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When one refers today to processes of globalization, one needs to be wary of the "presentism" that is so prevalent in discussions of our postmodern world, with their emphasis on "new economies" and new communication devices. At the same time, one cannot deny the specific characteristics of the current age. One of the specificities of today's world is the re-emergence of Asia as the center of global developments. Certainly, "Asia" is just as ambiguous as a geographical region as is "Europe," but nevertheless it is a large-scale spatial imagination that connects a number of histories of empire and civilization, and one that today enjoys considerable conceptual currency. It is, I think, right to argue that until 1800 Asia was at the center of global developments, but that between 1800 and 2000 it was pushed to the margins by the emergence of European modernity. This was the period in which Europe developed nation-states, modern, empirically based scientific research, nationalism, as well as imperialism, all in tandem. Asia was colonized and transformed under European imperial pressure, but developed its own nationalisms and postcolonial states. Over the past several decades, its economies (at least those in South, Southeast, and East Asia) are growing exponentially. This story is well known and has been told mostly from the perspective of political economy. It is a story of markets, states, and money that shows capitalism as a creative, historical force that produces a space and an imagination of that space. Indeed, it leaves out all kinds of other narratives of global connectivity that intersect with the larger story, and sometimes contradict it. The timeline of these other narratives is also different, referring to civilizational orderings of *longue duree*, but also responding to the kinds of opportunity that are not envisaged within economic understandings of global developments. The frame of these other narratives is not the nation-state, although the nation-state is always an important presence. While one can tell many such stories that complicate the general plot of globalization and the making of regions, a privileged genre is that of religion, because that genre entails imaginations of markets, states, and money that cannot be subsumed under the general rubric of capitalism. This issue of *Encounters* attempts to bring some of these stories to light by discussing religious networks in Asia and beyond.

Like many other European categories used to interpret modern society, but perhaps even more so than others, "religion"—with its emphasis on "belief," on church-like organizations, and on "the otherworldly"—is an inescapable, but troubling category to describe the traditions that we find in Asia. Moreover, the category is politically not neutral, but is used by states to classify, transform, and control these traditions. Certainly, also intellectuals within and outside these traditions make it their business to define and redefine traditions in terms of categories that are derived from the social science study of religion. This situation calls for deep reflexivity about the categories that one uses as well as the kinds of questions that one seeks to ask and answer. A simple example is the division of society into the spheres of the economy, politics, and culture (religion). When one finds religious actors (groups, movements, organizations) pursuing political goals, it would be a common fallacy to see this as an aberration of "true religion," as a politicization of religion. It is quite clear, however, that religious traditions have developed thoughts about politics, that they are carried by movements and organizations that have political importance, and that they have always been subject to state patronage and state regulation. Similarly, when one finds religious actors in pursuit of economic goals, this is often understood as the commercialization of religion, as a debasement of the true transcendental values of religion. At the same time, it is well known that the English word "fair" denotes both market and religious festival, and that temples and churches depend on gifts and landed property. The question the analyst should ask, then, is not whether religion is politicized or commercialized, but rather what the debates within and outside traditions are on politics and commerce. Are these matters at all debated? And if yes, what kinds of arguments are used? This, obviously, is an approach that often requires considerable reflexivity and, as has often been observed, participants in social life may not have sophisticated answers, although some do have them. The anthropologist deals with what "people think they are up to," but it is of paramount importance to be open to ways of understanding social life that do not fit prefabricated models of the religious and the secular, without, at the same time, romanticizing them as "the wholly other."

"Network," the other word in the phrase religious networks, is nothing more than a descriptive term for the net-like ties that link people locally, regionally, nationally, and transnationally. These networks can be based on "natural" ties, such as kinship, or on extensions of such ties, as in ethnicity, but they also can be based on rituals and traditions of belief and practice. It is remarkable how religion (in its original Latin meaning of "binding") connects people, offers them opportunities to travel and link up, and enables the movements of people and things across the world. What one has called world religions since the latter part of the nineteenth century can be seen as forms of global networking that enable trade, state formation, and forms

of communication (ritual, language). The creativity and innovativeness inherent in this completely contradicts the secularist understanding of the so-called inherent conservatism of these world religions. Important in these networks are religious entrepreneurs (Sufis, sadhus, bhikkhus, missionaries) who are on the road to salvation and who connect their travels to the transmigrations of the soul without losing interest in the mundane. In this issue of *Encounters*, we focus more on the recent travels and migrations of common people, of the laity, who have since the nineteenth century come to dominate world religions. It is remarkable how they stake their claim to the spaces they come to inhabit by ritual and by other religious means without losing their connection to the spaces of origin. If Durkheim was right about the spatial division of the sacred and the profane in ritual, it is remarkable how what seems static is, in fact, movable, and how the new spaces of arrival are sacralized. One of the important elements of these studies of religious networks is that they show the specific ways in which religions enable, as well as limit, specific forms of networking across the globe. These networks may or may not overlap with economic, kinship, and political ties, but they nevertheless carve out new areas of belonging.

The articles collected here address a number of subjects that are central to our understanding of the globalization of religious networks. Horstmann, Ngo, and Jung discuss the ways in which Christian networks are crucial to ethnic and national politics in Burma, Vietnam, and Korea respectively. In Horstmann's case study of the Burmese Karen, one finds a religious competition between Buddhists and Christians against the background of Burmese state formation. While the Buddhist Karen use an idiom of power and renunciation that is common in the area, Christians have access to transnational networks of missionary charity, especially in the refugee camps in Thailand. Horstmann highlights the importance of the camp situation for the recruitment or conversion and disciplining of refugees. Similarly, Jung shows how North Korean refugees are received and converted by Korean Christians on their long journey to South Korea. The flexibility of Christian (and other religious) networks enables them to act at the interstices of state power. This is not to say that they are, as such, not instrumental to the projects of the nation-state. In the case of Korea they clearly seem to be, while in the case of Vietnam they are not. In Ngo's case study of the Hmong in Vietnam, the state clearly sees conversion to Christianity (deemed a foreign religion) as a threat to its sovereignty and security. The Vietnamese Hmong have various imaginations of themselves as a "people" that are mutually reinforcing. There is a sense that they are connected to their "brethren" in neighboring Laos, Thailand, and China. This sense gives rise to recurrent millenarian desires for the return of the "Hmong king," a mythological figure. These desires find a new interpretation in Protestant Christianity. There is a more recent sense that the Vietnamese Hmong are connected to those who

left for the USA after the Vietnam War and who are now a minority in the USA, a minority that negotiates its roots with "authentic" Hmong culture by and through conversion to Christianity.

In Ninh's case study of Caodaism in Cambodia, one finds another instance of the long-term repercussions of the Vietnam War. The cult connects Vietnamese in Cambodia and those in the USA with the main shrine that is located in Vietnam, and which is under the control of the Communist state. The debates about the followers' connection with the main shrine show the predicament of refugee populations, who partly want to connect to the motherland, when it is developing and opening up, and who partly cannot accept the Communist victory and deny the history of suffering inherent in becoming refugees. The various layers of that history, including the problematic relations between Cambodians and Vietnamese, are negotiated through the cult. The difference between Ninh's Caodaists and Ngo's Hmong is that Caodaism is a cult that is primarily Vietnamese and one that can be reinterpreted to suit current Communist nationalism, while the Hmong converts to Christianity are a marginal minority living at the borders of Vietnam who have converted to a foreign (non-Vietnamese) faith. This situation is compounded by the active missionization by Hmong who are American citizens.

In all these case studies, war, violent conflict, world politics, ethnicity, and nationalism are central to religious networking. Refugees and their histories are engaged by Christianity, Buddhism, and Caodaism in Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, and, importantly, the USA. A large part of this history belongs to the Cold War and its aftermath, and much of the anticommunism that is inherent in at least Christian missionary activity stems from this period. Especially South Korean Christian missionary zeal seems connected to the deep wounds of the Korean War and the division of the country. While the history of warfare does not prevent most governments in the region from opening up their economies to the global market, they continue to be deeply suspicious of the soft power of Christianity as a global and national force. This trend is not declining, but actually increasing, with the US Congress pushing for the right to proselytize in countries with which the United States has trade relations. It is not doing this with Saudi Arabia, for instance, but in the case of countries like India, Vietnam, and China, the United States often tries to connect trade issues with issues of religious freedom.

The case studies discussed by Horstmann, Ngo, Ninh, and Jung all deal with sovereignty, borderlands, and border crossings, and thus with territorial space. Under pressure from various nationalist projects, subjects have to find ways to transcend the restrictions and the forms of marginalization that characterize their lives. Religions offer great opportunities for imagining worlds beyond the one that is called present-day reality, however arbitrary that may be, and also for commanding resources that are not tied to the

nation-state. In Ngo's case study, Hmong missionaries can use China as a base to infiltrate into Vietnam. They can connect to larger imaginings of the Hmong-Miao ethnicity whose members live in China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. In Jung's case study, it is the Korean minority in China that lives at the border of North Korea that is the first haven for refugees from North Korea. Christian churches in South Korea can reach these refugees in China in ways that would be inconceivable for organizations that are tied to the South Korean state. However, it is not only a matter of informal organization, but also a matter of the ways in which religions can offer practices for dealing with pain and suffering, with marginality, and with the destruction of ways of living together. Jung gives a few striking examples of narrativization of past lives that are part of the process of shedding the North Korean past and becoming South Korean Christian citizens. Of course, Protestantism always has this element of recounting past sins as an element of self-fashioning, but in the Korean case, it is interwoven with the repudiation not simply of communism, but also that of the evil North Korean ideology, and by that token, the transformation into South Korean citizens.

Ibrahim discusses a contestation of the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, a city sacred to Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The movement that encourages Muslims to visit the Al Aqsa Mosque and that keeps the Muslim presence in Jerusalem alive is explicitly non-violent, which is remarkable in this highly charged and violent political context. It combines religious pilgrimage to a holy shrine with a secular movement (including shopping) in an assertion of Muslim rights in Jerusalem. This religious assertion of territorial rights challenges Israeli hegemony in Jerusalem, and by that token connects Islamic practice to Palestinian nationalism without being tied to the latter in a straightforward or overt fashion.

People do not create regional, national, transnational, and global networks only under the pressure of war and violent conflict. The common understanding speaks about push and pull factors in migration, but less about the ways in which this travel beyond the direct community is imagined and desired. Dean shows the ways in which Putian (in Fujian, South China) as a region is ritually constituted in relation to the economy of irrigation, and also how this regional network is extended not only to other parts of China, but also to Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore, as part of more general patterns of Fujianese transnational migration. Kinship is a form of social organization that is basic to these networks, but it is also complemented by ritual networks and master-disciple networks. Dean argues that Putianese engage with the circumstances of modern life not by rejecting them but by molding them in tune with ritual and spiritual understandings. Important in his analysis is the concept of "trust," which is crucial for trading over long distances. Kinship, and also ritual alliances and pledges that have divine sanction, are all elements in building trust. One should not reduce this to a

merely functional understanding, in which ritual is seen to merely underpin the accumulation of wealth. One could just as well argue that wealth underpins ritual and (in Buddhist terms) merit. These false oppositions do not do justice to the creative ways in which ritual understandings of the world make long-distance trading possible. Ratanapruck shows how Tibetan Buddhist merit making is tied in with Nepali Manangi gem trading over long distances. This could well be compared to Jain and Jewish merchant networks in the diamond trade. Trust is, obviously, central to trading in these precious commodities, and that is why religious communities play such a central role in it. It is remarkable that the profits from Manangi trading and from other transnational business activities support a fifth of the Manangi male population living in monasteries.

Money and finance in general are highly ambiguous symbolic realms. Capitalism does not melt all that is culture into air, and therefore the market and money are culturally situated. The circulation of money, and the ways in which it enhances the circulation of everything in society, is crucial to social life and public culture, but money is an elusive abstraction. Muslim traders who for a millennium have expanded their networks all over Asia understand their commerce in Islamic terms, especially in relation to the injunction against interest. Brown and Lim discuss specific Islamic financial instruments that enable the expansion of networks over large regions and the ways in which modern states, such as Thailand, try to understand and regulate them. Islamic law intersects with colonial, national, and international law in different historical periods, but instead of being a stereotypically limiting factor in entrepreneurial activities, it proves to be remarkably flexible, providing pluralistic solutions to the problem of the legal protection of Muslims.

A question that has to be logically asked when examining expanding networks is who is in and who is out. Religious networks can be based partly on kinship, on ethnicity, on ritual community, or on a mix of these, but they are generally not endlessly open. Marriage and conversion are methods of including others, but the most radical and revolutionary vision is provided by the notion of humanity. The ideological universalism that is implicit in world religions becomes almost secularized cosmopolitan when it reaches out to others without aiming to convert. This development is recognizable in de-colonized Christian missionary activities in Western Europe that have morphed into humanitarian aid. Huang shows a parallel development in the Taiwanese Tzu Chi Foundation, which has extended its Buddhist "love for mankind" to people hit by disasters in different parts of the world. While the movement is still largely connected to Taiwanese ethnic migration patterns, it branches out by not asking members to leave their previous religious affiliation.

Cosmopolitanism is not a view from nowhere. While most attention has been given to the Enlightenment's cosmology, and to the "openness," em-

pathy, and the willingness to engage with Others that is imputed to modern (Western) man, in fact, there are a number of different cosmologies in the world that have given rise to a variety of conceptions of cosmopolitanism. Gupta discusses Bengali intellectuals who travel to Southeast Asia and rediscover Hindu civilization "in foreign parts." After the devastations and disappointments unleashed by nationalism during World War I, it is specifically an Asian cosmopolitanism that is conceptualized by thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore. The "spiritual" connections between Asian civilizations come to be seen as an alternative to the materialism and colonial aggression of the West. That Asia was not free of its own nationalisms and imperialism was, however, soon shown by the Japanese interpretation of Asian connectivity in its concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan optimism shown by Tagore and other Bengali travelers continued to inspire Asian leaders after World War II, as, for instance, at the Bandung Conference of newly independent nations in 1955.

This issue of *Encounters* does not ignore or deny the great economic flows that are enabled by the new communication technologies that characterize the current phase of globalization. It draws attention to the fact that these flows are enabled by, and understood through, global networks of ritual and religious tradition that have deep histories and that sometimes contradict the nation-form in which trade and taxation are predominantly conceived. These global networks of ritual and religious tradition provide forms of ritual governance, legal protection, merit making, and transnational transcendence that nation-states and nationalism cannot provide.

NOTE

¹ The papers by Dean, Brown and Lim, Ratanapruck, and Ninh were first presented at a workshop, organized by Kenneth Dean, on *Temple and Trust Networks Within and Out of Southeast Asia*, as part of the Inter-Asia Connections 2 conference held in Singapore on December 8-10, 2010, and sponsored by the National University of Singapore (NUS), the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HKIHS) at the University of Hong Kong. I am grateful to Kenneth Dean for bringing these papers to my attention. The papers by Ngo, Huang, Horstmann, and Jung are part of a research programme on religious networks at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany.