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Editorial Foreword

COMPARATIVELY CHRISTIAN Anthropology and Christianity have been fighting turf wars for over a century. Perhaps the two tribes are embarrassed by how closely they resemble each other. Ethnographers and missionaries crossed paths in the remotest corners of the planet, and each labored in service to a belief system that made bold moral claims about humanity. The claims were always comparative, whether they came dressed in religious or secular language. Catholics compared themselves to Protestants. Evolutionists compared themselves to historicists. People of faith compared themselves to scientists and humanists. All of this is old choreography. In recent years, however, the spread of evangelical, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal churches has turned Christianity itself, already universalist in its ambitions, into a global frame within which anthropologists can make sense of sociopolitical and economic changes that, despite occurring in communities that are distant and very different from each other, are clearly influenced by common beliefs and experiences. In the new choreography, Christian and anthropological worldviews can encapsulate and mutually clarify each other in ways that were seldom possible before.

Joel Robbins, **Bambi B. Schieffelin**, and **Aparecida Vilaça** make the case for a more rigorously comparative anthropology that uses conversion to Christianity as a means to analyze related sets of cultural puzzles and patterns of change. Building on their fieldwork in Melanesia and Amazonia, they consider how becoming an evangelical Christian requires the development of new conceptions of self. Heart, mind, and soul are recreated, as are relations between animals and humans, between in-laws, kin, fellow Christians, and unbelievers. The everyday languages available for talking about these shifts are also transformed. Christianity, according to these authors, reconfigures local conceptions of the physical and social body, altering both in ways that favor an internalized, spiritual self and its special relationship to God.

TOLERANCE, THE LIMITED GOOD Why does talk of tolerance so predictably disappoint or offend the tolerated party? As a moral standard, tolerance is either too high (accentuating stigma by correcting for it and pretending to ignore it at the same time), or it is too low (confusing legal acceptance of the marginalized with inclusion and respect). Moreover, any heartfelt call for tolerance requires targeted criticism, and sometimes outright demonization, of those who are intolerant. When enacted as official state policy, tolerance begets intolerance. This explains the vexed relationship between nationalism,

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which insist on unity and sharing, and pluralism, which insists on difference. Because official policies of toleration play the double role of creating solidarity and marking the outer boundaries of social acceptance, such policies will prove to be valuable, dangerous, and highly unstable tools in the hands of nationalists. In the hands of minority groups, the same tools often fail to provide an effective defense against anti-pluralist politics. Given all these problems with tolerance talk, why do we feel so strongly compelled to speak it?

Jeremy Menchik and **Ceren Özgül** attempt to answer this question as they explore the legal dimensions of tolerance in two states, Indonesia and Turkey, where political culture is strongly oriented toward themes of national unity. Cataloging many decades of Indonesian persecution of the Ahmadiyyah, a sect most Sunni Muslims denounce as heretical, Menchik shows how religious pluralism in Indonesia is legally defined such that intolerance toward unrecognized religious minorities actually produces solidarity among citizens who belong to sanctioned faiths. This "godly nationalism," as Menchik calls it, insures that millions of Indonesians will be able to practice their religions freely, but it is not to be confused with religious freedom, or with the secularist moderation for which Indonesia is associated in the West. Similarly, Özgül reveals deep contradictions in Turkey's new personal status laws, which allow citizens to change religions without hindrance. This apparent flexibility, Özgül contends, obscures the difficulty faced by some converts, especially Armenians who move from Islam back to Christianity, who request name changes that reflect new identities that are as ethnic as they are religious. Recognizably Armenian names are frequently rejected by judges because, according to Özgül, stories of return conversion told by new Armenian Christians make sense only in relation to the Armenian Genocide, which cannot be acknowledged in Turkey. In short, tolerance of Christianity does not trump intolerance toward Armenian historical claims. The latter sentiment, enshrined in law, is still a crucial facet of Turkish nationalism.

OTHER BUDDHISMS The great world religions have an endlessly evolving set of image problems and publicity strengths. These vary with location. In the West, Islam is associated with violence. In the Muslim world, Christianity is associated with fading religiosity, and with military and cultural campaigns against Islam. Familiarity breeds contempt; hence, the family quarrels that define the Abrahamic faiths. Distance, by contrast, can produce exotic appeal. This explains why the Western convert to Buddhism is often portrayed as a seeker, a spiritual connoisseur of sorts, whereas converts to Islam are treated as political traitors or deluded souls, unless they become Sufis (those mystical, contemplative, almost-Buddhist Muslims). In North America and Europe, Buddhism travels in a thick container of stereotype and misconception, much of it quite positive in tone, and much of it shaped by implicit critiques of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and modern science. A closer look at lived

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Buddhist traditions reveals other alterities whose critical potential lies in how they single out the likenesses and overlaps, not the dissimilarities, between proverbial West and East.

Roxann Prazniak and **Katherine Bowie** guide us through what, to many *CSSH* readers, will be unconventional Buddhist terrain. Muslim Persia was ruled by Ilkhan dynasts, the descendants of Chinggis Khan, for much of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (CE). Their empire represented a brief flourishing of Buddhist culture in what was then a center of Muslim civilization. Although the Ilkhans eventually converted to Islam, their particular strain of imperial Buddhism had cultural and political effects felt across Eurasia. This legacy, Prazniak argues, is now buried under centuries of Persian and Muslim influence, but it can still be traced out and profitably studied. Bowie, in similar fashion, reveals the strength of millenarian movements in northern Thailand, where Buddhism produced apocalyptic revolts and messianic cults of the sort more often associated with the Abrahamic traditions. Examining the case of Khruubaa Srivichai, who is remembered today as an apolitical saint figure, Bowie shows how his career, and his arrest in 1920, were shaped by severe economic conditions, belief in the coming Maitreya Buddha, and a widespread expectation that powerful monks would engage in political revolt. At the temple where Srivichai's ashes are kept, his ties to millenarianism have largely been forgotten; they are replaced today by his status as a Thai national treasure and an exemplar of the "worldly detachment" typical of (contemporary) Buddhist saints.

MARGINAL RESOURCES AND THE STATE When the Eurasian emperor studied the outer limits of his empire—it could be China, Japan, Siam, Russia, or the Ottoman domains—he did not see fixed borders. Or wastelands. He saw wealth to be acquired. Forests of uncut hardwoods and rare medicinal plants. Deposits of iron, gold, copper, and tin. Inexhaustible fisheries. Black markets in remote towns filled with smugglers and prestige goods. Nomads with fine horses and weapons. Mountains filled with self-sustaining militias, illicit trade routes, and the charisma of prophets. He saw allies, slaves, and enemies. All of this was his to subdue, exploit, build up, and wear away. Beyond the horizon, invisible to the eye, he discerned the presence of the most vital and ominous of these marginal resources—namely, the other emperors and overlords, secure in their own heartlands, who surveyed the same landscapes, devising similar schemes for appropriation and control. Some of the most subtle forms of imperial statecraft unfolded in and across these marginal zones.

Liping Wang and **Jin Sato** scrutinize the multiple processes by which states bring human and material assets under their control. Wang focuses on the final years of Qing China, during which land reform in Inner Mongolia forced nomadic tribes, Han Chinese farmers, military governors, and frontier

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courts into intricate contests over taxation, control of arable land, the movement of herds, and military service. These struggles, Wang shows, cannot be portrayed simply as state-dominated reform at the margins of rule; rather, they suggest that the state is acted out and resisted by diverse parties, some external and others internal to the state apparatus. In Japan and Siam, Sato argues that government exploitation of marginal resources in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced very different results, none of which can be explained by resort to models of weak or strong states. Dynasts in Siam developed hierarchical, exclusivist regimes for tapping into rich forest and mining resources. Local populations were kept out of these economies, while foreigners and ethnic minorities were brought in. In Japan, by contrast, fringe populations played a larger role in the exploitation of local resources. These divergent strategies, Sato claims, produced administrative, economic, and ecological effects that are still unfolding in Japan and Thailand today.

THE CIVICS OF SORCERY The marginal zones of the state are rich not only in material resources, but also in supernatural ones. As we have already seen, they produce messiahs, millenarian revolts, converts, heretics, and their devout opponents. The margins are home to witches, ghosts, sorcerers, shape shifters, and the specialists who protect us from these malign beings. If the state is responsible for the security of its citizens, it follows that the good citizens who inhabit these spiritual hinterlands should help state officials overcome criminal occultists. In so doing, they will bring magic under the rule of law and law into the realm of magic. Although modern states have been eager to administer the relationship between spiritual and secular authority, the policing of magical powers calls for another kind of politics altogether. Or does it?

Victor Igreja explores a fascinating case of witchcraft accusations in contemporary Mozambique. The accusers and victims were traumatized by a civil war that was fought with conventional and occult weapons. A decade later, claims of child murder and cannibalism escalated in two villages affected by the violence. National media, local police, and the courts were all implicated in attempts to control sorcery and the healers who, acting in the name of the state, were most active (and most abusive) in locating and punishing alleged cannibals. In his careful depiction of these lurid events, Igreja maps out the difficulties Mozambicans face as they struggle to find a place for the (contested) reality of magical practices in state formation, public culture, and participatory models of citizenship.

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