Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia: Comparative Perspectives, by R. Michael Feener and Anne M. Blackburn, eds. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. 207pp. Hb. \$68.00 ISBN-13: 9780824872113.

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Although Buddhism and Islam are the two largest religions in Asia, scholars of the two religions are rarely brought together under one book cover. Feener and Blackburn argue that this is an opportunity missed. Scholars within the field of Buddhist studies should be learning from those working within the field of Islamic studies and vice versa, using a 'mutual illumination' model. I wholeheartedly agree. The contributors to this collection offer meticulously researched pieces that throw light on each other and, in their location in one volume, contribute to the rehabilitation of the comparative study of religion.

The chapters are the fruit of exchanges that followed a conference held in 2013, in Singapore, on 'Orders and Itineraries: Comparative Religious Networks in Southern Asia'. Flowing from this, the focus of the collection is transregional Buddhist and Sufi networks in the pre-modern and modern periods, and the connected histories that lay behind them. 'Southern Asia' is defined in a broad sense to include South Asia, Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Southern China. Several of the contributors contest the term 'Order', particularly with reference to Sufi traditions. The term is best seen as a short-hand signifier for identity-creating networks and institutions, united by ritual, practice, intellectual discourse and material culture.

There are nine contributors to the volume, if Feener and Blackburn's extended introduction is included, four written on Sufi networks and three on Buddhist networks. Their ordering and juxtaposition allow the methodological and conceptual similarities between the two disciplines to emerge. Writers on both Sufi and Buddhist traditions, for instance, contest the stereotypical view that religious 'Orders', networks or lineages are unchanging. All examine transregional religious mobility and contest models that view either religion through national lenses alone. Several in both disciplines probe the effect of European colonialism on religious networks, particularly in making them less porous and more exclusivist. To illustrate this, I will take as examples the contributions of Alexey Kirichenko, Torsten Tschacher, Kenneth Dean and Martin van Bruinessen.

Kirichenko examines transregional monastic communication between Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar (Laṅkā, Siam and Burma) in the eighteenth century, through the life and testimonies of a 'mobile' monk, Sāralaṅkā. Sāralaṅkā was born in Tenassarim (now part of Myanmar), took a small part in one of the Siamese missions to Kandy in the 1750s and later made a career for himself in Myanmar, where he was revered partly because of his involvement in the Siamese mission, which he manipulated to his own advantage. Kirichenko uses this case study to argue both for

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the continuation of strong national monastic identities in the three countries — the formation of the Siyam Nikāya in Sri Lanka was a ritual necessity, not a ‘transplantation of monastic order, lineage, or external forms of monasticism’ (p. 51) — and the revering of monastic mobility, namely monastic travellers and mediators who were able to offer a sense of regional Buddhist identity.

Tschacher examines changes within Sufi *ṭarīqas* (usually translated as Order) in Southeastern India and Sri Lanka from 1400 to 1950. At first, Sufi ‘Orders’ were part of Islamic learning; ordinary Muslims did not seek initiation into a particular lineage. Later, itinerant Sufi teachers would gather networks of practitioners around them, the identity of which were dependent on memories, practices and a sense of religious integration rather than purity of lineage. Even the teachers could show allegiance to more than one *ṭarīqa*. And the poems and songs that developed within them sometimes drew on Hindu Śaivite forms, utilized for Islamic purposes to create ‘interpretative communities’. Only at the end of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in these regions, Tschacher argues, did lineages arise with tighter boundaries, forming the Sufi ‘Orders’ that are considered normative today. The impact of British colonialism played a part in this.

Kenneth Dean examines the spread of Chinese Mahāyāna monasteries in Southeast Asia, focussing on one Chinese temple network that began in Fujian in the sixteenth century and spread across Southeast Asia from the seventeenth century — the network of Hokkien. The temples were linked with Chinese trading communities and performed rituals connected with trading contracts. They became transnational religious institutions that transmitted ritualized roles. Itinerant Buddhist monks, sometimes on pilgrimage to Sri Lanka, and Daoist specialists could be hosted. Focussing on the British Straits Settlement (now largely Singapore and parts of Malaysia), Dean charts the changes that occurred to the role of monastics in this network. In the early years of expansion, Buddhist monks were servants of the temple leadership, salaried itinerants who were regarded with some suspicion because of the fear that they used opium or gambled. Their position changed in some temples when they entered into contracts for the running of the temple, the balance of power between monastics and lay people shifting as a result. Eventually mainstream Buddhist monasteries were established, beginning with Singapore. In this development, the religious categories laid down by British colonialists were influential, making porous boundaries much more difficult.

Van Bruinessen, in his chapter on Sufi ‘Orders’ in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, makes similar points to Tschacher and Dean. Indigenous communities in Indonesia began to accept Islam in the fourteenth century. Sufi forms were dominant, combining miracles and esoteric practice with a concern for law, *sharīʿa*. Yet, only from the seventeenth century are Sufi Orders mentioned in Indonesian sources; the view that they were a major force in the early Islamization of the region is untenable. As in South India and Sri Lanka, key Sufi teachers did not necessarily stay with one lineage and initiates were low in number, restricted to a small number of ‘adepts and affiliates’. Only in the nineteenth century did the ‘masses’ enter distinct lineages. Opposition to the Dutch as a colonial power played a part in this, as did a new-

found relationship with Mekka, which facilitated mobility between Indonesia and 'the symbolic center of the Muslim world' (p. 144). Increasing institutionalization of Sufi Orders followed, together with more exclusive boundaries between groups.

This is an excellent contribution to the study of Buddhist and Islamic traditions in Asia. Its significance, however, lies in its inter-disciplinary, comparative ethos, which allows scholars of Buddhism in Tibet, Bhutan, China and Sri Lanka to interact with scholars of Islamic traditions in India, Indonesia, Java and Sri Lanka.