

Joanne Punzo Waghorne, ed., *Place/No Place in Urban Asian Religiosity*

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With its rich ethnographic materials about nine cities in Asia, *Place/No Place* provides a much-needed overview of the changing nature of religiosity and notions of space in Asia over the past few decades. It offers eleven engaging essays on the following big issues: the changing nature of religiosity due to the urbanization of space and creation of non-spaces in the process, the effects of social networks on thinking about religious identity, and the changing role of the state in an era of globalization, among other issues. A challenge of presenting an edited volume such as this is to advance conversations about the broader theme of urban religiosity and space by connecting various arguments, methodologies, and issues in each essay. Joanne Punzo Waghorne's "editor's preface" at the beginning of each essay about the geographical and social context of each author's work creates a unified understanding about the social process of urbanization in Asia and its relation to religiosity. The editor begins by arguing that the changing demographic shifts from rural to urban, changing transportation networks, the changing role of the state in the era of globalization, and the availability of digital media in Asia has resulted in the formation of new religious configurations and new modes of thinking about religion. This foundational argument is then illustrated in the rest of the book through ethnographic materials about different Asian cities.

Yohan Yoo investigates three types of attitudes toward obtaining space for Protestant churches in contemporary Korea. First, some megachurches like to multiply by forming branches in new, rich neighborhoods. Second, some churches do not focus on acquiring particular spaces and instead focus on welfare work among the poor. Third, some churches, typically those run by intellectuals, choose not to obtain a space for worship although they can afford to buy such spaces.

Lily Kong examines how burial practices and funeral rituals have shifted from physical to virtual space in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China due to land scarcities. She convincingly argues that the reasons for differences in the trajectories of burial and funeral practices in these spaces stems from various factors including the role of the state, the role of the religious organizations, and cultural beliefs about death and dying.

Waghorne shows that the discourse of two Hindu gurus in Singapore moves beyond the particularities of space due to their cosmopolitan attitude toward ethnic and religious heritage, as well as due to their transnational organizational structure. Waghorne exemplifies that although global gurus draw audiences from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, they rarely form any social networks outside of their meditative conglomeration with the gurus.

Jean DeBernardi analyzes how the loss of local Daoist temples in Singapore has paved the way for creating translocal digital networks of Daoists. The loss of physical space has culminated in the use of digital technology such as websites to create global networks of Daoists. Additionally, the possibility of traveling to China has led to the creation of a translocal Daoist community that visits places such as Wudang mountain.

Gareth Fisher examines how changes in Beijing's religious places after the communist era have led to reconfigurations of everyday religious practices. Drawing on her fieldwork in the Temple of Universal Rescue in Beijing, the author argues that the

orientation of Buddhist practitioners in Beijing has changed from “emplacement” to “utopian religiosity.”

Smriti Srinivas explains how the construction of massive transport networks affects religious discourse at three thresholds on a popular street next to the metro construction in Bangalore. Srinivas argues that threshold spaces speak to the “mobile or shifting spatial, corporeal, social, and iconic lifeworlds in the city” (144).

Juliana Finucane explores how the Buddhist Soka Gakkai organization navigates its spatial journey in cosmopolitan Singapore through working at three different spatial levels: private homes, public secular spaces, and global spaces. Ultimately, Soka Gakkai appeals to Singaporean citizens as a domestic yet translocal, global space because the organization emphasizes its commonalities with branches in China and Japan.

Madhura Lohokare exemplifies how civil society networks called Mitra Mandals in Pune act as moral spaces that function as key actors in the identity formation of the members of specific neighborhoods. The Mitra Mandals function in creating a shared sense of spatial identity for the members through providing space-based religious engagements such as public Ganesh festivals and civic engagements such as reading newspapers and flag hoisting.

Daniel Gold analyzes the notions of space in three new religious movements in the provincial Indian city of Gwalior. Gold argues that although these movements are different from traditional religious movements—in that they emphasize values such as social service, national reconstruction, and global spirituality—each of them develops a distinct vision of space based on the sensibilities of the followers and ideas of the leaders.

Finally, Ann Grodzins Gold’s chapter provides a foundational theoretical notion, explaining that the imaginations of space are always emergent and unsettled. As the author shows, the residents of Jahazpur—an insular, provincial town in northwestern India—link themselves to pan-Indian culture and history through its foundational narratives. However, alongside this claim to antiquity rests challenges to tradition. For instance, the members of the Khatik community built a temple dedicated to Satya Narayan in the eighties as they had no access to other upper-caste temples. Thus, the foundational tales create an ever-lasting, unified, pan-Indian notion of space and yet, at the same time, we see reimaginings of structures of authority through the construction of new religious spaces.

The volume might have benefited from an editor’s conclusion. In addition, arranging chapters either by geographical focus or by topical focus would have enhanced the structure of the volume. Nonetheless, engaging ethnographies, issues of global concern, and wide coverage of Asian cities are all strengths of this book. Therefore, this volume would be appropriate for scholars and undergraduate and graduate students researching topics about space and religion, Modern Asia, and technology and religion. For the non-specialist, a significant contribution of the book lies in providing a clear overview of the process of urban religiosity and the role of technology, travel, and the state in shaping religious discourse in four Asian countries.

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