

Sacred Mandates; Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan offers a novel framework for understanding the history of interpolity relations in Inner and East Asia that can help us in addressing challenges and conflicts in the region today. It is written primarily for policymakers and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, but also for graduate students and scholars of Asian and Eurasian history and of international relations.

A challenge for conflict-resolution practitioners who seek to address the historical narratives that state and nonstate actors alike deploy to construe the past to justify claims, policies and ambitions in the present, is the need to delve into the past without indulging in it. The book is the result of a multi-year project, involving over 70 scholars around the world, that was designed to develop a methodology to address the impact that incompatible perceptions of a shared history have on conflicts and on efforts to prevent and resolve them. Inner and East Asia was taken as the case study. As the study progressed, it became increasingly clear that creating a meaningful analysis of historical as well as current interpolity relations in Inner and East Asia requires using an entirely different lens than we are accustomed to. By shedding the political and legal baggage of modern concepts of statehood, sovereignty, and independence, we are able to achieve a better-informed assessment of assertions made in support of claims to territory, authority, and related political projects today.

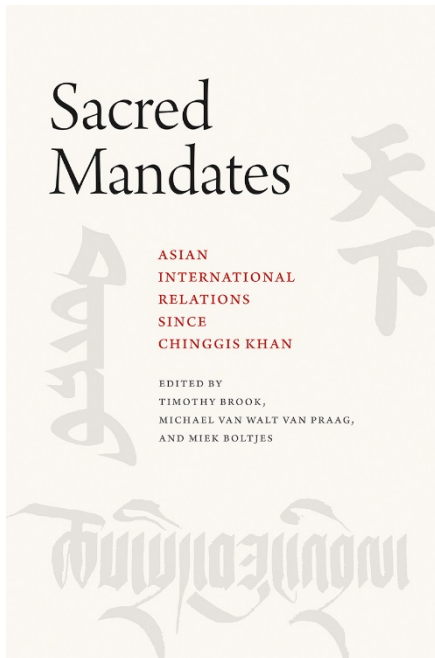
The book reveals that from the 13th to the beginning of the 20th century, relations between rulers and between states (or polities) in Inner and East Asia were governed by three international legal orders rather than one, as had mostly been assumed: the Chinggisid Mongol order, the Confucian or Sinic order and the Tibetan Buddhist order. They existed side by side, interacted and, at times, overlapped. These orders emanated from the three corresponding centers of civilizational authority and provided legitimizing ideologies and constructs for international relations that persisted throughout this period and that were adopted by the Manchu court in its rule of the Qing empire and its relations with other states.

The book rejects the presentation of Inner and East Asian history as that of an unbroken sequence of “Chinese” dynastic empires and their peripheries as privileging one worldview over the others, and it cautions against the projection of present political geographies and ambitions onto the past—an approach that is commonly employed by political leaders and governments to serve their political interests. It argues that understanding the importance and diversity of past legal orders helps explain the existence of the conflicting historical narratives that animate current tensions and conflicts in the region. It also demonstrates that because some of the values and assumptions of the past legal orders continue to play a role in Asia today, adherence to modern international relations theories as well as to the dominant Sino-centric historical paradigm, not only inhibits a proper understanding of the past but also of the Asian present, and creates a serious obstacle to the prevention and resolution of those conflicts.

Sacred Mandates

Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan

Edited by Timothy Brook, Michael Van Walt van Praag, and Miek Boltjes



Contemporary discussions of international relations in Asia tend to be tethered in the present, unmoored from the historical contexts that give them meaning. *Sacred Mandates*, edited by Timothy Brook, Michael van Walt van Praag, and Miek Boltjes, redresses this oversight by examining the complex history of inter-polity relations in Inner and East Asia from the thirteenth century to the twentieth, in order to help us understand and develop policies to address challenges in the region today. Rather than proceed sequentially by way of dynasties, the editors identify three “worlds” – Chinggisid Mongol, Tibetan Buddhist, and Confucian Sinic – that represent different forms of civilizational authority and legal order. This novel framework enables us to detect the effects of the complicated history at play between and within regions. Contributors from a wide range of disciplines cover a host of topics: international law, sovereignty, state formation, ruler legitimacy, and imperial rule and expansion, as well as the role of spiritual authority on state behavior, the impact of modernization, and the challenges for peace today. The culmination

of five years of collaborative research, *Sacred Mandates* will be the definitive historical guide to international and intrastate relations in Inner and East Asia, of interest to policymakers and scholars alike, for years to come.

Timothy Brook is professor of history at the University of British Columbia. **Michael van Walt van Praag** is an international jurist, executive president of Kreddha, a conflict resolution organization, and senior fellow at the Institute for Social Sciences, University of California at Davis. **Miek Boltjes** is a mediator in intrastate conflicts and director of dialogue facilitation at Kreddha.

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