RE-IMAGINING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Buzan and Acharya challenge the discipline of International Relations to reimagine itself in the light of the thinking about, and practice of, international relations and world order from premodern India, China and the Islamic world. This prequel to their 2019 book, The Making of Global International Relations, takes the story back from the two-century tale of modern IR, to reveal the deep global history of the discipline. It shows the multiple origins and meanings of many concepts thought of as only modern and Western. It opens pathways for the rest of the world into this most Eurocentric of disciplines, encouraging them to bring their own histories, concepts and theories with them. The authors have written this book with the hope of inspiring others to extend these pathways by bringing in a wider array of cultures, and exploring how they thought about and acted in worlds composed of multiple, independent, collective actors.

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Re-imagining International Relations

World Orders in the Thought and Practice of Indian, Chinese, and Islamic Civilizations

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CONTENTS

Foreword page vii

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 PROBLEMS WITH THE EXERCISE 13

3 INDIA 30

4 CHINA 53

5 THE ISLAMIC WORLD 81

6 CONCLUSIONS 113

References 161

Index 176
FOREWORD

This book is an outgrowth and extension of our 2019 book, where the question of what International Relations (IR) would look like if it had been invented elsewhere was raised briefly in the Introduction (Acharya and Buzan, 2019: 3). Our 2019 book went on to look in some detail at modern, nineteenth and twentieth century, thinking about IR in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, unsurprisingly finding that most of it was about reactions to the racism, cultural contempt, violence, and imperialism of the Western powers plus Japan. In this book, we want to start looking behind that, to investigate thinking and practice from Indian, Chinese, and Islamic civilizations about IR and world order before their encounter with Europe and industrial modernity. What is the deeper background of thinking about world order and international relations that these civilizations are bringing, and will bring, to both re-imagining, and practising, international relations?

We would like to thank John Haslam for his interest and support, and especially the three reviewers for Cambridge University Press. They not only understood in depth what the book was trying to do but also provided us with a wealth of knowledgeable, and constructively critical, suggestions as to how to improve it. We are most grateful for their insights.