

C. SHACKLE: *A Gurū Nānak glossary*. xxxi, 276 pp. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1981. £10.

The mixed language of Gurū Nānak (1469–1539) and his immediate successors has in the past not been very easy of access. With its variable proportion of Panjabi elements and elements of Hindi (Khari boli, Brajbhāṣā and other dialectal) character it has presented difficulties on the one hand to students of Sikh religion and society and on the other to those of the wider *sant* movement of north India in which Nānak has a place. The present *Glossary* contributes significantly to the removal of these difficulties.

The *Glossary* contains the words found in Nānak's hymns, in those of his successor Anḡad, in some of those by the later Gurūs down to Arjan and in those by Shaikh Farid: a body of verse comprising one-fifth of the Ādi-granth. There are some 6,000 headwords. These were drawn in the first instance (as the preface indicates) from the concordance *Ādi-granth śabad-anukramanikā* (1971) in which numerical references to the text, but no definitions or distinctions between homonyms, are given. The layout of the *Glossary* entries on the page is admirably clear and the structure of the entries is well planned and clearly explained in the preface. The major entries include transcriptions of headwords in Gurmukhi script, select lists of inflected and variant forms, the glosses themselves, citations of derivative phrases, a frequency-count, a derivation (comprising in most cases numbered references to Turner's *Comparative dictionary of the Indo-Aryan languages*), and, frequently, useful cross-references to related words. Occurrences of unusual forms of words in rhyme are noted, a fact which will be welcomed by some users of the *Glossary* and which is an example of the care that has gone to its organization. A useful feature of the preface is the clear explanation, with examples, of the different derivational categories into which headwords fall as Panjabi or Hindi *tadbhavas* or as Sanskritic and Persian loanwords.

The citations which I have checked are almost all impeccably recorded. For *aṭhūhām* read *aṭhūhiā* (Mājh vār 22, mahlā 2). The glosses give the impression of general accuracy and reliability and often (as in that to *toḷu*, p. 131) helpfully suggest underlying shades of meaning of headwords. Glosses of some technical terms and names of deities, as well as of some other words, will serve on occasion as correctives to misunderstandings which unwary readers can acquire from the translations of Macauliffe and Gopal Singh. Cf. the gloss and derivation given (p. 31) for the form *sahilā* 'successful' (< *saphala-*), where this meaning (rather than 'easy' < Ar. *sahl* as adopted by Gopal Singh) can be clearly confirmed from the following line of Nānak's text.

Comparable care is taken elsewhere in some discussions of uncertain derivations, e.g. s.v. *toḷu* 'luxury, desirable thing' where the connexion made with a verbal root rather than a nominal one seems clearly preferable.

The word *thagāṭi* ~ *thagāṭri*, glossed as 'poisonous herb administered by Thags to render their victims unconscious' (p. 131) seems in many contexts of *thagāṭi* rather to have the sense 'incapacity' or perhaps 'spell, enchantment'; in that case a derivation involving *ātura-* 'suffering, disabled, incapable' seems probable. Cf. Brajbhāṣā (sixteenth century) *thagauri*.

On p. viii Dr. Shackle describes the composite language of Nānak correctly as consisting of a core of Old Panjabi and 'Old Western Hindi (Khari Boli)' words. A slightly clearer picture of Nānak's language would have emerged, however, if the Brajbhāṣā dialect had been mentioned along with Khari boli as a contributory source, since Brajbhāṣā as distinct from Khari boli is the source in Nānak's language of such variant forms as *rahio* (~ *rahiā*); *ūmacāi/ūmco* (*ūmcā*); *taiso* (~ *taisā*); *tā* (~ *tis*); *kaū/ko* (~ *kā*): this form fairly rare in Nānak; *pari* (~ *pari*); *karori* (~ *karori*); *rākhi* (~ *rakhi* as 2:1); and perhaps *bibhūkhanu* (~ *bibhūkhanu*). Cf. similarly *mākhanu* (\**makkhanu* absent). These examples are not restricted to a narrow segment of the early Gurūs' language: they include verbal, pronominal and nominal forms, illustrate features of phonology as well as morphology and include loanwords as well as *tadbhavas*. The presence of Brajbhāṣā alongside Khari boli forms in the early Gurūs' verse is to be explained from the literary importance of this dialect in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It may be added that the above situation, though not mentioned in the preface, is represented accurately in the *Glossary* entries (from which the examples given are cited) and that valuable use can be made of the frequency figures given for particular forms in gauging the extent of dialect admixture.

Misprints appear to be very few. For *thagāṭi*, p. 131, read *thagāṭi*. The expression 'Muslim languages' (p. ix) might have been avoided.

This glossary will be of great assistance to all concerned with the study of the early Sikh scriptures.

R. S. MCGREGOR

STEPHEN COLLINS: *Selfless persons: imagery and thought in Theravāda Buddhism*. ix, 323 pp. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, [1982]. £22.50.

There are three sorts of book that can be written in Theravāda Buddhism. The first deals with secondary sources only, the second dips into the primary sources in a more or less superficial way, the third deals mainly with the primary sources. The first and second category aim to make generalizations and explanations, e.g. as in anthropological or sociological studies; the third sort deals with a small subject area and, in order to clarify that, deals with philological problems in depth, and exhaustively. To the extent that the first two categories depend on excellent

scholarship in the third category, they make a contribution to contemporary knowledge of the subject. Unfortunately, in Theravāda Buddhism there is not a very large corpus of works of the third category. This book, *Selfless persons*, 'an essay in the history of ideas', is in the second category.

In it the author seeks, following Dumont, to read the history of India in the Indian way. He aims to contribute 'to the solution of certain classic problems in the study of Buddhist culture', although he explains that his main interest is 'the imaginative world of Theravāda Buddhism'. He describes the direction of his study as aiming 'to widen a little the cultural horizons in which both our common sense and our philosophy set their ideas of the person and of selfhood'. His long introduction contains a preview of the ensuing chapters (citing many more aims and intentions), a brief analysis of the kinds of Theravāda text, and some comments on the relationship between Theravāda and Mahāyāna.

The main body of this book is in four parts. The first part deals with 'The cultural and social setting of Buddhist thought'. The author gives here a brief résumé of the Brahmanical tradition, contrasts it with contemporary ascetic thinking as exemplified by the six heretics of the *Sāmaññaphala sutta* and gives some exposition of the possible social background to these ideas. He then goes on to discuss ideas of time contained in the concept of *samsāra*, rebirth, and *karma*, which he holds to be both antecedent to and contemporary with Buddhism. He describes contemporary Thai Buddhism to show that the problems of the *anattā* doctrine are of concern only to a small minority of Buddhists. This is followed by a section on the meaning of *attā*. In the second part of this book, on 'The doctrine of Not-self', the arguments used by the Buddhists to prove that there is no self are presented and the soteriological value of such a concept is evaluated.

In part 3, the author refers to the Buddhist's rationalization of the problem of dealing with continuing entities which are at the same time subject to a 'doctrine of *anattā*', and discusses the soteriological import of house imagery in this context. He sees the doctrine of *anattā* as 'a linguistic taboo in technical discourse', discusses the function of this taboo as a soteriological strategy, and argues that the *anattā* doctrine in Theravāda Buddhism does not exclude the idea and practice of compassion.

Part 4 develops the topic 'Continuity'. What he calls 'Conditioning and Consciousness [*viññāna*]' is explained with reference to vegetation imagery in the literature; in the context of the momentariness of mental processes, Theravāda definitions of lifetime, life-faculty, and *bhavaṅga* are reviewed, together with some mention of its chariot imagery, but without perhaps developing any significant new insights.

In his conclusion the author judges himself to have shown 'how the conceptual framework of Buddhist thinking is addressed to the particular concern of elaborating an account

of selfhood, persons and their continuity in the light of the overall *samsāra-nirvāna* dichotomy, itself predicated on the social dichotomy of layman-monk; and how this account has embodied the hypotheses of the creation of temporality by the "constructive activity" of *karma*, the need for a coherent picture of the cessation of such creative activity if the religious goal of release is to appear intelligible, and the supposition that such a cessation takes place in the consciousness of the religious virtuoso' (p. 262).

This is certainly not a comfortably readable book. It exemplifies the problems of interdisciplinary studies which necessarily lead at best to the second of the three sorts of book that were distinguished above. The reader is overwhelmed by other people's knowledge, quoted extensively from modern Buddhist, philosophical, anthropological, sociological, and occasionally philological sources, without critical synthesis. He is not helped by a tendency to misapply concepts: the technical discourse of Buddhism is not a ritualized tribal practice and to call *attā* a 'linguistic taboo' is hardly meaningful. The importation of the fatuous sociological concept 'religious virtuoso' is most regrettable. There are, however, some interesting ideas and new and valuable approaches, as exemplified by the treatment of imagery in the manner of literary criticism.

The need for basic work at the third level is, however, always apparent. One example of this is the treatment of 'the term *puṭhujjana*, "ordinary man", which must originally have been referred to any householder in contrast to the ascetic virtuoso' (p. 93). It is not clear what aspect of any attestation suggests such a supposition, either in terms of the development of Buddhist psychology, or in terms of the semantics of the language, and in fact the author does not support this statement with textual evidence. Besides, it has to be said that stylistically the egocentric 'I', tempered by occasional lapses into the conspiratorial 'we' is singularly out of place in a book on 'Selfless persons'. It is to be hoped that some of the great wealth of ideas that this book contains will be worked out objectively by means of studies in the third category.

JOY MANNÉ LEWIS

SHEREEN RATNAGAR: *Encounters: the westerly trade of the Harappa civilization*. xxi, 294 pp., 3 maps. Delhi, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1981 [pub. 1982]. Rs. 120, £12.

Once the ancient urban civilization of the Indus valley had been recognized in the early 1920s, attention was naturally directed towards evidence of its contacts with its western contemporaries, and Gadd's paper of 1932 on 'Indian style' seals in Mesopotamia remains a classic. A new aspect of the problem was revealed from 1953 onwards by the Danish excavations in Bahrain and on the island of Failaka in the Gulf, which showed both Indian and Mesopotamian elements, and