

but it is not as clear how other issues such as “maintaining patronage” for example (p. 189) were addressed. To be sure, the question “why” is always a harder one to answer. Finally, since he shares many of its considerations, DeCaroli might have benefitted from engaging with Gérard Colas’ *Penser l’icône* (2012).

To summarize, this book is certainly a good overview of the complicated discourse surrounding image use in South Asia in the first centuries of the Common Era. The book lays down some interesting queries and problems that should be further explored in depth and could not have been due to its broad outlook and short format. It will surely be of interest to students of Buddhist art, history, and to students of South Asia at large.

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ADIL HUSSAIN KHAN:

From Sufism to Ahmadiyya: A Muslim Minority Movement in South Asia. xi, 237 pp. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015. £34. ISBN 978 0 253 01523 5.
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In the last decade very little of substance has been written by academics on the Ahmadiyya movement, despite its rapid globalization and almost universal condemnation and exclusion by Muslim groups of all types, even the most pluralist. This important millennial movement, founded in the Punjab by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), who claimed a number of problematic messianic titles, spread very rapidly first through India and then internationally through the leadership of consecutive *khulafa’-i masih* (“representatives of the messiah”). It has always been controversial in different ways to Muslims, but its problems accelerated in post-partition Pakistan, culminating in 1984 when its members were declared non-Muslims in the Pakistan penal code. This made it impossible to claim their persons and structures as Islamic and intensified coercion and persecution.

Much of the analysis of the Ahmadiyya has focused on the continuity and unanimity of prejudice, anathema, and persecution of its members. Adil Hussein Khan, in this revision of his doctoral thesis at SOAS, University of London, is no exception. But whereas much of the previous work has been concerned primarily with the religious or theological content of the confrontation, Dr Khan seeks to look at the Ahmadiyya as “both a religious movement and as a political party” (p. 178) in order to work out the changing patterns of accommodation and persecution over time and to gauge how these contributed to the emergence and maintenance of an Ahmadi identity. The author perceives a common genealogy in the disputation of identity, which he conceptualizes as “a neo-tribal conflict that extends back multiple generations along hereditary lines, whether physically or spiritually” (p. 177). This inherited conflict does not in itself produce persecution, which the author relates to political factors, but certainly intensifies it and provides for the unusual continuity within the various phases of politicization.

Khan’s arguments move three clusters of subjects through seven chapters. The first two chapters are concerned with the formative milieu of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad within a localized Sufi context and the emergence of complex but little-understood messianic claims. While it is useful to have this discussion in a single coherent location, the author adds little here to the previous analysis of Spencer

Lavan (from the standpoint of social context) or Yohanan Friedmann (from the standpoint of religious context). The next three chapters focus on the emergence of critical institutions of leadership, as well as distinct belief and ritual systems that served to construct a movement of the Ahmadiyya. This is really the heart of the book, and the author is excellent on the role of Kashmir in politicizing the Ahmadiyya within the context of late British imperialism and the growth of nationalisms as well as the consequence of this politicization of identity. The final two chapters focus on the growth of religious persecution at the hands of the Majlis-i Ahrar-i Islam in the 1930s to the increasingly bitter confrontation in the newly formed state of Pakistan. Khan makes the reasonable suggestion that the intensified persecution relates to the need in post-partition Pakistan to establish Islamic authenticity in new political terms. The author speculates that a possible consequence of the added width and breadth of persecution is that the Ahmadiyya might well come to redefine itself as post-Islamic, as happened previously to the Baha'i movement.

Much of what the author provides in this well-researched book makes good sense, and we are fortunate to have it. But I have some reservations. First, the author constantly Islamizes the movement, and there is almost no sense of parallel or shared discourses of identity within the Punjab, which the Ahmadiyya might share with non-Muslim movements such as the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj. There is a context beyond the Islamic. Second, the author wishes to organize his analysis around the politicization of persecution and its contribution to the formation of identity, but declines to define what he means by "religious persecution" (see, e.g., pp. 128–9). This phenomenon is complex, and surely mildly negative prejudices on the basis of religion (as in the first 50 years of the Punjab phase) are different in type to anathema, murder and state actions that alter legal categories. Finally, I am not convinced of the utility of thinking of the Ahmadiyya in its lengthy history from 1889 to the present as informed by a "neo-tribal conflict" extending along hereditary lines and focused on protecting spiritual honour. Without some larger theoretical discussion, the concept of neo-tribalism, with its implications of communities of feeling, does not fit well with the author's larger arguments on the politicization and disputation of identity.

Nevertheless, the author is quite right that it was not the specifically theological positions of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that caused the discrimination and persecution of the Ahmadiyya, but the particularities of late British imperialism and religious nationalisms founded on concerns for authenticity. The book is engagingly written and offers reasonable judgements on a movement of consequence.

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SEINO VAN BREUGEL:

A Grammar of Atong.

(Brill's Studies in South and Southwest Asian Languages.) xxxvi, 660 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 2014. €231. ISBN 978 90 04 25892 1. doi:10.1017/S0041977X16000628

Here is a weighty grammar of Atong, a little-known Tibeto-Burman language that is spoken in the south-eastern corner of the Garo Hills in north-east India, and in the neighbouring parts of the Khasi Hills, and Bangladesh. Seino van Breugel reports