

temples are achieved by “tugging at the weft” (p. 164) and compares their towers to “2 giant stacks of assorted biscuits” (p. 202).

The theory of emanation – of the dynamic force which almost literally unfolds the tradition – also determines the book’s time frame. Hardy tells us at the outset that his focus is on the period between the sixth and thirteenth centuries – that is from the post-Gupta era up to and including the medieval kingdoms of north and south. As a result, what is ‘only touched upon’ (in fact largely ignored) is the almost equally long period from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries when temple architecture interacted with other and newer traditions in the region, including Islamic and European design, and eventually Modernism. The very presence of these external influences radically altered the story: there could no longer be building traditions which developed according to their own internally consistent logic, unravelling at their own pace. Startling innovations and breaks with tradition became the norm.

The story that Hardy tells works well for his chosen period, but (as he concedes) not for any time thereafter. To call the earlier period the “heyday of temple building” (p. 15) prejudices the issue: one might argue that temple architecture’s later interaction with other cultures was a greater achievement still. But eclectic experiments are evidently not to Adam Hardy’s taste. For the same reason he is dismissive of some recent efforts to design new temples: because of what has intervened, they do not – they cannot – follow the rules of the game; they do not “show the way” ahead (p. 241). The thought that temple architecture has ended is a sad conclusion to such a stimulating book – and surely not what the author himself would wish to believe.

All of that said, this is a lucid and beautifully illustrated survey which deserves to become a standard textbook wherever the subject is taught.

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TEACHINGS OF THE SIKH GURUS: SELECTIONS FROM THE SIKH SCRIPTURES. Edited and translated by CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE and ARVIND-PAL SINGH MANDAIR, pp. 1, 164. London and New York, Routledge, 2005.

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Teachings of the Sikh Gurus contains a selection of poetic compositions from the two principal Sikh scriptures, the *Adi Granth* (‘original volume’) or *Guru Granth Sahib* (‘the volume in its role as spiritual teacher’), and the *Dasam Granth* (‘volume of the tenth Guru’). Professor Shackle is a specialist in Urdu and Punjabi as well as Sikhism and Sufism, while Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair has a background in philosophy and theology with a special interest in Sikh mysticism. As a result they could scarcely be better qualified to convey the subtleties of the language and the teaching of a selection from these two collections.

The translations are prefaced with a long introduction, which contains some useful background information and rewarding, if sometimes demanding, discussion. After explaining that the context from which the poems emerged was the overlapping traditions of devotional poetry which began to develop in India from the thirteenth century CE, Shackle and Mandair review the development of the two collections, emphasising that there is much that is distinctive and original about them, especially the *Adi Granth*. This is a collection of some six thousand devotional poems or hymns. Written in a variety of poetic forms, in different styles, popular and literary, and using vocabulary and constructions from a range of languages, including Old Punjabi and Old Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian,

and the north Indian poetic language known as Braj Bhasha, the great majority were intended not merely to be read, but actually to be sung to different musical settings, *ragas*, each selected with a view to inducing a particular mood. The Dasam Granth by contrast consists of a miscellany of different kinds of composition, including some hymns and autobiographical poems by the tenth and last Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, as well as poetic reworking of Hindu mythology from the Puranas, and a vast collection of ‘Tales of Deceit’ which as Shackle and Mandair point out seem more secular than spiritual in inspiration. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it enjoyed considerable authority, but since then has fallen out of favour, though a few of the tenth Guru’s hymns compositions are given canonical status and used in worship. Referred to in the Sikh prayer, the Ardas, as “the manifest body of the Gurus”, nowadays the Adi Granth plays the central role in worship, and in daily life. As a result the translators remind us, Sikhism is in its own distinctive way a “religion of the book”.

Shackle and Mandair also explore the Gurus’ understanding of the way to escape the “fires of grief” and achieve “the Absolute”. This requires an understanding of the nature of the ego, which perceives reality “dualistically in terms of either/or distinctions such as One/Many, life/death, existence/non-existence, form/formlessness, good/evil, time/eternity, transcendence/immanence, etc” (p. xxviii). Although “God is hidden in all hearts”, “unaware of reality, the ego-centred are consumed by separation and by suffering through false thinking” (from the *Siddh Gosht*, AG pp. 938–46/pp. 56, 67). Freedom comes both through the grace of the guru and through the practice of *nam simaran*; constantly holding in mind the Name (*nam*) of God:

“No other taste of all you’ve tried
Can grant you slight release from thirst.
But of the Name a single taste
Will make you drunk with ecstasy” (Gauri Guareri AG M5 15, p. 180/p. 113).

By surrendering its individuality in this way, Shackle and Mandair suggest, the self achieves “a spontaneity of action-speech-thought”, “giving rise to an intensely creative mode of existence that is aligned with the divine imperative” (pp. xxix, xxx).

The translators explain that they have chosen compositions for their ability to express the Gurus’ teachings rather than their lyrical qualities. They have grouped the translations into eleven sections of two types; six longer compositions appear in broadly chronological order, and between each is a section of shorter ones, arranged around an important theme. The major compositions comprise a rich and rewarding selection. Opening, like the Adi Granth itself, with Guru Nanak’s *Jappi*, which Shackle and Mandair regard as the greatest of all, this continues with the *Asa ki Var* which though mostly by Guru Nanak also contains some verses by the second Guru, and plays an important part in *gurdwara* ritual, being regularly sung in the early morning performances. Third comes the intriguing *Siddh Gosht* in which Guru Nanak expounds his ideas to the Nath yogis. Then follows the third Guru Amar Das’ *Anand Sahib*, parts of which are used in Sikh wedding and funeral ritual. The fifth selection is a group of hymns from the Dasam Granth by Guru Gobind Singh, known as the “Patshahi 10” or “Tenth Kingship”, and the sixth, from the Dasam Granth’s final section, is Guru Gobind Singh’s *Zafarnama* or “Epistle of Victory”, a letter in verse addressed to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Written after a treacherous attack on the Guru in 1704 by Aurangzeb’s general, Vazir Khan, in complete contrast to the devotional poems, it conveys the horror of the battlefield:

“On both sides, struck by shaft and shot,
Many fell prey to sudden death.
The arrows and the bullets rained,
The earth was stained bright poppy-red.

The heads and limbs piled everywhere
Seemed polo balls upon a pitch" (p. 141).

As regards the selections of shorter poems the translators explain that they have aimed to bring out, "the sense of otherness" in the Gurus' teachings. In particular they suggest the Sikh scriptures emphasise the shortness of life and the ever-presence of death. So for example one poem describes the ten stages of life, explaining that:

"The tenth is for burning till ashes are left.
As the funeral party utters laments,
The soul flies away and asks where to go.
Life came and is gone and so too has the fame,
Leaving only the offerings for crows to be called to"
(Majh ki Var, M1 1.2, p. 137/p. 25).

In keeping with this the theme of the first selection is impermanence, and this is followed by sections on the nature of the self, ethical action, guru, Word and Name, and ecstatic bliss.

As regards the translations themselves two important features which are bound to be lost are the musical settings, and the variations in vocabulary. However, Shackle and Mandair have tried to reproduce something of the directness and brevity of the originals' highly inflected language, and made the translations metrical. The brief selections reproduced here show how far they have succeeded in conveying not just the ideas but much of the emotional force of the originals. Succinct and refreshingly down-to-earth, free from the tendencies of some earlier translators to adopt archaisms such as 'Thy', 'Thee' and 'Thou', these translations will be appreciated not just by experts but by anyone with an interest in Sikhism. Offering in addition to the translations some original insights and unfamiliar perspectives on the Gurus' teachings, this book cannot be too highly recommended.

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AN ANTHOLOGY OF CHINESE DISCOURSE ON TRANSLATION. VOLUME 1: FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE BUDDHIST PROJECT. Edited with Annotations and Commentary by MARTHA P. Y. CHEUNG. pp. xxix, 268. Manchester, St Jerome Publishing, 2006.
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This book comes from a publisher who specialises in studies of translation, but is not known for being active in Asian Studies, so it may not have caught the attention of many who might find it interesting. It is worth seeking out, because it has much to offer not only to scholars of the theory and practice of translation, but also to specialists in cultural and social history, to say nothing of those working in Buddhist Studies. Although the volume does consider the role of translation in the secular and diplomatic contexts, the major part is devoted to materials arising from the massive and enduring project of translating Buddhist works from Indian languages into Chinese. This was a vast and ambitious endeavour that occupied some of the finest minds of the medieval period. Fortunately for us, it is not just the translations themselves that survive, but also texts written around and about the process of translation. The sources collected and discussed in this volume thus represent an invaluable archive for the study of a particularly interesting case of cultural transmission, one that is still well worth reflecting on in our current global age.

The majority of the eighty-two sources in the book are rendered into English for the first time. The editor has presented them in chronological order, and has striven to maintain consistency of