primarily impelled by this admiration and affection. Yet, if he had expressed that too warmly in his analysis, the discourses – short and modest as they are – might have disappointed. In a Note on the Translation at the end, he worries that his avoidance of synonyms and attempt "to render Bengali terms the same way in every instance . . . may have resulted in a rather wooden translation". I don't think it has. These are, in his rendering, lucid texts deserving of deep reflection, and only once or twice did I feel I was reading a translation. Is "mercy" the best word for *dayā*? (p. 165) Maybe "kindness" might be better – but then one remembers with Portia that "The quality of mercy is not strained./It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven" – and finds both in the texts themselves, and in Brian Hatcher's appraisal of them, that very same quality.

Perhaps it is no surprise that the finest and most substantial of the discourses are by Debendranath Tagore, who breathed new life into the Brahmo Samaj by bringing the members of the Tattvobodhini Sabha into it, gave it a coherent theology with his *Brāhmo Dharmaḥ* (1850), and passed on its best traditions of rationalism and spirituality to his great son, Rabindranath. His telling of the story of Śaunaka (Discourse Fifteen), wrestling at the foot of a path up a mountain with the rival appeals of two nymphs, "the Desired One" and "the Good One", is strongly memorable, and it is hard to think of better moral advice than can be found in Discourse Seventeen: "The Lord has made love, mercy, affection &c., the law of our hearts. Clearly, we have been created solely for the welfare of others, and anyone who works for the welfare of another finds happiness by following the divine law". (p. 165) These are texts that would gain from a life beyond the restrictions of an academic press. Can we look forward one day to a popular, pocket-book edition as well?

William Radice

THEODORE GABRIEL:
Christian Citizens in an Islamic State: The Pakistan Experience.
xv, 118 pp. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. £16.99. ISBN 978 0 7546 6036 1.
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Accounting for little more than 1.5 per cent of Pakistan's overall population (of whom 96 per cent are Muslim) the Christian community has experienced multiple forms of marginalization and victimization. Most Christians are from very low caste backgrounds and, despite the ostensible repudiation of caste in Islam, continue to suffer on this account. Many are domestic servants, particularly in the capital city of Islamabad, or occupy a low status in the landed economy of the Punjabi village. The community is a relatively recent one, with large-scale conversions dating back no further than the late nineteenth century, or indeed to the time of the foundation of Pakistan itself, though for ideological reasons this is sometimes disputed by the Christian leadership. Many untouchables (with hindsight mistakenly) thought it safer to relate to the new Muslim state as monotheistic Christians, rather than as vilified Hindus. For the most part, however, and despite attempts to "indigenize" over the last couple of decades, Pakistani Christians have been closely associated with the activities of missionaries and, by extension, with the old colonial regime or the Republican Right in the USA. This heritage has made it easy for the majority community to single out Christians as surrogate targets of victimization where the unequal power relationship between the West and a besieged Muslim umma can

be temporarily reversed. Churches have been attacked and worshippers killed, and vocal members of the community threatened with prosecution under infamous blasphemy laws. No section of Pakistani political society seems currently willing or able to reverse the creeping denigration of Christians from full citizens to legal scapegoats and subordinates.

Writing about this bleak experience from a perspective of constructive involvement is a journey through a political and analytical minefield. Any fruitful discussion of the Pakistani Christian experience has to capture the problem of double persecution; that the social and political forces most eager to vent their frustrations against a Christian scapegoat in Pakistan are often also disadvantaged and excluded themselves. Theodore Gabriel's short and hastily written monograph makes some gestures in this direction, but ultimately sacrifices analytical insight and academic rigour to a rehash of well-worn arguments. What could have been most interesting about this book – to learn more about the ways in which Pakistani Christians themselves make sense of their experience, what ways they see out of their malaise – has unfortunately been buried in a generous helping of potted history.

In his politically charged attempt to portray Pakistani Christians as better Pakistani citizens than the Muslim Pakistani majority themselves, Gabriel's account presents us with a story of "Islamization": in the beginning, "Pakistan" had been a secular vision – embodied in Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the highly revered father of the nation – in which Christians could find their proper place. Later on, this vision was undermined and perverted by Islamic ideologues who achieved a first breakthrough under the military dictatorship of General Zia ul-Haq in the 1980s. Later still, the Saudi and CIA-funded rise of violent Wahabi-ism and the general tensions of Bush's War on Terror gave religious obscurantism further momentum. This is the very same story that Pakistan's liberal elite has constructed to explain religious opposition to its increasingly fragile position of social and political dominance. The coincidence is unsurprising, as Gabriel's account draws almost exclusively on secondary literature or personal interviews with members of the Anglophone elite.

Apart from being highly questionable as an accurate historical account of Pakistan's history since its foundation, the story of Islamization fails to come to grips with a crucial point: the persecution of Christians in Pakistan has never been a narrowly religious issue in the Western sense, and hence does not require a religious solution in the form of Muslim–Christian dialogue, to which Gabriel dedicates much attention. Violent acts of subordination against minority communities – which often occur in symbolically charged episodes separated by periods of relatively peaceful coexistence – are part of a political culture inherited from colonialism. As Gabriel notes, but does not elaborate, campaigns for the prosecution of blasphemous texts and instances of lynch justice have a long and unbroken history in South Asia. They are not an invention of Islamic fundamentalists and have not become more frequent as a result of a process of Islamization. All that has changed in Pakistan since 1947 is that Hindus or Sikhs as primary targets have been replaced by Christians and members of the Ahmadiyya sect (while in neighbouring Hindu India, Christians and Muslims continue to bear the brunt of this kind of politics). The point of these agitations is to force the state to acknowledge the power of a self-styled majority community by demonstratively engaging in some form of symbolic one-sidedness against a minority. The designation of Christians as *dhimmis* in Islamic law, rather than as full citizens, has less to do with the injunctions of the Holy Quran than with this desire to make Pakistan truly a country "where Muslims are boss". This aspiration is exactly what Jinnah's Muslim League had in mind when they voiced their demand for Pakistan in the first place. Subsequent history has not been a perversion of a secular ideal. Rather, the

new Pakistani state has failed to be accepted by a majority of the population as being legitimately "theirs". This, and not the growth of fundamentalism, has fed a continuing hunger for surrogate moments of empowerment of the kind described in Gabriel's book. Pakistani Christians, in short, are the victims of the same problems of democratic deficit and massive social inequality that drive the transgressions against them.

Markus Daechsel

EAST ASIA

MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN, BEN JIAO and TANZEN LHUNDRUB:
On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: The Nyemo Incident of 1969.
xx, 236 pp. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2009. £14.95. ISBN 978 0 520 25682 8.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X0999019X

This book is the outcome of pioneering research into a controversial period of Tibetan history. It is the first study to tackle events from the Cultural Revolution using extensive interviews and fieldwork in the areas concerned, complemented by newly retrieved contemporary Chinese documents.

It provides a detailed account of the "Nyemo incident", which culminated with Tibetan villagers, inspired by a possessed nun (Trinley Chödrön), but guided by the Gyenlo revolutionary faction, attacking the PLA and, earlier, unarmed local villagers whom they mutilated and killed, and then marching on the local government seats in Nyemo County on June 13–14 1969. Although this event was limited in scale, it became highly significant for Tibetans, the Chinese government and scholars of Tibet. The Chinese government at first considered the incident an anti-revolutionary uprising to be crushed by the army, subsequently criticized this view when it was declared a factional fight, and has since resumed a position closer to the initial one to the extent that a patriotic shrine was recently dedicated to the victims of the attack. The exiled Tibetan community celebrated the Nyemo incident as an epic of national resistance, and even though some of the disturbing details, linked to local revenge, occasionally percolated through informal networks as people from the area came to India, these failed to be reflected in general views.

The book aims to unravel the intricacies of this event and often runs against the grain of Chinese and Tibetan nationalistic interpretations. It sets the incident in the wider context of the Cultural Revolution and the bitter factional fights still happening in Tibet when in the rest of China the turmoil was winding down. The main narrative examines the emergence of a local medium, a nun, as a charismatic leader, the creation of an "army of the gods", and its manipulation by one of the two revolutionary factions, the Gyenlo. This was a group primarily led by Chinese political activists who were seeking ways to overthrow the dominant faction of revolutionary activists, the Nyamdre, and the established cadre-force. The analysis highlights how local dissatisfaction with government policies was used by the Gyenlo to gain support for their movement and how they deliberately encouraged the uprising by the followers of the nun in an attempt to gain power from the competing faction.