

general practice to renovate (*jīrnoddhāra*) existing shrines without much alteration of their original form and design. On the whole, Dr. Harle has compiled an immense amount of material on the temple and its Gopuras which makes the book an important work of reference for scholars interested in South Indian architecture and iconography. The book is profusely illustrated, which considerably enhances its value; an index would have been equally useful.

PRATAPADITYA PAL.

84-5, 1966

DIE BUDDHISTISCHE PLASTIK CEYLONS. By HEINZ MODE. pp. 147, 175 plates, 12 line drawings, map. Leipzig, Seemann, 1963.

This book deals with sculpture in Ceylon before European colonization. It is pleasantly produced, and the plates give readers an excellent chance to appreciate the masterpieces and many minor works, though where the same subjects are selected the illustrations in Devendra's short book on sculpture of the Anurādhapura period are often superior. The text, however, is disappointingly unambitious for the first scholarly survey devoted to the field. There are no additions to our factual knowledge, and no new conjectures about the content or function of any work discussed. Social and ideological context are barely mentioned. For dating and iconography the author necessarily leans heavily on the Ceylonese authorities, notably Paranavitana, who has originated virtually all the interesting ideas in the field. The author duly mentions his iconographic conjectures but rarely commits himself beyond calling them "daring". On dating and style he offers some disagreements with Paranavitana, tending like Devendra to give earlier dates and to discount Indian influence. As he adduces no new material his arguments rest principally on formal analysis; for instance, arguing on grounds of composition that at Isurumuniya the relief of man with horse could well be contemporary with the relief of lovers (there is no concrete evidence either way) he says, "Here too a system of diagonals . . . is opposed to a texture of vertical and horizontal supports". In general Professor Mode adopts a dating schema of stiff (but charming) archaism, classical maturity, and stereotyped decadence (corresponding roughly to early Anurādhapura, late Anurādhapura, and Poḷonnaruva periods); but this simplistic approach has pitfalls of which he shows himself not unaware when he describes the Gal Vihāraya sculptures at Poḷonnaruva, almost the only securely dated (reign of Parakramabāhu I, 1153-86) Buddha images which are also tolerably preserved, as "archaizing". In the absence of more dependable criteria might it not be better—and briefer—to admit ignorance?

The author's sometimes indignant (see especially note 45) repudiation of contemporary Indian influence on Ceylonese art may be justified; but contentious Indian parallels are neither illustrated nor fully described, so the reader must go elsewhere to form a judgement. This denial of later Indian influence is necessary to the book's one new thesis—its main idea, though it occurs only in the opening and closing pages: Ceylonese art came to Ceylon with Buddhism from the Mauryan Court of Aśoka, and as it is very conservative it allows us to reconstruct what Mauryan art was like. So little authentic Mauryan art survives that speculation is easy and maybe even desirable; but the evidence Professor Mode supplies is not reassuring: Buddhist sculpture in Ceylon must have had a model; for the "sceptics who believe in facts" there are a few motifs, mainly pan-Indian (which could be due to post-Mauryan influence); but the principal object of sculpture, the Buddha statue, must be based on Aśoka himself, not on his appearance (which was perhaps never portrayed) but on his personality!

The bulk of the text consists of descriptions of the works illustrated and a few others. Some readers may feel that where there is a photo such a description is redundant, where there is none it is inadequate. A few photos (notably the last) are too small to show the

point the author is making. Some minor flaws may irritate specialists: the author uses diacritics sporadically (for which he apologizes) and also sometimes incorrectly, and transliteration is utterly inconsistent. The copious references have unfortunately not been arranged into a bibliography.

RICHARD GOMBRICH.

A HISTORY OF THE SIKHS. VOL. I: 1469–1839. By KHUSHWANT SINGH. pp. xiii, 419. Princeton, Princeton University Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1963.

Sardar Khushwant Singh's first volume has already been reviewed in several periodicals, but almost all of the reviews seen by the present reviewer have concentrated upon the second and third sections of the book (the post-Guru period). The principal criticism which has been made of these two sections is that they offer little more than a chronicle of political events and of the activities of the soldiery. Social conditions and religious development are largely ignored, and little effort is made to analyse the events which are recorded. The criticism is a valid one, but having been made several times it requires no repetition. This review will concentrate instead upon the first section (the background and the period of the Gurus) and related appendices.

There are four serious criticisms which must be made of this first section. The first concerns the author's use of his sources, and in particular his use of the *janam-sākhis*. The descriptions which he gives of the *janam-sākhis* are inaccurate in many details and we must take issue with the use which he makes of them. The author does indeed acknowledge their inadequacy (p. 299), but he nevertheless uses them in a manner which rarely involves a sufficient degree of caution. In general he follows the customary method of accepting the so-called *Purātan Janam-sākhī* (which he erroneously calls "a compendium of all the other janamsakhis" [p. 30, n. 12]), minus its miracles and anything else which is plainly legendary, and supplementing it with details drawn from other *janam-sākhis* or from even later works. This was the method followed by Macauliffe and it does not yield a historically accurate account. For two points in his narrative of the life of Guru Nānak he claims the support of relics which have been discovered in Bengal and Baghdad, but accords to them a trust which neither warrants. Much of the material for the remainder of the first section is drawn from similarly unreliable sources. In many cases his ultimate source is Santokh Singh's *Sūraj Prakāś*, and in some places he evidently accepts Macauliffe as a sufficient authority.

The second criticism concerns the author's interpretation of the religion of Guru Nānak (the only effort he makes to discuss at any length the religious content of Sikh history). Here we must disagree with two of the basic assumptions which lie behind his interpretation. The first of these assumptions is expressed in the claim that "Sikhism was born out of a wedlock between Hinduism and Islam" (p. 17). The true antecedents of the thought of Guru Nānak are to be found in the *Sant* tradition of Northern India, a tradition which was certainly influenced by Sūfi beliefs, but not to the extent indicated by the author's figure or by his other references to Muslim influence. The second is the statement that Guru Nānak equated God "with the abstract principle of truth" (p. 40). This is misleading in that it implies a denial of personality, and its acceptance must inevitably vitiate any attempt to interpret the religious thought of Guru Nānak.

The third criticism is that many of the translations, both from the *Ādi Granth* and from the *Purātan Janam-sākhī*, are inaccurate. In many cases accuracy has evidently been sacrificed in the interests of the translator's literary style. Not all of the quoted extracts are correctly identified and in all cases of extracts from the *Ādi Granth* we are given only the name of the author and of the *rāg* in which it occurs. This can mean considerable labour for the person who wishes to consult the original. It is labour which could have been obviated, for every *śabad* and *ślok* in the *Ādi Granth* is numbered and there is a standard pagination of the *Ādi Granth*.