

Reviews

AMINAH MOHAMMAD-ARIF, *Salaam America. South Asian Muslims in New York*. (Anthem South Asian Studies). London: Anthem Press, 2002. 355 pages, £ 27,95. ISBN 1-84331-010-4 (pb.)/£45.00, ISBN 1-84331-009-0 (hb.)

The South Asian diaspora and especially the Indian-American community in the United States of America have received quite some attention during the last decade. The remarkably good education of this group, its economic success, and its perceived internal unity have made it not only a "model minority" as far as its integration into the socio-economic environment of the U.S. is concerned, but also an increasingly active and visible player in the cultural and political affairs of the host country. Consequently, recent years have seen a couple of in-depth studies of certain parts of the community. Most, if not all, of these works, however, have focused on Hindu and, in part, Sikh immigrants to the United States. The large number of Indian Muslims that have come to America has largely been ignored. Aminah Mohammad-Arif's study attempts to fill this gap of in-depth knowledge.

Although the author has conducted interviews with members of the Indian Muslim community all over the U.S., the main focus of her work is the New York metropolitan area. This region has been the setting of other studies of the Indian-American community by authors such as Johanna Lessinger (1995) and Madhulika S. Khandelwal (2002) and hence provides a well-tested ground for academic research. In contrast to other works Mohammad-Arif concentrates on a special group within the community, a minority's minority, thereby breaking with the myth of a uniform Indian-American origin, culture, or identity.

The book is divided into four parts. The first main section, "From the Indian Subcontinent to America", starts with a chapter on the historical development of Islam in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Here, Mohammad-Arif describes the different Muslim traditions of Sunni, Shi'a, and Ahmadiyya in South Asia thereby laying the foundation necessary for an understanding of intra-community dynamics in the United States. Since the South Asian Muslims in the U.S. represent a "microcosm of the Muslim population of the subcontinent" (p. 19), a short introduction to their original internal divisions is not only helpful, but essential. The second chapter focuses on the economic and demographic profile of the South Asian immigrant community in the United States. Besides a brief historical description, this section offers insights into issues like "Marriage and divorce" (p. 39ff) or "Ethnic business" (p. 42ff). Unfortunately, the statistics pre-

sented rely heavily on the 1990 U.S. Census of Population, which renders several data obsolete. Nevertheless, this chapter proves to be very informative, especially because of the personal views presented in numerous interviews.

The second main part of Mohammad-Arif's work deals with the process of adaptation to the new environment. The first chapter of this section concentrates on the role and importance of religion and religious practices for the South Asian Muslim community. Here, Mohammad-Arif successfully links theoretical aspects of religiosity to the specific framework of Islam and to the day-to-day performance of religious duties by the members of the community. She also includes many controversial issues such as the Muslim diet (p. 63ff) or the frequently debated obligation of Muslim women to wear the veil (p. 66ff). These critical points of South Asian Muslim religiosity are described in the context of their relation not only to the host society but also to Islam in general, since many features of Islam on the Indian subcontinent show remarkable differences to their Arab or African counterparts. In the following chapter, Mohammad-Arif explores the problems and challenges for the second generation members of the community. Their "masala" identity" (p. 84) between the religious, cultural, and social traditions of their parents and the everyday struggle for acceptance in school and work life is of prime importance to the community as a whole and certainly deserves the attention the author has devoted to it.

The third part of the book, "Redefining Islam", investigates Islamic institutions and movements in the United States and their relations and adaptations to the host society. On the institutional side, Mohammad-Arif works with many well-researched and very informative, although possibly not necessarily representative, case studies of different mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic schools. As for Islamic movements, she describes in detail two of the most important groups, namely the "Muslim Student Association (MSA)" and the "Islamic Circle of North America (INCA)". These and other transnationally operating movements and associations do indeed reflect, as Mohammad-Arif clearly shows, the high degree of organization a well-educated immigrant group like the South Asian population can achieve (p. 189ff).

The concluding part deals exclusively with the relationships of the South Asian Muslim community with others. In the first chapter of this section, the author returns to the idea of an immigrant community as a microcosm, but applies this concept to the whole Muslim world. According to Mohammad-Arif, the United States might yet witness the "emergence of a 'utopian umma'" (p. 193) reflecting a unified Islam despite the internal diversity of the Muslim population in the U.S.. Recent trends suggest the possible forming of a "pan-Islamic melting pot" (p. 206), a development fostered by the growing use of modern communication technology. The following chapter explores the often difficult relations between South Asian Muslims and Hindus in the light of events like the Ayodhya crisis (p. 214ff) and assesses the possibilities of a common South Asian identity. In the last chapter of this section, Mohammad-

Arif turns to questions of integration into the host society, dealing with matters of mutual perception as well as with stereotypes and discrimination. Hereby, she also touches on lobbying efforts by the community to raise awareness and acceptance, a point that seems to be becoming more and more important and may encourage further research. The book closes with a conclusion that summarizes the main lines of argumentation.

Since the original, French, version of this book was published in 2000, the consequences of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have not been included in the main body of the work. Because of the prime importance of the challenges posed by this tragic event to the South Asian Muslim community, the author has added an afterword, written in February 2002. Here, Mohammad-Arif reflects on the immediate impact the terrorist attacks had on the community and discusses some of the first implications. The book also contains a glossary of the most important terms and an extensive bibliography. The statistical appendix is, at least in part, outdated, which is largely due to the fact that the South Asian diaspora in the United States is one of the fastest growing and dynamically changing ethnic groups in the U.S.

Overall, *Salaam America* provides a valuable and readable source of information on a subject that has hitherto not received much attention. Aminah Mohammad-Arif has very successfully combined a thorough analysis of the South Asian Muslim population with in-depth interviews of individual members of this community that convincingly support the author's arguments. The relatively narrow regional scope proves to be advantageous for the assessment. Nevertheless, future research should perhaps also include more information on the large Indian-American Muslim communities in California, Texas, and Illinois.

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WERNER OTTO VON HENTIG, *Von Kabul nach Shanghai. Bericht über die Afghanistan-Mission 1915/16 und die Rückkehr über das Dach der Welt und durch die Wüsten Chinas*. Hrsg. von Hans Wolfram von Hentig. Konstanz: Libelle Verlag, 2003. 284 Seiten, € 24,80. ISBN 3-909081-37-1

Vom Oktober 1915 bis zum Mai 1916 versuchte der Legationssekretär und Leutnant von Hentig im Auftrag der deutschen Reichsregierung, den Emir von Afghanistan aus der britischen Allianz zu lösen. Dahinter stand die Vorstellung, das britische Weltreich durch einen Aufstand der indischen Fürsten zu stören. Denn Britisch-Indien war von Afghanistan aus verwundbar. Das britische Expeditionscorps hatte in den Afghanenkriegen – zuletzt 1878–80 – empfindliche Niederlagen hinnehmen müssen. Der indische Prinz Kumar Mahendra Pratab von Mursan und Hathras hatte sich gegenüber der deutschen Reichsregierung