

Book Reviews

Madhu Trivedi, *The Making of the Awadh Culture*, New Delhi: Primus Books, an imprint of Ratna Sagar, 2010, Rs.1095, Pages 350

The book under review, *The Making of the Awadh Culture* by Madhu Trivedi, looks into the political anatomy of the Mughal province of Awadh that furnishes interesting facts about the overall achievement of 'Subadars', known as Nawabs. The contribution of the nawabs in making a distinct culture called "Ganga-Jamuni Tehjeeb", from the time when the sun rose in the 'suba' till it set on the horizon, is remarkable. Hence, a conscious effort will be made to supplement information to enrich the texture of the historical fabric.

Geographically the province of Awadh was unevenly divided into five 'sarkars' (districts) – Faizabad, Lucknow, Khairabad, Bahraich and Gorakhpur. In 1722, Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah 'Rangila' appointed his young ambitious warrior of knightly accomplishments, Saadat Khan Burhanul Mulk as the Subadar of Awadh. He was a Persian and belonged to Naishpur in Khurasan. As a matter of fact, many history books give the name of the city as Nishapur when it is actually Javelin, which in Persian is pronounced as 'Niash' and in Arabic as 'Naiza'. Hence, the city is called 'Naishpur'. Saadat Khan by his adroit manipulation of factional rivalries rose to power in the Imperial Court. However, he had to pay a very high price for his treachery, when he instigated Nadir Shah to invade Delhi in 1739. This compelled Burhan-ul-Mulk to commit suicide to save his skin.

Saadat Khan was succeeded by his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad Muqim Abul Mansur Khan, entitled Safdar Jung in 1739, who was considered as the most powerful Mughal noble by all his contemporaries. Hence, in 1748, Emperor Ahmad Shah offered him the office of Wazir, followed by the governorship of Ajmer and the Faujdari of Narnaul. Later, he exchanged Ajmer with the suba of Allahabad, as it was contiguous to Awadh. In fact, Safdar Jung's strength lay in his vast territorial

possessions, sound financial resources and a powerful military establishment. Though he was a pious Shia, was completely free from religious bigotry. All the Diwans of Awadh were mostly Hindus. The liberal trend inaugurated by the Nawab Wazir was continued by all the rulers of Awadh. The catholicity of religious temper of the rulers encouraged the assimilation of the two cultures – Hindu and Muslim in Awadh, which ultimately led to the evolution of a composite culture, better known as 'Ganga-Jamuni Tehjeeb'.

Safdar Jung's son and successor, Jalaluddin Haider Shujauddaula's regime stood the testimony to the violent disturbances and momentous vicissitudes in the country – the eventful third Battle of Panipat in 1761. Again in 1764, the Battle of Buxar changed the very course of history of India. Emperor Shah Alam, Shujauddaula and Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal lay prostrate at the feet of the English under Robert Clive. The Treaty of Allahabad in 1765 was an important landmark in the history of India, because Shujauddaula was dragged to sign the treaty to formalize peace, friendship and union with the East India Company". Thus, the Company inserted its 'siphon' into the Nawab's treasury, which never ceased to suck. Awadh, heavily taxed and impoverished, was made to accede to final annexation in 1856. It is interesting to note that behind the veil of cooperation extended by the English towards the rulers of Awadh, lay hidden their ulterior motives, apparently meant to please the rulers, but harmful in effect. They continued to behave like termites which cankered into the body polity of Awadh in the form of annexation of the Kingdom. The impact of the Europeans on Awadh was more of a bane than a boon, because the Company played a dubious role – that of a feigning friend and a silent foe. An anonymous writer defined this 'friendship' between the English and the rulers of Awadh as a 'Fatal Friendship'.

The impact of Western influence on the rulers of Awadh had been visible since 1773, when Shujauddaula considered it a singular honour to be called the 'Vizier'

of king of England. Further, a Frenchman J.J. Gentil, who was an advisor to Shujauddaula, wrote in his memoirs that the Nawab was a friend and protector of the French in India. But the Company never approved of the Nawab's friendship with the French. In 1775, after the Nawab was released from the toils of the Company's Government, his son and successor, Asifuddaula suffered in his stead. There is a common error in the spelling of the Nawab's name; in Persian dictionary, there is no word as 'Asaf'. Actually, the word is 'Asif', which means 'one who is highly talented'.

The English persuaded the new Nawab to ignore army reforms and to amuse himself with things that suited him best. In 1782, Asifuddaula transferred his capital from Faizabad to Lucknow, because he had to sever his relationship with his mother, Bahu Begum and grandmother, Sadrunnisa Begum, to fulfil demand of one crore and twenty lakh of Rupees, made by Warren Hastings. Apparently with the transfer of the capital, the outward splendour of Lucknow began to rise, but the administrative authority of the Nawab started waning. It was scarcely perceptible either to the Nawab or to his people that behind the smooth urbane exterior and professed concern, the shrewd imperialists were actually eating into the cankerous roots of his dominion and emptying the coffers of his ancestors.

It was with this political backdrop that Lucknow, the new capital of Awadh, gradually emerged as an epicentre of the Indo-Persian culture in the 18th and 19th centuries. Madhu Trivedi's book *The Making of the Awadh Culture* is a scholarly work on the cultural history of Awadh. She has made an incisive study into the evolution and growth of the composite culture during the Nawabi period. She has rightly pointed out that "the culture of Awadh was oriented to Persia, but from the time of Shujauddaula, European influence also became visible". The French influence was particularly visible "in military technology and in miniature painting during his time."

Asifuddaula and Saadat Ali Khan also maintained cordial relations with the Europeans. Asifuddaula had an insatiable passion for acquisition of articles of European manufacture and preserved them in his famous 'Aina Khana'. He had acquired a number of mechanical toys, watches, chronometers, glassware and scientific instruments imported from London. A young French officer Claude Martin, who was perhaps number one in the hierarchy, surrounding the Court of the Nawab, cultivated the latter's taste for European trinkets and undertook to supply them. Once Claude Martin had experimented with flying a gas balloon, which was demonstrated to the Nawab-Wazir, but it was not successful. However, during the reign of King Nasiruddin Haider, another experiment was successfully made by

an Englishman, who flew about 14 miles and descended near Chinhat in Lucknow. The King, who watched the feat from the Dilkhusa Palace, commanded his military Chief, Bakhtawar Singh to follow the balloon. When it passed from the palace, the Englishman took off his hat to salute the King, who later rewarded him.

It is interesting to note that Asifuddaula's son Wazir Ali was the first to learn English. Madhu Trivedi observes that among the rulers of Awadh, it was Saadat Ali Khan who had maximum exposure to European culture. Madam Gailliez, a French woman from Chundernagar, supervised his initial education. During his exile in Calcutta and Allahabad, Saadat Ali Khan had ample opportunities to interact with the European Society. Soon he became proficient in the language. As Ann Deane remarks "Saadat Ali Khan understood the English language perfectly and wrote it correctly, but his pronunciation was said to be faulty.¹ Nasiruddin Haider, too, had a great passion to learn the English language. William Knighton in his book *Private Life of an Eastern King*, mentions the names of five European tutors of the king. One of them was Captain Mackens, the King's bodyguard, and the other was his barber, George Harris Derusett, better known as 'The Barber of Lucknow'. The King had developed a peculiar Persian lettering, which from a distance resembled English script.²

On account of his craze for the English language, Nasiruddin Haider had established an English school and a medical college to teach the allopathic system of medicine. He even founded a King's Hospital near the Residency. Among the nobles, Tafazzul Husain, who was given the title of Sarfarazuddaula, was a profoundly learned man and the 'Alama' of the period. He was also a reputed linguist and had mastered the English language. Besides, he translated a number of English books into Arabic and Persian such as Newton's *Principia*, works of Thomas Addison, Simpson's book on Algebra and Conic Sections, Emerson's book on Mechanics, Euclid's works, and several other treatises. He was equally proficient in mathematics and astronomy.

The author has highlighted the impact of western culture on the dress, cuisine and drinks of the rulers and the elites of Awadh. During his stay in Calcutta, Saadat Ali Khan was inspired to imitate the English dress code of wearing breaches.³ At times, he appeared in the uniform of an English Admiral. According to Viscount Valentia Ghaziuddin Haider was "highly gratified by a comparison between himself and the Prince of Wales (Later King George IV). The Crown and robes used at the Coronation ceremony of Ghaziuddin Haider was of European origin. The king even imitated the English 'Court of Arms'. The famous artist, Robert Home was employed by Ghaziuddin Haider to design his crown,

coronation robes and court of Arms, which he actually obtained from the original 'Coronation Role' of England. Similarly, king Nasiruddin Haider also behaved and dressed up as an Englishman, with the difference that he wore a crown instead of a hat, which Madhu Trivedi substantiates in her book. However, the last three Kings of Awadh – Muhammad Ali Shah, Amjad Ali Shah and Wajid Ali Shah did not ape Europeans for they were much oriental in their attire and manners. The author mentions that 'Lucknow, was known for its sartorial styles' and introduced many new trends in dress, 'encouraged by royalty and fashionists, tailoring made unprecedented progress.'

Ghaziuddin Haider possessed an English Coach, rather like the Governor – General, Lord Mayo's Coach, with a Muslim coachman in livery of the latest London fashion.⁴

The coins of Ghaziuddin Haider also reflected European influence. He had embossed a pair of lions on the coins apart from the original fish motif of Awadh. Later, Wajid Ali Shah had replaced the lion figures by a pair of beautiful mermaids.

The popularity of Awadhi cuisine spread its aroma to enrich Lucknow culture. 'Pan' was also offered 'in style' in Lucknow. The Nawabs and their courtiers often entertained their European guests in western style. Once a visitor at the Court of Asifuddaula is reported to have remarked "If I looked no further than the tea table, I could persuade myself, I was in London".⁵ Similarly, when Saadat Ali Khan hosted a dinner in honour of Viscount Valentia, the latter remarked that the *mise-en-scène* was so English – like that the guests found it difficult to believe that they were seated in the court of an Asiatic Prince. Again in 1814, Nawab Ghaziuddin Haider had entertained the Governor General, Lord Hastings, the Earl of Moira and his wife, Lady Moira in a typical English manner. Likewise, in 1831, when Nasiruddin Haider entertained a British Officer and a lady, the table was laid in perfect existing English fashion. The King was very fond of European cuisine and had even employed a French cook. He had a taste for western furniture as well.

The author has discussed in detail the growth of Shiaism in Lucknow, which was an important aspect of the cultural trait of Awadh. Emperor Akbar was particularly impressed with the Shias for their profound learning and refined taste. During the mid-eighteenth century, Shia Ulama, scholars and some elite families assembled at Faizabad under the patronage of Shujauddaula. With the transfer of the capital by Asifuddaula, Lucknow emerged as the most reputed centre of Islamic learning. Mulla Nizam-al-Din Sihlwi of the Farangi Mahal were the most outstanding Sunni scholars. On the other hand, the author observes that

"under the patronage of the Nawabs there was a strengthening of the intellectual tradition which combined the rationalist scholarship of Iran, transmitted in large part in India by Fathullah Shirazi", where the emphasis was on 'Wahdat-al-Wajud'. It is interesting to note that "Not only was Indian Shia scholarship gaining ground in Awadh, the achievements of the Safavid scholars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in rational sciences continued to be cherished and nurtured by the sunni scholars of Farangi Mahal and Khairabad". Some of the leading Shia families of Lucknow studied under them. On the other hand, some of the leading Shia scholars of the eighteenth century were the products of Farangi Mahal. The movement of Shia Scholars and other professionals from Awadh to Iran and Iraq facilitated the diffusion of Ideas and it set up a new scholarly Shia tradition in Awadh. Maulana Saiyyad Dildar Ali Nasirabadi, better known as the Ghufran Ma'ab was a renowned Shia scholar of Lucknow. Shia Law was implemented during the region of Ghaziuddin Haider, which was enforced more-vigorously by Amjad Ali Shah. The celebrations of Muharrum attained a new height since the time of Ghaziuddin Haider. But, in spite of it the rulers of Awadh subscribed to Akbar's concept of 'Sulh-i-kul' and maintained perfect religious harmony in their dominion. However, sometimes, owing to ideological differences and the observance of certain religious practices, tension broke out between the Shia and Sunni communities. But the administration always tried to control the situation as far as possible. On the contrary, there was no conflict and tension between the Hindus and Shias in Lucknow.

The author has made a critical analysis of the literary activities of Lucknow as she points out that "significant development occurred in the realm of language and literature, Lucknow won acclaims for its literary culture. Frequent poetic assembles (*Mussaaras*) were attended by nobles and litterateurs alike. People could be seen intimately engaged in literary discourse at the residences of some courtesans of repute, who were also well versed in poetry. Inns too served as venues. Several popular poetic forms were developed in Lucknow, such as the 'fabti' and 'tukbandi'". (Fabti is a verse to mock or convey contempt, while tukbandi is to indulge in rhyming)

"The poetry of Lucknow was not a mere extension of Delhi School of Poetry, but assumed distinction from the very beginning as it laid its emphasis on the externals of language, the play on words, and rhetorical devices. It was much more ornate than the literary idiom of Delhi. The Lucknow poets were conscious of their exclusive diction and refinement of Urdu, endowing it with a Persian Veneer."

Thus, under the patronage of the rulers of Awadh,

Lucknow blossomed as the rendezvous of a galaxy of litterateurs. Wajid Ali Shah was himself a prolific writer, who wrote poems in different verse forms under the nom de plume 'Akhtar'. There were about 700 literateurs in the employ of Wajid Ali Shah. Urdu poetry, Ghazal, Marsiya, Masnawi, Rekhti, Haja, Hasal, Wasokht, Urdu prose, Urdu Drama, Persian poetry, Persian prose and polemical literature and the like, acquired tremendous refinement under the patronage of the rulers of Awadh. Moreover, the Hindu landlords and nobles also encouraged and patronized Hindi poetry, both in Braj Bhasha and Awadhi. The 'Riti' poetic style gives emphasis on 'alankar', 'Chahnda' and 'ras'. Its language is a blend of Sanskrit, Apbhransha and Persian and the compositions are in blank verse muktaka).

Archer, an Englishman, had popularized the idea of printing press and was the first one to establish a press in Lucknow during the reign of Ghaziuddin Haider. Books like *Zad-ul-Miad*, *Haft Qulzum*, *Taj-ul-Lughat* and a dictionary were printed from this press. In due course, a rich merchant, Mustafa Khan set up the Mustafai Press, followed by Baksh Bhan's Alvi Press, where works on oriental languages, particularly on religion, 'diwans', 'tajkiras', tales and history books were printed.

Music and dance were an integral part of the cultural milieu of Awadh. These art forms were appreciated and patronized by the rulers, courtiers, the elite class and even the common populace of Awadh. It was an important source of recreation. The author has very well traced the various styles of vocal, instrumental and folk music as well as dance forms including folk dance. The author has rightly stated that the term 'gharana' appears for the first time in a music treatise of Wajid Ali Shah in the context of dance. The King was also responsible for the development of 'musical historiography' in Awadh. He himself compiled a number of musical treatises in Persian and Urdu such as *Saut-al-Mubarak* and *Pari Khana* in Persian. Actually, *Pari Khana* is one of the chapters of Wajid Ali Shah's autobiography, *Mahal Khana Shah*. He also wrote four books on music in Urdu - 'Bani', 'Najo', 'Chanchal-nazneen' and *Dulhan*. These works provides us an insight into the performing traditions of the period, particularly, the court techniques, court musicians, and the various experiments of Wajid Ali Shah in the realm of music and dance.

The author has also referred to a particular style of somber music, known as 'Soz-khwani' and "marsiya-Khwani", which is primarily associated with the rituals of muharram. In this style the emphasis is given more on the rhythm and it never accompanied by instruments. In Lucknow, marsiya is recited in a set style and is never based on any rag and ragini. But Soz is invariably rendered in rag 'Bhairvi Thaat', 'Khwani' and 'Khambaj'

and 'Tilk Kamod'. In Lucknow Mia Shoric took Soz-Shoric took Soz-Khwani to a great heights.

Wajid Ali Shah is also famous as the founder of Urdu Drama in Lucknow. The first Urdu play, *Radha Kanhhaiyya Ka Qissa*, was written and directed by the King himself and it was staged by his 'paris' in the Rahas Manzil at the Qaisar bagh Complex. These 'Jalsas' were confined to elitist class only. Besides, *Radha Kanhhaiyya Ka Qissa*, Wajid Ali Shah had written and produced three more 'Rahas' - 'Dariya-i-Tashhuq', 'Bahr-i-ulfat' and 'Afsana-i-Ishq' and were staged in Qaisar Bagh complex. Later, Syed Agha Hasan Amanat wrote a play, 'indarsabha' and it was first read in front of the common audience at Mansooragar in July 1851 and finally it was staged in Janjary, 1852. Amanat's 'Indarsabha' provided all round entertainment to the public and it was a blend of folk and classical forms. This new form of dance drama became very popular and it led to the birth of urban theatre in Lucknow towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

The author has given a critical assessment of the development of a distinct style of painting and calligraphic art in the chapter entitled 'Awadh Painting'. From the point of view of the theme, style and technique, Awadh Painting may be divided into two categories: the later Mughal Court art with certain characteristics borrowed from Rajput paintings, and the influence of European style. The European influence on the paintings of Awadh originated in the reign of Shujauddaula under J.J. Gentil and Autome Louis Henry Polier, "who not only demanded the delineation of themes in a naturalistic manner, but took care of the technique and the colour palette as well." Nawab Safdar Jung was a great connoisseur of painting and had an excellent collection of Mughal miniatures. Eminent artists of Delhi like Faizullah Khan and others produced an enormous number of miniatures for him. Similarly, Asifuddaulah had employed Johann Zaffany, a renowned artist, with a handsome salary. Robert homes, whose artistic sill was highly acclaimed by bishop Heber and Muntz, adorned the courts of Ghaziuddin Haider and Nasiruddin Haider respectively. Muntz had painted a number of masterpieces of Nasiruddin Haider in his English attire as well as in his native costumes. The European impact was also visible on the works of local artists.

Recently a rare oval shaped oil-on-canvas painting of King Ghaziuddin Haider by Robert Home was discovered by a London Art dealer, Philip Mould, at an auction in London.⁶ This portrait reveals interesting facts about the King. The building in the background appears to be the rear view of the Rumi Darwaza, with the Bara Imambara entrance on the left hand side. The chair on which the King is seated, appears to be the one used by

his ancestor asifuddaula, because the same type of chair was painted by Johann Zaffany, an artist of that period. The Bara Imambara may also signify, Ghaziuddin Haider's role as a champion of the Shia faith in Awadh.

Calligraphy was treated as a form of art, which was used for decorative purposes. After his exile in Persia, when Humayun returned to India, he was accompanied by the master calligraphers of Persia. They improvised the art of inscriptional writing and mural calligraphy to such a level of perfection as reflected in the Taj Mahal. The religious buildings of Awadh, particularly of Lucknow, are decorated with splendidly executed calligraphic inscriptions of Quaranic verses in the traditional 'Naskh' style and innovative designs of 'Tughra'. It is 'specially structured to depict the attributes of 'Allah' or the titles of an Imam as a logo. Chronograms in Urdu or Persian provided information of the build and the year of construction in a 'Taareekh', lyrically composed or recorded in prose, were also affixed as a 'Katba', at some significant point of the structure. Some of the beautiful calligraphic styles are to be seen in Bara Imambara, Husainabad Imambara, Karabala of Kazmain etc.

The author has vividly traced the emergence of a new style of architecture in Awadh. It truly represents the aesthetic aspirations and socio-religious requirements of the rulers as well as the urban elites. The decoration of buildings are ornate in style with mouldings in plaster stucco work. The nawabi architecture of Lucknow also mirrored the European influence. Shujauddaula had appointed a Frenchman named Antonio Polier as a court architect, who had designed the fort of Faizabad. Polier came to Lucknow along with Asifuddaula. Another Frenchman Claude Martin established a strong friendly bond with Asifuddaula and Saadat Ali Khan and helped them to develop a taste for the European architecture. Gradually, the Lucknow style of architecture acquired its own identity, which was a perfect melange of the later Mughal and the European styles. The rulers of Awadh were fascinated by the Baroque, the Palladian and the Geothic styles. The rulers of Awadh were fascinated by the Baroque, the Palladian and the Goethic styles. The Dilkhusa Palace was an exact replica of Seaton Delavel, an English building designed by Sir Johan Vanburgh in Northamber land. The 'Kankar Wali Kothi' and 'Nur Baksh Kothi' were built in the Italian style. Kifaitullah had design Bara Imambara, which is a unique architectural feat in the world.

Another important feature of the Nawabi architecture is that the buildings are laid out in conjunction with gardens. The gardens were laid out in the Mughal Chahar-Bagh pattern, square in shape and surrounded by high walls pierced with lofty gateways and a

magnificent pavilion in the middle. Instead of running water channels of Mughal style, Awadh gardens had a raised tank in the centre, inserted with numerous fountains. Lucknow was also famous for its parks and beautiful gardens e.g. Sikandrabad, Lalbagh, Banarasibagh, Charbagh, Nazarbagh, Khurshidbagh, Alambagh, Badshah bagh, Chand bagh and the like. On account of its enchanting gardens, Lucknow was known as 'Paris of the East'.

It is significant to note that the rulers of Awadh were environment conscious. Their buildings were eco-friendly. The baolis and tanks served the purpose of rain harvesting. All round green belt and several gardens maintained perfect ecological balance in the capital.

The last chapter of the book is an interesting account of 'Industrial Art', i.e. the art and crafts of Awadh. Most of the excellent handicraft of Awadh had declined after the annexation of the Kingdom in 1856. But some of them are still continuing and are appreciated even in the home market, e.g. Chikankari and Zardozi work. Awadh produced extremely refined and skilled craftsmen, who were simply exquisite in their craftsmanship, whether it was chikankari, Zardozi work, shoe embroidery, kashmiri embroidery, minakari, wire drawing and wire working and at same time, there were craftsmen who were adept in gold and silver work including filigree ornaments, kandan kari, Lac and Guit work, copper and brassware, jewellery, ivory carving, ornamental tents and canopy making, clay work and wood work. The silver and gold 'Varaq' used for decreasing sweatmeats and wrapping pan, nuts cardamom etc. were specialities of Lucknow. It is said that the 'bidri work was introduced in Lucknow by Asifuddaula, who had invited expert craftsmen of damascening from Hyderabad and Murshidabad.

Textile was one of the biggest industries of Awadh. Superior quality of cotton fabrics were produced in Tanda, Rai Bareli and Jais. A large number of people were engaged in weaving, dyeing printing and the glazing of calicoes.

Lucknow and Bahraich manufactured paper of coarse quality. The author has given details of this industry.

'Taziya' or replicas of the tombs of Imam Husain, Imam Hasan and other kinsmen and followers were extensively manufactured in Lucknow during Muharram. The manufacturing of 'Taziyas' was an intrincating art, which the craftsmen of Lucknow had specialized. 'Taziyas' were made of paper, silver, ivory, ebony, sandal wood, cedar, glass and wax.

The kite and 'manzha' making was also a flourishing industry of Lucknow. Different types of kites were made, which required a lot of technical skill. Similarly, thread

and 'manzha' were prepared with special technique. The kite flying was a popular mode of outdoor recreation for all classes of populace of Lucknow.

To sum up it can be said that in the Nineteenth century, the cultural fabric of Awadh owes its richness, exquisite beauty and myriads of colours to the prevailing literary milieu of the period; progressive development in music; painting, architecture, industrial art and of course the renowned 'Ganga'Jamuni Tahzeeb' that symbolized the confluence of Persian aesthetics and Indian cultural values. Further, the lakhnavi secular way of salutation 'Adab' and the fish motive brought to the limelight, a distinct character of this composite culture.

It is this cultural panorama of Awadh that the author Madhu Trivedi has spotlighted the vividly delineated in this excellent monograph. This well researched work is indeed a significant and valuable contribution to the realm of knowledge and could be apt spring board for further researches in socio-economic and cultural history. The presentation of the book is praiseworthy. The lucid and convincing language makes the book all the more, an interesting reading.

Notes

1. Ann Deane, *A Tour Through the Upper provinces of Hindustan*, (London, 1823), p.103.
2. K.B. Saiyyad Aba Muhammad, 'Some Autographs of King Nasir-ud-Haider', *Journal of the U.P. Historical Society*, Vol. I, 12 July, 1939, pp. 40-48.
3. Major Edward C. Archer, *Tours in Upper India and in parts of the Himalayan Mountains with an account of the Courts of the native princes*, Vol. I (London 1833), p.17.
4. Fredrick John Shore, *Notes on Indian Affairs*, Vol. I, (London 1837), p.83.
5. *Journal of Indian History*, No. 45, Vol. II, August 1967, pp. 582-607.
6. 'Lucknow Times' the *Hindustan Times*, 15 June, 2010

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Syed Anwarul Haque Haqqi, *Chingiz Khan : The Life and Legacy of An Empire Builder*, New Delhi: Primus Books, 2010, pp.xxx+326, Rs.995.

In general perception, Chingiz Khan (1155-1227) has been regarded as a blood-thirsty monster who, during the course of his invasions in different parts of Asia, massacred thousands of people and destroyed scores of flourishing cities. In the process, he is alleged to have wiped out the finest elements of Islamic civilization which had risen to great heights in the previous centuries. The

contemporary writers, both of the East and West, portrayed him in lurid colours that have always roused feelings of horror and disgust. The book under review (which has grown out of a doctoral thesis prepared under the guidance of eminent historian Mohammad Habib) demolishes the stereotypes about Chingiz Khan and examines his achievements in the context of his times as well as his long-term legacy. Our author, Haqqi, is clear about his objectives. He aims at exploring those aspects of Chingiz Khan's career that have been hitherto overlooked viz. trials of early life, conduct as a man, achievements as a military general and contribution as an administrator and legislator.

We learn that Chingiz Khan was born in the house of a tribal chief, who belonged to the Borjigin clan of the Mongols and headed 40,000 households. He was brought up in the harsh nomadic life which was characterized by constant migration in search of suitable pastures for herds of cattle. During his youth, he was pushed into adversity owing to the death of his father and desertion of his relatives. While struggling for sheer survival, he employed the tribal concept of 'sworn friend' (anda) in order to win over influential potentates. Gradually, he succeeded in subjugating such tribes as Taichiuts, Naimans, Merkits, Tatars and Jurkis. At the same time, he forged alliances with a number of tribes (e.g. Ovirat and Qinqurat) and integrated them with his own people. He benefited from an uneasy alliance with the Kereits, a Turkish tribe that dominated the riverine tract along the Great Wall. The chief of the Kereits, Toghril Khan (Wang Khan), treated Chingiz Khan as the 'elder brother of his son.' As the ambition of Chingiz Khan to create an empire in the steppes became evident, eleven tribes formed a confederacy against him. Chingiz Khan scattered the confederacy and defeated the powerful alliance of Toghril Khan and Jamuka Sechen (the chief of Jajirat clan of Mongols). His expedition against China forced the Kin emperor to sue for peace, transfer his capital from Yenking to Pyeni Iyang and finally to poison himself. At the end of a decade of warfare and conciliation, Chingiz Khan was accepted as the Khaqan (Khan of Khans) by a grand assembly (quriltai) of subject tribes. This momentous event, which occurred in 1206, coincided with the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate in north-western India as an autonomous state.

Haqqi shows that the emergence of the Mongol Empire was inseparably linked with Chingiz Khan's elaborate military campaign against the Khwarazmian Empire, which extended from the Jaxartes in the east to the Persian Gulf in the west. On the one hand, Haqqi describes a series of Mongol invasions against Khwarazm and, on the other, uncovers the political and military weaknesses of this kingdom. It is true that Sultan Alauddin Khwarazm Shah