

Editorial

W. H. McLeod (1932-2009) played a singularly important role in introducing the Sikh tradition to the Western world. He emerged on the scholarly scene in the mid-1960s and remained a dominant presence during the subsequent four decades. Responses to his research ranged from unequivocal admiration to downright denunciation, but there cannot be any disagreement that his work remained at the center of scholarly output of his generation.

Soon after Professor McLeod's death, I discussed the possibility of reviewing his contribution to Sikh studies with Professor J.S. Grewal whom McLeod had called "my elder brother, who knows more." The idea was to bring to focus McLeod's considerable scholarly production and, in the process, assess the strides made by his generation. Professor Grewal graciously agreed and I am grateful to him for his essay that appears here.

Later, it occurred to me that given Professor McLeod's close association with the *Journal of Punjab Studies* since its inception in 1994, we should dedicate a special issue to commemorate his first death anniversary. I have always been very grateful to the honor that McLeod bestowed upon Harjot Oberoi, Pashaura Singh, Louis E. Fenech, and myself by calling upon the four of us "to keep the flag [of Sikh studies] flying" in the dedication to his *Sikhism* (1997).

This special issue seemed like an opportunity for each of us to write about how we have executed the responsibility he assigned in our research, teaching, and outreach activity while simultaneously providing an assessment of the state of the field. My three colleagues readily agreed to share in this project, though we left it open to handle this brief in the particular way each one of us deemed fit. I am grateful that they took time from their busy schedules to write the essays that appear here.

This issue is divided into two sections. The first comprises five essays. Gurinder Singh Mann's essay begins by examining McLeod's interpretation of Guru Nanak's life and teachings and proceeds to include his suggestions for expanding our understanding of the demographic origins of the early Sikh community. Pashaura Singh's essay highlights the strengths and weaknesses of McLeod's understanding of the early Sikh community, and how the recent developments in scholarship can contribute toward our understanding of the Guru period.

Louis E. Fenech addresses the theme of martyrdom in the Sikh tradition and brings to focus the differences between both McLeod and his students and amongst the students themselves. Harjot Oberoi takes us to the late nineteenth century, and presents a case study of Attar Singh Bhadaur, a Sikh savant who provided information to European scholars

interested in the Sikh community. In the closing essay, J.S.Grewal presents a comprehensive assessment of McLeod's scholarly output.

In the second section, there are reviews of five books, the abstracts of five doctoral dissertations, all written within the past several years, as well as information regarding a new Punjabi language manual to be published in early 2011. This provides a window into the activity of new scholars working in the field. All of these studies have either a direct or indirect association with the program at UC Santa Barbara, and we view this work as the effort of a new generation of scholars to keep "the flag flying."

This year we also mourn the loss of Norman Gerald Barrier (1940-2010), a senior voice in Sikh studies, Garib Dass Vartia (1939-2010), a dholi and a cultural icon of the past generation, and Ajeet Singh Matharu (1983-2010), a doctoral student at Columbia University and a budding scholar in the field. Their obituaries share with our readers their accomplishments and dreams.

I hope that an assessment of the work of the W.H. McLeod, a leader in the field, presented in this issue will provide a timely and necessary impetus for a new phase in Sikh studies. Learning from the agony of the past decades, we look forward to an era in which debates are constructive and creative rather than a distracting side show of attacks and allegations. The *Journal of Punjab Studies* would welcome meticulous critiques of the essays included in this issue. This may be the best way to honor the memory of Professor McLeod!

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