

Nigel B. Hankin: *Hanklyn-Janklyn, or a Stranger's Rumble-Tumble Guide to some Words, Customs and Quiddities Indian and Indo-British*. pp. 261. New Delhi: Banyan Books, 1992.

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As its title archly indicates, this book allies itself to the tradition of *Hobson-Jobson*, of which it is the most recent imitator (cf. Ivor Lewis, *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs: a Dictionary of the Words of Anglo-India*, Bombay 1991). Faithful in this respect to its nineteenth-century model, many an entry here smacks of a 'mysterious East' orientalism, as if comprising the field notes of a benevolent old Koi Hai as handed down over a chota peg to a raw recruit from Blighty. Its approach is more encyclopaedic in character than *Hobson-Jobson*; it is also, sadly, very much less accurate, and hardly represents an advance in terms of lexicography; in fact it is as though a century of lexicographical progress since Yule's day had not taken place. Hankin does provide some useful glosses on recent coinages, an example being 'chipko' (the tree-protection movement whose name derives from the imperative of Hindi-Urdu *chipknā* 'to cling', following an environmentalist protest in the 1970's); but as so often, the gloss goes wide of the mark in asserting that 'the Hindi word for a gecko — chipkali [i.e. *chipkalī*] — is from the same root'. Hankin's aspirations are frequently thus misguided. Transliterations (e.g. 'kafir', 'mahīla', 'mūkti') verge on the anarchic; etymological information, when offered, is often of the folk variety. The alleged etymology (or just implied sense?) of Khari Boli as 'the straight speech of soldiers, i.e. without circumlocution' is one of the funniest yet available, while musicians will be astonished to discover that the sarangi 'is particularly suited to...mournful music associated with death'. Hindi-Urdu headwords are allocated to one or other language with the communalist's faith in etymology as the defining principle of linguistic identity — but with some Indo-Aryan words ('mor', 'kothi' [sic]) being glossed nevertheless as 'Urdu', and some items ('janam din', 'pādri'), apparently at random, as 'Hindustani'. Hankin does give some helpful keys to the proliferating acronyms which feature so prominently in Indian public life, and many a pertinent cultural note is offered; but though the innocent alphabetical juxtapositioning of 'Nirmal Hriday' (the name of Mother Teresa's missionary homes) with 'nirodh' (condom) affords some delight, the briefest perusal of this book shows much of its data, like the eggs alluded to in the 'rumble-tumble' of the title, to be well and truly scrambled.

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