

die Festgestaltung, präsentiert der Autor ein besonders gut dokumentiertes und dazu noch spektakuläres Beispiel, das von Tzintzuntzan am Pátzcuaro-See im Bundesstaat Michoacán. Durch die Untersuchungen von George M. Foster ist der Festablauf schon für 1945 belegt, durch eigene Feldforschung in den sechziger Jahren konnte der Autor bis dahin eingetretene Veränderungen festhalten, und ab 1971 das zunehmend von Touristen dominierte bombastische Spektakel beschreiben, wie es bis heute existiert.

Ein eigener Abschnitt ist der Poesie gewidmet, die im zeitlichen Umfeld der Totengedenktage in der Presse und anderen Medien verbreitet wird, und als *calavera*, Totenschädel, bekannt ist. Darin werden bekannte Persönlichkeiten – oft Politiker – als bereits Verstorbene dargestellt und ironisch oder auch deftig kritisiert, selten gelobt. Im übertragenen Sinn bedeutet das Wort *calavera* auch Freigeist, Lümmel und Liederjan, was dem Inhalt der ironischen und provokativen Texte weitgehend entspricht. Die Auswahl und Abfolge der Texte ist sehr gut getroffen.

Im Zusammenhang mit rezenten Veränderungen werden auch die manchenorts zu beobachtende Einflussnahme des gänzlich säkularisierten nordamerikanischen Halloween behandelt sowie verschiedene Versuche, derartige Vermischungen bewusst zu vermeiden, um die eigene Identität zu wahren.

Da das Fest inzwischen auch nördlich der Grenze gefeiert wird, folgen am Ende Beispiele aus New York, Kalifornien und dem Südwesten. Sie machen die Veränderungen deutlich, denen das Fest in neuen Kontexten unterliegt, unterstreichen aber auch seine Bedeutung für die Festigung der eigenen Identität unter den Migranten.

Bei den Schlussfolgerungen wird zunächst noch einmal das Stereotyp über die Einstellung der Mexikaner zum Tod herausgestellt, wie es von Ausländern wie Mexikanern selbst verbreitet wird: sie sähen dem Tod geradlinig ins Auge, betrachteten ihn als etwas Normales und anstatt ihn nur zu fürchten verhöhnten sie ihn. Nach der Präsentation verschiedener Behauptungen dieser Art – darunter auch durch Octavio Paz – schwenkt der Autor um zur konkreten Praxis und beleuchtet das tatsächliche Sterben und die Trauer der Angehörigen, wie sie aus zahlreichen Ethnographien für Mexiko belegt sind. Der Kontrast könnte kaum größer sein, denn da ist nichts von Witz, Verhöhnung und Kraftmeierei – nur Niedergeschlagenheit und Trauer.

Die behauptete Unbeschwertheit und Koketterie gegenüber dem Tod gibt es in Mexiko aber tatsächlich, allerdings nur an den zwei oder drei Tagen, an denen die Toten gefeiert werden. Und dass Mexikaner sich mit dieser Haltung gern identifizieren, ist sehr gut nachvollziehbar, werden sie doch als kraft- und humorvoll gepriesen – weit überlegen den Nordamerikanern und Europäern, die den Tod angstvoll verdrängen. Ulrich Köhler

**Buijs, Kees:** Powers of Blessing from the Wilderness and from Heaven. Structure and Transformations in the Religion of the Toraja in the Mamasa Area of South

Sulawesi. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2006. 262 pp. ISBN 978-90-6718-270-6. (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 229) Price: \$ 30.00

Dr. Kees Buijs's study is based on five years' field research among a Toraja population numbering roughly one hundred thousand in 2002 and today with an economy based on the cultivation of rice, coffee, and other food crops. They reside in the village Mamasa in the western region of southern Sulawesi which lies to the west of the more well-known Sa'dan Toraja of Tana Toraja. In one version of their history the people of Mamasa are said to have come from the latter location and to have settled in different locations within the Mamasa region between Tana Toraja and the western coast; but as one might predict their origins are accounted for somewhat differently in myth. Myths play a major part in the portrayal Buijs gives of contemporary Mamasa ritual and ideology as does social change, for a prominent theme around which he has organized his ethnographic data is that of change. Accordingly, one intention of this work is to demonstrate how certain elements in the "old religion" of the Mamasa have changed as external circumstances have altered and have assumed more prominence whereas other elements have either disappeared or else assumed a different meaning. In the time when the old religion held sway gods of the heavens and those of the earth conferred their blessings upon ritual practitioners; but nowadays, while the former have maintained their authority that of the earth gods is becoming increasingly redundant. Such ideas, and their ritual contexts, constitute the ethnographic substance of his study and Buijs examines them closely in a quest – successful as it happens – for explanatory abstractions that embrace notions of structure, opposition, reversal, and transformation.

The "old religion" is referred to in the vernacular as the *aluk toyolo*, and two of its most spectacular ingredients were a pair of gender-orientated rituals. The *tobisu*, who are also known as *tomalangni* ("someone who is united with the deities"), are women who traditionally participated in the ritual of *pa'bisuan*, a female rite led by the *toburake*, a female priest, in which the participants conjoined with deities of the wilderness and danced on the branches of a *banyan* (*Ficus benjamina*). In complementary contrast was the head-hunting ritual for the *toberani*, "courageous men" who in past times participated in head-hunting rituals. This sexual opposition is intimately bound up into cosmological notions in which females are associated with the deities of the wilderness or earth whereas males are associated with heaven. Spiritual entities confer what the author refers to as "blessings" upon human beings, without which the latter cannot prosper on earth, and the former are concentrated into two transcendent regions outside the world in which human beings live. These regions are the "above" and the "beneath," or in other words, heaven and earth, i.e., the uninhabited forest or wilderness. From these two areas, which are inhabited by gods, come blessings, but each source provides a different kind. Blessings that derive from the deities of the earth are orientated towards life on earth,

fertility, health, and prosperity; blessings issuing from the gods of heaven are directed towards heaven, including (though they are not limited to) life after death. For human beings it is important that the powers of blessing from heaven and the powers of blessing from the earth cooperate, and the growth of the rice harvest is a vital instance of this cooperation. Rice is a gift from heaven, but can only grow on earth as the result of the fertility of soil and water, which are blessings drawn from the earth. The corollary is that since the earth is associated with the female sex and the heavens with the male sex, “the rice harvest can be seen as the result of the coming together of male and female powers, heaven and earth” (225). This concept of conjunction is embedded in cosmology and myth – “the descent of the sons of the gods to earth and their dependence on the female powers of fertility” – and finds expression in ritual. In the *ma'dondi*, which is carried out in the rice fields, women beckon men to join them and they embrace in what I would regard as a reenactment of this cosmological episode. This evocative image of conjunction-leading-to-creation is conveyed by Buijs thus: “The blessings to help rice grow and bear fruit are expected mainly from the ancestral deities in heaven, but in constant awareness of the goddess of the rice, *totiboyong*, who represents the fertility-giving gods of the earth” (225).

These and numerous notions of fertility and gender intriguingly resemble those described for the Tetum of Timor-Leste by the reviewer (see “Tetum Ghosts and Kin. Fertility and Gender in East Timor.” 2nd ed. Prospect Heights 2004), and underscore one of the points Buijs raises in his theoretical preamble to his ethnographic report, *viz.*, the Austronesian commonality of many of the archipelago’s institutions and collective representations. Quite properly, his focus is on comparison within his own immediate region of Sulawesi but readers familiar with the entire *ethnologisch studieveld* will perhaps readily recognize that these and other key topics of Buijs’s study, including the idea of conjunction, separation, complementary yet oppositional gender dualism, and the generation of life, are manifested in the archipelago among peoples far removed from Sulawesi, such as populations on Flores, Sumba, and Timor. Accordingly he might have considered more seriously the relevance for his analysis of ethnographic works published on eastern Indonesia and in thus doing been able to use them as the proverbial mirror in which to see his own Mamasa data given a novel reflection. Among others, one of the several works pertinent to the question of, for instance, spiritual agency, is Gregory Forth’s “Beneath the Volcano: Religion, Cosmology, and Spirit Classification among the Nage of Eastern Indonesia” (*Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 177; Leiden 1998). A scrutiny of this ethnography might have suggested to him the desirability of explaining more precisely the differences between “deities,” “spirits,” and “ghosts,” and perhaps pay extended consideration to the ontological implications inherent in the differences he marks. In this way he might have anticipated that some readers would wonder why

“ancestral deities” are *deities* rather than, say, “ancestral ghosts,” “ancestral spirits,” or simply “ancestors,” as they tend to be characterized by ethnographers working on the above-remarked islands (see “Grandchildren of the Ga’ë Ancestors: Social Organization and Cosmology among the Hoga Sara of Flores” by Andrea Molnar [*Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 185]. Leiden 2000). “Blessing” is another notion which deserves more examination in its vernacularly, exegetical, semantic, and etymological aspects, all the more so since “blessing” (i.e., Buijs’s English rendition of the presumed indigenous category) is the most important of his analytical concepts. What do Mamasa informants say about its meaning? These issues come to mind since my own work among the Tetum involves much the same kind of spirit/human reciprocity as engages the attentions of the author here; yet beyond the idea that blowing or sprinkling with water instills some sort of vitality into a substance the population I studied lack anything that might correspond to what the term “blessing” is generally taken to mean.

This having been said, the ethnographic details Buijs provides of Mamasa ideas and ritual practices, his care in marshalling them so they become intelligible as part of a pattern of structures, and his depiction of how collective representations shift in response to changing circumstances makes his study a most valuable addition to the published literature on Sulawesi, worthy to stand beside the works of Chabot, George, the Kruyts, Nooy-Palm, and Volkman. “Powers of Blessing from the Wilderness and from Heaven” is an informative account of fertility in a hitherto relatively little known community and the implications of fertility in the context of gender, the spirit world, cosmological notions, and ritual. Furthermore, by demonstrating the diverse manner in which structural transformations come about, the author provides us with an exemplary model of the mutual interplay between diachronic and synchronic. Indonesianist scholars, whatever their regional interests, will find this book well worth the reading.

David Hicks

**Carrier, Neil C. M.:** *Kenyan Khat. The Social Life of a Stimulant.* Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2007. 288 pp., illus. ISBN 978-90-04-15659-3. (*African Social Studies Series*, 15) Price: € 85.00

This volume is based on fieldwork among the Mem of east-central Kenya. The author investigated the production and marketing of khat (in Kenya also termed *miraa* or *veve*), the stems and leaves of a highland tree (*Catha edulis*). Khat is a stimulant highly prized by many in eastern and southern Africa, Madagascar, and the Near East. It is chewed and produces a sense of euphoria and alertness which enhances sociability and at times sharpens the senses and mind for carrying on boring or grueling tasks such as those of taxi-drivers, night-watchmen, soldiers, and students preparing for examinations. Defenders of khat describe it as little stronger than caffeine or other common stimulants and not as harmful as excessive consumption of tobacco or alcohol. Critics of khat