

becoming widows. Among farmers (*iyapu*), a woman can leave her husband and take another husband. It is well-known that in India the middle and lower castes have always allowed the remarriage of widows. It would have been of interest to refer to the difference established by L. Dumont between primary and secondary marriage, when he quoted the case of Newar women and compared it with Nayar women from South India. In the Newar context the link with a human husband is established by the yellow necklace *kumaḥkāḥ*, the measurement of the girl's body, taken during the first day of marriage. The yellow thread of the *kumārī* is given afterwards to the human husband at the time of the marriage. The colours of the clothes worn by the young girls are mentioned in detail but not their symbolism; for instance, in Hindu marriages the yellow colour is linked with the body and its purification.

The remarks concerning the aspects of time and space are particularly interesting, as they stress the fact that in the Hindu context for performing the rituals "there is no central place such as a large temple or a central town square for Newar initiation rituals. The rituals are family-bound events, and mainly incorporate nearby shrines or temples to local deities close to family's house. This is of course due to the fact that Hinduism does not have a central institution such as the church" (197). It is certainly very useful to have at the end of the book the texts used by the priests; but the texts don't explain the different stages of the rituals, who are the participants, and where they take place.

The book is a model for the study of rituals in the Asian context, throwing light on the links between rituals, objects, and texts. A DVD of excellent quality goes with the book and it is an important document for understanding of the performance of the rituals of initiation.

Anne Vergati

**Hämmerle, Johannes Maria** (Hrsg.): Geschichten und Gesänge von der Insel Nias in Indonesien. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008. 141 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-05812-4. (Frankfurter Forschungen zu Südostasien, 5) Preis: € 34.00

I am writing this review in English since German native speakers interested in what is going on on Nias and what is published by Johannes Hämmerle will be aware already of this publication (Narratives and Songs from Nias, Indonesia). Johannes Hämmerle, a Capuchin father, left Germany almost 40 years ago to work on the island of Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra. Hämmerle has published in Nias, in Indonesian, and in German. His publications include descriptions and analyses of stories and myths, of rituals (e.g., the famous tiger ritual in the South Nias subdistrict of Maenamölö), megaliths, and social structure. Moreover he is familiar with all areas and subareas of the island. To foreigners this may seem an easy task given the moderate extension of the island of roughly 100 × 50 km. But rains, landslides, and earthquakes, and an almost hostile topography make it difficult and strenuous to travel and to work. Those who want to do research on Nias will most probably have contacted

or contact very soon Johannes Hämmerle. Hämmerle has published so far more than a dozen books on Nias. He is the founder and the spiritus rector of the Nias cultural foundation and the well-known Nias Museum in the capital, Gunung Sitoli. He is considered to be the authority on topics Niassan, and he is also still the catholic missionary who writes (XII) that Nias is a Christian island and that it is unavoidable that Christian influence is noticeable in what he is going to present in this volume. Father Hämmerle is also very proud to confirm the high dates (12,000 B.P.) for the presence of the first inhabitants on the island that were cautiously presented by the French archaeologists for Tögi Ndrawa, a cave in northern Nias. All kinds of speculations come up, as always in archaeology where the bigger-older-stranger game is played constantly. All these topics are touched upon in the preface and that is why I am mentioning them too.

In the introduction the author shifts the focus from the tsunami of December 25, 2004, to the headhunting period that happened each year after the rice harvest (as if the author had witnessed these periods), then to basics of livelihood (there are "Holzkartoffeln", *ubi kayu*, manioc). Migratory gardening (although there is none on Nias) is said to be partly responsible for the decline of the primeval forest. But what about patchouli, *karet*, and *kelapa sawit* plantations? Didn't they destroy the primary forest? Due to the importance of pigs as food and in rituals, Islam may have had some troubles entering the interior parts of the island. "Nevertheless incision/circumcision are practiced among Niassans." As if incision were inseparately linked to Islam. Still, in the introduction there are some sections on headhunting, slave trade, early Christian mission, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombardments, and the proclamation of Indonesian independence. Of interest is a table of literary genres in Nias. Moreover in the introduction the reader will find another (not new) interpretation of Nias history by making Chinese immigrants responsible for the introduction of the art of housebuilding, of smithing, of cultigenes and animal breeding, of measures and norms, of the ancestor cult, and genealogies. It is easy to play with some ideas.

The main text consists of 21 songs or stories, almost all of them taken from Ama Yafe Mo'ölö Hondrö and his brother Ama Rati Maneragi Hondrö, both of them carpenters in the South Nias village of Onohondrö (and both of them deceased by now). These texts were recorded more than twenty years ago. Hämmerle pretends that what one can find in these texts is the wisdom of the commoner. But judging by the form one is inclined to see almost all of these texts in the *si'ulu* (upper class) tradition. The content of songs and stories is wide-ranging. Some deal with pan-Malay topics, like the story of deer and mouse-deer (one is proud but a little silly, the other is witty and cute), others are elaborated *hoho*, rhymed songs recited during feasts. Among these there are some which contain strong admonitions towards the *si'ulu* and especially the village head or a ruler, sometimes called *razo* (= indon. *raja* = king), to be honest and just. This obviously is a reflection towards misuse of power by

the rulers which happened quite often, especially during the times of the Nias slave trade. Good interpretations of some songs are given by Hämmerle (for example the commentary on the song “The Orphan Called Laerumbögia,” pp. 97–102), and this is necessary since Nias songs are full of metaphors almost impossible to be cracked by a foreigner. Today even local people cannot explain any more all the metaphors, which again offers a playground for plain etymologies.

Unfortunately the material is presented in a consistent way. Songs and poems are given in German and Niassan, whereas stories are given in German only. As this book is mainly meant for those interested in Indonesian oral tradition, it seems indispensable nowadays to collect as many texts as possible in Nias (and good Nias at that). Nias language is undergoing rapid change. Since words commonly known some thirty years ago are not used any more, and some of them went lost already, it is important to collect this kind of material. And although this collection seems to be somewhat accidentally kept together only by the fact that almost all songs and stories were collected from mainly one person, i.e., Ama Yafe, Hämmerle makes with this volume another contribution to the tremendous litterarum corpus created by the Nias people.

Wolfgang Marschall

**Hauser-Schäublin, Brigitta, and I Wayan Ardika** (eds.): *Burials, Texts, and Rituals. Ethnoarchaeological Investigations in North Bali, Indonesia*. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2008. 298 pp. ISBN 978-3-940344-12-0. (Göttinger Beiträge zur Ethnologie, 1) Price: € 38.00

If we arrange books according to their originality, you have at one end those which appear to be complex wholes, while at the other end you find those books which constantly refer to other sources, thus leaving the reader a little frustrated unless this he or she has (immediate) access to all the sources cited. The reviewed book belongs to the latter category. The topic of the work is given in its subtitle, and as can be guessed by the names of the editors, it has to do with ethnological and archaeological research in Northern Bali. It is the outcome of cooperation between Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana in Denpasar and the Institute of Cultural and Social Anthropology, University of Göttingen. I Wayan Ardika started excavating in the Sembiran and Pacung area, subdistrict of Tejakula, district of Buleleng, in the year 1987. The results of the team working with Ardika came as an archaeological sensation. For the first time Indian artefacts had been found in quite secure layers and suggested an India-Bali trade network around 2,000 years ago. These discoveries, as well as the famous copperplate inscriptions of Sembiran known to the Western world at least since the 1890 publication of Brandes, were the sufficient reason to do again anthropological fieldwork in the area, and that was started by Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin in 1995 and it is still going on. The book contains roughly two parts of equal length. The first part consists of two lengthy articles by Hauser-Schäublin “Sembiran and Julah – Sketches of History” and Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff “The

Textiles of Sembiran,” while the second part consists of another eight articles, ten to fifteen pages each. There is a highly valuable appendix containing all Sembiran inscriptions with an interlinear and a colloquial translation into Indonesian. Sembiran C, however, is translated into English. The six royal edicts written on these plates are all Saka-dated and were issued between A.D. 922 and A.D. 1103.

Sembiran, to quote from an earlier article by Hauser-Schäublin (*Indonesia* 2004) “has been a village where people of differing origins and with different ritual practices met, producing a culture that displays corresponding traits, Islamic elements being among the most prominent.” This has to be set against the notion of a “Bali Aga” village conceptualized as a pre-Hindu village. As Hauser-Schäublin can show in her article this concept is misleading, especially for this area, which had contacts with Indian traders and probably Hindu people more than 2,000 years ago and which owns royal edicts in an Old-Javanese/Old-Balinese style from around 1,000 years ago. Hauser-Schäublin concentrates a major part of her article on the role of the temples in the Pura Desa in Sembiran, analyzing the ritual and political connotations of each and by so doing reveals the network into which Sembiran is woven. This is the role Sembiran and neighbouring places played in local and international trade. In this context the idea is intriguing that today’s temple offerings at least partly are a continuation of tributes paid to the rulers. Palm leaf manuscripts lead in that same direction. Also, the gods of Batur were taken on processions as far as the villages that had shrines representing the Batur temple or one of its deities (58), thus reconfirming the ritual and as well as political territory.

Sembiran with its *krama desa* features a division of ceremonial moieties according to the model of elder and younger. This *krama desa* is a manifestation of an aboriginal egalitarian organisation. Only through the cooperation of the two parts can a ritual be organized. In relation with the outside world the two moieties disappear, and the village as a whole becomes the counterpart of any other organisation. It might well be that the *karaman* mentioned in the Sembiran edicts is a forerunner of the modern *karma desa*. In addition to this, Sembiran has a unique organisation called *sekehe gede*, in which members of all clans are represented. Although it is doubtful that these groups are “clans,” since these *dadya* are more a kind of local groups. They may have developed as a fusion of different ritual groups.

Nabholz-Kartaschoff deals with different types of textiles to be found in Sembiran called Sembiran cloth, *kain Sembiran*. The author can demonstrate that the latter, much looked for by “Western” collectors were not produced in Sembiran, and that Sembiran textiles were of a different character. The northern area of Bali and especially Sembiran from early on were cotton-producing areas, and from inscriptions we learn that the North and the central part around Batur formed a trade unit. Looms and dyestuff are discussed, as are the uses of the different textiles according to gender and age. Especially the different women’s groups have textiles of their own. Also the two