

a sport in order to unite Japanese all over the world, it is now seen as “inherently” Japanese and many foreign wrestlers have fought for proper recognition. Tierney concludes that the crisis of *sumô* cannot be related to the high number of foreigners but to the general loss of interest among the Japanese audience.

The final chapter deals with something completely different. Nelson Graburn looks at the idea of multiculturalism, museums, and tourism in Japan. Apart from describing a “unique” exhibition on multiculturalism in Osaka’s Anthropological Museum, he goes on to discuss theme parks with foreign motives, the so-called *gaikoku mura*, foreign villages. He concludes correctly that all these different manifestations of foreignness within Japan merely display some kind of “domesticized foreignness.”

Overall, the volume is heterogeneous and directed towards the audience in the Anthropology of Japan or in Japanese Studies, since some of the chapters assume too much knowledge about Japan to be easily understood by anyone outside this context. It unites many chapters of different quality and length, some articles are merely nine pages long while others go over twenty, which somehow makes the book appear a little imbalanced.

Some of the chapters appear less carefully edited than others, but in general, all of them aim at a theoretical discussion along different theories of difference, globalization, and belonging. Some of the papers draw on fieldwork conducted years ago, so it would have been worthwhile to also include updates, if possible. Despite the fact that more research on foreignness within Japan is very much needed, and this volume would have been the one academia has been waiting for, most chapters will only be relevant for some academics interested in a particular fields. However, taking some of the articles out of the volume, they do provide an adequate and refreshing discussion in their own area of research.

Griseldis Kirsch

Gutschow, Niels, and Axel Michaels: *Growing Up. Hindu and Buddhist Initiation Rituals among Newar Children in Bhaktapur, Nepal.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008. 307 pp., photos, DVD. ISBN 978-3-447-05752-3. (Ethno-Indology, 6) Price: € 64.00

The latest book by these two well-known specialists of Nepal concerns the rituals of initiation. These are rituals through which pass Newar children of the town of Bhaktapur. The city is one of the three previous capitals of the Malla kingdom (1200–1768). It has been bypassed by the economic and social changes that have been taken place over the most recent decades in the Kathmandu Valley. The originality of this book consists in providing detailed descriptions of the rituals, which are very precise, as well as the texts used during the ceremonies by the Buddhist (*vajracarya*) and by the Hindu priests (*brahmins*).

The book is divided into four parts. The first one describes the social topography of the town of Bhaktapur and its ritual specialists; the second gives descrip-

tions of the rituals of initiation which are also *rites de passage*, such as the first feeding of solid food (*annaprāsana*), the birthday ritual, the first shaving of a boy’s head (*cūḍākaraṇa*), the boy’s Hindu and Buddhist initiation, the Buddhist monastic initiation (*bāre chuyegu*), the Hindu and Buddhist marriage of girls to a god (*ihī*), and the last is ritual of seclusion for twelve days of young girls before puberty (*bāhrā tayegu*). The third part is a conclusion, a theoretical framework (*une mise en perspective*) of the descriptions of the rituals, and the last part is concerned with the texts in old Newari mixed with Sanskrit as well as the translation of the texts into English.

Generally speaking, the anthropologists who have studied the Newar rituals have described the performance of the rituals, the social position of the participants, and the ritual specialists without mentioning the objects used in each particular ritual. For the first time we are provided with illustrations of the objects made by the pot makers and painted by painters with auspicious marks of the Buddhists and the Hindus. The central earthen pot is decorated with images of Brahma for the Hindus and for Buddhists with a blue diamond (*nīlavajra*). We also find a detailed description of the eight auspicious signs of the Shivaites which are taken from the painters notebooks. The printed symbols of the gods on paper, which decorate the foreheads of the girls during the marriage, are well illustrated. In the Hindu context, the food is of great importance. It differs at every stage of the ritual and it is described most carefully with beautiful illustrations.

The main characteristic of Newar society is the centuries-long coexistence of Hinduism and Buddhism. The town of Bhaktapur is predominantly Hindu but the Buddhist community has kept its traditions and specificity. The authors clearly indicate the difference between the rituals of initiation of Hindus and Buddhists. It is certain that the gods invoked are not the same, but the performances of the rituals carried out are identical. The authors emphasize the difference of the ritual objects, of the paintings on the earthen pots, for instance, the manner of representing the eyes between Hindus and Buddhists (113). There are maps showing the place where the rituals are performed and the location of the houses of different participants.

The third part of the book, “The Dynamics of Newar Childhood Rituals,” shows that the most important element of the rituals of initiation is the transformation of an individual from a psychological and social point of view. The authors underline the importance of the extended family in Newar society but also in South Asia. The rituals are happenings by which the extended family demonstrates the social status (196). The authors do not refer to the rituals performed by other Hindu communities in Nepal or in India; they refer, above all, to Sanskrit texts. Initiation rituals such as that of Buddhist boys (*bāre chuyegu*) and the collective marriage at puberty (*ihī*) are characteristic of Newar society, and are considered as elements of ethnic identity. Newar women stress their different status from that of the Parbatiya women; their marriage to a god (the *bel* fruit) allows them to avoid

becoming widows. Among farmers (*nyapu*), 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 *kumaḥkāh*, 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