

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

condemn it for causing sleeplessness, sexual impotence, poor nutrition due to loss of appetite, and loss of money better spent on food, clothing, and education. Countries declaring khat illegal neither ban tobacco nor alcohol, which are worse drains on the budgets of the impoverished and which, in the case of alcohol, often lead to violence. With recent global migration khat is now consumed, legally or illegally, in Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and North America, mainly by Somalis and Near Eastern refugees. Today it is illegal in Tanzania, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. It is legal in Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen, Kenya, and Great Britain. It is an important part of the agricultural economy of Kenya and Ethiopia where it is grown. Khat production and trade constitute an especially interesting topic of study in that its legality and moral status complicate its widespread distribution. Furthermore, since khat spoils quickly, its successful distribution depends on expensive, quick transport by land and air.

Carrier began his study working with Meru people in the Kenya highlands, the major khat producers in East Africa. While Meru are today involved in the international khat trade, mainly working through Somalis and Arab merchants, they have a long local tradition of khat as a crop integrated into local ceremonies and daily custom. Today production of khat is far more profitable than the production of coffee, tea, or food crops. It is far too important to be declared illegal in Kenya where it is produced and fairly popular. The author provides little detailed information on how the trade works in areas where it is illegal but notes that khat continues to find its way to East African immigrants in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere. Both the legal and illegal trades work through African and Near Eastern kin and ethnic networks of trust and credit. The author examines these in detail for the legal trade in Kenya and to a lesser extent in Great Britain.

Cultural views about khat are complex even where it is traditional and legal. It is a messy product, its consumption involving masses of slimy, chewed leaves, much spitting and coughing, and discoloured mouths and teeth. Some local women condemn it as eroding marital relations on account of causing impotence and leading men to spend too much time sitting around with one another "doing nothing" and not working. Some elder Africans value khat as exemplifying their African and ethnic tradition and male bonding. Some younger Africans see khat as a means of expressing modern nonconformity, especially since it was not traditionally chewed by young people who today both trade and consume it. In contrast, some middle-class, educated Africans condemn khat as backward and barbaric. Local African views about khat are divided, even among Christians and Muslims and among those with medical knowledge. Certainly nearly everyone considers khat less baneful than alcohol. Carrier provides rich reportage on such varied and contradictory views though he nowhere integrates such findings into any coherent picture. I do not suggest that there may be any prevailing evaluation

of khat, but in general the author appears far more adept at reporting diverse data than in relating materials to any broader concepts or theories about social organization, cultural beliefs and values, or changing views regarding gender, age, and suitable expenditures of time and money. Yet the controversy surrounding khat makes it a useful arena for considering these contested issues.

Carrier's book provides more detailed and extensive information about khat production and consumption than any other available publication. The book is clearly written and cast in a modest and appealing manner. Carrier wisely avoids taking any strong position regarding the pros or cons of khat though he clearly enjoyed khat chewing and does not view it as an especially dangerous substance meriting its illegal status in some countries. There is certainly little medical or social evidence provided in this long study that would convince a reader to advocate the banning of khat.

This book belongs in every library where there is a program in East African studies. I found this book a valuable source of information. Unfortunately, not even the many coloured illustrations in it would justify its very high price so I doubt that many readers are going to purchase a personal copy. Still they should urge their local academic library to acquire it.

T. O. Beidelman

Dünnwald, Stephan: Der pädagogische Griff nach dem Fremden. Zur Haltung lokaler Initiativen gegenüber Flüchtlingen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Frankfurt: IKO – Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2006. 378 pp. ISBN 978-3-88939-822-2. Preis: € 24.90

Die Verabschiedung des Zuwanderungsgesetzes durch den Deutschen Bundestag hat die Migrationspolitik der BRD mit einem neuen rechtlichen Rahmen versehen. Zum ersten Mal ist von der Politik anerkannt worden, dass Deutschland ein Einwanderungsland ist. Mit dem neuen Gesetz soll die Zuwanderung in geregelte Bahnen gelenkt werden, indem formalisierte Prüfverfahren für die Anliegen der Migranten zur Anwendung kommen, um eine Überprüfung und Bewertung ihrer Integrationsabsichten und -bemühungen zu gewährleisten. Nach der Sicherstellung des rechtlichen Status werden die Zuwanderungsaspiranten in so genannten Integrationskursen mit der deutschen Sprache und den hier geltenden Gepflogenheiten vertraut gemacht. Nach sechs Monaten wird anhand einer Prüfung festgestellt, ob eine Integration erfolgen kann.

Gleichzeitig mit der Verabschiedung des Gesetzes ist die über Jahrzehnte dauernde Aushöhlung des Asylrechts seitens der Politik zunächst zum Stillstand gekommen. Die Harmonisierung der EU-Flüchtlingspolitik, die Aufrüstung der Grenzsicherung an den EU-Aussengrenzen und die Errichtung von Auffanglagern in den EU-Anrainerstaaten hat dazu geführt, dass die Asylzahlen dramatisch zurückgegangen sind. Asylsuchende schaffen es nicht mehr bis Europa und damit auch nicht mehr nach Deutschland.

Damit ist der langjährige Disput zwischen Zivilgesellschaft und Politik über den Umgang mit Zuwande-