

mythology. He tests Josselin de Jong's and Lévi-Strauss' theories about cultural identity by examining myths in the Minahassa area (North Sulawesi) and on the Mentawai islands ("Kulturelle Transformation im 'ethnologischen Studienfeld' Indonesien", 363-385).

The title of the volume labels the content as Swiss, which makes the reader wonder if there are any particularly Swiss features which would separate these studies from others. I have not found conclusive evidence for this—except perhaps for the style of writing mentioned above. The essay of the editor at the beginning of the volume does not seem to offer any clues either. Obviously it is not meant as an introduction to the following since it does neither explain the criteria of selection of authors nor does it elaborate on past or present tendencies in Indonesian studies at Swiss Universities and museums. Instead it gives an account of Swiss scholars and writers involved in Indonesia since the middle of the last century to which a bibliography is added (which is very incomplete indeed). A few areas (Kalimantan, Eastern Sundas, Muluccas, and New Guinea) are not covered, but more surprising is the lack of studies in religion, language, visual arts, and music. Some foreign scholars living in Switzerland are represented, but not all Swiss scholars in Indonesian studies living in Switzerland or abroad. Is there chance or selection at work?

I can think of one particular area of research in which Swiss scholars in the past have been prominent and influential and with which some living scholars still identify—but which is absent in this volume!—: the special interest of Alfred Bühler, Ernst Schlager, and the Painter Theo Meier in the interrelation between aesthetical and artistic phenomena on one side and ritual and the crafts on the other. Also, of course, one could ask how much the Swiss owe to scholars and academic teachers from abroad. It seems to be worthwhile to reflect on these questions. But, in any event, the volume stands on its own—inspiring by the variety of methods used and enriching our knowledge of the archipelago.

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NIESSEN, S. A. *Motifs of Life in Toba Batak Texts and Textiles*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 110. Dordrecht/Holland: Foris Publications, 1985. Viii+249 pages. Map, illustrations, bibliography, glossary, index of Toba Batak terms. Paper Dfl. 35,—; ISBN 90-6765-067-6.

After having received an MA in Anthropology from the University of Toronto, Niessen had moved to Leiden to pursue her studies further in Social Anthropology. The present book is an outcome of her doctoral dissertation.

The "Leiden School" is known for carrying on the scholarly tradition connected with the 'Field of Anthropological Study' (FAS), a concept proposed in 1935 by J.P.B. Josselin de Jong. First attracted by the work of J. H. Jager Gerling who in 1952 had discovered femaleness as constituting a significant attribute in Indonesian textiles, the author succeeded with the present book in her attempt to apply the concept of FAS to a Toba Batak society.

The particular merit of the author's research lies in the fact that, attracted by the significance textiles have in Toba Batak mythology, she analyzed and explained four

motifs which appear in the relationship between women and textiles, namely kinship, fertility, time, and space. In keeping with comparative studies done in Eastern Indonesia by J. J. Fox and others (1980), the author does not follow the method of the Leiden School insofar as she does not try to reconstruct the "original" system. Rather, the approach she takes is to compare existing systems and in this way understand and explain their variations (112).

As a result it appears that the Toba Batak adhere to a dualistic world-view opposing male and female, as it has been expounded in the hypothesis of the Leiden School. Furthermore, a connection emerges to Jager Gerling's conclusion that in Indonesian society textiles are integral to the "female half" of that society. However, after having considered the model of an "Indonesian type," where "the Toba Batak are, according to J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, a society in which these principles are 'still displaying remarkable vigour'" (1977: 174), and pointed out van Wouden's asymmetric marriage exchange and double-unilateral system (1964: 92), she goes on to say that marriage exchange occurs on a wide scale among a considerable number of *marga* rather than among only a restricted number. And she sums up by professing her negative viewpoint concerning this question: "Flexibility in the marriage rules is crucial to the system and cannot be depicted in the model. Neither is it implied by the model. Flexibility in the positive marriage rule means that the Toba Batak do not have circulating connubia" (108).

J. C. Vergouwen has earlier shown that the relatives of the bride's side (*hula-hula*) are spiritually superior to those of the groom's side (*boru*). He says, however, that if a misfortune occurs (such as when a woman after marriage cannot conceive) then the woman is believed to be followed (*sori ni arina*) by some evil power. The husband will then appeal (*elekelek*) to his *hula-hula*, that they call together the spirits of the ancestors and implore them (*somba somba*). "If they are of no avail the wife, her parents and brothers, turn to the *hula-hula* of her mother. However, should the *datu* see from his oracular signs that it is necessary to resort to the *hula-hula* on her father's mother's side, or to affines still further removed, then this will be done" (Vergouwen 1964: 56). I wish the author had commented on this particular statement by Vergouwen, because she on her part remarks that textiles and weaving tools are called *parrambuan* and are transmitted from mother to daughter. On the one hand there is the fact that such aspects as the ones just mentioned which cut through the idea of a lineage can be discerned. Nevertheless, the author speaks of the preeminence of patrilineal descent in this society in the following manner, linking it to the spirit domain: "The organization of the spirit domain reflects *marga* chauvinism and the patrilineal principle. Spirits of members of the same *marga* stay together and fear the spirits of other *marga*. Spirits of women remain with the spirit of their husband and their fortunes also remain linked. The most miserable of *begu*, irrespective of their worldly wealth, are those that have no male descendants as they have no one to make offerings to them and heed their wishes. The desire of a Batak to have progeny to perpetuate his patrilineage is synonymous with his desire to perpetuate his own spirit and attain a position of status in the spirit realms" (122-123). This description is loaded with suggestions for verifying descent and I would have expected her to consider the possibility of lines of transmission which are neither matrilineal nor patrilineal.

The author says that the *ulos*, which at a wedding is given by the *hula-hula* group to the bride and the groom, has the purpose of stabilizing the soul. She also agrees with Gittinger's opinion that "the cloth clearly symbolized their union and longevity" (Gittinger 1975: 23).

Among the fertility motifs she takes up rice and *dengke porngis* (plentiful fish), saying that these fertility motifs may comprise the idea of purification or have the magic meaning of "cool" in an indigenous form of expression. An example showing this aspect would be the rite where "at sowing, the seed rice is carried to the fields along with a twig of the waringing tree" (143).

As an instance of a temporal motif the author points to the way of speaking about two periods of existence for the individual soul, the first is while the soul stays in the body, the second when it lives in the spirit realms after death. And she sees the period of staying in the body as being divided into several stages by rites of passage.

The author has succeeded to show how much, in Toba Batak society, textiles are part of the women's realm, and how important they therefore are. With this, she has opened up a new field in the study of Toba Batak society.

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ARCHER, WILLIAM G. *Songs for the Bride. Wedding Rites of Rural India*.

Edited by Barbara Stoler Miller and Mildred Archer. Studies in Oriental Culture, Number 20. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. Xi+181 pages. Map, illustrations, bibliography of the writings of William G. Archer, notes. Hardcover US\$27.50. ISBN 0-231-05918-3.

This is a thoroughly delightful and instructive book. It does credit to an old I.C.S. man of the traditional school who was not only an able administrator, but also a keen student of Indian art and culture. After many years of Indian Civil Service the author