

temple-based cult's Buddhist antecedents seems to be quite convincing: "just as the village temples have origins in Buddhist prototypes rather than indigenous spirit shrines, so the antecedents of the village priests [...] lie with the Mahayanist monks [...] and not the indigenous spirit masters" (400). Such cases are known in other parts of Southeast Asia too, although it is enough here to refer to the Bru, whose "shamanic" texts and religious ideas contain elements of Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese origin, among others (see, for example, VARGAS 1994, 122–76).

In the third part (550–734), the Christian experience of the Lahu, i.e. Christian proselytization and the consolidation of Christianity in the Lahu Mountains are detailed. As one might guess, the advent of Christianity had been prepared by Lahu messianism that, in turn, had been preconditioned by the activity of the said theocratic Buddhist monks. This is how and why Christian missionaries could be seen as messiahs by many Lahu at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Owing to lack of space, it is impossible to enumerate all the results and problems dealt with in this remarkable and voluminous book. Instead, let me say that, all in all, it is a scholarly masterpiece and a major contribution to Lahu religion and to Southeast-Asian "Montagnard" culture in general.

#### REFERENCE CITED

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WILDER, WILLIAM D., Editor. *Journeys of the Soul: Anthropological Studies of Death, Burial and Reburial Practices in Borneo*. Borneo Research Council, Monograph Series No.7. Phillips, Maine 04966: Borneo Research Council, Inc., 2003. xiv + 366 pages. Map, tables, illustrations, references, index. Cloth US\$45.00; ISBN 1-929900-04-X.

This collection of papers contains five solid ethnographic studies on mortuary notions and practices as observed among five indigenous peoples on the island of Borneo. The discussed ethnic groups are taken solely from the western parts of the island, that is, the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. They include the Rungus from the northern tip of Sabah and four Sarawakian groups; namely, the Punan Bah, the Iban, the Kelabit, and the Bidayuh. Apart from the introductory article (Chapter 1) written by the editor, five articles are divided into two parts. Part One presents "traditional" aspects of the customs and beliefs that were well detected at the time of respective researches among the Rungus, the Punan Bah, and the Iban. The papers in Part Two, by contrast, deal with the almost entirely Christianized groups of the Kelabit and the Bidayuh and mainly attempt to reconstruct the past practices and notions. All the articles, except the introduction, are the revised papers that were originally read at the American Anthropological Association conference held in 1997.

The topic discussed in this book is noticeably a long established one in anthropological literature, and especially so in the study of Bornean societies. In the introduction, with the

title of "Anthropology, Life, and Death," Wilder toils away at explaining the possible range of new crops that these five works could produce from this well tilled, or one may even say overcropped, field. He refers justifiably to a pretty wide variety of theories and thoughts relating to the phenomenon of human death and its cultural meanings. They include those concerning the concepts of soul, the culturally defined modes of death, the fear of the dead, the pollution of the corpse, the theoretical frameworks propounded by Robert Hertz and Arnold van Gennep for understanding the temporal and sequential structure of mortuary rituals, and, finally, psychoanalytical interpretations of cultural dynamics revolving around the antithesis of Eros/Thanatos, on the basis of which Ernest Becker and Norman O. Brown built a grand theory of universal human desire for immortality. Of particular importance and specific relevance is the Hertz's study on the collective representations of death, which makes an extensive use of ethnographic material derived from Borneo. In fact, all the papers in this volume try to evaluate the applicability to the respective cases of Hertz's theorem of what I would call "the doubly tripartite compositions" underlying the secondary burial practices. No paper, on the other hand, carries on any serious argument about the immortality theory of death in analyzing the individual case. As Wilder himself notes, this theory, being "a synoptic view [,] which has fallen out of favour in the social sciences of today [...] surely provides a valuable key" (27) to the existential predicament of human mortality expressed in various cultural forms, either in narrative or in performative manners. Perhaps, the editor here wants to see, though largely in vain, some balanced yet challenging combinations between studies based on group symbolisms, or collective representations, on the one hand, and insightful thinking on the human problem of death and its ritually attempted solutions, on the other.

In subsequent ethnographic chapters, George N. Appell and Laura W. R. Appell present a long article, entitled "Death among the Rungus Momogun of Sabah, Malaysia: The Dissolution of Personhood and Dispersion of the Multiple Souls and Spiritual Counterparts" (Chapter 2). They first describe the complex conception of multiple souls that are vital to the Rungus notion of personhood, and then proceed to discuss the theoretical implications that the Rungus death rituals, which do not involve any secondary treatment of the corpse, provide for the analysis of ritual/ceremonial structures. The authors declare that Rungus see death as instantaneous, contrary to the well-known phrase that Hertz began with in his work. By contrast, however, the sequence of Rungus post-burial ceremonies is a prolonged one, which seems to repeat a number of same motifs of separation and reintegration. The Appells characterize this feature as redundancy, and try to make a revision to van Gennep's, rather than Hertz's, schematization of rites of passage. They divide the whole sequence into the primary and the secondary levels, both involving their own liminal phases in which the bereaved—in the exemplar case the authors take: the widow(er)—is gradually reintegrated to the normal life. These double liminal phases, one being strong, the other weak, combine to constitute what the authors term the "interstitial phase." Apart from this argument, which is sound in itself, the authors' emphasis on the necessity of analyzing the cultural construct of personhood for understanding the meanings of death rituals points to the undeniably right direction.

Ida Nicolaisen's beautifully written paper (Chapter 3), "Pillars of Faith: Souls, Fertility and Mortuary Rituals Among the Punan Bah of Central Borneo," follows that direction, this time taking the case from a society that (used to) practice(s) secondary burial. After the secondary burial, Punan Bah used to erect wooden burial pillars for putting the remains of the deceased aristocrats on top of them. The pillars are decorated with carvings of human figures that represent sexuality and fertility. The author pursues the meanings of those symbols in Punan Bah conceptions of life, soul and rebirth of humans. As she found

out, the secondary burial ensures the rebirth into a descendant of those whose remains are treated in a proper way. This aspect was not discussed in Hertz's reasoning on the practice, which, as Nicolaisen sees it, paid attention only to linear transition of the soul of the dead, of the conditions of the bereaved, and of the corpse. The Punan Bah secondary burial was thus instrumental in its function—that is, not merely confirmatory, such as how Metcalf characterizes Berawan burial rituals in relation to the conditions of the dead—and also essentially rooted in the stratified organization of their society. As the notion of rebirth has not been reported from any other secondary burial group in Borneo, this case would require further study in the field of social ideology involved in mortuary practices.

Clifford Sather's "Transformations of Self and Community in Saribas Iban Death Rituals" (Chapter 4) also tries to go beyond Hertz in that ideas concerning death among the Iban are more complex social construct than seen in his theoretical analysis. Egalitarian features of Iban society may be contrasted with the Punan Bah social stratification. Fate of the dead is thus naturally expected to be differentiated less in terms of prescribed social status than of achievement of individuals during their lifetime as well as of contingent modes of actual death. In this connection, the exceptional Iban practice of apotheosis, or the "enshrinement," if I may use my own term, draws special attention. Like the Rungus, the Iban usually practice interment form of burial, but in exceptional cases, the remains of the distinguished war leaders or community leaders may be placed on the platforms above the ground, to be preserved for long in some cases. Deification of the dead in the context of an egalitarian but competitive society may serve as a good source for our understanding of social ideology as mentioned above.

Both of the last two chapters try to reconstruct the past forms of the mortuary practices and the related conceptions in the manners that the authors announce as ethno-historical. Matthew Amster's "Gender Complementarity and Death among the Kelabit" (Chapter 5) points out the importance of distinction between male and female domains in the ritual/religious realm in a society which does not emphasize gender differences in everyday life. The ritual domain related with death among the Kelabit was a male dominated one, in which male leadership and prowess used to be commemorated in megaliths, inscription in landscape and others. This contrasts with the female role in the domain of life, which includes birth and agriculture. Pamela Lindell's "Cremation, Abandonment and Burial: Bidayuh Mortuary Practices and their Interpretations" (Chapter 6) attempts to give a reasonably clear picture of variations of the past burial forms among two subgroups of the Bidayuh, and discusses that the cremation used to be norm to all the population except for certain ritual specialists, contrary to the earlier fragmentary reports that testified cremation was restricted to high ranked people. She suggests the reported variations may be ascribed to the different stages of historical change. The origin of cremation, as the author judges, is not to be traced back to Hindu or Buddhist influences, but with high probability endogenous. Interestingly, cremation is interpreted by locals as a custom instigated by dominating Malay neighbors.

All the articles apart from the Appells' not only refer to, but also extensively recapitulate Hertz's theoretical propositions for discussion. Although this would have been surely necessary for independent papers, it gives an impression of somewhat cumbersome redundancy when compiled in a book form. Putting this minor complaint aside, I learnt a lot from each of the papers, and would recommend this book to any reader interested in folklore and ethnology of insular Southeast Asia.

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