

The vastness of Wilhelm's sinological heritage detailed in this book is marvelous and truly unique. It should serve as an example for all similar efforts to process the archived heritage of other great sinological figures.

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GUTSCHOW, Niels, Michaels, Axel. *Growing up. Hindu and Buddhist Initiation Rituals among Newar Children in Bhaktapur (Nepal)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008. 307 p. ISBN 978-3-447-05752-3. With a film on DVD by Christian Bau.

The present book is the sixth volume in the series *Ethno-Indology, Heidelberg Studies in South Asian Rituals* which started to be issued in 2005. At the same time it is the second part of a trilogy of studies of life-cycle rituals among the ethnic community of Newars of Bhaktapur in Nepal by Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels, the first part of the trilogy being the volume *Handling Death* (published in 2005) and the last part (not yet published) focusing on marriage rituals.

The book is divided into four main sections preceded by the Foreword and the Introduction and followed by Appendices (including mantras used in the handbooks and the survey of Newar rituals of passage with their Newari (Sanskrit) names and the times suitable for their performing) as well as References (including a glossary of relevant Newari terms).

The field research by N. Gutschow and A. Michaels described in this book is restricted to a relatively small location and concentrates mainly on the study of life-cycle rituals performed in a few sample families; therefore, the authors have been able to present a very detailed analysis of historical development of the location, a strict definition of territory as well as social topography. They offer a detailed picture of Newars as “a cluster of sub-castes that gains its specific identity mainly by its locality and the Newari language” (p. 22). A hierarchy of castes and sub-castes of Bhaktapur is shown in the table on page 23. Due space is devoted to the hierarchy of ritual specialists, that is, priests, assistant priests, and helpers: potters, painters, relatives and lineage members and their role in the major life-cycle rituals. The authors repeatedly (in slight variations) point out to the fact that the life-cycle rituals are to be seen “not as a singular event in the life of an individual but as a process that connects the various steps in the life of a certain man or woman as well as the members of various social groups in order to maintain or create the identity or purity of a social group” (p. 31). These as well as some other questions are discussed in the first section of the book named “Bhaktapur – The City and its Ritual Specialists”.

The second and the largest part of the book, named “The Rituals”, is devoted to very detailed and comprehensive descriptions of specific aspects of some life-cycle rituals. They include pregnancy and birth rituals, the first feeding of solid food *Macā jākva* or *Annaprāśana*, the birthday ritual, the first shaving of a boy's head; *Busā khāyegu* (*cūḍākaraṇa*), the boy's Hindu and Buddhist initiation with the loincloth; *Kaytāpūjā* or *Mekhalābandhana*, the boy's Buddhist monastic initiation; *Bāre chuyegu* (*pravrajyā*),

the girl's Hindu marriage to the bel fruit; Ihi, and the girl's seclusion; Bārḥā tayegu. The authors focus on the special features and core events of these rituals, describe their purpose, the places and times of their performance, their participants and main actors and their precise roles in the rituals. Careful attention is paid to various ritual objects, their meanings and purposes. At the end of the analysis of each ritual the authors introduce a telling conclusion. In the main they always come to the conclusion that the rituals of passage celebrate not so much a biological as a social change: a child becomes a member of a social group, extended family and lineage group with certain duties and rights. It is mainly this part of the book which has been enriched by beautiful photographs and diagrams.

In the third part of the book named "Conclusion – The Dynamics of Newar Childhood Rituals" (pp. 190-199), the authors show what these rituals have in common. They consider them all as initiation rituals as they mark admission to a kin group and socio-religious community. In this context a few, but very important and relevant pages, are devoted to an analysis of certain aspects of childhood and adolescence, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, the individual and the social, space and time, the construction of immortality.

Equally interesting is the last part of the volume "The Texts". It includes with texts written in old Nevārī interspersed with Sanskrit mantras as they can be found in the handbooks and manuals still used by priests during the performance of the respective rituals. The authors have edited the texts and prepared their "readable and practicable" (p. 202), i.e. not literal, translation into English. A reader will find the following texts here: Daśakarmaviddhi1, Daśakarmavidhi2, Kaytābīya-Mekhalābandhana/-vidhi/ (Buddhist), Ihipūjāvidhi, Suvarṇakumāravivāhavidhi, and Pāṇigrahaṇavidhi.

The text of the book is completed with 21 maps of the territory of Bhaktapur, of places for discarding ritual waste, of settlement patterns according to sub-castes, of sacred places of the quarter where the rituals are performed, of the location of ritual specialists and lineage members as well as relatives invited to join the feast, of the location of places for Ihi rituals, of places that an initiated person visits as a part of the ritual and so on. The book also contains many photographs of participants and actors of the rituals, the overall views or details of ritual acts, ritual objects, and offerings. Of great use are the various diagrams; for instance, there are diagrams of the site of the ritual place, of the location of ritual instruments, of symbols painted on pots used in rituals, and so forth.

The book provides a comprehensive description of respective rituals as they are performed in a specific time and in a strictly defined community of Newars in Bhaktapur. The authors make use of their profound theoretical knowledge as well as their intimate knowledge of the actors in the rituals and the environment in which they do their field work for confirmation of their oft-repeated premise that the life-cycle rituals can only be understood in social relational terms.

The book is very well designed. The conception is well-thought-out. It documents the authors' great experience not only as experts in their field of scientific research but also as the creators of a number of scientific publications. Their speciality is the practice of naming the actors and places involved in rituals which is in contrast to the usual practice

in ethnographic research. They regard this as an expression of respect for the participants of rituals.

The volume includes an exquisite DVD *Growing up* (Ihi and Kaytāpūjā/Mekhalābandhana) by Christian Bau which vividly illustrates the text by showing the setting, participants and performance of rituals.

The present book can be highly recommended to all who are interested in Hindu and Buddhist life-cycle rituals.

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SIMPSON, Andrew (ed.). *Language and National Identity in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 367 p. ISBN 978-0-19-928675-1.

This book gives an explanation of the political and language situation in Africa. National identity is connected with language and/or religion. "Language as a communicative system varying among different populations is commonly acknowledged to function as an important symbol of group identity, often stimulating a natural sense of solidarity among communities sharing a single variety of speech and is sometimes deliberately manipulated to create feelings of belonging to populations larger than the local or the regional, and the significant establishment of fully extensive national identities in independent states." (Simpson, p. 2)

In Africa the situation is much more complicated. Indeed, it can be said that language plays an important role in new nations, but it is hard to generalize that language has the most important role in nation-building. Africa is a continent full of diversity, which one can see in the various states and in the political situations found there. The book examines studies of nineteen out of the fifty-four states of Africa with different historical backgrounds that have influenced their language policies: Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti, Zambia and South Africa. Out of these countries just Somalia is monolingual and Somali is an indigenous language, which has the status of official language. However, its monolingualism, singular culture, and singular religion do not necessarily mean national unity. On the other hand, there are countries with diversity of language, ethnicity, and religion.

This book works with terms such as lingua franca, language of inter-ethnic communication, national language, and official language. It is still important for African countries to keep ex-colonial languages as official languages. Firstly, because of their important status on the international scene, as happened in the case of Senegal, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. Secondly, the language because of its long history in the country changed into a language of inter-ethnic communication or became a part of their heritage as in the case of Nigeria and Ghana. Thus indigenous languages are usually marked as lingua franca or national languages, but in few cases are these indigenous languages used throughout