Johannes Maria Hämmerle, *Das Herz Von Hia Spricht: Die Urbevölkerung Auf Der Insel Nias, Indonesien*. Sankt Augustin: Academia, 2018, 402 pp. ISBN: 9783896657299, price: EUR 49.00 (paperback).

Johannes Maria Hämmerle, the author of the book here under review, has for more than forty years been living as a pastor on the Indonesian island Nias, which is part of the so-called Barrier Islands situated off the western coast of Sumatra. Hämmerle's academic work demonstrates a profound knowledge of the culture and language of this island. In more than thirty publications, this author has made aspects of the indigenous people of Nias available to the broader scholarly community.

Das Herz Von Hia Spricht: Die Urbevölkerung Auf Der Insel Nias, Indonesien ('The Heart Of Hia Speaks: The Indigenous People On The Island Of Nias, Indonesia'), published in 2018, describes oral traditions and feasts from the district of South Nias. The information on which this book is based was collected by Hämmerle and his informants. He has relied mainly on one of the chiefs in this region.

Most of the data compiled in this book are presented in German, occasionally accompanied by the original text in the Nias language. Technical terms referring to aspects of feasts are all cited in the original Nias language and explained in meticulous detail. At times, this approach challenges the reader's ability to appreciate such an in-depth study, because of the abundance of references to the names of people, villages, or feasts and their specific components. The book could have profited from a more explicit outline of its structural setup in the introduction, as well as a clear and stringent separation of the writer's personal statements and those of his informants.

The work consists of two parts: section I to VII deal with the major feasts celebrated in the Nias culture. Chapter II provides a special focus on the so-called 'tiger-feast' (*Börönadu*). It contains a discussion on descriptions of this feast by former Dutch officials and by Peter Suzuki (1959) in his dissertation titled *The religious system and culture of Nias*, whose analysis he criticizes sharply. The author corrects the latter's views at length on the basis of his own experiences. Chapters III to VII mainly consist of tales on the *Börönadu* and of other feasts and traditions in the *adat*-region Maniamölö as they were reported by Hämmerle's main informant. The tales are intertwined with comments and explanations by the author.

Chapters VIII to XVII contain very useful information on a variety of subjects: the traditional Nias calendar and measures, genealogies, well-known people and ghosts, topographical names, village names, river names, plants and anim-

als, a glossary, and illustrations. Most of the books illustrations consist of maps, villages, carved figures, dances, and portraits of men and women.

Hämmerle's work is an extremely rich source for all researchers interested in the Barrier Islands as a whole and Nias in particular, as well as the place of the cultural traditions of these islands in the broader Austronesian world.

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Reference

Suzuki, Peter. *The religious system and culture of Nias*, Indonesia. Leiden.