dieses Buch auch zu einer wertvollen Quelle. Es stellt somit ein Bindeglied zwischen den "Klassikern" (die teilweise noch in deutsche Kolonialzeit zurückreichen) und der Gegenwart dar, thematisiert jüngere und jüngste Entwicklungen des Gestehungsprozesses so mancher Objekte und beleuchtet auch deren gegenwärtige Bedeutung und Sichtweise, sowohl bei den Einheimischen als auch bei den Konsumenten dieser Kunst. Barbara Wavell erwähnt dabei mehrmals, wie sehr sich manche traditionelle Formen im Laufe der Zeit gewandelt haben, so z. B. die sogenannten "Love Sticks" (Fig. 92), die auf Chuuk früher zum Einsatz kamen, um junge Menschen zueinander finden zu lassen. Der Band ist gefällig gestaltet, hat ein detailliertes Literaturverzeichnis, sowie eine genaue Beschreibung jedes einzelnen Objektes, welches in dem Buch abgebildet ist. Letzteres ist ein echter Gewinn und macht dieses Buch damit zu einem brauchbaren und anschaulichen Manual über mikronesische traditionelle Gegenwartskunst. Hermann Mückler

Wellens, Koen: Religious Revival in the Tibetan Borderlands. The Premi of Southwest China. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010. 278 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-99069-9. Price: $ 30.00

This book is a rich ethnography and a fascinating discussion of the Premi, a people in the eastern borderlands of Tibetan cultural influence – a historical frontier zone between the Tibetan and the Chinese civilizations. Here, history shapes the present situation: In the modern Chinese province of Yunnan, the Premi have official status as "Pumi," a separate minority nationality (in the Chinese-language approximation of the ethnonym Premi); but those who live nearby in the modern Chinese province of Sichuan have been designated as "Tibetan," and we learn in this book about how this is because Tibetan religious and administrative influence historically ran deeper there, under the Tibetan Buddhist Gelugpa king of the semi-independent monastic domain of Muli.

All of the Premi or Pumi as well as the Tibetans of this area, just like many other people on the margins of China, are engaged in religious and cultural revivals enabled by the relaxation of formerly prohibitive government policies. This book, written by Koen Wellens, is an important contribution to the growing body of literature on such revivals and on the reconfiguration of religious traditions in China, as well as that on Tibetan civilization and religion (compare Goldstein and Kapstein's "Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet. Religious Revival and Cultural Identity," 1998; and Kolås and Thowsen's "On the Margins of Tibet. Cultural Survival on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier," 2005). It also contributes more generally to the literature on ethnicity and its configurations in the context of multinational or multiethnic states, and empires.

The author is an anthropologist with many years of dedicated research experience in the region. Originally from Belgium, he is based in the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, Norway, and has published separately on human rights and freedom of religion. This book is anthropological and historical in nature, and in contrast to some related works that survey a larger region, Wellens' book is decidedly in-depth. Much is gained by this approach. We learn about the present-day situation of the Premi against a richly painted historical background of this far-flung corner of the Tibetan realm, which was first integrated with the central Tibetan state as a Lama kingdom from the 16th century, or so. Because of its location in a frontier-zone between Tibetan and Chinese civilizations, it also later on became the object of Chinese attempts to integrate it within the apparatus of China's empire and the modern Chinese state. At times, the Muli king (*gyelpo*) formally recognized by Lhasa simultaneously held the imperial Chinese title of *tusi*, or native chief, – indeed, the book makes some of its main contributions precisely in regard to this in-between status of an area where local people have negotiated their relation to such faraway, indirectly competing power centers.

Wellens' book succinctly presents an array of rich research materials derived from years of fieldwork and historical-archival studies. All is thoughtfully and clearly organized. The first chapter presents the history of Muli as "the political integration of a Lama kingdom" – into Tibet, and later on into China, complete with translated passages from local chronicles, and fascinating accounts of both intra-Tibetan intrigues, and the Communist Chinese takeover after 1950. Chapter 2 is a rich overview of a Muli area locality in the post-Mao era; including local economics, and local conceptions of the wider ethnopolitical constellations of which the area forms part. In chap. 3, Wellens looks in detail at the Premi household and its place in the wider social landscape, analyzing it using the notion of a "house society" where "architectural, social, and symbolic aspects of a single institution" are all linked in the house (119). Firmly based on this ethnographic grounding, chap. 4 catalogs and discusses Premi rituals for dealing with ancestors, deities, evil spirits, as well as nonlocal human powers such as the states afar. Finally, in chap. 5 and in the conclusions, he reflects on what the Premi revival means today.

Wellens' observations on local traditions centering on priest-like figures named *anji* or *hangui* are among the most fascinating parts of the book. These now flourish alongside Tibetan Buddhism, which has sometimes regarded such local religion as heresy – this is also parallel to how the folk traditions were condemned as "primitive" or animist religion by post-1950 Chinese authorities (who also attempted, in vain, to destroy even the architectural configuration of the Premi house; pp. 123 ff.), though they now permit them. Locally, the potentially dangerous contradictions with more prestigious and powerful nonlocal traditions are deemphasized, in favor of coexistence and nonconfrontation, and the *anji* exist and perform side by side with Buddhist priests – this even as the more authoritative representatives of Buddhism, on their part, still hope for the eventual demise of what they see as nonrational *anji* "folk" religion. Wellens' nuanced argument about these complex issues concludes by dissolving the purported duality of Buddhism and folk religion in the actual Premi context and discovering how the revival of ritual and religion, under whichever name, has

been deployed by locals to build their own community as a "system of constructing and maintaining relatedness" (213), (as a local ideology, we might say!); and, by extension, for the purposes of self-governance. Perhaps it could be extended even further, by pointing to how just like elsewhere in China, local tradition also notably coexists with and coopts the roles and functions imposed by the Chinese state – which Wellens calls "secular," suggesting a distinction between secular and religious that is probably misleading here, considering the demands for worship and confession that are made in the name of the modern Chinese state – and the profound parallels between the "civilizing projects" at work here to impose control from afar.

On a different but related note, Koen Wellens makes no comparative reference to Wang Ming-ke's highly relevant work (cf. "The Qiang Between the Han and the Tibetans. A Historical-Anthropological study of a Chinese Frontier." 2003), which is based only some distance farther to the north in Sichuan. Wang probes the Qiang's ambivalent status in the Tibetan-Chinese borderlands, and the problem of how ethnic hierarchies are made and managed in these contexts. For a further theoretical perspective on such dynamics of the edges of empires, one could draw on Jonathan Friedman's "System, Structure, and Contradiction. The Evolution of 'Asiatic' Social Formations" (1998; originally 1979) – a classic work intended to dismantle Edmund Leach's more famous "Political Systems of Highland Burma," itself also a discussion of these problems concerning the making and transformation of total ethnic systems in this same region of the world.

And yet, even though these could be called omissions, Koen Wellens' deeply serious book on the Premi clearly is a marvellous contribution to the study of precisely these wider issues of how people on the margins of civilizations negotiate their forced incorporation into imposing state machineries, including especially in terms of religious and administrative institutions – which they may adapt and manipulate, so as to preserve something of themselves in the process. Magnus Fiskesjö

Were, Graeme: Lines that Connect. Rethinking Pattern and Mind in the Pacific. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. 205 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3384-8. Price. $ 38.00

Were's "Lines that Connect" is a bold attempt to retheorise social life in the Pacific in terms of pattern. This is the kernel of an excellent idea that deserves considerable attention. The book itself, however, fails to live up to its promise.

Were begins with the ethnography of Nalik people from New Ireland. In the first section of the book, he explores the significance of *kapkap*, a well-known but previously unstudied valuable made up of a white shell disc overlaid with an incised turtle-shell plate. These striking objects are in use as items of display and ceremonial throughout island Melanesia in different forms.

Surprisingly, *kapkap* are little understood and Were makes it his mission to explicate what these objects mean and how their patterns are implicated in social life. This takes him on an interesting journey through the history of missionisation and social change experienced by Nalik people since the nineteenth century, culminating in an analysis of Nalik adherence to Baha'i religious practice. Throughout, Were attempts to show how pattern has served as a mediator of social relations and a thread of continuity in Nalik social and cultural life.

Continuing its exploration of pattern and social change, the book then turns to consider how indigenous Melanesians co-opted and made use of imported cloth during the colonial period. Were argues that Melanesians did not simply imitate European clothing, nor did they passively respond to missionisation, but actively appropriated textiles to their own purposes. Finally, Were turns to his other field site in Tonga, where he analyses developments in Tongan women's corded textiles such as crochet.

One of the main failings of this book is that it is simply too short for everything that it attempts to undertake. This is Were's first single-authored monograph and curiously, he uses the opportunity to make a cross-cultural analysis of artworks rather than to develop either of the two ethnographic projects that he has undertaken in detail. The exploration of *kapkap* alone would merit a book of twice this volume's 180 pages. Unfortunately, in a book of this length, Were inevitably proceeds through suggestion and assertion rather than patient ethnographic exposition. Similarly, the discussion of colonial Melanesian history and Tongan textiles are too brief and in the former case almost wholly speculative.

Conceptually, "Lines that Connect" is rather a muddle. At the heart of this book is a very good idea: that human life might be rethought in terms of patterns. Pattern is, as Were points out, fundamental to a vast range of human activity. Indeed, drawing on the geometric logic of patterns – their potential to engender new patterns through their own transformation – Were suggests how the idea of pattern as a *relational* form might come to supplant the notion of culture, which he regards as founded on difference rather than relations. It is in this guise that his claim that pattern is a "meta-media" is most convincing – an assertion that he bases on Alfred Gell's now famous discussion of Marquesan designs in "Art and Agency" (Oxford 1998).

The fruitfulness of this idea is immediately apparent. The location of pattern in geometry and the logic of mathematical operations offers to make of pattern what Lévi-Strauss made of incest. That is, pattern might serve as the form to bridge the gap between logical and social relations as the geometry of patterns passes from the leaf and the snail-shell to barkcloth and shell valuables. Indeed, this is clearly what Were intends, when he suggests that pattern, *because of its geometric logic* "transcends any specific incarnation" and therefore (he cites Piaget) plays a role in the formation of specifically human intelligence.

The remainder of the book, however, does not live up to this headline promise. Central to the argument regarding the Nalik material is a formal exploration of *kapkap*. Were draws on Gell's analysis of Marquesan patterns to suggest that the patterns of *kapkap* can logically be generated from one another. He suggests that the "prototype"