

really accomplished. That shortcoming has been evident in the fact that the empirical findings from People's Republic of China are not compatible with those in Taiwan. The rationale behind the author's intention to compare both are two: first, the traditional cultures they have had inherited, and the second, the impact of globalization of nature that they have experienced. However, such admirable ambition is not fulfilled judged after the substance of the discussion. So the title of this book may be a little bit misleading. It is not difficult for a serious reader to discover this imbalance in the course of the presentation and argumentation.

The first two chapters are interesting and rich in cultural and historical discourse. But the analytical link with the remaining chapters may appear to be weak. Especially in the final chapter, the author singles out the critical role of the two different states in transforming the cultural traditions, responding to the globalization influences, and dealing with public environmental protests that have made the "discovering nature" experiences in Taiwan and China fundamentally different. That final word appears to be the counterargument to the overall theme of the book.

In spite of the above mentioned overall reservations, this book is indeed an achievement of environmental sociological endeavor in the recent years, especially in the Asian contexts. Speaking of the discovery of nature and environment in modernizing Taiwan, this book has in effect quite convincingly demonstrated how the two environment-related social movements, i.e., localized antipollution protests and islandwide nature conservation efforts, have actually paved the way for such public discovery. The victim-centered antipollution movements amounted to more than 2,200 cases between 1980 and 2000, which alone have fostered the new concept of "environmental rights" among the general public. On the other hand, the professional middle class-initiated nature conservation movement aiming at saving forestry, river, wilderness, wetlands, costal areas, and migratory birds on the island, has directly facilitated the new development of eco-tourism by means of the establishment of various national parks and nature protection areas. This book, however, does not deal with the third stream of Taiwan's environmental movements, that is, antinuclear movement since 1988. It should be also considered as an integral part of the collective discovery of nature and environment in contemporary Taiwan society.

The discussion on the historical "nonexistence" of the Chinese and Taiwanese traditional conception equivalent to nature/environment in its modern sense is very illuminating. Such important antithesis to the conventional philosophical notion of "unity of heaven and human" points to the historical significance of the rise of the "new perception" of the existence of "environmental-pollution problems" and "natural resources depletion" in modern days. It is indeed a breakdown as well as a breakthrough in the traditional and modern discourse on nature/environment, most noticeably in Taiwan.

No direct equivalence in terminology concerning the environmental awareness does not prevent the emergence

of environmental actions and eco-tourism, and it certainly does not mean that there were no other useful cultural practices and religious beliefs which could actually be mobilized to transcend and even facilitate the modern day concerns about pollution issues. Various Buddhist and Taoist temples played both politically protective and financially supportive roles in several cases of antipollution protests in Taiwan, and so demonstrated that cultural affinity.

Finally, the institutionalization of the new environmentalism as manifested in the rise of environmental civic groups and organizations has once again disclosed the sharp differences in politics and society in Taiwan and China, due to which two different environmentalisms had developed.

All in all, Weller has done a very good job in tracing and telling the story of the rise of environmentalism in Taiwan, and the preliminary comparison with China also provided a useful base for a further fruitful analysis. This anthropological book on the environment should be recommended to those scholars who are watching the ever-changing social contexts in modern Asia.

Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao

**Wreford, Jo Thobeka:** *Working with Spirit. Experiencing Izangoma Healing in Contemporary South Africa*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. 260 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-476-0. (Epistemologies of Healing, 3) Price: \$ 85.00

Jo Thobeka Wreford is one of a growing number of Europeans or "Whites" who have been initiated to the *Izangoma* – her title which will be used through this review – healing tradition widely represented in the Nguni-speaking societies of South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique, parts of Botswana, Zimbabwe, and beyond. The book is an account of her calling and initiation, as well as of her apprenticeship to anthropology, based on her doctoral research. It, therefore, has the double agenda of situating *izangoma* healing in contemporary South Africa, as well as elucidating the study trance healing in current anthropological research.

The "Introduction" lays out the issues of the work and Dr. Wreford's pilgrimage from growing up in Zimbabwe, becoming a professional architect, a time in England during which she experienced personal crisis and serious illness, to her return to South Africa. Chapter 1 "Conversations in Anthropological Theory and Method" tackles scholarly engagement with healers. Chapter 2 "On the Question of Ancestors" looks at the history of the anthropological construction of African ancestors and sets out to recreate another paradigm that is more approachable as knowledge and experience – a "sacred pragmatism" that permits a closer approach to "otherness." Chapter 3 examines the misunderstanding-filled relationship of biomedicine to *izangoma* and argues for more transparent collaboration. Chapters 4–6 relate Wreford's course "through the white": sickness and "being called," accepting the call, having her dreams and experiences interpreted by her teacher-counselors (4); sacrifices and

examinations by a panel of healers leading to a public “graduation” as fully-qualified healer (5); finally, being able to steadily experience “ancestral en-trancement” (6) with her teachers-become-co-healers. Chapter 7 explores the relationship of outside – non-African – *izangoma* like herself to the *Izangoma* community, meeting some initial resistance on the part of some, but ultimately finding widespread acceptance. Chapter 8 discusses the unique opportunity for white *izangoma* in the context of challenges of HIV/AIDS affliction in South African society. This final chapter is in some ways the most interesting in the book because it confronts head on the common fear in the African community that AIDS is “caused by witchcraft,” the very issue at the basis of misunderstandings of African life, society, and healing by the biomedical community. Wreford’s analysis of the persistence of this suspicion despite the common understanding of viral infection of AIDS among South Africans suggests that social codes surrounding sickness, suffering, mortality, and healing involve far more than just bio-physiological features. I return to this below.

Wreford’s portrayal of the anthropological approach to trance healing is oriented to her ultimate recommendations about anthropology’s role in dealing with the region’s serious problem with AIDS. To set the stage for these recommendations later in the book she reviews some of the many programs in medically applied anthropology – e.g., Edward Green’s work on the education of healers in public health campaigns in East and Southern Africa, and more widespread collaborative efforts that bring healers into health education programs, in particular in combating sexually transmitted diseases and dealing with HIV/AIDS. Engaging anthropology to teach public health to healers is one thing, but the anthropologist becoming healer is quite another, with other theoretical ramifications. “Going native” has been a kind of danger zone for anthropologists for a long time, one acutely at the front of Wreford’s mind as she embarked on the double journey of becoming healer and anthropologist. In chapter 2 she reviews some of the writing on the epistemological engagement of subject and object in fieldwork. Finding some value in it being “holistic” (Michael Agar), “dialogic” (Edith Turner), or “participant experience” (Elizabeth Hsu), she however identifies “experiential anthropology” to capture her own stance on these issues. Wreford’s discussion on the merging of action and ethnography are among the most thorough and genuine I have read. It is apparent that she is grappling with her own intense experience with life issues and *ngoma* healing and call, as well as the urge to become a professional anthropologist. There is no sense of contrivance here, rather an exploration of the depths of the conjoined careers of suffering-call-healership and ethnographic exploration and interpretation. As far as method is concerned, she finally embraces “mimetic ethnography” (following Schweder and others) as the most appropriate approach to being *ngoma* healer cum anthropologist. This stance encourages the scholar to live out, to act out, to “mimic” the actions of others in the community that become the ethnographic record.

Already hinted early in the book is Wreford’s strong recommendation that *izangoma-nyanga* healers have a unique contribution to make in coming to terms with the massive AIDS epidemic in South Africa, and presumably elsewhere. This involves not only the application of herbal-based medicines to strengthen the immune system of an infected individual, but more importantly, the ritual purification – cleansing – of the individual who has been polluted through the transgression of social norms and the stigma-paralyzing isolation with which AIDS sufferers are regarded in much South African society. This condition of social marginalization is often referred to in the culturally-specific shorthand of “witchcraft.” To identify a cause, any cause, including witchcraft, the intentional infliction of suffering upon another, is less debilitating in the eyes of many than a totally hopeless death sentence that an HIV positive diagnosis has typically meant. A witchcraft diagnosis brings the misfortune back into the arena of social relations where it can at least be fathomed. Wreford’s second recommendation for the role of *izangoma-nyanga* is that they become the therapists of choice for the ceremonial cleansing of AIDS sufferers who “come out” to their families and the community, thereby gaining acceptance within the social setting that would otherwise disown them. Such a measure would go far to overcome the debilitating denial and secrecy that plagues South African AIDS treatment, and would directly and indirectly contribute to the physical improvement of sufferers. With the growing availability of ARZ medication and treatment of AIDS, there is a great need to work out the social dimensions of the epidemic that have hindered its effective resolution. Yet such an approach, as recommended by Wreford, would require public health authorities and the biomedical community to accept the *izangoma-nyanga* as respected equal partners. That has begun in pilot projects, but it is still unfortunately resisted by the mind-set that considers the *izangoma-nyanga* a vestige of a primitive and largely misguided past.

“Working with Spirits” is an insightful book not only on *izangoma* healers of Southern Africa but of the unique contribution they can make if they are engaged as a resource for the restoration of those suffering Africa’s most severe epidemic. The book should be required reading not just by anthropologists of African ritual and healing but by public health officials, medical professionals working with AIDS sufferers and their families, as well as social service workers and pastoral counselors.

John M. Janzen

**Zougouri, Sita:** *Derrière la vitrine du développement. Aménagement forestier et pouvoir local au Burkina Faso.* Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2008. 274 pp. ISBN 978-91-554-7261-0. (Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 44) Price: skr 225.00

Angesichts des steigenden Energiebedarfs an Brennholz seitens der städtischen Bevölkerung von Ouagadougou / Burkina Faso und der Gefahr einer Umweltkatastrophe infolge der unkontrollierten Abholzung der um