



Healing Powers and Modernity: Traditional Medicine, Shamanism, and Science in Asian Societies

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What is the current state of traditional healing practices in contemporary Asian societies? How are their practitioners faring in the encounter with Western science and its biomedical approach? How are traditional healing practices being transformed by the politics of health within the modern nation-state and by the processes of commodification typical of modern economies? How do patients in Asian societies see the various healing options now open to them?

The authors, all of whom are anthropologists, observe the clashes and complementarities between traditional therapies and biomedicine, which, in its many manifestations, is the dominant form of medicine supported by national governments, and is emblematic of the modernity to which they aspire. Some of the medical traditions, such as the sophisticated herbal-humoral systems of Tibetan medicine and Indian Ayurveda, are becoming well known in the West, both through scholarly study and through their increasing popularity with Western patients interested in their healing potential. This book adds a new dimension to their study, being focused unlike most previous writing on practice rather than textual tradition.

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