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Edited by William Sax and Claudia Lang

The Movement for Global Mental Health

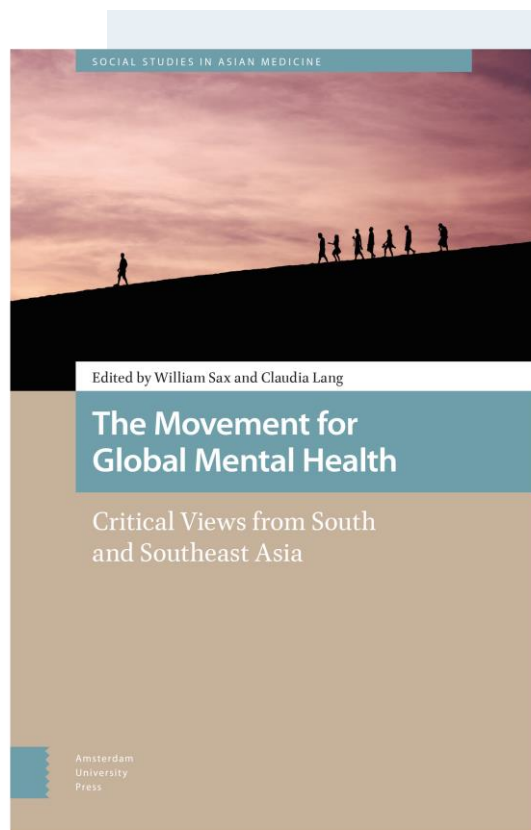
Critical Views from South and Southeast Asia

In *The Movement for Global Mental Health: Critical Views from South and Southeast Asia*, prominent anthropologists, public health physicians, and psychiatrists respond sympathetically but critically to the Movement for Global Mental Health (MGMH). They question some of its fundamental assumptions: the idea that “mental disorders” can clearly be identified; that they are primarily of biological origin; that the world is currently facing an “epidemic” of them; that the most appropriate treatments for them normally involve psycho-pharmaceutical drugs; and that local or indigenous therapies are of little interest or importance for treating them. The contributors argue that, on the contrary, defining “mental disorders” is difficult and culturally variable; that social and biographical factors are often important causes of them; that the “epidemic” of mental disorders may be an effect of new ways of measuring them; and that the countries of South and Southeast Asia have abundant, though non-psychiatric, resources for dealing with them. In short, they advocate a thoroughgoing mental health pluralism.

BIOGRAPHY

William S. (‘Bo’) Sax has taught at Harvard University, the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg. He has published extensively on pilgrimage, gender, theater, aesthetics, ritual healing and medical anthropology.

Claudia Lang is currently an associate professor (Heisenberg) of anthropology at University of Leipzig, Germany. Before, she was a postdoctoral researcher in Paris, France. She is currently working on the digitization of mental health and on environmental health.



Social Studies in Asian Medicine
April 2021
346 pages
Hardback
156 x 234 mm
€109.00 / £99.00 / \$136.00
€108.99 / £98.99 / \$135.99

ISBN 9789463721622
e-ISBN 9789048550135
BISAC MED102000 / MED105000 / MED004000
BIC MBPK / MBN / 1FM

KEYWORDS

asian medicine, mental health, psychiatry,
medical pluralism, medical anthropology

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: Global Mental Health: Critical Views from South Asia and Beyond - William Sax and Claudia Lang

Critical Histories

2. Mental Ills for All: Genealogies of Global Mental Health - Stefan Ecks
3. Schizoid Balinese? Anthropology's Double-Bind: Radical Alterity and Its Consequences for Schizophrenia - Annette Hornbacher
4. Misdiagnosis: Global Mental Health, Social Determinants of Health and Beyond - Anindya Das and Mohan Rao

The Limits of Global Mental Health

5. Jinns and the Proletarian Mumin Subject: Exploring the Limits of Global Mental Health in Bangladesh - Projit Bihari Mukharji
6. Psychedelic Therapy: Diplomatic Re-compositions of Life/Non-life, and the Living and the Dead - Harish Naraindas

Alternatives

7. The House of Love and the Mental Hospital: Zones of Care and Recovery in South India - Murphy Halliburton
8. Ayurvedic Psychiatry and the Moral Physiology of Depression in Kerala - Claudia Lang
9. Global Mental Therapy - William Sax

Afterwords

10. Afterword - Johannes Quack
11. 'Treatment' and Why We Need Alternatives: An Autoethnographic Reflection on Psychiatric Incarceration in India - Anonymous

Index

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