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0521548411 - Discovering Nature: Globalization and Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan

Robert P. Weller

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Discovering Nature

Robert Weller's richly documented account describes the extraordinary transformations which have taken place in Chinese and Taiwanese responses to the environment across the twentieth century. Indeed, as the author points out, within a relatively short time both places can be said to have "discovered" a new concept of nature. The book focuses on nature tourism, anti-pollution movements, and policy implementation to show how the global spread of Western ideas about nature has interacted with Chinese traditions. Inevitably these interactions have been reworked and reconstituted within the local context, and differences of understanding across groups have caused problems in administering environmental reforms. These differences will have to be resolved if the dynamic transformations of the 1980s and 1990s are to be maintained in the twenty-first century. In spite of a more than a century of independent political development, a comparison between China and Taiwan reveals surprising similarities, showing how globalization and shared cultural traditions have outweighed political differences in shaping their environments. The book will appeal to a broad readership from scholars of Asia, to environmentalists, and anthropologists.

ROBERT P. WELLER is Professor of Anthropology and Research Associate of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University. His numerous books and articles on China and Taiwan range from religion to political change, including most recently *Civil Life, Political Change, and Globalization in Asia* (editor, 2005).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521548410

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First published 2006

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-83959-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-83959-9 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-54841-0 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-54841-1 paperback

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Acknowledgments

I have played with this project long enough that my debts are too great to list properly. Foremost among them is the help I have received over the years from Peter L. Berger and my other colleagues at Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, and at its predecessor, the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture. The Institute provided the funding for the first few years of research through a grant from the Bradley Foundation, and its intellectual greenhouse has allowed my ideas to grow. Thanks also to my many other colleagues, especially in the Department of Anthropology at Boston University and the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University, who have been both personally supportive and intellectually challenging.

Much of the work in China took place in cooperation with the Harvard University Committee on the Environment. Most of the research in the People's Republic was funded through them, with grants from the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and the United States Department of Energy. I am grateful for the help and support of William Alford, Leslyn Hall, Chris Nielsen, Karen Polenske, Yuanyuan Shen, and David Zweig on that project. Jiansheng Li was invaluable as a postdoctoral researcher.

The Committee on the Environment also funded some of the research on earlier Chinese ideas about nature. For that part of the book, I especially want to thank Peter Bol, who shared responsibility for that first phase of the project with me, and who is one of the people who got me started on the topic over lunch many years ago. Thanks also to Ping-tzu Chu and Andrew Meyer, both graduate students at the time, who helped so much.

In Taiwan I am grateful above all to Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, who expedited much of the work, and shared his ideas, time, and contacts so generously. Julia Huang was a wonderful research assistant both there and in Boston for several years. Funding for some of the Taiwan research came from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, whose help I gratefully acknowledge.

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viii Acknowledgments

I have presented portions of this material at many talks over the years. The most important to me in shaping the final form of the book was the Hume Memorial Lecture at Yale University, and I am grateful to the organizers for giving me the opportunity. Many thanks also to those who have helped me, often by challenging me, in presentations at the China Environment Forum at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Institute of Chinese Studies at Oxford, the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University, and East Asian studies programs at Bard, Skidmore, and Stanford, and on many occasions at Harvard.

I gratefully acknowledge the permission of Chiang Hsun and Chu Ko to reproduce their paintings here, and I hope my admiration of their work is clear in the text. I also want to thank the Administrative Offices of Taroko National Park and Kending National Park in Taiwan for permission to use their visual materials. Every effort has been made to secure necessary permissions to reproduce copyright material in this work, though in some cases it has proved impossible to trace copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to my notice, I will be happy to include appropriate acknowledgments in any subsequent printing.

Finally, I am especially grateful to the people who have read and commented on parts of the manuscript for this book: Steve Harrell, Richard Louis Edmonds, Thomas Moran, Eugene Anderson, and Wen-hsin Yeh. I learned a great deal from each of them, and many of their comments helped shape the way this book turned out. Any acknowledgment here is inadequate repayment of the labor they put in, but at least it is a token.