Wellness and Tourism: Mind, Body, Spirit, Place
Edited by Robyn Bushell and Pauline J. Sheldon
Cognizant Communication Corporation, New York, 2009
Pp. 304+; Price: US$75 (Pbk); ISBN: 1-882345-51-7

This pioneering volume, based on papers presented at the 2006 INTO seminar on the Balearic Islands, is the first comprehensive attempt to examine on the conceptual and the practical level the interface of the domains of wellness and tourism, and the emergence of "wellness tourism" as a niche market of the tourist industry. The principal orientation of the book is that of business management; most contributors belong to various management departments and tourism schools; a few are sociologists or geographers, specializing in tourism.

The aim of this book was to 'provide a conceptual framework for the investigation of wellness tourism, an assessment of the state-of-the-art of the field, and a platform [for] future research' (p.4). It consists of fourteen chapters and three case studies (and a bibliographical appendix), varying widely in terms of focus, clarity and relevance to the book's principal aim. They cover a broad range of topics, from attempts to deal with conceptual issues related to wellness tourism, and discussions of its various specific manifestations, to descriptions of wellness tourism activities in particular countries.

"Wellness" is an elusive, vaguely bounded concept, comprising a heterogeneous array of practices, performed in a wide range of institutional settings. In their introductory chapters (1 and 2) the editors seek to come to grips with that vagueness. They offer a typology of concrete wellness practices, ranging from a desire for bodily wellness (medical treatments, health and fitness), to methods of spiritual transformation. They seek to demarcate the vague boundaries of the overlap between the domains of wellness and tourism, and to offer a definition of "wellness tourism"; they then turn to the relationship between wellness tourism and the broader issues of quality of life, health promotion and sustainability.

The spectrum of wellness tourism practices, listed or discussed by the contributors is extremely wide. Kelly and Smith (Chapter 5) offer a six-fold classification of such practices (Table 5.1), according to the kind of wellness they offer: whether they treat the body, the mind or disease, enhance beauty, proffer experience of spirituality or facilitate self-expression. But an integrated, holistic pursuit of bodily, mental and spiritual wellness is suggested as the most preferable wellness practice. Several contributors deal with various specific forms of wellness tourism, such as medical travel (Henderson, Chapter 13), the pursuit of health in tourism (Sönmez and Apostolopoulos, Chapter 3, Powis and O'Leary, Chapter 4), spas (White, Case Study 2) and outdoor adventure tourism (Kulczycki and Lück, Chapter 10).

Several chapters discuss wellness tourism in particular countries, such as Canada (Williams, Chapter 9), Australia (White, Case Study 2) and Taiwan (Chen and Prebensen, Case Study 3). Mansfield and McIntosh's chapter (Chapter 11) is exceptional, in that it deals with the wellness of the hosts, derived from hosting Israeli youth tourists in New Zealand.

In the spirit of the series in which the book was published, both editors and contributors seek to show how various forms of "wellness" treatments and experiences could be turned into products of tourist establishments. For example, Sheldon and Park (Chapter 6) discuss the components of a sustainable wellness destination, and the varieties of "wellness modalities and experiences" such destinations could offer. Dann and Norstrand (Chapter 8) stress the importance of multi-sensory experiences offered by wellness destinations. The contributors discuss a great number of specific wellness treatments, ranging from specific to holistic, proffered by various tourist establishments. The most common example of the former are the ubiquitous "spas," but the editors seek to redirect attention from these highly commercialized forms of often luxurious pampering, to various comprehensive, holistic wellness programs, found in other kinds of establishments. Special attention is paid to (non-religious) pursuits of spirituality, some of them, such as yoga (Ali-Knight, Case Study 1), borrowed from Eastern religious practices, as cardinal contributors to wellness. The transformative potential of various wellness pursuits in peoples' lives are also examined (Lean, Chapter 12).

Though Bushell in her introductory chapter (Chapter 2) offers an extensive discussion of basic concepts and theories relevant to the topic of the book, the treatment of most issues by the contributors is highly empiricist. The book is rich in data, but features few, if any, insights of wider theoretical significance. The editors (Chapter 14) in fact acknowledge that the field is still "undertheorized." With the exception of Crouch's (Chapter 7) somewhat inscrutable chapter, in which wellness is approached as a 'process rather than category' (p. 116), most contributors do not refer to contemporary post-modern approaches in the sociological literature, which might have a considerable bearing on the analysis of the dynamics of the interplay of wellness and tourism, as both increasingly become mingled with everyday life.

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Authors frequently state their concern for the possible problematic impact of development of wellness tourism on local communities, and stress the need for sharing the benefits of such development with them. The editors draw attention to a possible analogy between ecotourism, which had an 'intended highly ethical base and yet in various modalities quite exploitative reality' (p. 229) and wellness tourism, and hence advocate a focus on policy-related aspects in researchers' definitions of the latter. However, despite concerns, the contributors did not pay much attention in their analyses to the specific social and political processes involved in the establishment of wellness facilities in often remote destinations, and rarely discuss the means by which the marginalization of the local population could be prevented. Neither did they pay much heed to ethical issues in the attempt to commercialize some welfare practices; thus, the endeavor to turn such quests as spirituality into, as it were, a routine commodified service, appears in the eyes of this reviewer as somewhat paradoxical.

Though the various components of a "wellness industry" are rapidly growing, the theoretical standing of "wellness" as a concept is still undecided. Despite the editors' efforts, it is not yet clear whether the diverse practices subsumed under the term have sufficient commonalities for a field of "wellness studies," analogous to that of "tourist studies" to emerge in the future. "Wellness tourism," as an intersection of wellness and tourism practices, may well become a recognized niche market for practical purposes, but it is questionable whether it has sufficient internal coherence to become a recognizable sub-specialty of tourism studies, analogous to such sub-specialties as eco-tourism or heritage tourism.

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Polar Tourism: Human, Environmental and Governance Dimensions
Edited by Patrick T. Maher, Emma J. Stewart and Michael Lück
Cognizant Communication Corporation USA, 2011
Pp. 306; Price: US$ 110 (Pbk); ISBN: 978-1-882345-55-7

The subject of polar tourism seems to have no ending for specialists who study it in various aspects, this book being part of the publisher's Tourism Dynamic Series of books. The team of Maher, Stewart and Lück has come out with another very useful collection of chapters that assess, in this case, the human, environmental, and governance dimensions of tourism. In the Arctic, that means resident attitudes toward tourism in Cambridge Bay and Pont Inlet, Canada; environmental aspects of beluga whale-watching vessels in Churchill, Manitoba; and tourism strategies and environmental labeling in Greenland. The same 'dimensions' for Antarctic tourism include the aspect of 'Antarctic ambassadors,' with perspectives from the Ross Sea region; effects of human activity on Weddell seals; and a long-term strategy for tourism and decision-making within the Antarctic Treaty System.

Additional sections of the book include chapters on sub-Arctic tourism and sub-Antarctic tourism, with somewhat the same themes, in northern Ontario and northern Europe, and Australia's Macquarie Island and New Zealand's islands (Snares, Bounty, Auckland, Campbell, and Antipodes), respectively. All the southern islands are heavily visited, with tourism managed by strict procedures in place by their parent countries. The 16 chapters by specialists in their fields and with field experience in tourism, cover a cross-section of another aspect of tourism that continues to evolve as investigators provide a comprehensive assessment of the subject, and offer suggestions as to its improvement. Enzenbacher points out in the chapter on Conclusions that polar tourism is not static, but continues to evolve in response to consumer demand and requires specific management techniques, rules, and regulations. The cooperation between tour operators and regulators is key to making the industry work properly without negative impacts. I recommend the book to a growing audience of those who have experienced tourism in polar regions, now numbering in hundreds of thousands, and those who want to find out more about it to be assured that it is conducted properly. For a companion book on the subject, by the same three editors, see a review in January 2011 of The Polar Times, p. 26 - "Cruise Tourism in Polar Regions: Promoting Environmental and Social Sustainability?"

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Health and Wellness Tourism
By Melanie Smith and László Puczkó
Butterworth Heinemann, USA, 2009
Pp. 400+; Price US$ 49 (Pbk): ISBN: 978-0-7506-8343-2

This is a timely text that examines the (re)emergence of health and wellness tourism in the current context of the tourism industry and a society where there is renewed interest in health, lifestyle and stress management through leisure pursuits. The book offers useful insight into both the historical context of health tourism in particular, and frameworks for analysing new and emerging trends in wellness.
Comprising of three sections, the book devotes part 1 to the history, definitions and scope of health and wellness tourism. The definitional and typological discussions here are useful, albeit somewhat repetitive in places throughout the book. The reader is offered an understanding of the types of health and wellness tourism products, as well as insight into the types of visitors likely to partake in each. What is apparent is the diversity of both tourism and tourist within this sector, which makes generalizations difficult. Place specificity, uniqueness and authenticity are issues that are rightfully addressed.

Part 2 takes a business approach, examining management, marketing and consumer issues. There is a little over-usage of figures and diagrams, not all of which are clear in their purpose. Typologies of products and visitors appear again in this section, along with short case study boxes. Further, more in-depth case studies appear in section 3. The latter provide good global coverage of the wide range of health and wellness tourism products on offer. The quality of these case studies in terms of depth, critical assessment and industry contextualization is variable.

Overall, this book is a useful text for students and researchers of health, wellness, medical, spiritual tourism, leisure, geography, sociology and business studies. There is adequate coverage of a range of product, visitor and case study perspectives to give a grounding in the subject matter, its origins, trends and potential future developments. Given the relatively recent attention to this sector in the academic literature, this text is an important contribution. More in-depth analysis, trends, and longitudinal studies on how the sector changes over time and place will be useful in any future editions.

Overall, a beneficial contribution to the literature in this key area of new tourism.

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The Three Secrets of Green Business: Unlocking Competitive Advantage in a Low Carbon Economy
By Gareth Kane
Earthscan Publication, London, UK, 2010
Pp. 202; Price: £16.99 (Pbk); ISBN: 978-1-84407-874-5

Environmental issues have always been the cause of critical concern. For decades environmentalists have tirelessly invested their energy in seeking solutions for sound environment management. Their efforts have emerged in the concepts of Sustainability and Sustainable Development.

Gareth Kane's book The Three Secrets of Green Business: Unlocking Competitive Advantage in a Low Carbon Economy thus seeks to resolve the prime question that lies in front of the developers and businessmen - 'Why should you take the environment seriously when you have a business to run?'

The book consists of five chapters besides a conclusion. The first chapter forms the basis of the book and provides a brief on the current condition of the Mother Earth who is struggling for its survival against problems like acid rain, ozone layer depletion, climate change and the like. The author says that as the world getting impacted by the environmental issues, sustainability has to be achieved also in terms of economy, society and ecology. Thus he has proposed a few models to achieve sustainability, namely - the traditional model, the three-legged stool model and the fried-egg model. The chapter also includes the Precautionary Principles that were 'included in the Rio Declaration' as an outcome of the 'First Earth Summit in 1992.' The chapter closes with enlisting of environmental business drivers in terms of opportunities and threats. This introductory chapter appears as a preface to the next chapter.

The second chapter has the core content of the book; it discusses the three secrets. The first secret 'Understand the Business Case' states that one must 'treat the environment agenda as an opportunity, not a threat.' Yet the author warns readers at various places that in concern of the environment they must not overlook their business. The second secret 'What to Do' points out two broad approaches to achieve environmental sustainability: eco-efficiency and eco-system models. According to the author eco-efficiency (resource efficiency) is concerned with 'the amount of utility extracted from each unit of natural resource' and eco-system models that work on the Biothinking Principle of Solar, Cyclic and Safe are concerned with the type of materials and energy to be used for business and how we use them (p.20). The third secret is 'How to Do it'. This section states that an organization must 'take some huge leaps and lots of small steps' in order to develop and contribute to the environmental well-being. It brings along two terms - kaikaku (big radical steps undertaken to deliver quality products) and kaizen (continuous and small improvements in existing products). This chapter is the launching pad for the core message of the book. It is brief yet quite comprehensive.

'Preparing to Go Green' is the third chapter of the book. It provides a series of steps of changes' to be brought about in the organisation for a greener future. How and why one must encourage the employees to undergo change, what is the need for reinforcements and interventions, what is the need for an Environment Management System (EMS), why should performance be measured against a baseline, how
can one create a strategy and so on? Such questions form the crux of the chapter. Accordingly, the chapter holds distinct divisions of key ideas for a greener change. 'Carbon footprinting' and 'Marketing green products and services' enjoy special emphasis. The author sustains his focus to green marketing even in this rather long chapter. This chapter successfully achieves its aim of delivering basic guidelines for a greener business in simple and lucid language.

'Small Steps' is the fourth chapter of the book. It focuses on the easy and 'incremental' actions to cut-down waste of materials, water and energy to make a business 'cleaner and greener'. The chapter includes the techniques that are in vogue for improving environmental performance without affecting business. They are well-spelt out and cover the questions of utmost concern. Gareth Kane provides various guidelines so as to overcome them in a viable manner. 'Carbon Offsetting' is among the main themes of discussion in this chapter. It has been well-elucidated. The author describes each issue very clearly and offers practical solutions for entrepreneur, managers and factory owners.

The fifth chapter of the book discusses the 'Huge Leaps' that would actually lead towards a 'truly sustainable business'. It incorporates the radical concepts that would help industries turn towards 'true green innovation'. This chapter includes various changes that need to be incorporated in the processes and product models to lead one's business to greater profits. The author proposes introduction of novel technologies like - nanotechnology and change in business models like - industrial symbiosis. The author discusses a few but effective and feasible methods for developing eco-friendly products for a greener business. Like others, this chapter also provides practical guidelines to help anyone who is concerned with developing sustainable solutions for the environment.

The book doesn't close at chapter five. It is followed by a conclusion and three appendixes. The conclusion succinctly re-caps all the chapters and helps the readers if they are seeking external assistance. The appendixes: Sources of Help, Checklists and Brainstorming Tool, are handy and help the managers and owners to quickly look-out for the changes they want to incorporate in their organisation/business.

The book presents a simple and light-hearted approach. It is timely and topical. The language is simple and packed with ample examples that undeniably contribute to a better comprehension. Gareth Kane has effectively condensed all the hot issues of the environment and rendered them in high readability. It is a handbook that can prove beneficial to anyone who is environment sensitive - be it the organisation managers or the common groups or the youth. This reviewer is of the opinion that it should be recommended to everyone, especially the youngsters, because it is only then a positive change can be brought about on this planet. The book is brilliant and enlightening.

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