In the spirit of Uganga - inspired healing and healership in Tanzania

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This book is about the role and practice of traditional health care in Tanzania and the interrelationship that exists between illness, healing and vocation. Based on a comparative ethnographic research, the practices of two popular spirit healers in Southern Tanzania are described in detail. The study entails historical, cultural and religious features of the healing practices, the creative and metaphysical skills employed by the healers and the physical and psychosocial problems of the clients. The healers are from various cultural backgrounds and settings with a good reputation for their specialist skills. One is a prophet- or faith healer and the other is an ancestral lineage healer. To broaden the scope of traditional health care in Southern Tanzania, a third specialist is discussed, namely the witchdoctor, represented by two male and two female healers. This part contains an online presentation of two healers which enables the reader to capture the atmosphere in which the healers practice and the sensations that are involved in musical and ritual healing. The book demonstrates that the instrumental and symbolic means of traditional religion and healing, including magic and sorcery, are an outspoken means of reacting to and coping with the changes of time. When these constraints are not sufficiently relieved or remedied with the help of traditional or musical rituals, spirit affliction may be inherited as in a genetic disorder. Occasionally, it may even cause an epidemic of spirit affliction among lineages or ethnic groups.

The descriptive sections of this book are based on accounts and experiences of healers and their clients to involve an African point of view. That makes it a resourceful book for practising professionals and academics working in the field of medical anthropology, (trans)cultural psychiatry and African religion.