



Under the Rattlesnake: Cherokee Health and Resiliency (Contemporary American Indians)

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For the Cherokee, health is more than the absence of disease; it includes a fully confident sense of a smooth life, peaceful existence, unhurried pace, and easy flow of time. The natural state of the world is to be neutral, balanced, with a similarly gently flowing pattern. States of imbalance, tension, or agitation are indicative of physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual illness and whether caused intentionally through omission or commission, or by outside actions or influences, the result affects and endangers the collective Cherokee. Taking a true anthropological four-field approach, Lefler and her colleagues provide a balanced portrait of Cherokee health issues. Topics covered in this title include: an understanding of the personal and spiritual impact of skeletal research among the Cherokee; the adverse reactions to be expected in well-meaning attempts to practice bioarchaeology; health, diet, and the relationship between diet and disease; linguistic analysis of Cherokee language in historical and contemporary contexts describing the relationship of the people to the cosmos; culturally appropriate holistic approaches to disease prevention and intervention methodologies; and, the importance of the sacred feminine and the use of myth and symbolism within this matrilineal culture. All aspects - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual - figure into the Cherokee concept of good health. By providing insight into the Cherokee perspective on health, wellness, and the end of the life cycle, and by incorporating appropriate protocol and language, this work reveals the necessity of a diversity of approaches in working with all Indigenous populations.

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