



# Illness and Healing among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation

*Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney*

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## **Illness and Healing among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation** Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney

Originally published in 1981, this book explores the issue of how a society understands human illness in the absence of a germ theory. This is done through an interpretation of the illness categories and healing practices of the Sakhalin Ainu, a hunting and gathering people resettled in Japan. The text illustrates how illnesses relate to the Ainu view of the universe and how their medical system is intimately interwoven with their moral cosmology and social networks. Even such minor ailments as headaches and boils are meticulously classified to mirror the classifications of such basic perceptual structures as space and time. With the Ainu medical system as an example, this book probes questions central to research in symbolic, medical and linguistic anthropology, structuralism, and the anthropology of women.

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