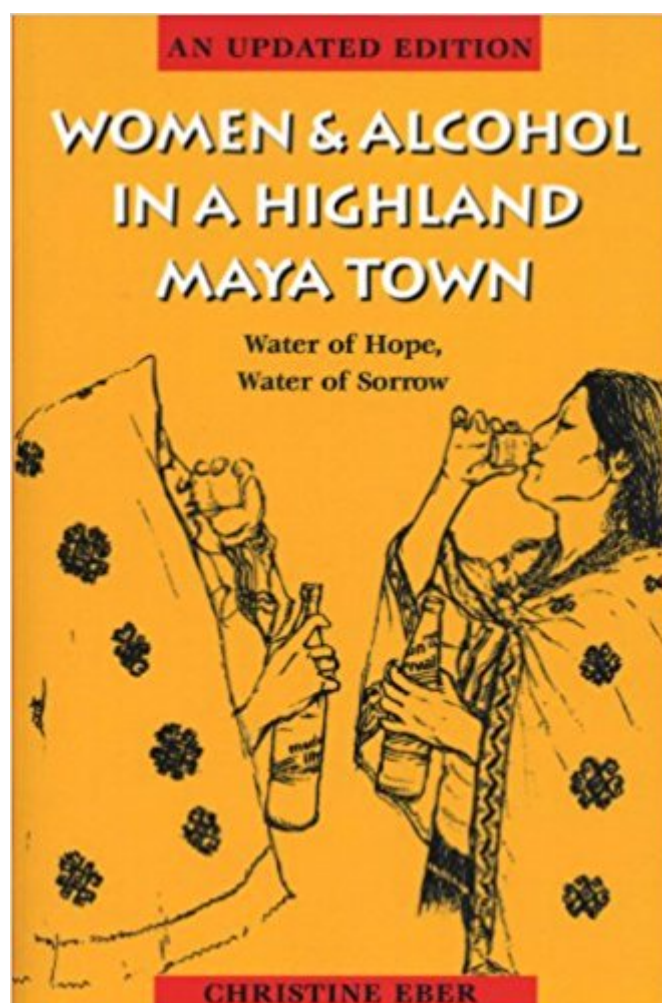


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Women And Alcohol In A Highland Maya Town : Water Of Hope, Water Of Sorrow Revised Edition



Synopsis

This pioneering ethnography looks at women and drinking in the Highland Chiapas, Mexico, community of San Pedro Chenalhó to address the issues of women's identities, roles, relationships, and sources of power. In a new epilogue, Christine Eber describes how events of the last decade, including the Zapatista uprising, have strengthened women's resolve to gain greater control over their lives by controlling the effects of alcohol in the community.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Women and Alcohol is a book worth reading.... The book's informal tone and interesting topic make it appealing to a wide audience, including casual readers and undergraduate classes. Furthermore, Eber's cross-cultural insight into alcohol dependency is relevant not only for anthropologists but also for health care professionals and others who deal with substance abuse." (Latin American Indian Literatures Journal)"In this well-written ethnography, Christine Eber weaves together the critical issues of gender relations, religious change, domestic violence, and drinking in highland Chiapas.... This is a fine ethnography that is a must-read for all interested in gender relations in contemporary Latin America. It is also one of the best current discussions on the little-studied phenomenon of religious change in Mexico.... Eber also provides a wonderful model of how to write a readable ethnography that treats its subjects with dignity and respect and honestly integrates the trials and tribulations of the ethnographer in the process." (Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute)

Christine Eber is Professor Emerita of Anthropology at New Mexico State University. Her previous books include *Women and Alcohol in a Highland Maya Town: Water of Hope, Water of Sorrow* and *Women of Chiapas: Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope* (coedited with Christine Kovic). She is a founding member of Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection, a network of volunteers that assists Chiapas weavers to sell their products through fair trade.

Eber makes me understand how strong women are, in almost everything they do. This book is worth reading, not only for anthropologists but also everybody interested in Maya traditions.

The scope of this book is much broader than the title implies. Like all good ethnographers, the author sought answers about alcohol use and abuse in the daily activities and religious practices of the community. Thus, she lived in the highland Mayan town of San Pedro Chenalhó in Chiapas, Mexico, and looked at the place of alcohol in the social structure, including the paradoxical role of rum which is aligned with religious experience, but with the potential to do harm. However, in living in the community and in asking questions about drinking, the author necessarily broadened her theme to include child-rearing practices, shamanism, and the control exerted over envy among community members. Although based in anthropological research, this book is very readable. The anecdotes are interesting. Moreover, the author is forthright about her own role in the community, her personal experience with drunkenness in Tenejapa, and the potential problems she generated for one family by her presence in their household. I have only minor quibbles with this book. The inclusion of Aztec traditions with respect to gender and alcohol could have been omitted, and terms such as "time-out" might have been briefly defined the first time they were used. But, overall, this is an essential resource for anyone interested in contemporary Mayan culture.

I really liked this ethnography. Granted, I purchased it as a requirement for a college anthropology course; however, it was easy to read and very interesting material. The author really immersed herself within the Mayan culture and it adds personal anecdotes that I feel the book would be lacking without. I would recommend this text to anyone interested in the subject matter.

The history, culture and lives of Mayan women are complex, there isn't an easy way to describe the family relationships and the struggles - family, economic and with alcohol. This is an academic research book, so it isn't light reading, but the author's style helped me to visualize and understand the challenges women face in Chiapas

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