

## Choice

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### Outstanding Title!

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**Blood magic: the anthropology of menstruation**, ed. with introd. by Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb. California, 1988. 326p bibl index ISBN 0520060857, \$45.00; ISBN 0520063503, \$12.95

The first major collection on anthropological interpretations of menstruation. These nine essays treat varied interpretations: symbolic, social, psychological, political, and biological. The editors contribute a lengthy, useful introduction to this biological phenomenon and the interpretations given to it by different peoples; moreover, they provide discussions for each section. Most of the chapters, based in a variety of ethnographic contexts, attempt to explain the relationship between menstruation and female subordination; the female body, its images, and the sociocultural position of women in society are also treated. The notes and bibliographic references are combined, creating an obstacle for readers who want to use the chapters selectively. A well-edited and useful contribution to the continually growing literature on the cultural constructions of gender (see *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. by Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, CH, May '82).

--L. Beck, *Washington University*

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