

# The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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## CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN - APRIL 1972

Dear Friends:

While we visit distant parts of the world in search of drama and adventure, there are strange customs in our own country which are endangered by the rapid expansion of our industrialized society. In the bleak mesalands of New Mexico and Arizona are old communities where the religions and customs of the Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni peoples linger on with small but devout followings. Most of the beliefs of these culture groups are animistic, concerned with a living universe of visible and invisible powers which extend but a short distance from the isolated villages.

One morning nearly thirty years ago, I took a plane from the Grand Canyon to the village of Oraibe. Ernest Thompson Seton accompanied me, and our purpose was to watch the ceremony of welcoming the gods from the great mountains where they dwelt. Our plane was small, with only one engine, for there was no landing field except the desert. One modern innovation was a wind sock which I learned later disappeared regularly. After a rough landing, we climbed the steep path which led up to the little adobe town. It was a very important and sacred day, and the Indians were dressed in their best velvet shirts and finest turquoise jewelry. It was immediately noticeable that very few men were present, and I assumed they were in the kiva. This is an underground room in the central square, from the opening in the roof of which a long ladder projected at an acute angle. The people were very friendly and as the day was hot, invited us to share in the shade of their homes. It was hard to tell how many persons were present, but there were probably two hundred, counting the small children.

Things move slowly on the mesas, and sacred matters are not subject to the tyranny of time. Ultimately, however, there was a heavy rumble of drums, and a hush of expectancy descended upon the assemblage. From the kiva emerged a number of masked dancers who had spent the previous night in their subterranean chapel purifying their souls with the mystic chants of long ago. The villagers recognized these men as sons, fathers, or husbands; but the magic of the masks temporarily transformed the wearers into supernatural beings. They had become spirit ancestors--heroes of long ago and guardian spirits that had taken flesh for a few hours. In addition to the grotesque masks with their pendant feathers and geometric paintings, the dancers also wore curiously designed kilts trimmed with fur, and anklets from which were suspended little tinkling bells. Masks are essential parts of animistic paraphernalia throughout the world. The dancers at Oraibe were similar to the masked priests of Egypt, the Shaman of Siberia, the devil dancers of Tibet, and the strangely costumed witch doctors of Africa.

At Oraibe, masks were homemade, but the preparing of them was completely ritualistic. When an Indian decided to make a mask for his own use, he had to do all the work behind his back; and he should not so much as glance at the mask until it was painted and decorated and finished. If he transgressed this rule, he would surely die a painful and lingering death. He must never put on the mask except on the specified occasions when he had purified himself and offered up his body to be inhabited by a spirit not his own. When this spirit came, the dancer was transformed into another person. There was no deceit or subterfuge when a villager said, "Today the gods come," and the ritual is made more perfect when these unearthly beings present little flat baskets of yellow corn meal as a symbol of good fortune and fecundity.

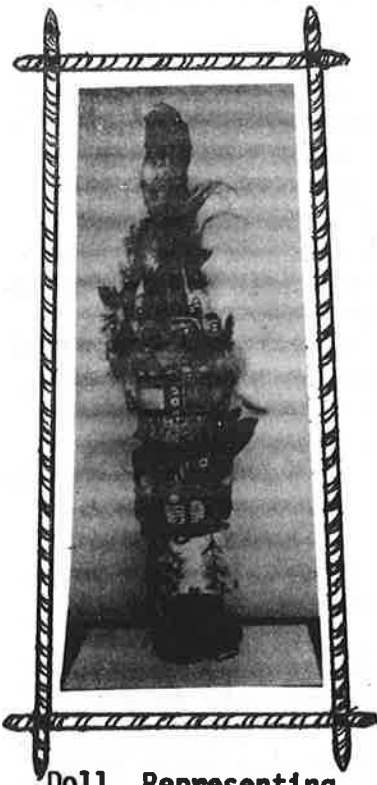
We were all watching, but so far as I could tell there were no other Anglos present. As the dance progressed and the chanting grew louder and the drums roared like distant cannon, a sandstorm came to Oraibe. The air was so laden with dust that we could not see across the open square. The shadowy forms of the dancers appeared as through clouds and then vanished again. At last the sound became so intense that its effect was eerie and almost hypnotic. It seemed impossible that we were in prosaic United States in the twentieth century. The great moment was approaching when the holy visitors from the blue-capped mountains would come to bless the community. Then, out of the mist they came, whirling and twisting, shaking their rattles and whirling their bullroarers.

In the course of the dancing they approached groups of bystanders and gesticulated with their hands as though causing magnetic currents to flow from them. The storm howled, tearing at curtains and blankets; and the top of the mesa became a fragment of some phantom universe. The number of dancers must have been nearly one hundred, and although all seemed to be pandemonium, the dancers moved with extraordinary precision. Later when the sandstorm had faded away and the ceremony was over, the surface of the open square resembled waves breaking on a seashore, the sets of the ripples in the sand being the impressions of the bare feet of the dancers.

The gods came to bring blessings to the people. There were children to be welcomed into the mystery of the spirits who walk with men. There were unborn babes to be brought safely into the world. There were young couples who should not be barren, and old folks who should live in peace. Below the mesa the corn must ripen, and the wells must not go dry. The spirits of the ancient dead will rejoice because the living have kept the ways of the "Olds" and the "Trues."

We had witnessed one of mankind's oldest religions. The gods from the mountains then circled the square in single file, and, walking away, disappeared over the edge of the mesa by a different path than that which we had ascended. They were going back to a kind of terrestrial paradise, for the gods of the mesaland loved their good earth more than any verdant place beyond the sky.

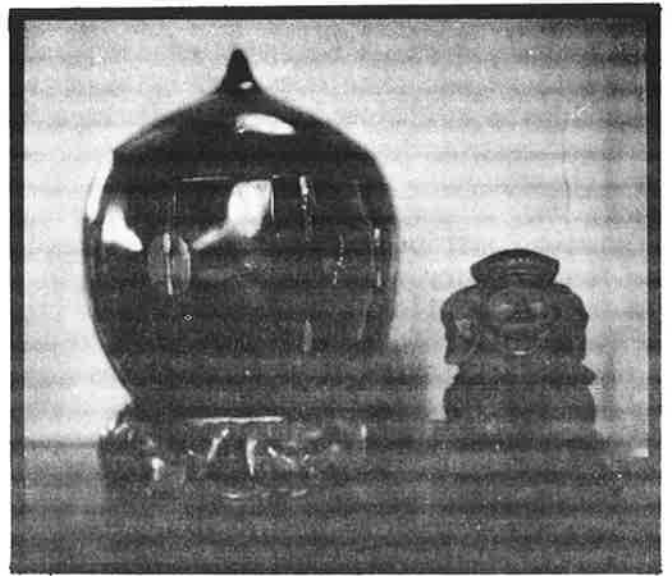
Later, the Indians shared some of their fetishes with us and regretted that the men of the families had been "called away."



Doll Representing

Kachina Dancer

Among recent arrivals from the Orient is a delightful shrine containing an image of the Japanese folk deity of wealth, Daikokusen, or Mr. Daikoku. This shrine is in the form of the cintamani, or radiant jewel, of Buddhism--a form, incidentally, which came into Europe from the Near East and is a favorite shape for church steeples. Mr. Daikoku is the patron protector of the Izumo Shrine, the oldest Shinto sanctuary in Japan. His name means "the great black," and he can be traced directly to the East Indian god, Shiva, whose ferocious aspect, Mahakala, is also a familiar figure in the Tibetan pantheon. The Japanese, an optimistic people, transformed the Indian Lord of Death into a cheerful, rotund figure standing on two rice bales and accompanied by rats. Daikoku has another meaning. The central column which upholds the roof of a house is called the Daikoku Pillar, associating this rather humorous godling with the stability of the home, which in turn is an appropriate symbol of the stability of humanity. In one hand, Daikoku holds a magic mallet, and whatever he strikes with this pours forth gold. He also carries a large sack on his back filled with gifts. Though seldom recognized in official Shintoism, Daikoku is privately adored by all seeking to improve their fortunes. The shrine pictured here shows the result of Kobo Daishi's effort to amalgamate Shintoism with Buddhism. The sacred pearl is essentially the symbol of the light of Buddha, but in this case it is supported by figures of rats. Altogether, this is a most curious example of folk religion and may very well be unique.



Our April exhibit at headquarters features "Magic, Myths, and Medicine," and we have gathered some fascinating material dealing with various phases of mental and physical healing. There will be rare acupuncture diagrams, examples of leaves from old herbals, talismans, charms, early anatomical figures, Oriental mandalas, Navajo Indian sand paintings, and other curiosities. We hope that those of you living in the area will make it a point to attend this fascinating display.

We will be writing you soon again, and in the meantime please accept our thanks for your support and encouragement.

Always most sincerely,

*Marilyn P. Hall*

## SPECIAL NOTICE FROM OUR BOOK DEPARTMENT

A number of important and scholarly volumes in our fields of interest are now available in attractive and accurate reprints. Most of those listed here are included in Mr. Hall's list of recommended reading and have long been rare and out of print. To these have been added selected works by outstanding modern authors. The Contributors' Bulletin will list additional works in future issues.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Price</u>
Cosmic Consciousness	R.M. Bucke	\$ 6.00
Cosmic Memory	Rudolf Steiner	6.50
Cosmo Conception (Rosicrucian)	Max Heindel (P)	4.50
The Count of Monte Cristo	Dumas	3.25
Creation Myths of Formosan Natives	Arundel Del Re	3.75
Creative Ikebana	N. Ohno	7.50
Crude Black Molasses	Cyril Scott	1.00
Culture--Man's Adaptive Dimension	M.F.A. Montagu (P)	2.50
The Cosmic Doctrine	Dione Fortune	4.00
Clairvoyance	C.W. Leadbeater	2.25
The Curious Lore of Precious Stones	Geo. F. Kunz (P)	4.50
Commentaries on Living (Volumes 1,2,3)	J. Krishnamurti (P)	1.75ea
Culpeper's Complete Herbal Remedies	Nicholas Culpeper (P)	2.00
The Cosmic Womb (Man's Relationship to the Infinite)	Arthur W. Osborn (P)	2.25
The Comte de Sainte Germaine	I. Cooper-Oakley	7.50
Dayspring of Youth	"M"	8.50
Death and Rebirth of Psychology	Ira Progoff	6.50
Death of Socrates, The	R. Guardini (P)	2.45
Depth Psychology and Modern Man	Ira Progoff	6.50
Depth Psychology and a New Ethic	Eric Neumann	7.00
Development of Personality, The #17	Carl G. Jung	6.00
The Dharma--The Religion of Enlightenment	P. Carus	2.00
Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?	G.R.S. Mean	10.00
Dionysus Myth and Cult	W.F. Otto (P)	2.65
Distilled Wisdom	Alfred Montapert	5.00
The Divining Rod	Barrett and Besterman	7.50
Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition	G.R.S. Mean (P)	2.75
Dowsing	W.H. Trinder	2.75
Dweller on Two Planets	Phylos	8.50
The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui Neng	Trans. A.F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam (P)	2.25
A Dictionary of Pagan Religions	Weddeck and Baskin	10.00
The Doors of Perception (Heaven and Hell)	Aldous Huxley (P)	1.45
Dalton's Table of Houses		4.00
Dictionary of Astrology	James Wilson	12.95
Early Greek Philosophy	John Burnet (P)	2.25
An Earth Dweller's Return	Phylos (Tibetan)	8.50
The Earth Gods	Kahlil Gibran	3.95
Education and the Significance of Life	J. Krishnamurti	2.50
Eleusis and Eleusian Mysteries	Geo. Mylonas (P)	4.95

These books may be ordered directly from The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on first page). Please add 25¢ for handling on orders of less than \$5.00, and sales tax is to be included by California residents. Note: Prices are subject to change.