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This week we offer a new list featuring non-Western world Occult and Witchcraft, books include preeminent Black scholar Joseph Williams' Voodoo and Obeahs, African and Egyptian mythology, Asian sword alchemy and Sumatran Batak manuscript book [pustaha]. As always let us know if you have questions or would like images.

Non-Western/BIPOC Occult List


Joseph Omosade Awolalu (J.O. Awolalu) is a Nigerian scholar, educator, and writer. Dr. Awolalu was at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan in Nigeria for many years, and is the author of books and articles on African religious traditions, and particularly those of the Yoruba people.


A world traveler, John Bainbridge's focus on esoterica has resulted in books published on Huna and comparative religions. Huna Huna (Hawaiian for "secret") is the word adopted by the non-Hawaiian New Age author Max Freedom Long (1890-1971) in 1936 to describe his theory of metaphysics. Long cited what he believed to be the spiritual practices of the ancient Hawaiian kahunas (priests) as inspiration; however, contemporary scholars consider the system to be his invention designed through a mixture of a variety of spiritual practices from various cultures, with roots in New Thought and Theosophy, rather than in traditional Hawaiian indigenous beliefs.

Signed by author. [OCLC 4 copies]

3. Batak people of Lake Toba region of North Sumatra. Sumatran Batak divination manuscript book [Pustaha] [Indigenous; divination; Shamanism]. Indonesia, Early to mid-20th century. Unique. Boards stained with natural pigments, little wear to extremities, spotting to wood boards, although in remarkable condition. Repair to a few inner leaves with bark paper. (Two-sided) panel concertina fold; fastened on handcarved alum wood (bark) original boards with lizard sculptural relief and decorative borders; inscribed and drawn on smoothed and pressed; ~closed, measures 9cm x 7.5cm x 5.5cm; illustrated. Handwritten in red and black ink pigments. Remarkable and clean. Very Good+. Hardcover. (#12133) $1,250.00

The 'pustaha' [named by the Batak people of interior province of northern Sumatra, Indonesia] are manuscript books constructed and composed by their "datu" or magicians and healers. Origins of the pustaha remain somewhat clouded to non-indigenous research, although, records of provenance date to the 18th century. The Batak people settled mainly in the Lake Toba region of North Sumatra, and included three dominant dialects: Toba, Angkola, and Mandailing.

"The datu used three essential ritual objects: a magic staff, his medicinal horn, and a bark divination book (pustaha). The text runs parallel to the folds in the bark and is read horizontally from left to right and contain black and red drawings. Batak books use a script that is related to southern Brahmi of India and ancient Javanese writing systems. Like Sanskrit, it is syllabic in nature, and it is widely believed to derive from Sanskrit. The texts deal with divination, magic, and medicine. They could be used to determine auspicious days for ceremonies or new endeavors, or for reference when casting spells, influencing the weather, finding lost objects, diagnosing illness, or prescribing medicine. In addition to appearing in books, writing is found on other ritual objects."-- Bookseller.

The books themselves are frequently made with alim tree-bark; written and illustrated with other natural ink pigments. The pustaha is significant for the Batak, as the

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texts are idiosyncratic to the datu, meaning they are didactic tools for apprentices, but also for members of the community to interpret important decisions and advise on community issues, as reconciled by the datu. The books are often written in note-like script. The script is almost illegible for most members of the community, and indecipherable to Western scholars; however, the syllabe script is thought to be derived from East Indian Sanskrit or to some scholars, Indian Palawa script. Many contemporary pustaha (as this specimen is most likely) were made and sold to tourists of the region, as well. The content of the books vary, but generally are divination books, including diagnosis of illness, protective/destructive magic, and acts of cult. Many of the books are also astrological in nature and contain solar and lunar charts and tables, and in the case of this particular pustaha, which contains animistic figures. This book features a carved lizard in high relief on one of the front boards with carved decorative elements, which is associated with fertility and fertility rites. Many of the figurative illustrations in the book [a spirit] [a god/goddess figure] [wheel] [star] [snake, scorpion], also allude to creation myth, as the 'tendi' manifestation of 'life' and 'death' represented these symbols. The text is inscribed and illustrated on both sides of the bark. Although colonized by the Dutch government in the 19th century, many Batak people retain indigenous religious beliefs, although increasingly marginalized. Similar to the magical amate bark books of San Pablito, Puebla, Mexico. An exceptional and critical book for Indonesia history and culture. Bound in alum tree boards.


"The ritual of rainmaking is one of half a dozen Japanese folk practices and festivals described in this book. The story of rainmaking ceremonies begins with personal experience and then draws on the work of Japanese folklorists to record significant local variations and to construct a general account of the history and purpose of the ceremony. Field research was conducted during study visits to Kyoto, to Tenri in Nara Prefecture and to Shiga Prefecture. The chapter order follows the year cycle, from New Year via early summer purificatory festivals and rainmaking ceremonial to the feast of Bon, which with New Year ceremonies divides the year. Alongside these community or public rites are described private or family rituals concerned with birth, marriage and death. The introductory chapter relates aspects of Japanese culture, myth and language to the constant features of folk practice recorded or extant in 1950s Japan."--Publisher.


In Yoruba land this ceremony is known as "Iso omo Loruko". The ceremony is held 8 days after the birth of the child. The ceremony may be held at the home of the child's parents or grandparents depending on which is more convenient. The ceremony is usually conducted while taking the religion of the child into consideration....The father of the child is asked to reveal to all the names he had chosen for his child. It is normal in the Yoruba culture for a child to have multiple names...." The birthing / Naming ceremony is a sacred ceremony for Yoruba, but also Nigerian, Ghanaian people.


Osiris (whose name is a Greek transliteration of the Egyptian Asar) is the Egyptian god of life, death, fertility, and the underworld. His extreme antiquity is attested by his inclusion in pyramid texts dated to 2400 B.C.E., when his cult was already well established. In addition to the god's primary mythic and religious affiliation with the land of the dead, Osiris is also seen as the underworld agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. Osiris belongs to a complex religious, mythological and cosmological belief system developed in the Nile river basin from earliest prehistory to 525 B.C.E. Harold Percy Cooke (d. 1956) lectured at the University of Durham on various topics, including witchcraft and Egyptology. Out of the Theosophical Library, Pasasena.

unmarried. Minor wear, rubbing and chipping to head and bottom of DJ, minimally toned, clipped. First pp crease. Bright blue cloth, 8vo, 175pp illus. Very Good in Very Good (Price-Clipped) DJ. Cloth. (#11405) $100.00

Winifred Holmes, born Winifred Alice Young on 7 April 1903, was raised in India where her father worked for the Indian Civil Service. Educated at schools in Tasmania and England, she became a nursery teacher but soon abandoned this as a career to take up journalism as a nursery correspondent for the Evening Standard. After the war, Winifred directed a number of film documentaries, including A Cruel Kindness (1948), Consider the Carpet (1948) and A Brother for Susan (1953) as well as scripting others. She wrote a number of children's books and the 'Simon and Sally' strip in Robin. She also contributed to the first 9 editions of Robin (1953-61) and may have contributed to later volumes. She also wrote books on Indian art and Asian films, and this extensive study on four powerful and noble women in Egypt.


E Bolaji Idowu (1913–1995 was the third native-born leader of the Methodist Church Nigeria, serving from 1972 to 1984. He is also well known for his ethnographic and theological studies of the Yoruba people. In the process of preparing a doctoral thesis for the University of London (in 1955), Idowu discovered that all the available material on African religion appeared to be inaccurate, condescending or simply ridiculous. (For example: Leo Frobenius's belief that the Yoruba religion came from Plato's Atlantis by way of Egypt.) As a result, he set out to describe the religious beliefs of his own Yoruba people according to universal theological concerns such as the nature of the Deity, morality, and the ultimate destiny of mankind. His writings on the subject are among the first examples of African religion seen from the viewpoint of an African, but it is not a traditional religious, and the result is biased by Christianity, distancing the reader from real orthodox tribal customs and practices.--Wiki. Extremely scarce in dj. Important work on African religion written by an African scholar and religious leader.


...Includes eight page handwritten in ink working paper using the book as second source material. An comprehensive and marginalized study of the Fore people in Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea and the incidence of a rare disease called kuru. The text discusses the response to kuru epidemic and the relationship to the practice and infliction of sorcery. Epidemiology reveals the disease was potentially exacerbated by cannibalism and consumption of animal meat. The author also discusses Fore beliefs about diagnosis and prevention of other diseases. Provocative and insightful cultural folk medicine study.


Original published in 1936. This volume presents eminent alchemists of both the Chinese and Japanese traditions. There is a survey of alchemical elixirs, with their compositions, properties and uses. Recipes are given for the making of gold, and there is a detailed discussion of the chemical reactions occurring in the process. There is a chapter dealing with the making of bronze, along with a survey of the different articles in which it is used. The work concludes with a chapter on forging steel, which demonstrates how alchemy relates to metallurgy. OOP.


Modern retelling of Ancient East Indian tales.

*Scholarly book on African - Brazilian religious cults in South America and México.*


*A translation of twenty-five representative examples drawn from more than three hundred myths collected in the late seventeenth century by P’u Sung-Ling [Liao Chai Chih Yi (completed in 1680 in mss, first prited edition 1766)].


*A critical study of voodoo and obeah spiritual beliefs, utilizing primary sources, scholarly investigations, and personal experiences. From the publisher: "The first scientific study of those weird practices which are connected with the mysterious Voodoo that has cast such a blight on the social and religious development of Haiti." Williams examines the history of voodoo and obeah in the Caribbean, specifically Jamaica and Haiti, traces them back to their roots in Africa and discusses the influence imperialism, slavery and racism had on their development. Joseph J. Williams was born in Boston in 1875 as the son of Nicholas and Mary Jane Williams. He was educated at home by his mother, a former Boston school teacher, and later at Boston College High. In 1893 he entered the Society of Jesus at Frederick, Maryland. After two years of scientific and philosophical studies at Woodstock College he was assigned to Jamaica from 1906 to 1907. Williams earned a doctorate in ethnomology at Woodstock and was editor of America from 1910 to 1911. The next five years he served as a missionary in Jamaica. The author also spent numerous years studying black culture in Jamaica, an attempt to trace the many Hebrewisms, especially those found in tribes in West Africa, particularly among the Ashanti. Important work authored by a Black scholar on Afro-Caribbean spiritual beliefs. Signed and presented by the author, dated 1933 on ffep.*

*Thank you, in advance, for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.*

Ian J. Kahn

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