

Shamans, Witches and Maya Priests

Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala

By Krystyna Deuss

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Native Religion and Ritual
in Highland Guatemala



Krystyna Deuss

- 334 pages
- 11" x 8.5" paperback (210mm x 280mm)
- 102 photographs (B&W duotone)
- 43 diagrams
- 9 tables
- 4 maps



Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests is a study of the "old ways" that still prevail in the Q'anjob'al, Akatek, and Chuj communities of the remote northwestern Cuchumatán mountains. Deuss paints vivid pictures of the traditional rites and rituals she witnessed over a period of 15 years. These include blood sacrifices for the good of the community and private shamanic rituals as well as black magic. Deuss has also included a selection of the prayers she recorded.

REVIEWS

Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala, by Krystyna Deuss, is an outstanding contribution to the field of ethnographic studies in highland Guatemala. Not only is it an informed and insightful account of her work among the Maya Prayersayers in the Cuchumatanes region of Guatemala, but it is also a truly great read—an evocative portrait of Maya traditionalists attempting to maintain the practice of their ancient faith in the face of remarkably trying circumstances. Many of the ceremonies she describes have already ceased to be performed, and others are in imminent danger of disappearing forever. This book is therefore, in some cases, the last eyewitness account of traditional rituals that had survived for centuries.

— ALLEN J. CHRISTENSON

Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities, Classics and Comparative Literature at Brigham Young University

A comprehensive study of a little-known area of Guatemala, this book is an invaluable contribution to Maya studies. The author's attention to ethnographic detail is revealed through the text, diagrams, and the astonishing photographs, which set a new standard for documentation. At the same time, the succinct style of writing assures the accessibility of the book to non-specialists. Highly recommended.

— MATTHEW G. LOOPER

Associate Professor of Art History, California State University, Chico

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