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Robert Gordon, Wasson

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Robert Gordon, Wasson : The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. The Hallucinogenic Mushroom in Mesoamerica.By New Age of Barbarism_The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica_, No. 7 in the Ethnomycological Studies series, by newspaper reporter and banker turned ethnomycologist, R. Gordon Wasson, is a fascinating account of the hallucinogenic mushroom cult and its use among shamans in Mesoamerica. Wasson along with his wife Valentina Pavlovna had written their first account of hallucinogenic mushrooms in *_Mushrooms, Russia and History_*. Later, they extended their research to include the presence of the hallucinogenic mushroom cult among the Indo-European peoples in *_SOMA: Divine Mushroom of Immortality_*. The author refers to the hallucinogenic drugs he discusses as entheogens, a neologism coined to mean "God-within-us" referring to the quasi-religious experiences invoked by these substances. Wasson's writings focus on the mushroom cult as well as revealing its role in the origins of primitive religious practice and among shamans. Nevertheless, Wasson was opposed to the crass usage of the mushroom by pleasure and thrill seekers as well as hippies. He expresses his disgust at the "hippies, self-styled psychiatrists, oddballs, even tour leaders with their docile flocks . . . upsetting and abusing the quiet tenor of life in what had been, superficially at least, an idyllic Indian village". For Wasson, the mushroom was a sacred substance and therefore merited treatment with the highest respect. The regions discussed in this book begin at Nicaragua and run north and

west to a wavy line that runs across Mexico just north of Mexico City. The author begins by discussing his encounter with the mushrooms at a velada (a shamanic mushroom ceremony) in Huautla, Mexico. At this velada the author encounters Maria Sabina, a mushroom seeress who administers the mushrooms and undergoes a transformative rite. The author notes the religious syncretism involved among the Indian inhabitants of Mesoamerica, often combining Catholic Christianity with their traditional pagan religious beliefs and worship of the mushroom. While Maria Sabina sings and dances, the author reports on his hallucinogenic state after he has consumed the mushroom. The author notes the kaleidoscopic colors that flash before his eyes comparing them to Plato's forms. While initially the experience induces nausea, at his second velada he did not experience this nausea to such a degree. The author thoroughly describes the Mesoamerican velada mentioning the essentials as well as the role of the shaman. The mushrooms are affectionately known as "small fry" or "little tykes" but also "clowns" by the shaman. Wasson considers the eating of mushrooms to be a sacrament and notes the animosity felt towards this sacrament by the early Spanish Christian colonizers. Wasson also compares these mushroom ceremonies to Siberian and Eurasian mushroom eating. Following this discussion of the velada, the author turns his attention to the past. Here, he traces the historical origins of the hallucinogenic mushroom in Mesoamerican art, culture, myth, and traditional religion. The book includes many valuable photographs and drawings showing beautiful artworks which exhibit the mushroom symbolism. Among others, the author attempts to show that the statue Xochipilli (or "Prince of Flowers") concerns the hallucinogenic mushroom, traces the development of the mushroom among Nahuatl poetry (referenced as "the flowers" by the aristocratic poets and translated by Father Garibay), inebriating drinks of the Nahua, codices, lienzos, and mapas, the role of the "Holy Child" ("Holy Childe") Pilzintli pictured as a plunging god and referenced in the rites of Maria Sabina, Teotihuacan and the mushroom, and the mushroom stones of the Mayas. The author also discusses the historical record, in which he shows the mycophobic reaction of the European colonists and the Inquisition to the hallucinogenic mushroom cult as well as a discussion of human sacrifice among the Aztecs and the Mayan ball game in which he argues that the players partook of the mushroom before entering the game. The author brings out the distinct contrast between mycophobes (such as the Western Europeans) and mycophiles (including many of the archaic peoples of the earth). The book concludes with a discussion of shamanism and the mushroom. Wasson argues for the primacy of the hallucinogenic mushroom experience as a source for primitive religion. Indeed, the early Christians may have seen hallucinogenic mushroom eating as an abomination because it mocks Holy Communion. This may have led to the persecution of the native populations of Mesoamerica. Wasson's book offers a fascinating account of mushroom use among the primitive peoples of Mesoamerica. It includes beautiful photographs and drawings which show much of the mushroom presence in Mesoamerican artworks. Wasson also references the mushroom's development in primitive myth and the worship of the mushroom as a deity (mycolatry). This book provides a fascinating perspective and a very interesting addition to our knowledge of primitive religious belief among the Mesoamericans.⁵ of 11 people found the following review helpful. Entheogens: Professional Listing By A Customer "The Wondrous Mushroom" has been selected for listing in "Religion and Psychoactive Sacraments: An Entheogen Chrestomathy." [...]

"From now on any comprehensive study of Ancient Mexican civilization must start from (and with) your discoveries." Octavio Paz "The late Mr. Wasson is the Abraham of the reborn awareness in Western civilization of the presence of the shamanically empowering mushroom." Terence McKenna In 1957 Life magazine created a sensation by publishing an article about the experiences of a JP Morgan executive who took mind-altering mushrooms with a shaman woman in Mexico. The story captured the imagination of a generation, inspiring waves of intellectuals, artists, and seekers to travel in search of the mushrooms and the indigenous healer, Maria Sabina. Today, Gordon Wasson is credited with having triggered the psychedelic revolution and his influence lives on through the growing community of people who study indigenous spirituality, sacred plants, and their role in personal transformation. In celebration of Wasson's pioneering work, we present a reprint of his classic *The Wondrous Mushroom*, an in-depth study of shamanic realities, mushrooms, and traditions connecting contemporary practices to pre-Conquest art, architecture, and culture. The book begins with Wasson's first experiences taking mushrooms, going into a wealth of details about sacred indigenous ceremonies, culture, and practices. *The Wondrous Mushroom* reflects a lifetime of studies, personal experiences, and reflections on shamanism, culture, community well-being, healing, and spiritual strength. Long out of print, this new edition is a must-have for anyone interested in the history of psychedelics. Gordon R. Wasson (1898-1986) founded the field of "ethnomycology" and was considered the preeminent authority on the use of psychoactive mushrooms.

"City Lights can be congratulated on their re-issue of Wasson's classic of cultural history and ethnomycology. Through his contact with Maria Sabina, the Mazatec mushroom curandera, Wasson brought about the cultural transfusion of an ancient entheogenic ritual into the modern world. In this beautiful and generously illustrated monograph, written with his customary scholarly acumen and literary elegance, Wasson established forever the central role of the visionary teonancatl mushroom in the religion, art and culture of the Aztecs. A book filled with wondrous details about the

meaning and significance of our relationship with these fabulous fungi." -- Ralph Metzner, Ph.D., Editor/Author of Sacred Mushroom of Visions"Before Timothy Leary, Carlos Castaneda or Terrence McKenna tasted 'the flesh of the gods,' the mysterious R. Gordon Wasson turned 1950s America on to the wonders of the magic mushroom, beginning our long, strange trip into extraordinary states of consciousness." --Don Lattin, author of Distilled Spirits: Getting High, then Sober, with a Famous Writer, a Forgotten Philosopher and a Hopeless Drunk"The great gift of Wasson's explorations writings in The Wondrous Mushroom was their revelation for many of us of one of the deep sources of poetry as a visionary quest spiritual resource. The central figure here was the Mazatec shaman Mara Sabina, whose poetic practice, rooted in ancient Mexican traditions, Wasson first brought to light, with it an unprecedented insight, contemporary historical, into the poetry the traditions themselves. That City Lights Books, with its own history as a major poetic resource, should now restore this work for us is both totally appropriate incredibly welcome."--Jerome Rothenberg, poet and author of Technicians of the Sacred and Shaking the Pumpkin"Inspired by his legendary mushroom experiences with Marina Sabina--described thoroughly herein--Gordon Wasson unfurls a rich, poetic, and seductive journey through ancient Central American mushroom lore. Like many fungal visionaries, Wasson tends to see the 'little children' popping up everywhere, but his exuberant mycophilic vision of Mexican civilization is bolstered with rich historical arcana and extraordinary images that seemingly tell more than the strict record will ever show."-- Erik Davis, author of Nomad Codes: Adventures in Modern Esoterica"R. Gordon Wasson's The Wondrous Mushroom is at once the most accessible, comprehensive and factually grounded of his many excellent books on the history and cultural uses of psychoactive mushrooms. It focuses especially on so-called magic or sacred mushrooms that have been used in secret religious rites by indigenous peoples in Mexico and parts of Central America since ancient times. Anyone not yet familiar with the history and practice of these rites, which were 'discovered' and then widely publicized by Wasson and his wife Tina in the mid-1950s, will find reading this richly detailed account of their groundbreaking research both informative and an adventure. They'll also find Wasson's prose not only elegant and erudite but also clear and engaging, often striking a tone best described as conspiratorial. City Lights Books deserves praise for reviving this classic work of literary science for a new generation of sacred mushroom book seekers." -- Thomas J. Riedlinger, Editor, The Sacred Mushroom Seeker: Essays for R. Gordon Wasson"The fact that 'magic mushrooms' are now being shown to have great value in medicine and psychology owes much to the pioneering work of Gordon Wasson in Mexico over fifty years ago. The Wondrous Mushroom, long out of print, tells the fascinating story of Wasson's adventures taking the psychedelic mushroom himself and the many remarkable discoveries that followed. Now a whole new generation of readers will get to see why these mushrooms are considered not only magical but spiritual, and why many consider Wasson to be the father of ethnomycology."--Clark Heinrich, author of Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy"From its groundbreaking, first-person depiction of mind-altering indigenous rituals to its intriguing exploration of the theme of ecstasy in ancient Mayan artwork, R. Gordon Wasson's The Wondrous Mushroom is an invaluable addition to the canon of psychedelic studies, lovingly brought back to life by City Lights Books."--Nicholas Schou, author of Orange Sunshine: How the Brotherhood of Eternal Love Spread Peace, Love and Acid to the World"Author Gordon Wasson triggered the psychedelic revolution, and this reprint of his classic book is an in-depth study of shamanic realities, mushrooms, and traditions that can be traced back to pre-Conquest art, architecture, and culture."--Alexis Coe, SF Weekly"His discoveries, certainly in Mesoamerica, are prescient and grounded and the republication of this book is necessary for a number of reasons. . . . it is a great book to have back on the scene and no doubt a vital starting place for anyone interested in magic mushrooms, Mesoamerican history, and the entheogenic analysis itself." -- Psychedelic Press