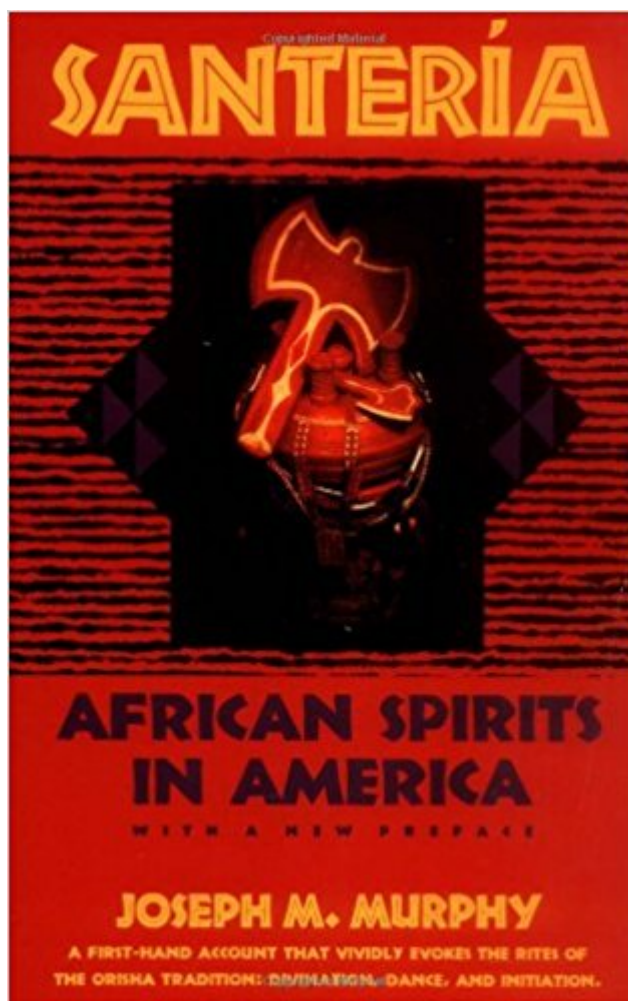


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Santeria: African Spirits In America



Synopsis

Santería represents the first in-depth, scholarly account of a profound way of wisdom that is growing in importance in America today. A professional academic and himself a participant in the Santería community of the Bronx for several years, Joseph Murphy offers a powerful description and insightful analysis of this African/Cuban religion. He traces the survival of an ancient spiritual path from its West African Yoruba origins, through nearly two centuries of slavery in the New World, to its presence in the urban centers of the United States, where it continues to inspire seekers with its compelling vision.

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Beacon Press (April 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807010219

ISBN-13: 978-0807010211

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #255,700 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in Books > History > World > Religious > Ethnic & Tribal #146 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Religious History #246 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Tribal & Ethnic

Customer Reviews

Informative and a joy to read. . . . It strikes a balance between participation and observation in an explanation of Santería that will please believer and scholar alike. --Shaman's Drum

'A western-oriented introduction to a misunderstood religion of African roots that is a profound symbol of the force of the spirit against slavery.' -Kirkus Reviews

I found this book to be very clear and easy to read. I really enjoyed that it gives you a thorough background for the religion. I am new to this path; so for me, it provided answers that I have struggled to get elsewhere. I really recommend this title.

This book is a wonderful resource for those wanting an introduction to Santeria. Easy to read, but packed with information and excellent references.

This is a good overview of the religion.

This book was very easy to read and insightful into a very misunderstood religion. While reading it, one feels very close to the rituals and traditions.

This was the first actual book on Santeria I ever read, so I was almost completely ignorant about all aspects of Santeria and Ifa when I got it. Murphy started the book as a graduate student looking for something to write his dissertation about. A friend pointed him toward a respected babalawo in the Bronx, and Murphy began observing and participating in different rituals and ceremonies. Other reviewers point out that Murphy is not initiated into the religion, and they're right; he's not. Murphy even says that he's not initiated and can therefore only write about the parts of the religion he's familiar with. The beginning student of west African religion will get historical background on both the African and the Cuban branches of the faith, a basic understanding of the major orishas, the ori, or Yoruban concept of destiny, and an engaging personal account of Murphy's experiences with his padrino and ile. A scholar of west African religion would also find three more academically geared essays after the personal account dealing with how Santeria fits into the world as a whole. The book is interesting, readable, and a handy reference to have.

The author investigates the SanterÃfÃ- a religion in the USA. This is a Cuban version of traditional Yoruba religion with some other aspects of the traditional religion of the Congo and Fon peoples, all of whom brought their religious practices with them when brought as slaves to the Spanish regions of the New World. SanterÃfÃ- a is similar to Umbanda in Brazil. The slaves expressed their spirit religion in the form and guise of the Roman Catholic religion's prayers to the saints, with a saint standing for each of the African spirit-gods. This resulted in the Catholic Cult of the Saints. The author presents the African and Cuban background, giving historical and social factors and then probes the religion in the US, having been brought largely by the Cuban refugees after the Communist revolution in Cuba in 1959. Murphy lists the names of the original Yoruba gods, their role and character in the original religion, and the way these beliefs operate in the mystical possession cult of SanterÃfÃ- a.

There are mix reviews of this book, some like it; some do not, as everything in life. But if you want to learn this "History" of the Lucumi religion known as Santeria as practiced in Cuba, then this is really not that bad of a book. This is not one of those, "How to Books", it is as I have said, more of a historical prospective. Good for those who just want a basic understanding of the Santeria. It also touches on the Palo Mayombe, and Monte, and gives a bit of the differences between the different people of Africa and their Spiritual backgrounds. A lot of people do not like it, or like to discredit it, but honestly the information is well researched, and accurate. All done in the most High Respects and in good taste to the Santeria Lucumi Religion.

Dr. Murphy writes a good story. The book is a description of his personal experience in Santeria. It should be noted that he is not an initiate, but he writes in a sympathetic, informed and respectful way about the religion. Even though he is an academic, this book is written in a non-academic style. If you are curious about santeria it is a must read.

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