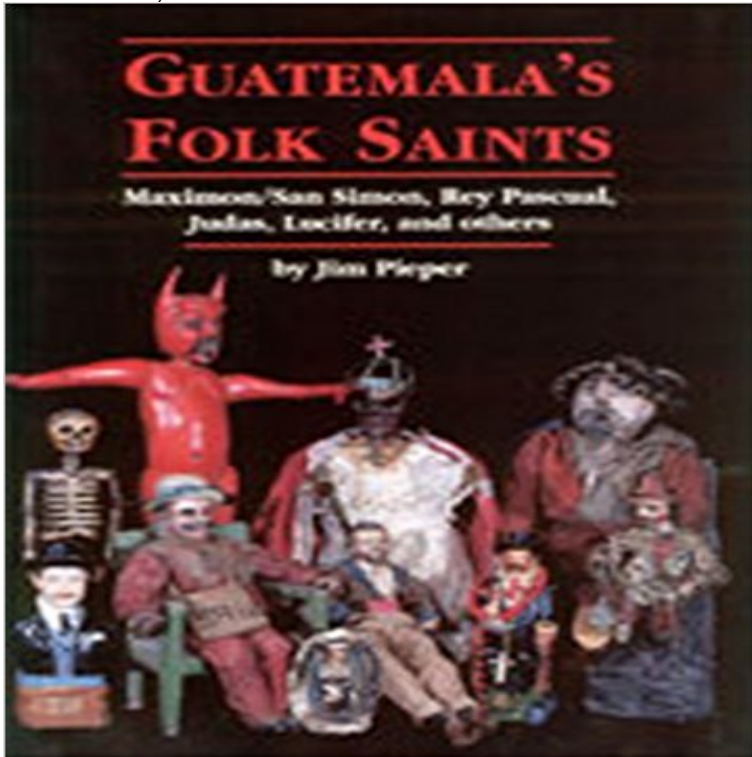


Guatemalas Folk Saints: Maximon/San Simon, Rey Pascual, Judas, Lucifer, and Others



The icons documented in this handsome volume appear in many physical forms, ranging from life-size to half an inch tall. They reflect a belief system deeply rooted in the ancient Mayan religion of Guatemala and influenced by centuries of superimposed Christianity. The objects whose photographs appear here are collected as ethnographic folk art by aficionados but they, and the saints they represent, are a living part of Guatemalan culture. *Guatemalas Folk Saints* is a rich melange of observation, interviews, and photographs that combine to give a vivid and intimate portrait of this particular variety of syncretic Christianity. Including extensive information on altars, prayers, and the pantheon of the saints themselves, the book focuses on an entity known both as Maximon and San Simon, a spiritual representative to whom any kind of request can be made. Although petitioners are usually encouraged to pray only for good causes, San Simon can also be enlisted to get rid of evil spells or even to cast one. San Simon may be a bundle of woven textile topped with a hat or a life-size figure with his face hidden behind a mask and designer sunglasses. He may wear cowboy boots or be covered in petitioners offerings of silk scarves. Clouded in incense and addressed in indigenous dialects, he is Mayan. Addressed in Spanish, his Christian veneer becomes clear. Other chapters address Rey Pascual (a skeletal deity), the Ajitz Judas, Lucifer, Don Diego, and San Gregorio. The book includes a glossary and bibliography. This unique documentation of modern Mayan culture will be of interest to scholars, collectors, and travelers.

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