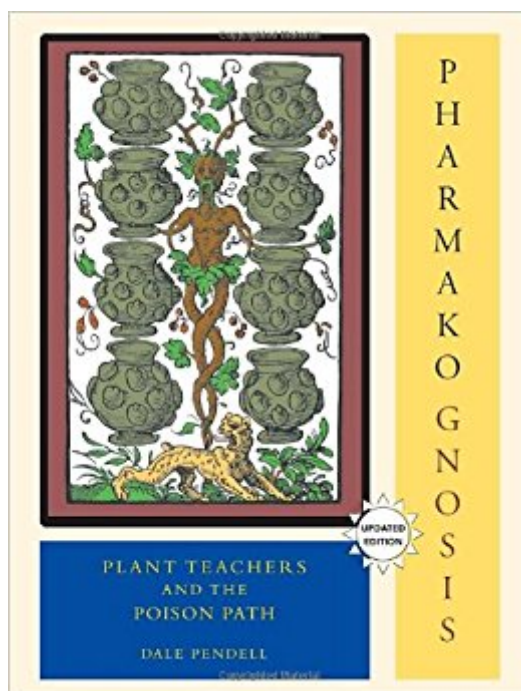


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Pharmako Gnosis: Plant Teachers And The Poison Path



Synopsis

***This paperback edition has a new introduction by the author and updated content. This is the third and final volume of North Atlantic Books' updated paperback edition of Dale Pendell's Pharmako trilogy, an encyclopedic study of the history and uses of psychoactive plants and related synthetics first published between 1995 and 2005. The books form an interrelated suite of works that provide the reader with a unique, reliable, and often personal immersion in this medically, culturally, and spiritually fascinating subject. All three books are beautifully designed and illustrated, and are written with unparalleled authority, erudition, playfulness, and range. Pharmako/Gnosis: Plant Teachers and the Poison Path includes a new introduction by the author and as in previous editions focuses on plant-based and derivative psychedelic "teachers" (including ayahuasca, peyote, LSD, and DMT) and on the "poison path" of substances such as belladonna, ketamine, and ibogaine. Each substance is explored in detail, not only with information on its history, pharmacology, preparation, and cultural and esoteric correspondences, but also the subtleties of each plant's effect on consciousness in a way that only poets can do. The whole concoction is sprinkled with abundant quotations from famous writers, creating a literary brew as intoxicating as its subject. The Pharmako series includes the predecessor volumes Pharmako/Poieia (which covers tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, opiates, salvia divinorum, and other substances) and Pharmako/Dynamis (focusing on stimulants and empathogens).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Essential reading, a modern classic.” • Stephen Silberman, Wired magazine

“The poet of plants . . . Pendell may be America’s answer to Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. . . .” • Emily Green, Los Angeles Times

“Whereas all other drug encyclopaedists are accompanied by excessive slyness, the seemingly free verse of Dale Pendell is constrained by compulsive accuracy, to paraphrase Zarathustra’s Hom Yost, by the (scruples) that drive forth truth.” • David Flattery, author of Haoma and Harmaline

“A beat alchemist working textual DJ decks.” • Erik Davis, Bookforum

Plant student Dale Pendell established himself as one of the foremost popular exponents of shamanic ethnobotany with his unprecedented Pharmako trilogy. A noted poet, he was the founding editor of the avant-garde magazine Kuksu and a cofounder of the Primitive Arts Institute and has led workshops on ethnobotany and ethnopoetics for the Naropa Institute and the Omega Institute. Pendell was part of the Oracular Madness theme camp at Burning Man for a number of years (his book Inspired Madness: The Gifts of Burning Man was published by Frog Books in 2006). Also an experienced computer scientist, he lives with his wife Laura in California’s Sierra foothills.

One of my all time favorite books. Highly informative, insightful, and a thrill to read. Dale Pendell has traversed some interesting mindscapes indeed.

Dale Pendel’s best! If your a psychonought or plant person a must read

My least favorite of the trilogy, but still a five-star book.

I have read, from the bible, the koran, the bagdavad gita and many other religious tomes Dale Pendels trilogy is the first to have touched my soul and I’m not even sure that was his intention in the first place. I have purchaced two sets of these books, one to lend out and one set to have close by. I loved them. Great work Mr Pendell. Should be in the school curriculum. Skeet

This book is poetry. I also did not expect to receive the Expanded Edition. That was a pleasant

surprise. Kazoo.

great

The third installment of the Pharmako- series, Phamako/Gnosis addresses the more psychedelic and hallucinogenic plants and chemicals. Pendell does this with the skill that we would expect after the previous two books. Well written, and easy to read, packed with enough information for the advanced studier, and simple enough for the beginner. For anybody with an interest in the origins, history, use, science, and lore of these "poisons," this is a book that belongs on your shelf.

"Pharmako/Gnosis" is the crown jewel of Pendell's superb trilogy, and indispensable reading for anyone interested in psychedelics, botany, anthropology, and earnest inquiry into the nature of existence. Covering LSD, mescaline and peyote, DMT, psilocybin mushrooms, esoterica like Syrian rue and even xenon inhalation, as well as other signposts on what he calls "the Poison Path," Pendell continues his profound investigation of mankind's relationship with plants and chemicals that can seem like helpful teachers, demons, pernicious addictions -- or all three at once. (The truly addictive substances are mostly discussed in the previous two volumes of the trilogy, "Pharmako/Poeia" and "Pharmako/Dynamis.") Even if you never touch the stuff yourself, Pendell's trilogy is worth reading as one of the most graceful and powerful breakthroughs in prose in many years. Combining poetry, deep history, science, psychological insight, and Zen-style humor in the face of "the Great Matter," Pendell has created a voice that is wholly his own. He can be radiantly tender in one passage, saltily irreverent in another, and certain sections of this book -- such as "Splitting the Hair" and "The Two-Dragon Problem" -- come as close to saying the Unsayable as any literature I know, outside of such Zen classics as "The Blue Cliff Record." A section called "The Hallucinogenic Properties of Maize" is a brief tour-de-force that should bring a knowing smile to fans of "The Matrix" and other works that suggest that what we call normal waking consciousness is worthy of closer scrutiny. Like the Poison Path itself, Pendell's books are not for everyone. They may be difficult reading at first for those who are totally unfamiliar with botany or Zen, and their frequent flights into personal witnessing of altered states may piss off readers who are expecting an "objective" textbook or how-to-get-high cookbook. But stick with them -- these sly books instruct even as they tease or confound expectations, and will still be whispering in the inner ears of shamans and potential initiates many generations from now, long after most so-called drug books of our era have been forgotten. And Pendell's Coyote-like wit -- taking the narrator to task for his own

pomposity in italicized sections that the author calls "the back channel" -- never allows him to wallow in the kind of self-importance or vacuous yakking that afflicts so many self-appointed psychonauts. At the level of book design, Pendell's luminous and subtle use of images is nothing short of revelatory. The sudden appearance of Walt Whitman's youthful face after a particularly lovely passage, for example, says more than another ten pages of prose could have. Mercury House has done an admirable job of bringing the author's hard-won mapping of the other world into this one. In some of the book's most memorable passages, the author seems to step aside to let the spirits of the plants themselves speak -- no easy trick without seeming ridiculous. Bravo to Pendell for creating a guide to uncovering essential experience (with the help of potent allies) that will be, in the words of Allen Ginsberg, "good to eat a thousand years."

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