

Reviews

Rainhouse and Ocean.

Speeches for the Papago Year.

Ruth M. Underhill, Donald M. Bahr, Baptisto Lopez, Jose Pancho and David Lopez. ATR Series, Volume 4. Museum of Northern Arizona Press. Flagstaff. 1979. vi + 153 pp. \$12.95.

Desert plants figure prominently in the memorized speeches which are recited during traditional Papago Indian rituals. The book is a collection of texts in the Papago language with their English translations. The speeches are religious in nature and pre-date Papago contact with Europeans. The reader senses that he is hearing voices from the distant past—voices which are difficult of comprehension—voices calling out in the wilderness of the desert, communicating over the centuries with the present generation and with all those yet to come. In the introduction, Dr. Underhill recalls how she transcribed speeches from Papago ceremonialists after she took up residence in Papaguera in 1931. She rendered the speeches into English in collaboration with Juan Javier in a literary style befitting them. "I have been told that my result sounded like the Psalms, but why not? These were poetic descriptions of a ceremony held by farming people whose life was not too unlike that of the ancient Hebrews."

Dr. Underhill's original transcriptions and translations are filed in the archives of the Denver Museum of Natural History. Her descriptions of Papago life and religion have been published and republished: *Ethnobiology of the Papago Indians* (University of New Mexico Press. 1935), *Social Organization of the Papago Indians* (Columbia University Press. 1939), *Papago Indian Religion* (Columbia University Press. 1946), *Singing for Power* (reprint, Ballantine Books. 1973), *The Papago and Pima Indians of Arizona* (reprint, Filter Press. 1979), and *Papago Woman* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1979), among others.

For the present volume, Dr. Underhill made her transcriptions and translations available to Dr. Donald Bahr of Arizona State University and to Baptisto Lopez, Jose Pancho and David Lopez of the Papago Tribe. Dr. Bahr has interpreted the speeches in light of recent research and has provided literal translations in collaboration with

the Papago authors. Versions of the speeches chosen for the present volume include ones originally transcribed by Underhill as well as versions supplied by present-day Papago orators, including two of the book's authors.

Persons who have read "The Annual Saguaro Harvest and Crop Cycle of the Papago, with Reference to Ecology and Symbolism" (*Desert Plants* 2(1): 1-61) may wish to examine Papago ceremonial speeches in more detail. *Rainhouse and Ocean* is a veritable treasure trove of these speeches and interpretations of their meaning. Both Papago and non-Papago alike should find much of interest in reading it.

Plants that Poison. An Illustrated Guide for the American Southwest.

Ervin M. Schmutz and Lucretia Brezeale Hamilton. Northland Press. Flagstaff, Arizona. 1979. xviii + 241 pp. \$7.50.

The book illustrates and describes about 125 native and cultivated plants which cause human misery and death. For each plant the usual mode of poisoning, the chemical nature of the toxic compound, symptoms of poisoning in humans, and comments of the authors are given. The authors are well qualified to dispense information on and to depict the plants that poison and the coverage appears to be both adequate and accurate. Aside from trees, shrubs, vines, herbs and houseplants, the book treats other poisonous species such as botulism bacteria, *Anabaena* algae, ergot fungus and various mushrooms.

Parents may be surprised to find that many of the poisonous plants described are not rare species found out in the wilderness, but rather quite common plants which their children might find around the home or neighborhood. A single leaf of the common Oleander can kill a person if eaten and children have been poisoned by sucking nectar from a flower. Honey made from Oleander is also poisonous. Sleeping near the flowers of Jimsonweed can cause headache, nausea, dizziness and weakness and children playing with the flowers have been poisoned. In the case of several species, poisoning can occur from contact with smoke when the plant is burned or the branches used for roasting hot-dogs.

The book should be required reading for persons who eat wild food plants or for parents or grandparents of children who tend to put berries, leaves, flowers or other plant parts in their mouths. Hikers, campers, science teachers, garden clubs, girl scouts, boy scouts and doctors' offices should not be without the book.