

Why Santa Claus?

Although most people see Christmas as a Christian holiday, many of the symbols and icons we associate with Christmas celebrations are actually derived from the shamanistic traditions of the tribal peoples of pre-Christian Northern Europe.

The sacred mushroom of these people was the red and white *amanita muscaria* mushroom, also known as "fly agaric." These mushrooms are now commonly seen in books of fairy tales, and are usually associated with magic and fairies. This is because they contain potent hallucinogenic compounds, and were used by ancient peoples for insight and transcendental experiences.

Most of the major elements of the modern Christmas celebration, such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, magical reindeer and the giving of gifts, are originally based upon the traditions surrounding the harvest and consumption of these most sacred mushrooms.

Reindeer were the sacred animals of ancient people such as the Sami of Finland, and the people of Siberia, as the reindeer provided food, shelter, clothing and other necessities. Reindeer are also fond of eating the *amanita* mushrooms; they will seek them out, and then prance about while under their influence. The effects of the *amanita* mushroom usually include sensations of size distortion and flying. The feeling of flying could account for the legends of flying reindeer.

The *amanita muscaria* mushrooms grow only under certain types of trees, mostly firs and evergreens. To ancient people, these mushrooms were literally "the fruit of the tree."

The North Star was also considered sacred, since all other stars in the sky revolved around its fixed point. They associated this "Pole Star" with the World Tree and the central axis of the universe. The top of the World Tree touched the North Star, and the spirit of the shaman would climb the metaphorical tree. This is the true meaning of the star on top of the modern Christmas tree, and also the reason that the super-shaman Santa makes his home at the North Pole.

Although the modern image of Santa Claus was created at least in part by the advertising department of Coca-Cola, in truth his appearance and clothing mark him as the reincarnation of these ancient mushroom-gathering shamans.

Originally Santa Claus was not red and white, but was first depicted like this due to a link to native spiritual traditions involving hallucinogenic red and white mushrooms known as fly agaric. When it was time to go out and harvest the magical mushrooms, the ancient shamans would dress much like Santa, wearing red and white coats and long black boots.