

Accompanying this article is the facing insert from "Be Here Now" (Crown), in actual size and paper, with its cover art on the front

Hip Religions Spark Contemporary Publishing

SOME UNUSUAL religious books are springing up from the devotees of Eastern and mystical religions. Two offshoots of those currently popular cults rise above the faddish and have a long lasting and universal appeal. One is highly symbolic, the other is written in a hip vernacular. Both offer inspiration for coping with life, have innovative visual aspects and bear modest prices.

Their two young editors, Bill Whitehead, at Doubleday, who edited "The Book of Peace" by Richard Shannon, and Bruce Harris, at Crown, who produced "Be Here Now" a Lama Foundation Book, told *PW* that they published these books on the merits of the mystics as individuals of special vision, rather than to exploit the current fad.

The books are vastly different but both were derived from deep religious beliefs which inspired the words and the visual presentations.

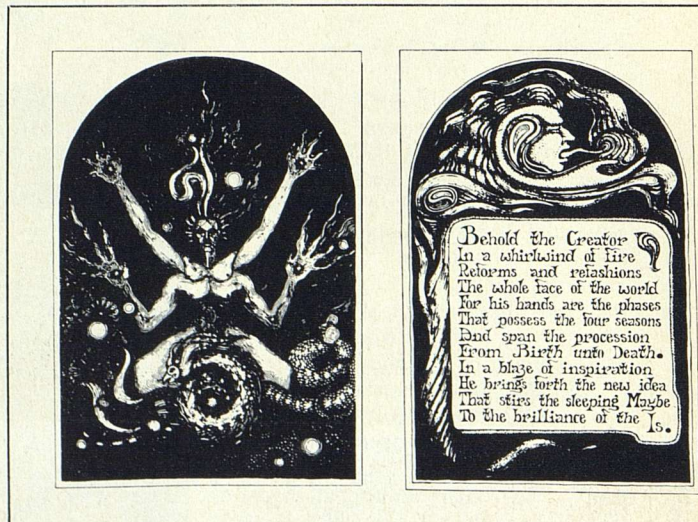
"The Book of Peace"

In "The Book of Peace" each double-page spread is an illuminated unit all hand-lettered and drawn, a contemporary link, artistically, with the stylized creations of the past, notably Blake's "Songs of Innocence", Gibran's "The Prophet" and many drawings of Aubrey Beardsley. These units are arranged in sequential progression of mystical chronology dealing with the life cycle. The verbal and visual content is full of symbolic references to numerology, seasons, male-female polarity, triangles and circles, each placed in the book according to a plan representative of cosmic unity.

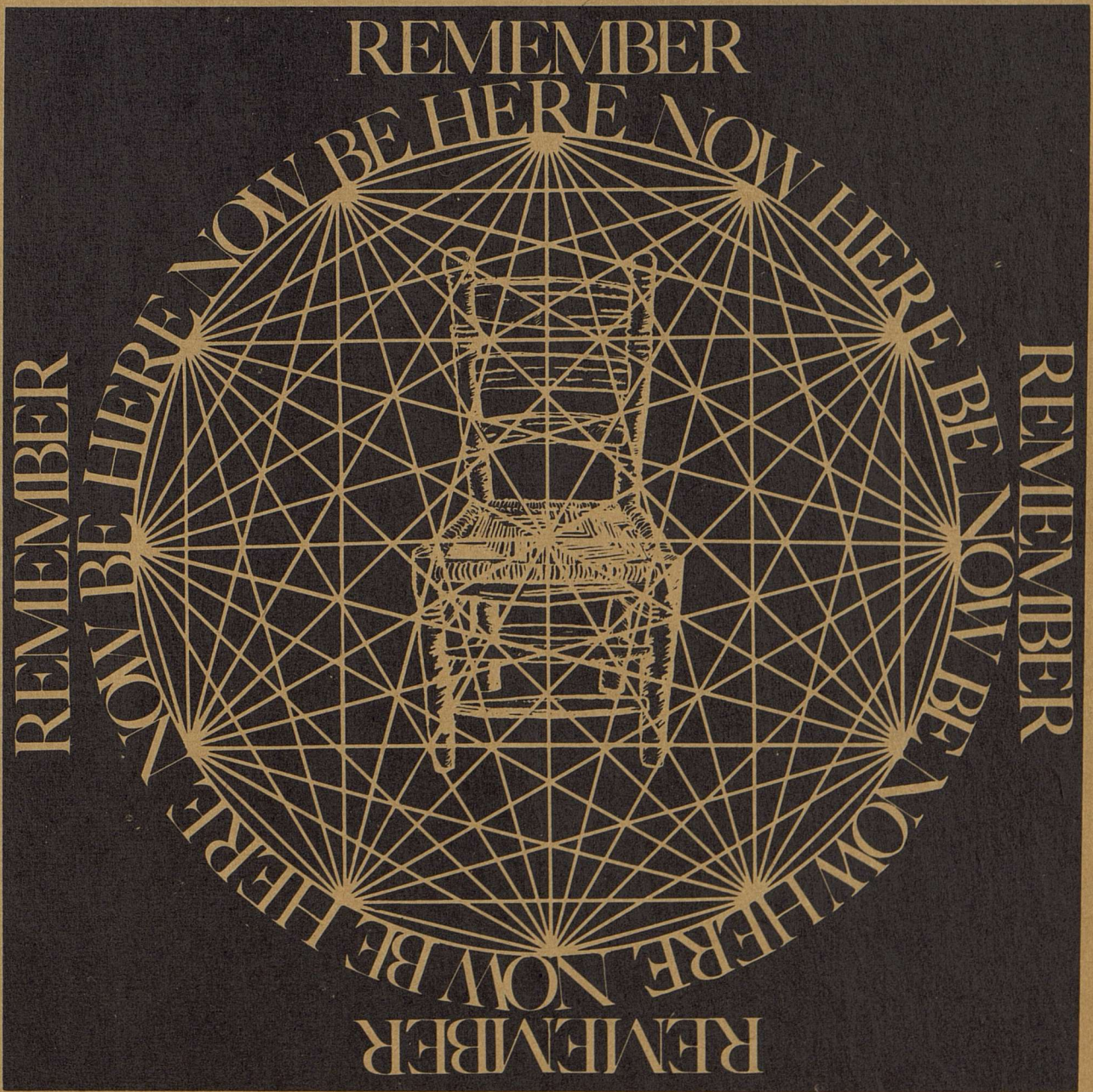
Explaining how he became a visionary



Jacket above, and inside spreads, below, all handwritten and drawn by Richard Shannon for "The Book of Peace" (Doubleday)

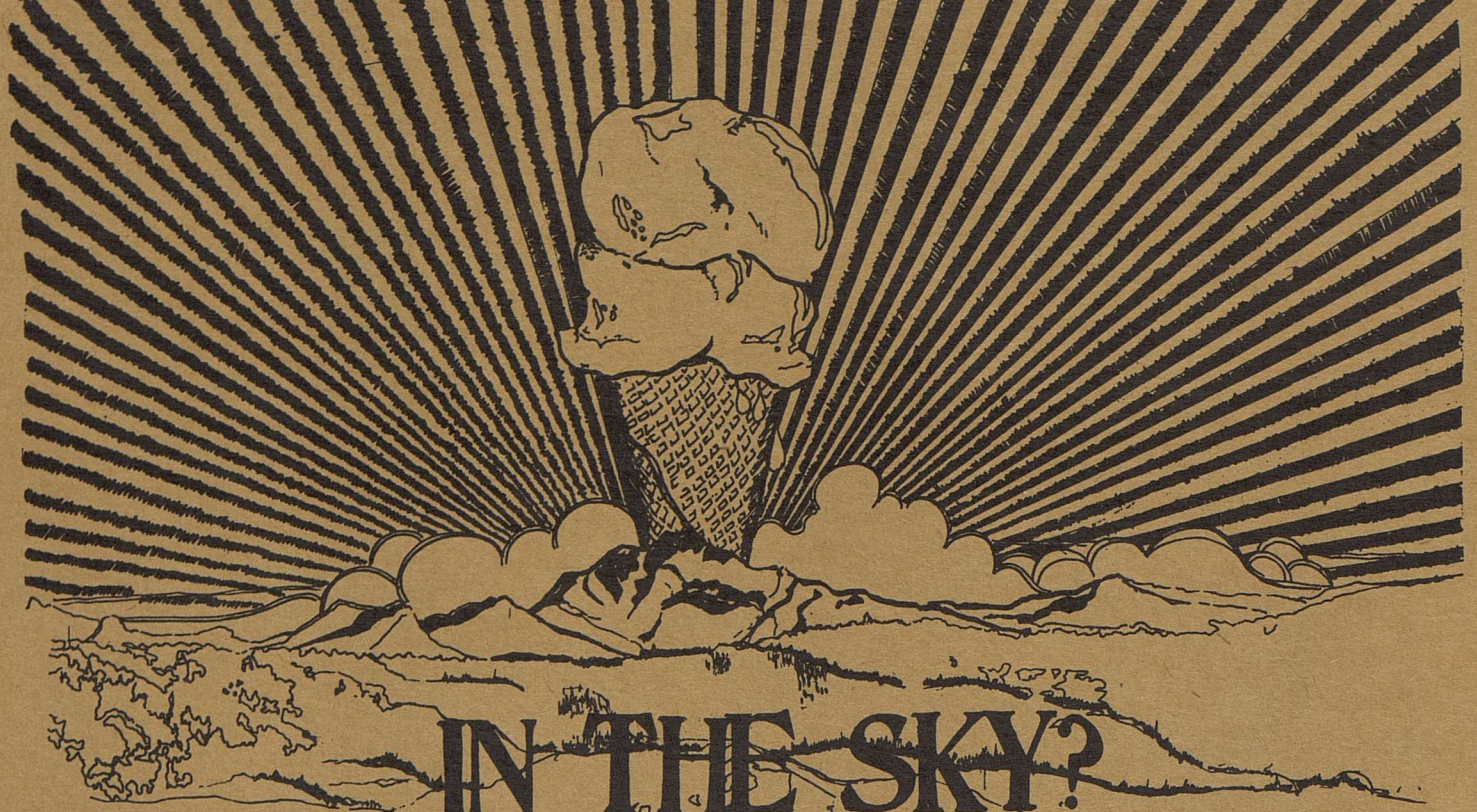


JACKET DESIGN OF BE HERE NOW, A LAMA FOUNDATION BOOK,
DISTRIBUTED BY CROWN PUBLISHERS, INC.



EXAMPLE: SOME BODY LOOKS AT YOU SEDUCTIVELY...
AN ICE CREAM CONE GOES BY.....WILL IT EVER BE

THE BIG ICE CREAM CONE



IN THE SKY?

WILL IT EVER BE AN ETERNAL ICE CREAM CONE?

OR....IS IT ALWAYS GOING TO MELT?

YOU GOTTA KEEP EATING IT YET IT MELTS & MELTS
THAT'S ITS PROBLEM

YOU GOTTA KEEP EATING IT CUZ IT WILL MELT.....

....& THEN IT'S GONE

& YOU KNOW THAT TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH WHEN YOU
FINISH &....YOU WANT A GLASS OF WATER? RIGHT?...
THEN YOU HAVE A GLASS OF WATER & THERE'S THAT
BLOATY FEELING?

THEN YOU'RE READY FOR THE NEXT ONE.....
TO GET RID OF THAT ONE.....

LET'S TAKE A WALK....& YOU TAKE A WALK.....
IT'S COLD OUT. LET'S HAVE SOME HOT CHOCOLATE,
YES, LET'S HAVE SOME, & ON & ON & ON & IT'S CALLED

LIFE

☼ YOU SEE: THE OPPOSITE OF CRAVING IS SAYING
BABY, THIS IS THE WAY IT IS ☼ YEAH ☼

☼ OK ☼ HERE & NOW ☼ THIS IS IT

I ACCEPT THE HERE & NOW FULLY

· AS · IT · IS ·

RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT !!!

This is the introduction from "Cookbook For A Sacred Life", the third section of BE HERE NOW. The large page, is one of 108 pages in the second section; all hand-drawn and hand-stamped by members of the Lama Foundation.

COOKBOOK FOR A SACRED LIFE

Dedicated to those who wish to get on with it...

INTRODUCTION

We offer this book with humility and a compassionate awareness of our own predicament—and yours. We are all on the journey towards enlightenment and at each stage must share what has been discovered with those who will listen. The sharing is part of the work. The listening is part of the work. We are all on the path.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."—Lao Tzu

BUT WHERE DO WE BEGIN? The answer is simple: you begin just where you are.

"If thou but settest foot on this Path.

thou shalt see it everywhere..."—Hermes Trismegistus

Then you become aware of the inevitable process of the evolution of consciousness... that daily, slowly, the cloud of illusion becomes thinner and thinner...until, at last, there is light.

This manual concerns no more or no less than the living of daily life. At first you "do" *sadhana* (work on the spiritual path) within certain time and space boundaries, such as going to church on Sunday mornings, or getting high on Saturday nights, or meditating each morning. Eventually, it turns out that *SADHANA IS EVERYTHING YOU DO*.

"WARNING: if you don't have room in your livingroom for an elephant—don't make friends with the elephant trainer..."—Sufi mystic

This manual contains a wide variety of techniques. Everyone's needs are different and everyone is at a different stage along the path. But, as with any recipe book, you choose what suits you. If you listen to your own inner voice, it will tell you where you are now, and which method will work best for you in your evolution towards the light.

"May the longtime

sun shine 'pon you

All love surround you

and the pure light within you

Guide your way home."—The Incredible String Band

and why he has recorded his ideas, Richard Shannon said he had his first vision when he was seven and another when he was sixteen. He recalls that "Suddenly I became aware of a great power that established a path for the sun and for the earth and for all things everywhere. . . . I was totally filled with an inner peace. I felt such a union with God and with the spirit of all things. . . ."

"I vowed that someday I would share that wisdom with others by writing a sacred book. . . . I knew then that my life's work would be to help others understand the hidden meanings of life."

When Bill Whitehead wanted to turn his work into a book, however, Shannon had many reservations about how publication might transform it. Shannon even had a vision of a young man (Whitehead) cutting the branches of a tree (editing his manuscript) on Park Avenue (Doubleday's location). But Whitehead was determined to preserve the integrity of the author's work by not making any changes in it. He neither eliminated any illuminations nor corrected misspelled words.

The jacket imagery has a fierce look, particularly so for a "book of peace." Shannon designed a colorful demon with a large open mouth to convey his idea that there is trepidation involved in any profound new awareness—in cosmic peace, for most of us an unknown area. The open mouth symbolizes the entrance. The back cover art, a floral decoration, is delicate and tranquil symbolizing the more conventional idea of peace.

A "no-hype" sales approach is being used for all book outlets, university, trade and underground. The hardbound price, a flat \$6.00, not \$5.98 was selected with that in mind, and a silk-screened poster of the book's cover was sent to booksellers for promotional use.

"Be Here Now"

Crown editor, Bruce Harris, enthusiastically described "Be Here Now" this

way: "It does not look like most other books. It doesn't read like most other books and it was not printed like most other books because the book was designed, printed and published by the Lama Foundation, a non-profit commune devoted to spiritual enlightenment, located in the mountains of northern New Mexico." It is being distributed by Crown which helped develop its editorial concept incorporating the thoughts and writings of Baba Ram Dass formerly known as Dr. Richard Alpert. In ways this collaborative effort represents an attempt to mingle the interests of the counter-culture with the existing capitalist pipeline.

"Be Here Now", a square-shaped paperback, has four sections each with a different paper stock or ink color to set them apart. It grew out of the inspirations in sermons and writings of Baba Ram Dass, who will not take any of the profits however, because he believes that all the insights and spiritualizations came through his body as the vehicle for a higher source.

The first part of the book, printed in blue ink on matte white paper, tells how Alpert became disillusioned with his achievement-oriented life at Harvard, where he was a professor and psychotherapist, how he and Timothy Leary, then a colleague at Harvard, turned on to drugs and dropped out, and of Alpert's ultimate dissatisfaction with artificial methods of getting high. Alpert recounts his travels to India and his growing awareness of Eastern religious techniques, particularly Yoga.

The middle sections offer an optimistic philosophy for coping with contemporary life. The second part is called From Bindu to Ojas (From Materialism to Awakened Consciousness). It is an illustrated credo printed in black ink on brown wrapping paper. Each two-page spread was designed by artists of the Lama Foundation commune after meditation on the words of Ram Dass. Com-

mune members boiled down his sermons to 108 meditations, one for each bead on the Mala, the Hindu rosary. Each is depicted on a spread held the long way, from top to bottom rather than across, by having the reader swing the book around. It is hand drawn and lettered from a rubber stamp set (no mechanical type was used) and artists tried to let both lettering and illustration express the thought of that particular page. An actual spread from this section appears in full size on the inside pages of the insert accompanying this article.

The third section, The Cookbook for a Sacred Life, a page of which is reproduced on the back of the insert, is printed in brown ink on a pulpy newsprint stock because it is a method book, a tool book that gives recipes for living the spiritual life in America in 1971. This section should give the book its widest audience. It covers work, school, family, food, dope, the rational mind and many everyday things.

The last part is a bibliography called Painted Cakes Do Not Satisfy Hunger, printed in orange ink on brown wrapping paper. It is an inviting list of books on spiritual sources divided into such subsections as Books to Hang Out With, and Books to Visit with Now and Then.

Like the "Book of Peace" very little money is being spent to promote "Be Here Now." At the beginning is a "Money Yoga" page declaring who gets what from the book's price, \$3.33. The book's first printing of 25,000 was sold out before pub date and 30,000 more copies are on the press.

A recurring criticism of today's books by judges and reviewers, such as those for the 1971 Fifty Books of the Year Show sponsored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, (*PW*, May 10) is that they lack the means to communicate with today's multisensory readers. Those critics hadn't seen "Be Here Now." The book is what "being here and now" is all about. M.R.K.

Richard Shannon, left, and two photos of Baba Ram Dass, as professor, center, and later at right, as holy man

