John Major Jenkins

John Major Jenkins has some wild ideas about the Maya and 2012

Although he bills himself as an "independent" researcher of the Maya, John Major Jenkins has a close relationship of mutual promotion with tourism interests in Mesoamerica. He is best known for his ideas about the calendar systems used by the Maya civilization, including the Galactic Alignment with either the galactic equator or the Dark Rift. His writings are associated with 2012 millenarianism and the development of Mayanism in contemporary and popular culture, as a part of the New Age movement. His newest book is The 2012 Story: The Myths, Fallacies, and Truth Behind the Most Intriguing Date in History, which we review here.

Jenkins is a Founding Member and Advisor of The Maya Conservancy and a featured participant in The Great Rethinking and The Prophets Conference.

Jenkins on Jenkins

John Major Jenkins calls himself:

...an independent researcher who has devoted himself to reconstructing ancient Mayan cosmology and philosophy.

In Jenkins' newest website, johnmajorjenkins.com, he describes himself as a "mass media iconoclast and jet-setting medievalist".

Jenkins' place in the 2012 phenomenon

Jenkins works hard at presenting himself as erudite and scholarly.

In an article in the New York Times Magazine, author Benjamin Anastas called Jenkins "perhaps the most lucid figure in the subculture of 2012 prophets". Having read some of the views of other "2012 prophets", we agree. However, "most lucid" is a relative term, and as shown below in the section Jenkins on 2012, Jenkins' less-publicized beliefs and accusations are disturbing.

John Hoopes, an archaeologist at the University of Kansas, is somewhat complimentary of Jenkins' research, even if he doubts the validity of Jenkins' major conclusions, including the galactic-alignment theory:

John Jenkins has done his homework on the ancient Maya, and he's thought about their culture a great deal. Arguelles and Calleman largely disregard what we know the Maya believed.

Still, like most Mayan experts, Hoopes is not convinced that the Maya would have considered the end of a world cycle to be an apocalyptic event, as Jenkins has sometimes maintained.
Jenkins on 2012

Publicly, Jenkins does not support the idea of an apocalypse in 2012. “Personally, I think it’s about transformation and renewal. It’s certainly nothing as simplistic as the end of the world.”13 Jenkins phrases it this way: “A lot of people ask me if the world is going to end in 2012, and I’ve come up with the best way to address that. The short answer is yes. The long answer is no.”

However, a closer look at his writings gives a much different picture of Jenkins. He apparently heaps abuse on people who disagree with him, referring one person to a “dream worker” for a diagnosis of “energy vampires” and “mind parasites”.14 He can be harshly critical of the “2012 Doomsday” camp:

The trendy doomsday people… should be treated for what they are: under-informed opportunists and alarmists who will move onto other things in 2013.15

Jenkins calls producers of 2012 documentaries “doomsday pimps”,16 ignoring the fact that some of his own “essential books for exploring Maya perennial wisdom for 2012” attribute apocalyptic views to the Maya for which he now says there is “zero evidence”.17 Adding to the confusion, Jenkins asserts that “[2012] is about a sea change that probably won’t bear fruit for many decades”,18 while also stating that the Maya only “suspected” this19.

Jenkins’ exchanges with his critics, some of which he maintains on line, are quite surprising. Some show his responses to observations that he overstates the strength of supporting arguments, and “cherry-picks” only those data that support him.20,21 Of course we laymen cannot judge whether these observations are accurate, but they’re made credible by Jenkins’ insistence that astronomers change the standard definitions of terms like “conjunction” to fit the meanings he gives them in his Galactic Alignment.22

Alternative science

Jenkins appears to reject the conclusions of science, because it has abandoned its ‘sacred roots’.

Modern profane science is the degenerate descendant of an ancient sacred science that long ago perceived and embraced many dimensions of reality, including supra-sensory realms that lead into a higher integrative consciousness that is not anti-intellect, but transcends the intellect and is within reach of all human beings.23

Among the sciences whose loss Jenkins laments is ley-line geomancy,24 a body of knowledge that leads him to suspect that Mexico City might be destroyed by earthquakes early in the 21st century, due to “astronomical pressure” over the unstable “power band” along the 19°30’N latitude.25

Jenkins also distrusts the conventional explanation of precession, preferring either Walter Cruttenden’s “Binary Sun” hypothesis,26 or the idea that Maya kings were semi-human deities who periodically re-conjured their realms into being,27 and sustained precession through their own blood sacrifices and participation in the mesoamerican ball game.28

Jenkins, The Maya Conservancy, and the cover-up by “Reincarnated Maya Priestess” Deborah Skye

Jenkins is a Founding Member, Advisor, and “Resource” of The Maya Conservancy (TMC), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation whose Directors make dubious claims29 about the ancient Maya and the “Galactic Alignment of 2012” (along with its supposed hazards) to advocate for preservation of the Izapa archaeological site in Chiapas, Mexico. TMC also promotes tourism to Maya sites. As we note below, some of TMC’s Board members have their own tourism interests in Mexico and Guatemala.

Jenkins is a friend of Deborah Skye, a “past life regression therapist” and “Reincarnated Maya Priestess” who works closely with TMC. At the invitation of Director Jim Reed, Ms. Skye participated in a TMC event at Izapa in June of 2010. There, she and Jenkins made a series of YouTube videos in which Ms. Skye described the “full information” she claimed to be receiving about Izapa’s monuments from extraterrestrial and extradimensional sources. In two of those videos, Jenkins made misleading statements about the “Alignment of 2012”. As documented here (note: video no longer available), Ms. Skye deleted comments from YouTube users who questioned her own claims, and blocked a YouTuber who demonstrated that Jenkins made his misleading statements knowingly.

Involvement with high-end "2012 tourism"

The tourism interests with which Jenkins collaborates include cruise lines.30 The Maya Conservancy,31 and Jades, S.A., whose advertising slogan is “Jade: A Treasure from the Past, an Asset for Your Future”.32,33 The Maya Conservancy recently organized an event in Izapa that included several days of high-end tourism, a presentation by Jenkins, and a trip to Jades, S.A.

As documented here, Jenkins is also promoted enthusiastically by the Institute for Maya Studies, whose
Use and advocacy of hallucinogens

By his late teens, Jenkins was already an experienced user of hallucinogens. He describes the LSD experiment that he conducted on himself in an isolation tank at age 19 as “an experience that reoriented my entire being, at a young age, and has led me along the path that is my life”.

Jenkins had prepared himself for that experiment through fasting and diligent meditation. In addition, he had “lately eliminated mind-altering substances in deference to yoga practice, seeking clarity of mind”. As further preparation, he’d had four or five previous sessions in the isolation tank “without pharmacological help”. Jenkins recalls that the session in which he used LSD lasted five hours. He later wrote that

Jenkins used psilocybin mushrooms extensively during the 1990s, during the period when he was doing the research for his “magnum opus”, Maya Cosmogenesis 2012. He appears to attribute to drug use, his “blazing new revelation[s] about how the Maya encoded the galactic alignment of 2012 into their various institutions”.

Jenkins maintains that with the aid of hallucinogens, the ancient Maya were able to perform feats far beyond humankind’s present technology, and to communicate with beings from other times and levels of existence. Therefore, Jenkins recommends that modern heads of state avail themselves of hallucinogens for decision-making.

In his latest book, The 2012 Story, Jenkins draws a clear distinction between LSD and other hallucinogens. He says that all human beings should have some direct experience (with proper guidance) of “sacred plants”, which he defines as “psychoactive tools of shamanism such as peyote, psilocybin mushrooms, [and] ergot”. In contrast, of LSD he says, “I don’t advocate LSD use or suggest that [his own experiment in the isolation tank] be repeated”.

Did someone ask Wikipedia not to mention Jenkins’ drug use?

Wikipedia’s biography of John Major Jenkins used to contain most of the information on his drug use and advocacy that we present at 2012Hoax. Wikipedia removed that information on 19 July 2010 after being contacted by parties whom Wikipedia declined to identify. Although that information cited Jenkins’ own writings (exclusively), and had been successfully defended a week earlier, Wikipedia administrators now deleted it, calling it “junk”, and “innuendo”. Wikipedia administrators also instructed that “due weight [be] given to [Jenkins]’ own denial of the assertion that he promotes hallucinogen use”. The Administrators could not provide a source to cite for that denial.

As of this writing (28 October 2010), no mention of drugs has been restored to Wikipedia’s biography of Jenkins. Wikipedia decided that the material on Jenkins’ advocacy of hallucinogens was irrelevant because “that’s not what he’s known for”. No reason has been given for not restoring the information on his drug use. Wikipedia’s reasoning is striking:

“I’m not sure that information [about advocating hallucinogen use, including by heads of state] is any more relevant to his bio than mentioning that he advocates drinking coffee in the mornings, or taking vitamins before bed. (comment by “Eskimo”, 20:38, 21 July 2010)

“Eskimo” was seconded by CJLL Wright, Wikipedia editor and administrator, whose current focus of activity is on Wikipedia's Precolombian Mesoameria articles, and the Wikiproject Mesoamerica.:

I'm not sure that information [about advocating hallucinogen use, including by heads of state] is any more relevant to his bio than mentioning that he advocates drinking coffee in the mornings, or taking vitamins before bed. (comment by “Eskimo”, 20:38, 21 July 2010)

Fully agree with The Eskimo's comments here. Whatever JMJ's position on hallucinogen advocacy might be is beside the point. That's not what he's known for, and whatever that personal position is it has nothing to do with whether or not his calendric ideas & 2012 millenarian writings (ie, basis for notability) are correct, or accepted. (04:04, 22 July 2010).

Did CJLL Wright not understand that the article is a biography of Jenkins, rather than a treatise on Jenkins’ calendric ideas & 2012 millenarian writings”? And did CJLL Wright really believe that a biography should restrict itself to what’s already best known about the subject?

Clearly, the undisclosed source that contacted Wikipedia caused a flurry of activity among Wikipedia
administrators, leading them to eviscerate Jenkins' biography for puzzling reasons.

Publications

Jenkins' publications include:

- Journey to the Mayan Underworld (Four Ahau Press, Boulder, CO: 1989)
- Mirror in the Sky (Four Ahau Press, 1991)
- Maya Cosmogenesis 2012 (Bear & Company, Santa Fe, NM: 1998)
- The 2012 Story (Tarcher/Penguin, New York: 2009)

Further Reading: Jenkins and the Energy Vampires

Conclusion

Jenkins' iconic status as an "independent" researcher of the Maya is undermined by his collaboration with "2012 tourism" interests that promote his work. Though he publicly downplays the idea of apocalyptic events, he indulges in wild speculation that "transdimensional beings" will emerge in 2012, and that the Maya thought of the 2012 date as "the end of time and space"

Footnotes

1. [15]
2. [13]
3. [2]
4. [12]
5. [20]
6. [19]
7. [14]
8. [7]
9. This is a direct quote from Jenkins' own website[ 6].
11. See especially Arguelles and Lieder
12. ibid. [1]
13. In [1], Anastas explains some of Jenkins' beliefs. It appears that Jenkins may be smitten with Mayanism.
15. From the CNN article "Apocalypse in 2012", January 27, 2009[ 16]
19. [10]
20. [4]
21. [8]
22. [5]
23. This is from the draft version of Galactic Alignment (2002)[ 4]
24. [3], p. 297.
25. [3], pp. 85-86.
27. [3], p. 322
28. [3], pp. 137-138; 323-324. See also See also here.
29. For example, that the inventors of the Long Count Calendar chose 21 December 2012 as the "end date" because it falls during an intense solar cycle. See the video Izapa Cosmogenesis 2012 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3sMGmOSl-k) at 14:10.
30. [15]
31. The Maya Conservancy is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation whose stated mission is "to aid in the preservation and protection of Maya and Pre-Maya archaeological sites throughout Central America". However, some of its Directors and Advisors have tourism interests, and Mary Lou Ridinger, its Secretary of the Board of Directors, is an owner of Jades, S. A., in Antigua, Guatemala.
32. [17]
33. [18]
34. [7], p. 395.
35. Ibid., p. 396.
36. Ibid., p. 401.
37. Ibid., p. 401.
38. [3]
39. [9]
40. [3], p. 318.
41. Ibid., pp. 320-321.
42. Ibid., pp. 317-319.
43. Ibid., p. 384.
44. Ibid., p. 401.
46. According to Wikipedia, its biography of John Major Jenkins is "Within the scope of WikiProject
Mesoamerica, a collaborative effort to improve the coverage of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, its civilizations, history, accomplishments and other related topics on Wikipedia.
47. The persons who attacked that information also attacked statements about Jenkins in Wikipedia's 2012 Phenomenon article. For more, see here.
50. "Four Ahau Press" appears to be a self-publication company consisting of Jenkins himself, possibly with the aid of the services provided by the local copy store. [11] Jenkins has refused to provide samples of the books and booklets published through "Four Ahau Press" to researchers.

Bibliography