

The crow is a sacred bird, revered as the messenger from the spirit world. The raven, which is practically a larger crow, and which lives in the mountains, but occasionally comes down into the plains, is also held sacred and regarded as a bringer of omens by the prairie tribes. The crow was depicted on the shirts, leggings, and moccasins of Ghost dancers, and its feathers are worn on their heads, and whenever it is possible to kill one, the skin is stuffed as in life and carried in the dance. At one time the Ghost dancers in Left Hand's camp had a crow which it was claimed had the power of speech and prophetic utterance, and its hoarse inarticulate cries were interpreted as inspired messages from the spirit world. Unfortunately the bird did not thrive in confinement, and soon took its departure for the land of spirits, leaving the Arapaho once more dependent on the guidance of the trance revelations. The eagle, the magpie, and the sage-hen are also sacred in the Ghost dance, the first being held in veneration by Indians, as well as by other peoples throughout the world, while the magpie and the sage-hen are revered for their connection with the country of the messiah and the mythology of his tribe.

(Mooney. G.D.R.) pp. 982