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Introduction

I should start by raising my voice in a prayer.

Acbadadea, Maker of All Things Above, hear my prayer. Thank you for giving me the strength to help my people so that the Sun Dance Religion may carry on. I am retired now from being the Crow Sun Dance chief, but You have helped me to select a man to continue this sacred tradition. You have also allowed me to continue to have the strength to be a medicine man and I intend to continue to try to help others by my actions and by my words. I hope in this manner to help people see that they need to find a way that will lead to You.

You have given different ways to different people all over the world. As we know, this earth is round like a wagon wheel. In a wagon wheel, all the spokes are set into the center. The circle of the wheel is round and all spokes come from the center and the center is You, *Acbadadea,* the Maker of All Things Above. Each spoke can be considered as a different religion of the world which has been given by You to different people and different races. All of the people of the world are on the rim of the wheel and they must follow one of the spokes to the center. The different paths have been given to us but they all lead to the same place. We all pray to the same God, to You. There are different places on the wheel so each way may look strange to someone following a different path. It is easy for people to say that their way is the best if they know all about their faith and it is good for them. But they should refrain from saying bad things about other ways that they don't know about. There should be no hard feelings about someone else if he is following a way that leads to You. Help us to see this wisdom.

It is the responsibility of each person to choose a path and to pray. It does not matter which path they choose, as long as they follow some religion. It helps to understand the sacred way of other people in order to better understand your own religion. So I hope that this book will help the people who read it to remember their responsibil-

ity to live in a sacred manner by better understanding the spirit of the olden-day Indians.

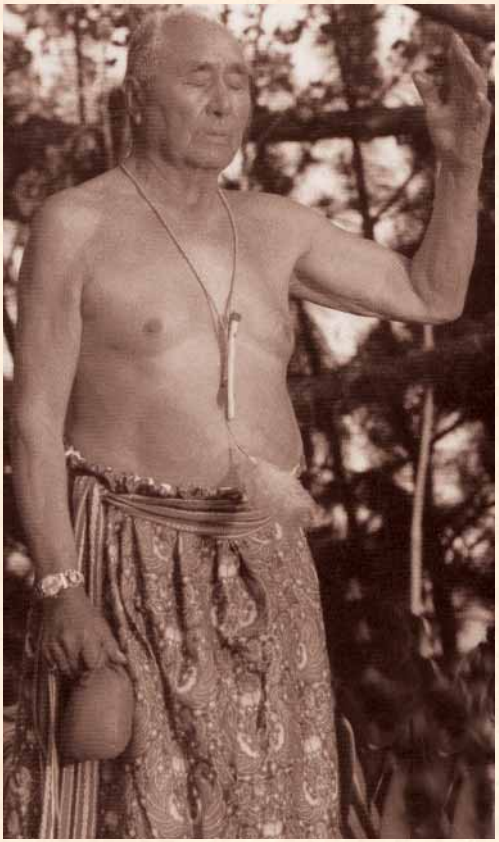
I have read the words of the olden-day Indians that have been selected by my son, Michael Fitzgerald, and I have looked at the images that have been gathered together by my son [Michael] and my close friend, Frithjof Schuon. I am thankful that others may see these things, so that they may better understand the path that You have given to the Indians. *Aho*!

People will want to know how I met Frithjof Schuon. We first met in 1953 in Paris. In that summer of long ago, my wife and I were members of a group of Crow Indian dancers who toured Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East performing traditional Indian dances. In both 1959 and 1963 the Schuons traveled from Switzerland to the United States to attend the Sun Dance with me and to meet with Indians of many tribes. I was with Mr. Schuon in Sheridan, Wyoming in 1959 when he was adopted into the Sioux tribe in a ceremony at the All American Indian Days. Since he moved to America in 1980, we have come together each year for a visit. In 1987, I held a ceremony and adopted him as a member of my family. It is better that he is now both a Crow and a Sioux.

The idea for this book came from my son, Michael Fitzgerald, who has been a member of my family and the Crow tribe for over twenty years. He and his family come and attend the Crow Sun Dance every year and I stay with him each year in Bloomington, Indiana. Michael also had the idea to make a book about my life and the Crow Sun Dance, which was recently published.[1] In that book Michael helped to preserve the spiritual tradition of the Crow Sun Dance. Now Michael has helped to show us the wisdom of the old-timers with some of their best words. Because Michael and Mr. Schuon know and love the spirit of the Indians they have been able to find and select the best images of the old-timers that have ever been gathered together. *Aho*!

Our Medicine Fathers have given us two main plant medicines to use in our healing ceremonies. These plants only grow in one place in the world, and that is over at a certain place on the Shoshone reservation. This sacred location is guarded by two eagles, one a bald eagle and the other one a golden

1. Michael Fitzgerald, *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*. See "Primary Bibliography" for more details.



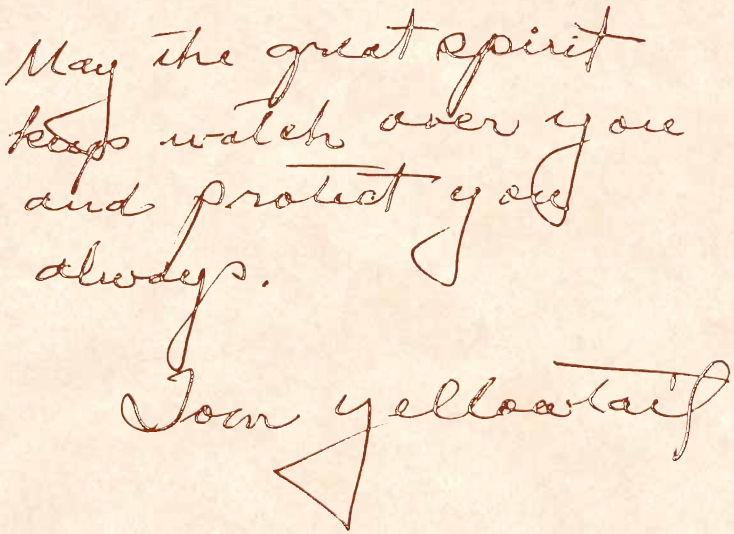
Thomas Yellowtail
Crow Medicine Man
and Sun Dance Chief

eagle. Each time we go there to collect the medicine we say prayers, and in our prayers we always say a few words just for these two eagles, to thank them for protecting the sacred medicine. Years ago, when I adopted Michael as my son, I gave him the Crow name "Two Eagles," after these two eagles. So his name really means "Protects the Sacred Medicine." Michael is trying to live up to his name. This is very good.

This book makes me remember the times in my youth when all of the old-timers were living still. I can remember the fear and the admiration I felt when I was in their presence. I recall one of the chiefs in this book very well, because Chief Medicine Crow gave me my traditional name when I was growing up. He named me "Medicine Rock Chief" and I have spent my life trying to become worthy of such a name. There are many other chiefs that I remember and it is sad to know that as these people died, much of the sacred center of our traditional ways was lost with them. But what we have left is still good enough and if a person is able to pray and be sincere, then they will find their way to their Maker and this is good.

Words alone are inadequate to express spiritual realities. This book expresses the Indian spirit because it combines the best photographs ever taken of old-time chiefs with some of their best words. You can meet these old-timers and share their wisdom. People who read this book will better understand our sacred ways. *Aho*!

October, 1992
Bloomington, Indiana



Introduction to Indian Spirit: Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Yellowtail
Features in
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