From the online library at www.worldwisdom.com

Medicine Crow
Absaroke

Wakan Tanka
When I pray to Him
He hears me.
Whatever is good
He grants me.

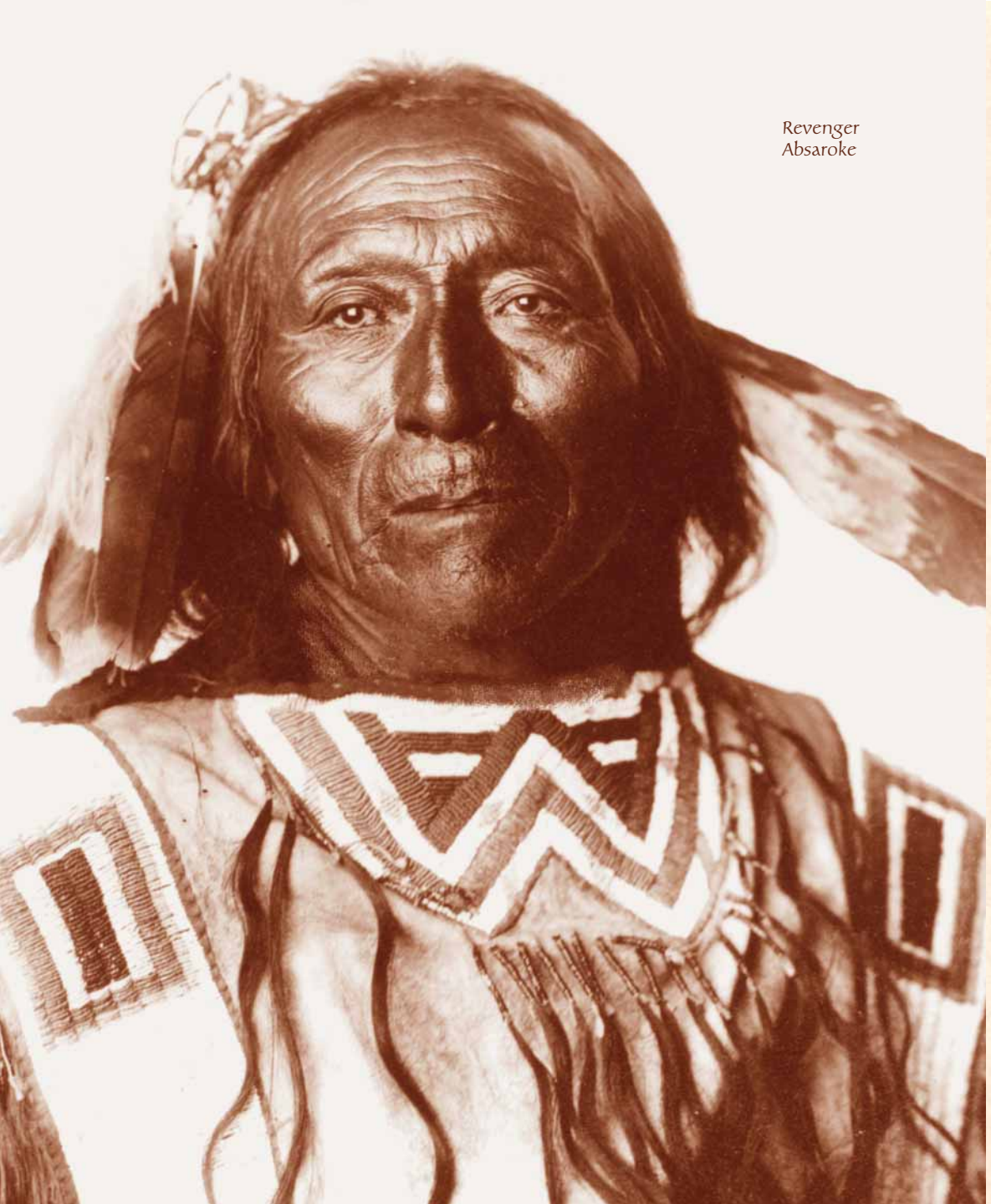
Teton Sioux Song

Medicine
Crow

When a person is on a vision quest, he must have certain attitudes and intentions for his prayers to be sincere, and then he must carry these over into his daily life. It is easy to forget what you learned during this trial; unless you remember to carry on your prayer continually during every day of your life, you will not have learned one of the most important purposes of the vision quest. Each time we talk about one of our sacred rites, you will hear me talk about the spiritual attitudes which a person must possess as that person participates in any rite. It is possible to learn the outer steps that must be accomplished in a rite without learning the inner meanings that are the keys to the sacred traditions. Each seeker must therefore open his heart to the Great Mystery as he tries to follow the sacred way, because the perfect accomplishment of the outer steps of a rite will be worth nothing without the knowledge of the inner meanings.

Medicine Crow

Yellowtail, Absaroke



Revenger
Absaroke

INDIAN SPIRIT

I am blind and do not see the things of this world; but when the Light comes from Above, it enlightens my heart and I can see, for the Eye of my heart sees everything. The heart is a sanctuary at the center of which there is a little space, wherein the Great Spirit dwells, and this is the Eye. This is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees all things and through which we see Him. If the heart is not pure, the Great Spirit cannot be seen, and if you should die in this ignorance, your soul cannot return immediately to the Great Spirit, but it must be purified by wandering about in the world. In order to know the center of the heart where the Great Spirit dwells you must be pure and good, and live in the manner that the Great Spirit has taught us. The man who is thus pure contains the Universe in the pocket of his heart.

Black Elk
Oglala Lakota

It is good to have a reminder of death before us, for it helps us to understand the impermanence of life on this earth, and this understanding may aid us in preparing for our own death. He who is well prepared is he who knows that he is nothing compared with Wakan Tanka, who is everything; then he knows that world which is real.

Black Elk

Two Guns
Blackfeet

INDIAN SPIRIT

We saw the Great Spirit's work in almost everything: sun, moon, trees, wind, and mountains. Sometimes we approached Him through these things. Was that so bad? I think we have a true belief in the supreme being, a stronger faith than that of most whites who have called us pagans.... Indians living close to nature and nature's ruler are not living in darkness.

Did you know that trees talk? Well they do. They talk to each other, and they'll talk to you if you listen. Trouble is, white people don't listen. They never learned to listen to the Indians so I don't suppose they'll listen to other voices in nature. But I have learned a lot from trees: sometimes about the weather, sometimes about animals, sometimes about the Great Spirit.

Walking Buffalo, Stoney

Two Guns

The land ... was put here for us by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not belong to us. You can count your money and burn it within the nod of a buffalo's head, but only the Great Spirit can count the grains of sand and the blades of grass of these plains. As a present to you, we will give you anything we have that you can take with you; but the land, never.

A Blackfeet Chief

Two Guns Black

INDIAN SPIRIT

Remember that your children are not your own, but are lent to you by the Creator.

Mohawk proverb

My sun is set. My day is done. Darkness is stealing over me. Before I lie down to rise no more, I will speak to my people, Hear me, my friends, for it is not the time for me to tell you a lie. The Great Spirit made us, the Indians, and gave us this land we live in. He gave us the buffalo, the antelope, and the deer for food and clothing....

We fought our enemies and feasted our friends. Our braves drove away all who would take our game.... Our children were many and our herds were large. Our old men talked with spirits and made good medicine. Our young men herded the horses and made love to the girls. Where the tipi was, there we stayed and no house imprisoned us. No one said, "To this line is my land, to that is yours." In this way our fathers lived and were happy.... Then they sang the Indian songs and would be as the Lakotas were and not as the white men are.... Shadows are long and dark before me. I shall soon lie down to rise no more. While my spirit is with my body the smoke of my breath shall be towards the Sun for he knows all things and knows that I am still true to him.

Red Cloud, Oglala Lakota

Red Cloud
Oglala Lakota

The Lakota loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth.... It was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him....

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence.

Standing Bear
Oglala Lakota

Selections from Indian Spirit: Revised and Enlarged

Features in

Indian Spirit: Revised and Enlarged
©2006 World Wisdom, Inc;
Edited by Judith Fitzgerald and Michael Oren Fitzgerald,
Foreword by James Trosper, Introduction by Thomas Yellowtail
All Rights Reserved. For Personal Usage Only.
www.worldwisdom.com