

# Plant Spirit Medicine

by Eliot Cowan

*A major pharmaceutical firm approaches a shamanic studies institute. The firm wants to contact shamans of the Amazon in order to get information on medicinal plants. The company plans to take samples of the herbs, isolate active molecules, and manufacture them in the laboratory. Field workers rush specimens back to the laboratory. Skilled technicians spend millions of company dollars researching new compounds, only to come up with one disappointment after another. The shamans will be discredited, but they won't care. They will still be in the jungle working cures with the plants they have used for centuries.*

from *Plant Spirit Medicine*

Since *Plant Spirit Medicine* was published in 1995, Eliot Cowan has been teaching the art of plant spirit healing to practitioners from all over the U.S., Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Hawaii and Mexico. The plant spirit community is currently opening The Blue Deer Community in the Catskill Mountains of New York with Eliot as its resident Shaman. Cowan currently has 38 apprentices who are being trained in the Huichol tradition.

About *Plant Spirit Medicine*...

Tradition tells us that if you want to use a plant for healing, the spirit of the plant must come to you in your dreams. If the spirit of the plant tells you how to prepare it and what it will cure, you can use it. Otherwise, it won't work for you.

When the traditional Shaman-healer turns to the plant world, he turns to the spirits. Plant spirits cure his patients. Spirits are his teachers, friends and allies. This ancient practice of plant spirit medicine, long forgotten in the West, has now been remembered, revitalized, and reintroduced by American healer, Eliot Cowan.

Eliot Cowan learned that leaves, roots and flowers are relatively ineffectual; it is the spirit of a plant that does the healing. Contacting these spirits and asking for their help, Cowan can give his clients direct access to the grace and healing gifts of plants.

*Plant Spirit Medicine* (Swan•Raven & Co.) opens the reader to the real and ancient world of contact with plant spirits, shows how to make that contact for oneself, and shares wonderful stories of Indian shaman healers and their respect and alliance with plant spirits.

Continued...

*Plant Spirit Medicine* also explains a new method of herbal treatment based on the following principles:

1. Knowledge of plant medicines is accessible through shamanism.
2. Herbs can have a powerful effect on the mind and spirit.
3. Local wild-growing plants make the most effective medicine.
4. The Chinese Five Element system of medicine can be practiced using only herbs.

Presented in three sections, *Plant Spirit Medicine* opens with Cowan's personal experiences working with herbs and Indian shamans. For Cowan shamanism is a way of learning in which the student alters his state of consciousness in a disciplined and purposeful manner. In a non-ordinary state of awareness, students make direct contact with spirits, who give information. (Cowan does not use drugs to induce an altered state, rather, his preferred method of induction is repetitive drumming.)

According to Cowan and other practitioners of plant spirit medicine, each species of plant has a wise and knowledgeable spirit. A powerful technique is provided which allows the reader an opportunity to begin to learn from these spirits. One first must study a plant in its natural habitat. Understanding where the roots are, one can then move into an altered state to meet the plant spirit.

Part Two of *Plant Spirit Medicine* explores the Chinese medical tradition of the Five Elements and how each of the elements corresponds to plant spirits and people. Each chapter closes with a questionnaire that allows readers to examine their relationship with the qualities associated with each element.

In Part Three, *Medicine Dreams of the Shamans*, we meet five plant shamans who share their own way of relating to the spirit power of plants.

This is an extremely important introduction to a field that is little researched and written about. *Plant Spirit Medicine* provides knowledge, insight and a proven method to make contact with plant spirits for healing. Those interested in alternative medicine and herbalism, Native American medicine ways, and psychic and spiritual approaches to nature will find *Plant Spirit Medicine* a particularly engaging book. Eliot Cowan presents an extremely important introduction to the world of plant spirits and how one, given a bit of practice, can heal one's own spirit by working with the generous spirits of plants.

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### **Ordering Information**

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