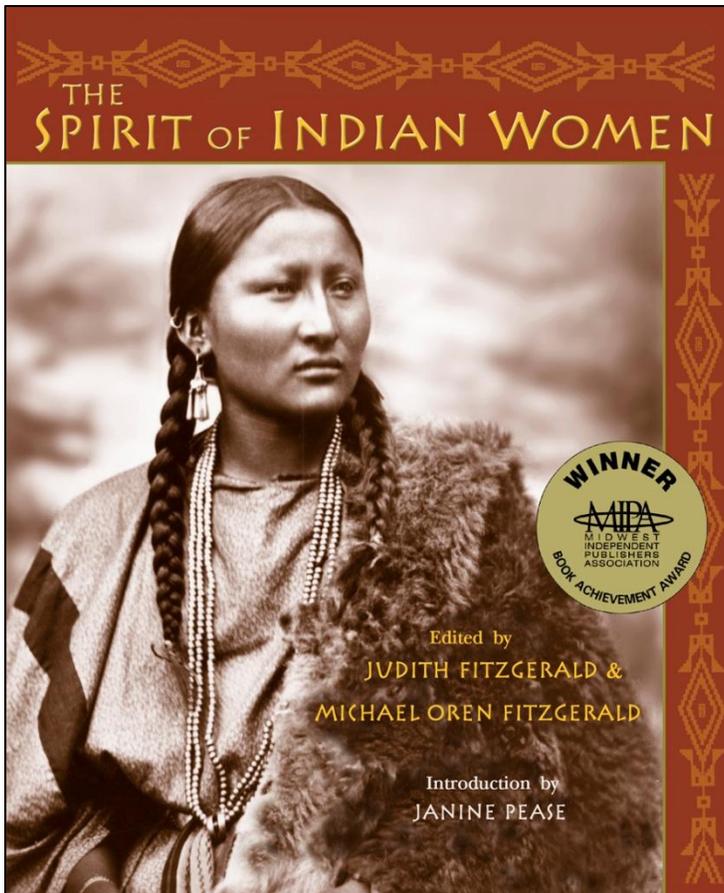


# The Spirit of Indian Women

By Judith Fitzgerald & Michael Fitzgerald



What was the role of women among the nomadic American Indians of the 19th century? *The Spirit of Indian Women* provides a unique glimpse into a world that is almost inaccessible in our time.

## About This Book

- ❖ An award-winning title presenting the remarkable spirituality of American Indian women in the pre-reservation days of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- ❖ Shows the essential role of women in the religion, values, governance, education, and arts of their tribes
- ❖ Features an informative introduction by Janine Pease, National Indian Educator of the Year and founder of Little Big Horn College
- ❖ Contains over 110 inspiring quotations by or about American Indian women, with sections on “The Role of Indian Women,” “Celestial Femininity,” “Intercessors with the Sacred,” and “Women’s Voices”

- ❖ Includes over 80 rarely seen b/w photographs, some published for the first time, conveying the “spirit” of these extraordinary American Indian women
- ❖ A companion volume to the bestselling, *Indian Spirit*, also edited by Michael and Judith Fitzgerald

## Publication Details

- ❖ ISBN: 0-941532-87-9
- ❖ Pub Date: October 2005
- ❖ Price: \$14.95
- ❖ Trim Size: 6 x 7.25
- ❖ Page Count: 156 Pages



# Sample Pages of *The Spirit of Indian Women*

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**LOLOLOMA, THE BEAR** Clan chieftain, is responsible for the well-being of our village, and must make a daily pathway for us, his people, through prayer. He calls us his children. We call him our father. He prays for long life, puny, abundant crops, for all of us who live in Oraibi. He prays for rain. He prays for the essence of good in the plants we use, and in the clay we dig and crush for our pottery making, and in the rocks we pile one on top of the other in house building.

Your father and I are responsible for the well-being of our own home and our children. It is our duty to see to it that our children have a place to live and food to nourish their bodies. It is LoloLoma's duty to see to it that we are all fed spiritually. That is why he prays in the mornings, and again in the evenings. He is the father of our spiritual home.

Sevenka (mother of Polingaysi), Hopi

115 WOMEN'S VOICES

Red Bird and child, Kootenai



THE AIM OF the old Dakota economic system and that of the white man's are one and the same, incongruous as that sounds when we compare the two systems for achieving it. Security, that was the aim: food, clothing, shelter, and an old age free from want. All peoples need that; it is what they struggle for in their respective ways.

But the two systems in question are irreconcilable. They go counter to each other. One says in effect: "Get, get, get now, all you can, as you can, for yourself, and so insure security for yourself. If all will do this, then everyone will be safe." And it depends on things, primarily.

The of they will of giving beings—  
Ella Delo

16 THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN WOMEN

Blackfeet women



17 THE ROLE OF INDIAN WOMEN

CONCERNING FIDELITY, HUMAN frailty must be taken into consideration, but the Indian woman was a true wife and the Indian man a true husband. The vows on both sides were taken seriously and both man and woman looked upon their marriage contract as something extremely vital to their position in the tribe. The integrity of the home was revered, and a man known as a good husband and a woman known as a good wife were honored members of society. Polygamy was never extensively practiced among the Lakotas, comparatively few men—chiefs or men of special note—taking more than one wife. But this arrangement was not assigned to divine instruction nor given a religious hue; it was wholly and solely an adjustment with the social plans of the tribe. A chief would have considered it much more dishonorable to have one overworked wife than to have two or three to share the duties of his household, and the women were of the same opinion. But fidelity was another Indian virtue to become weakened by the disruption of his society, for the white man was wont to take the things that pleased him.

Luther Standing Bear  
Oglala Lakota

Sample Pages

Unknown Apache



117 WOMEN'S VOICES

THE TRADITIONAL IMPORTANCE of the native doctor among our people gave parents an enticement for sending their children out into the forest each night to hunt for a supernatural spirit and become accomplished shamans. An Indian doctor, with the knowledge of spirit guardians and animal guides, had greater influence among the natives than did the chief, (especially) if he was a good medicine man with one or more powerful spirits.

A child might find these supernatural powers almost any place: water, cliffs, forest, mountains, remains of lightning-struck trees, animal carcasses, old campfires, or the sweat lodge itself. The spirits were supposed to appear to a child when they were impressed by the dedication and lured by the purity of the persistent seeker.

The spirit's appearance came to a child in a vision, in the form of an animal or an object that spoke about how the spirit would help him or her in future life, especially when needed during times of distress. It sang its spiritual song for the child to memorize and use when calling upon the spirit guardian as an adult. Such a vision did not always come to a child while awake. Sometimes it came while the child was asleep beside the token he or she had been given.

Indian theory holds that each spirit has the same strengths as its animal counterpart, as judged by close observation of nature and the outcome of actual fights, in "real" life, between such animals or shamans with their powers.

Ever since I was seven years old, my parents, my adopted grandmother, Teequalt, and other relatives had coached me to hunt for the spiritual blessings of a medicine woman. I followed the rules and never was afraid to go after water or run other errands at night, the time to search for a vision to accomplish my goal. I used to get up at dawn and bathe in cold water. At first I resented this, but I grew to like it afterward. I remember that my feet would stick to the ice, when I got out of the hole chopped into the stream where we took our morning baths during winter. People used to bathtubs and plenty of hot water might think this terrible, but it is a refreshing sensation. Getting out, the water feels warm against the frigid air, creating a sensation that penetrates the body and makes a person feel like running and jumping. It is a great preventive against the common cold; usually a person taking this daily bath is always healthy and long-lived.

Mourning Dove, Salish

## Praise for *The Spirit of Indian Women*

“... we read the exquisite thoughts and feelings of bygone women from a lost time in American history. In portrait after portrait, the souls of the women haunt the frontiers of the human spirit with a staunch beauty that is both refined and raw. The wisdom in these faces is alone worth the price of the book.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“*The Spirit of Indian Women* is an act of reclamation as much as of spirituality: it reproduces precious and seldom-seen photographs of Native American women, most of them from the later 19th century. Their images are interwoven with oral accounts, songs, and other documents that offer priceless glimpses into the little-understood lives and experiences of America’s foremothers; Janine Pease’s brilliant introduction sets the Fitzgeralds’ anthology in a whole historical context. These entries in the ‘Sacred Worlds’ series are delights to the eye and the mind, and *The Spirit of Indian Women* is a special treasure. Highly recommended.”

—*Library Journal*

“Dr. Janine Pease appreciates what a gift *The Spirit of Indian Women* is to all American Indian women. The book is also a gift to non-Indians, presenting a unique and ignored perspective on the thoughts, hopes, and roles of American Indian women from tribal nations across the United States. . . . The book is also rich in photographs of Indian women, many secured from a private collection and rarely seen before. Many have never been published.”

—*The Billings Outpost*

“This book opens us to a world of honesty, generosity, self-mastery, courage in the face of adversity, nobility of soul, and of constant living awareness of the creator in creation. The photos and words are from a wide variety of tribes from the Great Plains, but the single message they express is clear: the olden-day Indians and their way of life were imbued with the presence of the Great Spirit. These photos and words combine to communicate that presence to us, but with immense grace.”

—*The Monthly Aspectarian*

“*The Spirit of Indian Women* is a profoundly important book, because the voices of the life givers have always been too muted, in American Indian lore as in the rest of the world. Modern women should be inspired by these strong, quiet voices to regain control of the quality of life, which is now too much in the hands of vainglorious male fools.”

—James Alexander Thom



## About the Editors

Judith and Michael Oren Fitzgerald have spent extended periods of time visiting traditional cultures and attending sacred ceremonies throughout the world. Both Michael and Judith have been adopted into the Crow tribe and the family of the late Thomas Yellowtail, one of the most honored American Indian spiritual leaders of the last century. Judith is a graduate of Indiana University and is an artisan, calligrapher, and graphic designer, and collaborated with Michael on a series of successful inspirational quote books, including *Indian Spirit*.



Michael Oren Fitzgerald is the author and editor of more than fifteen books that have received over two dozen awards, including the prestigious ForeWord Book of the Year Award, the Ben Franklin Award, and the USA Best Books Award. His books have been published in six different languages and at least ten of his books and two documentary films produced by him are used in high school and university classes.

Fitzgerald is an acknowledged authority on the religion and culture of the Plains Indians and is also the adopted son of the late Thomas Yellowtail. Michael is editor of *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*, *Living in Two Worlds*, and *Children of the Tipi*. All the royalties from Fitzgerald's books and films about American Indians are donated to different American Indian charities or used to perpetuate American Indian spiritual traditions. The charities include the Smithsonian's Museum of the American Indian, the American Indian College Fund, and The Language Conservancy.

## About the Author of the Introduction

Dr. Janine Pease is the founding president of the Little Big Horn College in Crow Agency, Montana, a past president of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a director of the American Indian College Fund, and a member of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. She is Vice-President for American Indian Affairs at Rocky Mountain College.

Dr. Pease, a member of the Crow and Hidatsa tribes, has won several prestigious awards: National Indian Educator of the Year, The MacArthur Fellowship "Genius Award," and the ACLU Jeanette Rankin Award. She has been named one of the "One Hundred Montanans of the Century" by the *Missoulian Magazine*, a "Montanans To Remember" by *Montana Magazine*, and one of the 14 most important American Indian leaders of the 20th century in *New Warriors*, by R. David Edmunds.

