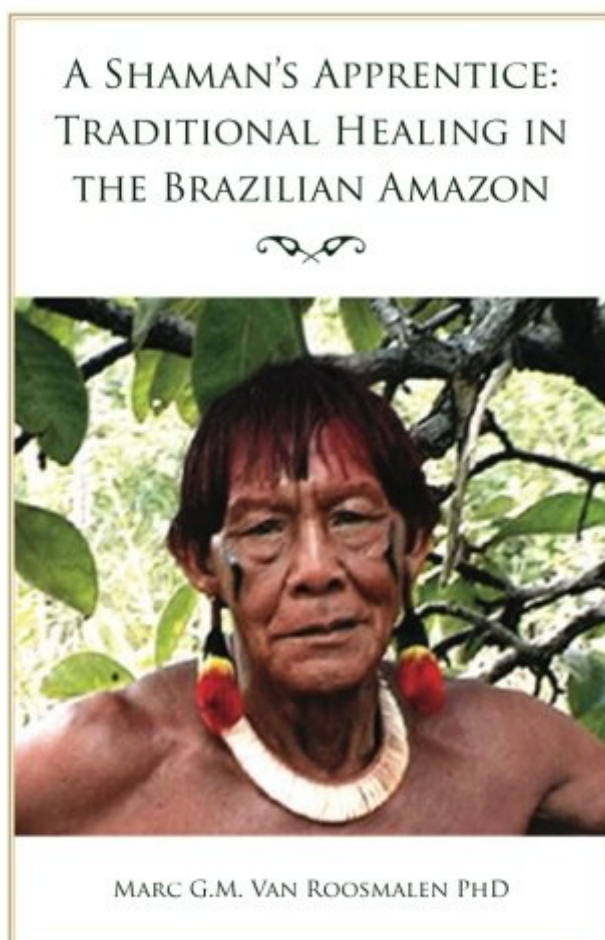


A Shaman's Apprentice: Traditional Healing in the Brazilian Amazon PDF



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A Shaman's Apprentice: Traditional Healing in the Brazilian Amazon by Mr Marc G.M. Van Roosmalen PhD ISBN 1484034414

In this book I first tell the story about me, an outsider, after being appointed apprentice to the shaman of an authentic Amerindian tribe that lives in the Amazon of Mato Grosso, Brazil. He invited me to document the tribe's traditional healing powers and pharmacopeia containing hundreds of local medicinal plants and animals, as practiced since Pre-Columbian times and passed on from one shaman to another. So, I came to live for over four months among and in intimate contact with the Kamayurá tribe, as the chosen apprentice of the 'pajé'/shaman and general 'cacique'/chief of the Upper Xingú National Park. My intention was to preserve the man's unique, most precious intellectual property for generations to come. Being an illiterate man of age who had not yet found a competent apprentice among his tribesmen, Tacumã was aware of the

risk his tribe ran to lose once and forever the traditional health-care knowledge that had been accumulated and passed on over centuries from shaman to shaman. As for now, there was no back-up of all the know-how stored exclusively in his head. Living among the tribe revealed to me how shamans have worked in the past and still do, how their pharmacopoeia is built up over hundreds of years - not by trial and error but based on the so-called 'doctrine of signature' that was already in use in medieval Europe. What their animistic beliefs are, their philosophy of life and ethics. During my stay among an authentic Amerindian tribe living from sustainable fishing and farming on anthrosols left behind by their ancestors, I also found answers to questions that I myself by lack of information since long had raised about the early human occupation of the Americas and the Amazon Basin, in particular. When the first humans began to inhabit the Amazon? Where did they come from? Which problems and dangers they found on their path when they settled down to make a living of the overall scarce natural resources from the rain forest? How did they adapt to this for them completely new natural environment? Other questions: When, where, and how did the earliest horticulturists and peasants succeed in transforming the overall poor-nutrient Amazonian soils into fertile black earth to be perpetually farmed on? And why, after the invention of 'terra preta' anthrosols these people moved away from the fertile banks and floodplains of white-water rivers to high riverbanks of less productive far-away black- and clear-water rivers, where they would make, accumulate and leave behind their 'terra preta' (black-earth) deposits? How present-day 'terra preta' farmers manage to harvest over and over without practicing shifting cultivation or the elsewhere so destructive 'slash-and-burn' agriculture? And how we may retrace what happened later to these 'earthmovers', once there is no Indian left to tell the tale? This book gives some of the answers that the anthropologists and archeologists hitherto failed to provide us. Such as, how the central Amazon was invaded by Aruak-speaking Carib-Indian warrior tribes in search of the 'black gold', causing the subsequent replacement of the peaceful 'terra preta' peasants that lived in socially and culturally advanced complex societies wherever their fertile lands were conquered? My experience of all sorts while living in the Amazon and observing all kinds of animals, in particular primates, as well as my stay among several native tribes still living in the Stone Age have brought me much insight and understanding about this human-related 'terra incognita'.

A Shaman's Apprentice: Traditional Healing in the Brazilian Amazon Review

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