



# Spirit of the Shuar: Wisdom from the Last Unconquered People of the Amazon

*John Perkins, Shakaim Mariano Shakai Ijisam Chumpi*

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- Discover the thoughts, history, and customs of the Shuar of the Amazon, as told in their own words.
- Tribe members explain their practices of shapeshifting and headhunting; the interdependence of humans and the environment; the role of ecstatic sex; their belief in war as a path to peace; and their faith in *arutam*, the life spirit.

The indomitable Shuar of the Amazon--reputed to be the only tribe in the Americas that has never been conquered--have lived as warriors, hunters, cultivators, and healers for generations. Even in today's acquisitive, often wasteful world they defend their rainforests and sustainable ways of life and offer their philosophy of love, joy, and hope.

More than three decades after first befriending members of the Shuar, author and environmentalist John Perkins and his publisher, Ehud Sperling, inspired Shakaim Mariano Chumpi--a young Shuar warrior who has fought in the jungle war between his native Ecuador and Peru--to travel among his people and record their thoughts, history, and customs. The result is *Spirit of the Shuar*.

Here, in their own words, the Shuar share their practices of shapeshifting, "dreaming the world," and ecstatic sex, including the role older women play in teaching uninitiated men how to please. They explain the interdependence of humans and the environment, their formula for peace and balance, and their faith in *arutam*, the life-giving spirit of nature that allows each of us to transform ourselves. And they describe how their ancient-and current-practice of shrinking heads fits into their cultural philosophy.

Whether exploring the mystery of shamanic shapeshifting, delving deeper into the powers of healing herbs and psychotropic plants, or finding new ways to live sustainably and sensitively in the face of encroaching development and environmental destruction, the Shuar have emerged as a strong people determined to preserve their identity and beliefs and share their teachings with a world in dire need of their wisdom.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the Ayumpum Foundation to help the Shuar conserve their forests and spread their message.

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