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Why Shamanism? Why Peru? Why Now?

Why are Westerners travelling to Peru for a shamanic experience?

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Abstract

Why Shamanism? Why Peru? Why Now? This thesis answers these questions by exploring the richness of the Peruvian Amazon, Andean mountains, and the shamanic traditions that dwell within. I describe why it is that members of the West turn towards shamanism and specifically Peruvian shamanism for spiritual, environmental and medical reasons.

The phenomenon of the shamanic tour is explored and the scientists who study Peruvian shamanism in order to understand and transfer its benefits to the Western world are also considered. Reasons for their interest include: curiosity, spiritual enlightenment, drug tourism, medical (psychological and physiological) and the need to experience and record shamanic knowledge before it is lost.

Reasons why this knowledge is sought and made available at this time is explained including reference to the new age movement, disillusionment with religious and biomedical institutions in the West, changing worldviews and the Q'ero Inkan prophecy which foretells the time when the eagle of the North (the Western world) and the condor of the South (traditional world) will fly together and the Earth will awaken.

As Western interest increases, and as the world changes, intellectual property rights become an issue for these traditional societies. Indigenous knowledge and current trends and implications of international intellectual property legislation are discussed.

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Introduction

Peru is a wonderful country! It will fascinate the tourist, the anthropologist and the zoologist equally, for the discerning visitor cannot fail to be impressed by its cultural and geographical variety or be excited by the travel possibilities this country offers (Rachowiecki. 1996:11).

Why Peru? Why shamanism? Why now? Why is it that members of the Western¹ world are interested in the exotic practices of Peruvian Indians; their relationships with plants, spirits and the universe? This thesis explores why it is that Western tourists and scientists are drawn towards shamanism, specifically Peruvian shamanism, as a way in which to answer questions pertaining to their lives in the West. Also explored is why the experience and knowledge of Peruvian shamanism is being sought out at this particular time, and the resulting intellectual property rights concerns and implications.

Ask twenty different people the definition of shamanism, and you will get twenty different answers. The best definition that I have been able to find is one by Anthropologist Robert Wallis (1999:41-42), which I quote at length below;

Origins of neo-shamanism stem from use of the term shamanism in 18th century ethnographic and antiquarian texts. The saman were originally Siberian Tungus practitioners of altered states of consciousness encountered by German, Russian, and Polish explorers. But, by the end of the 18th century, shamanism had become the generic term used to describe similar forms of ecstatic religion (Flaherty 1992). Essentially then, shamanism is an academic construct and a word for the West, its meaning inevitably universalised, repeatedly re-fabricated, its definition contested. Fascinated by its titillating bizarre qualities, people romanticized shamanism, associated themselves with the noble savage and became neo-shamans.

Central to the West's fascination with traditional societies is the romantic idea that the past holds the key to the present. Loss of faith in contemporary ideologies and worldviews often cause people to seek answers in the past. If it is perceived that the way of the past was in some way more fulfilling than that of the present, aspects of this past are often resurrected. These aspects are rarely resurrected in

their past form, but rather a mixture of past ideas within present contexts. This is apparent in the resurrection of traditional shamanism, and its integration into the Western worldview.

Justin Hall (1996) discusses James Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy* and Michael Harner's *Way of the Shaman*² as offering "wondrous new ways of seeing the world actually grounded in the most ancient universal principles" (Hall 1996) and asks "can one adapt and distribute the wisdom of the east without being cheesy?" (Hall 1996). Hall would suggest no, "I myself feel often disillusioned at the mere mention of money, leaving in a tough place folks who would make a good old fashioned western living off helpful ideas" (Hall 1996). Hall (1996) uses these two books to illustrate the more widespread genre of spiritual self help books and tells us that these books "offer a secret, or access to something relieving. So they perhaps empower, but they posit the source of that power in a galaxy far, far away". This concept is illustrated in the following quotes;

Shamanism represents the most widespread and ancient methodological system of mind-body healing know to humanity (Harner 1980:40)

She hesitated for a moment, still looking at me intensely. 'He said the manuscript dates back to about 600 B.C. It predicts a massive transformation in human society (Redfield 1993:4)

"It heals," says Hall (1996) "it's everywhere, it's old. It's super powerful, and it's 'known', but somehow 'ancient' puts it just out of reach". This is the basic premise of the romantic idea that the past holds the key to the present illustrated in romantic ideology and literature through the searching for the long ago and far away. Many authors of these self help books have spent time with or have spoken to the custodians or keepers of this ancient knowledge, and by presenting it to us in written form contribute to saving a knowledge that is 'something slipping from our grasp, intangible, literally dying" (Hall 1996).

¹ By Western, I refer to the members of regions such as North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

² One of the core texts of neo-shamanism is in fact anthropologist Michael Harner's book *The Way of the Shaman*, the "Harner method" techniques are probably the most widely known and practiced in the West" (Wallis 1999:42).

Hall (1996) states that “the new age revolves around this idea of accessibility”. Although there is the thirst for the ancient knowledge and methods from far away places, if it has been translated to provide symbols with Western cultural significance, all the better. This is for the average ‘run of the mill’ spiritual seeker, those ‘hard-core’ seekers distance themselves and become the more elite spiritual seeker by seeking out ‘genuine’ pre-translated spiritual experiences. By actually travelling to these far off places and going to the sources of the knowledge and experience, their spiritual journey becomes more of a quest and less accessible than that which is peddled to the new age masses.

Generally shamanic workshops teach ‘core shamanism’ “a self-reliant system which is purposely culture-free so as to be more easily adapted by Westerners to their own use” (Hamayon 2000) However workshops that also incorporate fieldtrips for shamanic experience, tend to occur within ‘genuine’ cultural contexts, such as the Coastal, Andean or Amazon shamanic experiences.

Mircea Eliade’s book *Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (translated into English in 1964) “is the first and still remains after several decades the only general work on shamanism” (Hamayon 2000). It, however, was not intended to be a scientific analysis on shamanism but rather, in Eliades own word’s “I would like it to be read by poets, playwrights, painters... who would benefit more from it than historians of religions,” “my research could be seen as an attempt to rediscover the forgotten sources of literary inspiration” (Eliade quoted in Le Manchec 1991, and again by Hamayon 2000). Never the less it is considered to be the foremost book on shamanism in both academic and new age worlds.

In the field of anthropology the study of shamanism seems to come in and out of vogue, with the thread of shamanistic inquiry winding through the sub disciplines, historical theories and multidisciplinary endeavours. European fascination with shamanism has a long history and has influenced scholars across a range of disciplines including philosophers, theologians, physicians, archaeologists, psychologists and ethnographers (Atkinson 1992). In recent years, particularly with the interest in states of consciousness and mechanisms of therapy, along with

popular interest in alternative forms of spirituality and healing (Atkinson 1992), this fascination has had a resurgence. In fact Atkinson (1992) tells us "At present, most general theorizing about shamanism appears outside the anthropological literature". This is apparent, not only in academic journals, but also in new age writings published in books, magazines and on the Internet.

In response to these new age writings Atkinson (1992:309) comments that "Without an ethnographic counterweight this literature slips quickly into unwarranted reductionism and romantic exoticizing of a homogeneous non-Western Other" and that "Newer ethnographic writings offer an important corrective by underscoring the connections of shamanic practices to local, regional, national, and transnational contexts".

Although the general position held by anthropologists is that shamanism varies due to history, culture and social context, it is also acknowledged that there are some general themes and patterns that occur in shamanistic practices. Cultural anthropologists shy away from general theories of shamanism, which dislocate the practices from specific cultural contexts. This becomes more apparent when looking at the anthropological literature where writings on shamanism tended to be a section within an ethnographic monograph on a particular culture, rather than a monograph focusing purely on shamanism. Shamanistic studies "which features general theorizing, model-building, and self-actualization" (Atkinson 1992:308) does not, as its fundamental basis, draw from anthropological literature, but rather is dominated by "general and comparative works, especially in the fields of psychology and religious studies, along with a wide array of popular writings on self-actualization and New Age spirituality" (Atkinson 1992:308).

Hamayon (2000) tells us that the history of the study of shamanism can be placed under three headings: devilisation, medicalisation and idealisation. Devilisation includes early missionary writings where the shaman is depicted as wild, uncivilised, diabolical and devilish. The medicalisation of shamanism refers to the tendency in the nineteenth century for shamanism to become the answer to the troubles brought about by colonization. During this time shamanic practice became known for its therapeutic and healing capabilities, although still tended to

be seen in a negative light with the shaman considered to be psycho-pathological. The idealisation of shamanism refers to the last three decades where shamanism is becoming revalued, and is most apparent in Western neo-shamanic writings.

Popular shamanic literature, is written to 'assist its readers in the cultivation of their own spirituality' (Atkinson 1992:323) rather than specifically educating them in the ways of the Other.

"Anthropologists and the new urban shamanists have different and potentially conflicting aims – the former seek to document and understand local traditions, whereas questing neo-shamans seek to develop their own spirituality with help from eclectically borrowed wisdom from 'older' cultures" (Atkinson 1992:323)

Shamanistic studies are often preoccupied with altered states of consciousness, and the psychological state of shamans. Noll (1985) reminds us that the goal of shamanism is not the achievement of an altered state of consciousness; but rather, simply a means to promote enhanced mental imagery.

Recent inquiry into shamanism has included the ways that shamanism has been shaped and modified by access to biomedical practitioners (Balzer 1983), the interdependence of both medical systems (Nishimura 1987) and the integration of shamanism in Western medical practice (Doore 1988). The relationship between shamanism and politics has also been explored (Atkinson 1989, Taussig 1987, Santos-Granero 1991), shamanism and gender (Lewis 1989, Harvey 1980, Kendall 1985, Wolf 1990, Glass-Coffin 1998), and shamanistic performance and symbols including chants (Overing 1990), narratives (Halifax 1979), music (Rouget 1985) and the relationship between the performer and audience.

Various researchers including ecologists and anthropologists have shown increased interest in the traditional or indigenous societies relationship with their environments as it becomes apparent that these relationships could be beneficial to those in less traditional societies.

The condition of the great territories of the Earth, such as the polar regions, the rainforests, and the great lakes of mainland Asia, is recognised as important for the maintenance of a tolerable climate world-wide. When the physical surroundings of one or more cultures, inhabiting the same region, become relevant to people living far

away, a general interest in what is culture, and how different cultures compare is awakened (Seeland 1997:101).

Peru, a land of mystery and stunning landscapes, is a virtual treasure trove for tourists and scientists alike. Geographically, Peru is comprised of three very different regions: the desert coastline, the Andean mountains and the tropical rainforest. The coastline (La Costa) of Peru is dry and desolate, with river oases providing fertile valleys. Situated along the northern coast are the cities of Chiclayo and Trujillo, and the ruined cities of the Moche, Lambayeque, and Chimú civilisations. Following the coastline south is Lima, the country's capital, and Pachacamac, the shrine for the great deity of the same name (meaning 'world creator' in Quechua) and the home of the now lost Oracle. Still further south is Nazca, with the famous lines etched into the desert sand.

The majestic Andean mountain ranges (La Sierra) rise to the east of the desert and stretch the length of the country. Again, fertile valleys lie between the two parallel ranges. It is from these mountain valleys, and Qosqo in particular, that the Inkan Empire reigned. It is here also that Machupicchu, the Lost City of the Inkas', is located.

Lying on the other side of the Andes is the Amazon rainforest (La Selva), which comprises over half of Peru's landmass. The flora and fauna of the Amazon rainforest is among the most diverse and spectacular on earth and is intertwined with the magical and mystical beliefs of the Indians.

The three very different regions bring forth different cultural adaptations and riches. Most people, when they think of the ancient cultures of Peru, think immediately of the Inkas. However the Inkas are only one of the many civilisations that have inhabited Peru. Most of what is known of these civilisations' comes from archaeological research and deductions, as the people themselves had no written records and subsequent civilisations tended to change the practices of previous ones.

A lot of the information that we do have comes from the ceramics of the various cultures. In the ceramic museums around the country you can walk through rows upon rows of ceramics with intricate shapes and detailed artwork depicting the lives and beliefs of the time and of the particular culture. Similar pictures were also woven into their textiles and still others made into jewellery. We are also able to follow the progress of technological knowledge by way of the tools and methods used to make these crafts. (For further information see Moseley 1992 and Davies 1997)

Deciding to research Peruvian shamanism was not a difficult decision; I had long been interested in medical anthropology³. My father had been living in Peru on and off for about a year and suggested that I come to visit him. I saw this as a perfect opportunity to visit and do some fieldwork. With an interest in medical anthropology, and systems of healing, the most logical choice of topic was shamanism. It was not until a month into my stay that I became interested in *why* we in the West were so interested in Peruvian shamanism.

I had been researching the general topic of shamanism for about six months. I had scoured the academic journals and gotten my hands on every book that I could find with 'shamanism', 'Peru' or 'healing' in the title. I was well aware that I would find a wealth of information on the Internet, but decided to, in the beginning, limit my search to keep it manageable. I would move onto the Internet once I had waded through the paper literature.

Through reading the academic journals I had built up an image of shamanism as being a deeply imbedded and mystical practice within a culture, a practice that could only truly be understood and wholly appreciated by the members of that culture themselves. The literature thus far had suggested that it was important to have an exemplary understanding of the situation through which shamanism had emerged and was now being practiced. It appeared to me that only when you had

³ On a trip to Pakistan a few years earlier I had visited a leprosy hospital, with a friend who worked there, and became interested in leprosy as a social disease, the misconceptions of the disease and the way those afflicted were regarded by others.

this understanding could you participate in these healing rituals and for them to have meaning.

Then one night, while 'surfing' the Internet for something completely off topic, I typed the word 'shaman' into the search engine, just to see how many 'hits' I would make. As expected, I got many and went on to limit the search to 'Peru'. As I started to click on the topics, the number of shamanic or spiritual tours that were offered intrigued me. The presence of these tours completely undermined my understanding of the experience of shamanic healing. How could just anyone come along and take a "journey of initiation into the world of the spirit" (Joralemon 1990:107)? Tours were offered to all of the popularly known shaman destinations around the world. The subject matter explored optimism for the future, and offered 'real' answers for its attainment.

The popularity of the Internet and the ensuing information explosion has brought to the mainstream public information about shamanism and individual spiritual, drug or medicinal quests. Reading these transcripts fosters an interest in shamanism and perhaps even the desire to embark on a quest themselves.

Barbara Meyerhoff (2000) writes, "Indigenous traditions deserve accurate and respectful preservation, and these records must be distinguished from imaginative works. It is the obligation of the lettered to make written records of the lore of the unlettered, simply a record – not a mirror of ourselves or our needs and fantasies." But what happens when our needs and our fantasies become part of the reality of these indigenous traditions? We can not disregard these developments in the continuing history of shamanism on the basis that it is not 'pure' or 'genuine'. Inquiry into such a topic continues the discourse of blending, integrating and cultural adaptation.

Meyerhoff's statement represents three stages of anthropological exploration and writing. Anthropology's origins were in the travel writing that embellished and exoticised cultures to delight and entertain those who stayed at home. For traditional anthropology, an objective telling of the facts, reporting, documenting and preserving a culture, became the focus. Now we see the adaptation of these

exotic lives into the lives of the West. The West is now placing itself within the stories that were once written to entertain them.

Why shamanism? Why Peru? Why now? These are the questions I set out to answer. Why do people look to Shamanism for answers, particularly when it is not common to their own culture? What is it that Peruvian shamanism has to offer the world? And why has this interest in Peruvian shamanism grown over the last few decades?

This thesis is not a comprehensive description or analysis of Peruvian shamanism, nor of the anthropology of ethnic tourism or Western research in exotic locations. However, all these topics are touched on when presenting an overview of why the West is interested in Peruvian shamanism at this time. There are already many ethnographies focusing on the various cultural groups of Peru, their shamanic practices and the ways in which they interact with their environment (Lamb 1971, 1985; Sharon 1978; Brown 1985; Luna 1986; Bastien 1987). There are also many papers and books dealing with the various sacred plants of Peru (Dobin de Rios 1972; Furst 1972; Harner 1973; Shultes and Rauffauf 1990).

Having decided on my topic, I left for Lima, Peru in June 1998. I lived in an apartment in the city for four months while I took Spanish lessons at the Instituto Cultural Peruano-Norteamericano. During this time I continued reading about Peru and its shamanisms, and visited art galleries and museums, trying to learn as much about Peru's ancient cultures and history as I could – and there was so much to learn. I had informal conversations with Peruvians and non-Peruvians about shamanic tours, which greatly helped me to conceptualise what it was that I wanted to research. Many of my more interesting conversations were with the taxi drivers of Lima, many of whom had come into the city, from the mountains or jungle, to find work.

Whilst in Lima, I became a member of the South American Explorers Club. The South American Explorers Club is an organisation where tourists, explorers and researchers of any nationality can find information on almost anything in South America. At the clubhouses you will find very helpful and knowledgeable

employees, a library, folders of trip reports, Internet access, maps, a quiet chat and a cup of coffee. Included in the aims and purposes of the club are, to;

- Support scientific field exploration and research in the social and natural sciences, and
- Further the exchange of information among travellers, outdoors people and researchers (South American Explorers Club Mission Statement).

I spent many an hour going through trip reports of other travellers and reading books from the club library. I also put up a sign on the club notice board explaining my research and asking spiritual tourists to contact me if they would like to participate in the research. Aside from those interested in the outcomes of my research and people letting me know that they thought that it was a very interesting topic, I did not get any replies from tourists wishing to be interviewed.

I ventured out of Lima three times to do research, each time for up to two weeks. I travelled to Tarapoto to visit Takiwasi: A Drug Rehabilitation and Research Centre, which uses traditional shamanic methods to heal its patients, to Iquitos and up the Amazon River to a jungle lodge where a shaman performed healing rituals and spoke to me about various aspects of ayahuasca shamanism, and to Qosqo and the Sacred Valley of the Incas to experience the power places of the region and learn about Andean shamanism. I had intended to travel to Trujillo to study coastal shamanism, but time and funds were not permitting.

I was asked, on occasion, if I would like to experience ayahuasca but I declined each time. For me this was a difficult decision. The thought of taking ayahuasca scared me a little, although there were places that I visited during my research where I would have felt safe and comfortable taking it. I came to realise that the main reason that I wanted to take the ayahuasca was because it would add an interesting dimension to my thesis. I decided that this was not a good enough reason. Juan⁴, after one of the night ceremonies told me that he had 'seen' me taking the ayahuasca, and seemed sure that I would at a later date.

⁴ One of the shamans that I met during my research.

Anthropologist Marlene Dobkin de Rios had similar feelings when she studied mescaline healing on the Peruvian coast in 1967. “Although it was readily available to me, I must admit that I was frightened, in fact horrified to imagine all the terrible things that self-knowledge might bring me... And so, despite the kindly offers of my informants and the healers I visited, I resolved not to try the mescaline cactus” (Dobkin de Rios 2000). When she returned in 1968 to study ayahuasca, she decided that she should experience the plant that she was studying. “I realised that the reality that I reported on was quite a different one than that of people who used such substances for mystical or religious purposes... I sensed that if I were ever to go beyond the detachment I had so carefully cultivated, I would have to take ayahuasca myself (Dobkin de Rios 2000).

And so, after much hesitation (about five months), Dobkin de Rios took the ayahuasca and was then able to add the extra depth she wanted to her research. I realised that although it would “add an interesting dimension”, it was really not pertinent to my research. Had I been studying the experience or the effects of ayahuasca, then maybe the outcome of my decision would have been different.

My focus on indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights grew out of the university’s concern for ensuring ethical standards in the area of intellectual property. As researchers it is our duty to ensure that our participants retain intellectual property. There was tension between the university’s desire to have a signed form indicating that the participants understood that the knowledge, once shared, remained their own property, and the participant, who did not believe that knowledge could be owned. I decided to respect the shamans’ worldview and role as keeper of the knowledge rather than owner of it. I also do not publish any specific knowledge that could be appropriated and attempt to draw the readers’ attention to issues surrounding wrongful appropriation of knowledge for commercial endeavours.

There are many, and varied, reasons as to why Westerners come to Peru for a shamanic experience. To give some understanding of these reasons I have chosen to go with an amalgamated multiple voices approach. By reading travelogues of spiritual seekers via the Internet or in their books, by speaking to various people

in Peru, by reading academic articles and books on others' research, I have been able to piece together general themes from the reasons that people have given as to why they have sought out these experiences and knowledge. Mostly however they are for complex individual reasons, which generally take, in varying degrees, from the main themes making up a reason that is personal and unique to themselves. I have chosen to focus on the main themes.

Generally speaking Westerners tend to look to Peruvian shamanism for spiritual, psychological and medicinal reasons. They seek a shamanic experience out of mere curiosity, as a way in which to find something missing from their lives, to heal their mind, body and soul, to reach an altered state of consciousness, to feel at one with nature, to study the traditional knowledge and practices in the hope that it may be of benefit to themselves and those back home, to record a valuable oral tradition before it is lost, to find the answers to the problems of contemporary life, answers that are found in the past or traditional cultures, to bring together human consciousness and to make a better world.

I look at two main groups tourists and researchers. Within these two groups can be found sub-groups, the tourists having the curious, the drug takers, the new agers and the neo-shamans. The neo-shamans can also be classified under the heading of researcher, as are the ethnobotanists, anthropologists, environmentalists and biomedical practitioners.

I did not go to Peru with a hypothesis that I wanted to prove or disprove. I went simply to ask the three questions: why shamanism, why Peru and why now? My original idea to interview tourists and tour operators would have involved a lot more travelling, which would have been impossible on my graduate student's income. My research is in no way exhaustive or in anyway as detailed as I would have liked, but I believe I have contributed to the growing knowledge in this area, and posed many questions, which can now be built upon.

This thesis builds on the growing anthropological literature on shamanism. Although I draw on the general themes of what Westerners (the audiences of general shamanic literature) seek as a shamanic experience, this thesis is situated

more in the particular, that of the seekers of a Peruvian shamanic experience. Atkinson (1992:322) states, “the reworking of shamanic traditions from around the world in terms of American and European cultural idioms and concerns is a significant development that anthropologists would do well to study”, this thesis adds to this discourse.

Chapter One: *Western Shamanism*, gives a historical look at shamanism in the West, its demise and resurgence in the form of a reawakening of spiritual awareness. Also discussed is Skolimowski’s participatory mind or worldview, which sheds some light on the movement into Western thought at this time. Chapter Two: *Peruvian Shamanism*, looks at the three main types of shamanism in Peru in order to briefly describe what it is that people who go to Peru for a shamanic experience can expect to find when they get there. This chapter also discusses the Q’ero Inkan prophecies, which give some indication as to the question ‘why now?’ Chapter Three: *Shamanic Tourism*, contemplates the quest for a shamanic experience by way of workshops, programmes and tours. Chapter Four: *Shamanism and Research*, looks at the various studies that have come out of the current interest in Peruvian shamanism. Such studies include ethnobotanical research, pharmaceutical research, drug rehabilitation and environmental preservation, research encompassing the psychological and physical worlds. Chapter Five: *Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property*, looks at the value of indigenous knowledge in its originating country and in the West. International intellectual property rights legislation, and the way in which this affects traditional indigenous knowledge, is also discussed.

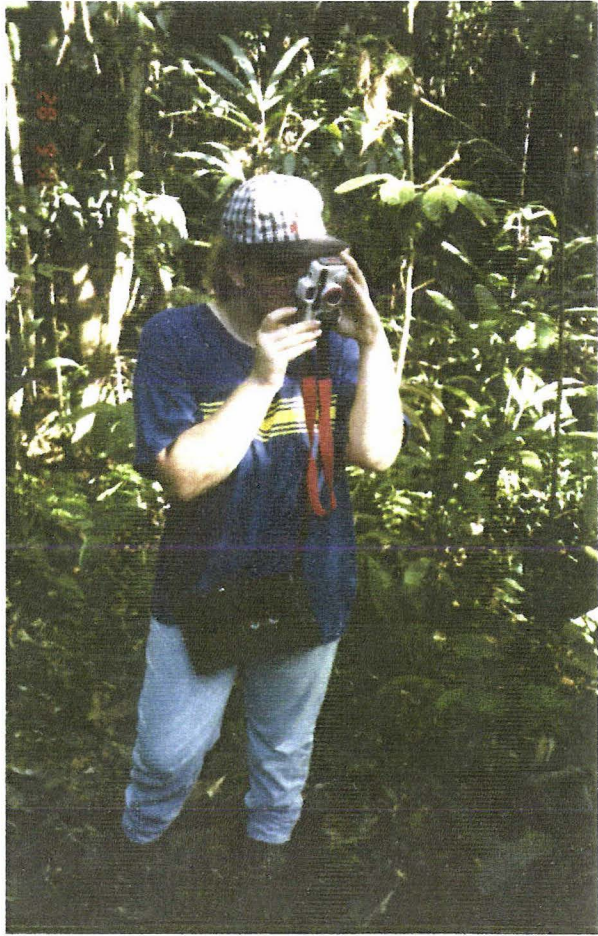


Figure 1. Author in the Amazon rainforest.

Chapter One

Western Shamanism

The West of course has had its own shamans. However, due to mass hysteria and blatant scapegoating, they have been all but eliminated from European society. The shamans of the West were called sorcerers, healers, wise men and women and preceded what is commonly referred to as witchcraft, but were, from the thirteenth century through to the eighteenth, hunted and massacred alongside witches.

Throughout Western history, the term 'witchcraft' has been used to convey various images and representations,

Three quite different phenomena have been called witchcraft. The first is simple sorcery... The second is the alleged diabolical witchcraft of the late medieval and early modern Europe. The third is the pagan revival of the twentieth century (Russell 1989:203, 211).

Each of these phenomena has essentially built upon traditions governed by the social environment of the time.

In the Middle Ages, healers or sorcerers could cure sickness, promote harvests, see into the future and read the stars. Royal families and other powerful figures in early Europe often enlisted the talents of these seers and curers for both public and private matters. These sorcerers were not considered sinister but rather served a function in their societies through the use of plants, waxen images and various other types of spell making. Pickering (1996) notes that sorcery is common to all folklore traditions and to virtually all eras and that sorcery relies upon the intervention of good and bad spirits.

Although sorcerers could call upon the assistance of bad spirits it was not then naturally assumed that they had turned their backs on God, while it was believed that a witch *naturally* made a pact with the devil in order to gain access to occult power. Later, the term 'white witch' was used to refer to these sorcerers, if a distinction was made at all. As a result of mounting hysteria the distinction was blurred and more often both were killed.

Jeffery Russell interprets the history of witchcraft as *the history of what it has been thought to be*. He argues that it developed as an intellectual construct out of a number of concepts gradually assembled over the centuries. European sorcery, pagan religion, and folklore were the first three elements in this construct; Christian heresy and Christian theology were the fourth and fifth elements (Rountree 1992:97, my emphasis).

While Russell argues that witchcraft was a construction, born from overactive and accusatory minds, sorcery was developed through centuries of tradition, belief and practices.

Witchcraft is a reflection of Christian religious philosophy and culture, while sorcery, expressed in the common language of superstition, curses and spells, is a generic characteristic of folklore world-wide (Pickering 1996:ix).

Methods of sorcery varied from one region to another, including song, image magic and herbalism. Sorcerers were well versed in herbalism, and were in some cases referred to as herbalists. The most common plant ingredients included mandrake¹, foxglove, poppy, nightshade (belladonna), hawthorn, rye fungus (ergot), hazel and hemlock, and were, in some cases, forerunners to modern drugs. Both belladonna and ergot were considered to be hallucinogenic.

Nineteenth century anthropologist Edward B. Tylor (1924 [orig. 1871]: Vol. 2:418) discussed medieval witch ointments and commented that they “brought visionary beings into the presence of the patient, transported him to the witches’ Sabbath”. The image of the flying witch represents the use of solanaceous² hallucinogenic plants. Each of these plants contained atropine, a hallucinogenic that can be absorbed into the skin. When witches applied an ointment containing any of these plants they “took a ‘trip’, the witch on a broom stick is a representation of that imagined aerial journey to a rendezvous with spirits or demons, which was called a Sabbat” (Harner 1973:129).

¹ Mandrake was one of the more interesting plants, in regard to the stories that formed around it. It is a human shaped root and it was believed that it would only grow naturally under a gallows, ‘springing up from the semen that fell from the decomposing bodies of executed felons’ (Pickering 1996:183). Great care had to be taken when digging up the root. Those that touched it with their bare hands would be struck dead or made impotent on the spot. According to folklore as the root left the soil ‘it would utter a terrible shriek, which was itself enough to drive any living thing within hearing quite mad’ (Pickering 1996:183).

² Plants of the potato family, including datura, mandrake, henbane and belladonna.

Medieval society was relatively unfazed by the knowledge and activities of sorcerers and healers. In these early years of medicine, communities sought out sorcerers as midwives, doctors, vets, herbalists, psychiatrists, seers and confessors (Pickering 1996). The general populace wore charms and amulets and superstitions were believed in and heeded. Folklore and magic were not initially considered to be threats to the Christian establishment, as religious and superstitious beliefs were combined in order to protect oneself.

The early fourteenth century, however, saw many changes in European society; the collapse of the Feudal system, famine, warfare, and splits in the Roman Catholic church, coupled with the arrival of the Black Death in 1347, led to turmoil and anxiety in Europe (Pickering 1996). This turmoil threatened both the church and the state. People looked for somewhere to lay the blame. "Mystic forces of evil" (Pickering 1996:x), it was claimed, surely lay behind these disasters and the guilty parties needed to be rooted out. These scapegoats could be found in any non-conformist groups, including the sorcerers. Sorcerers were a fringe mystic group and it was concluded that their powers and knowledge must come from Satan and that they were the cause of society's current state of chaos.

The Roman Catholic Church in its efforts to exterminate heresy, played a key role in the early persecution of Europe's witches. They propagated the theory that sorcerers derived their powers from the devil and that their aim was to overthrow Christ's church and "launch a concerted full-scale invasion of the civilised world" (Pickering 1996:xi).

Although there were claims by authorities that distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' witchcraft were made, "this subtlety was lost on witch hunters" (Pickering 1996:xii) and the stereotypical witch was born. The archetypal witch tended to be female, poor, on the fringe of the society, was followed around by animals and flew to Sabbats on a broomstick.

The infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, a 'practical guide' to witchcraft, was issued in 1486 as a guide for witch hunters and judges deliberating witchcraft cases. It

was written by Professors of Theology, Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, in accordance with the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII. The actual number of witches killed is unknown. Estimates range from fourteen thousand to nine million, though “more realistic modern estimates have suggested a total of some hundred thousand victims” (Pickering 1996:xvi).

In contemporary European society, the word ‘witchcraft’ is commonly used to refer to rituals and magical practices of all kinds. The term ‘witch doctor’, for example, is often used to describe shamans or practitioners of folk religions. Contemporary witchcraft in the West sees itself as an alternative religion like Islam or Buddhism. It is a nature-based religion and considered ‘pagan’ because several nature gods are worshipped, instead of a single god.

Witchcraft as a modern Western religion was inspired mainly by the theories of Margaret Alice Murray, a British archaeologist and anthropologist. In her 1927 book, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, she proposed a theory that modern witchcraft was a continuation of a much older pagan religion. Although this theory is considered to be flawed by most scholars, practitioners of today’s Wicca consider themselves to be “heirs of some lost nature religion” (Pickering 1996:xviii). In some places it has also absorbed surviving traditions of folk-magic (Hinnells 1984).

The World Christian Encyclopædia estimates 6 million Americans profess to be witches and engage in practices like these. They are a sub-group of over 10 million persons the encyclopædia says call themselves pagans, who practice “primitive” [sic] religions such as Druidism, Odin worship and Native American shamanism (Rufus 1986:59).

Neo-paganism, with its links to the past and earlier traditions, is a religious reawakening. Specifically it seeks to worship a god or gods from the past. In contrast, the emergence of the new age movement in the 1980s presents “a religious or semi-religious option for the spiritual market consumer or metaphysical seeker” (York 1995:1).

The new age is a new religious orientation rather than an institutionalised religion. New agers are not fixed to any particular tradition or traditions, but may borrow eclectically from any or all of them (York 1995:2). The new age is often referred to as the Age of Aquarius. An 'age' is said to be 2000 years long; the Age of Pisces began with the death of Christ and ended in the year 2000 or 2001.

The new age movement has caught the attention of commercial and media industries. This can be seen in the deluge of 'self help' material that pervades the West's middle class. Spiritual and motivational bookstores seem to be popping up all over the place as spiritual wellbeing takes its place alongside the physical wellbeing of the 1980s. This spiritual movement is prominent in *Oprah* and her 'Change your life TV' show format, as well as the huge rise in self-help books, seminars and awareness. Oprah Winfrey, with her new talk show format, is the Queen of Self-help, she parades various self-help gurus, their books and seminars before viewers world-wide.

Both new age and neo-pagan movements have stemmed from society's unrest. The rising 'ecological panic' of our times (York 1995) has contributed to the quest for lifestyles that more fully appreciate nature and the Earth. The rise of these neo-pagan Earth religions and a new age desire to balance and harmonise with the Earth, are examples of this. Add this to the dissatisfaction with the more orthodox religious institutions, consumer oriented and technological society, and we have the rising desire to seek meaning elsewhere.

Philosopher Henryk Skolimowski (1994) has offered up the theory of a new participatory worldview and suggests that the current worldview of Western civilization has run its course. Peter Reason (1998) tells us that worldviews may be viewed as sets of basic beliefs about the nature of reality and how it may be known. Skolimowski's worldview, or "new theory of knowledge and the universe" (Harman 1995) centres on the place of the mind, or consciousness, in the cosmos, the healing of our world and our psyches and the rediscovering of the spiritual.

Skolimowski (1994) begins with a critique of the way that the modern world acquires and transmits knowledge and its place within the scientific study of reality, then goes on to propose a worldview where the mind is a 'naturalistic, holistic and universal phenomenon' (Skrbina 2001) a worldview that belongs, not only to humans but to every thing in the natural world.

Skolimowski (1994) describes, what he calls, the three major projects of Western culture, the Greek project, the Secular project and the Evolutionary project. Each of these projects describe a cycle of the collective Western mind, cycles that provided us with different ways to experience the world. In the first Western project the Greeks saw knowledge as enlightenment. Seen as something sacred, knowledge was an instrument of self-enlightenment "the vehicle that enables us to overcome the coarseness of our body, the limitation of our senses, which dim the vision of the soul... knowledge is recollection: remembering what the soul once knew" (Skolimowski 1994:64).

For the second Western project knowledge is power "to put the universe on a plate and cut it with an analytical knife; then to manipulate it to our advantage" (Skolimowski 1994:66-67). Aspects of the second Western project include secularism, and the importance of the exploration and manipulation of the external world with science at its centre. Skolimowski (1994:68-69) tells us that the basic assumptions of this project are:

- (1) We can know the world. It is ours for the taking.
- (2) There are no mysteries. Science will explain all.
- (3) Western rationality or scientific rationality is universal. Other cultures must submit to it.
- (4) Human progress can be universal if all mankind applies the tools of Western science and technology and the canons of Western rationality.

After three centuries of pursuing this scientific project the Western mind is confused "instead of bring fulfilment to all people of the earth, [it] has created a nightmarish pseudo-rational reality, with environmental degradation, famines, violence in full abundance" (Skolimowski 1994:70). The confused mind, Skolimowski (1994:70) warns us, is a dangerous one.

Out of this confusion the West begins their search for wholeness, evolutionary unity, integration, and values that sustain life and the spiritual. Although Skolimowski (1994:71) tells us that the third Western project is emerging and not yet clearly defined he offers up some of its emerging features;

- (1) It is a holistic project emphasizing the unity of all things.
- (2) It is a spiritually inclined project without necessarily invoking any institutional religion or even the notion of God.
- (3) It is an ecologically oriented project, as ecology provides the key for healing the world and ourselves.

These are features that, typically, Eastern and traditional cultures never ceased to hold. In a way the Western mind has come full circle, or as Skolimowski (1994) tells us, full spiral. We take these features that once existed in the West and which continued in the East, and “give them a sense of new coherence and meaning” by situating them in the contexts of our time, which exists as a result of our minds historical past.

Theories that Skolimowski has built on for his Participatory Mind Theory include; Lovelock’s Gaia Theory and Teilhard de Chardin’s Noosphere and Omega Point. Dr. James Lovelock, a British Chemist specialising in the atmospheric sciences while working with NASA designing experiments to detect life on Mars, proposed the Gaia hypothesis, the idea that the Earth is a living being.

I recognise that to view the Earth as if it were alive is just a convenient, but different, way of organising the facts of the Earth. I am of course prejudiced in favour of Gaia and have filled my life for the past twenty-five years with the thought that Earth may be alive: not as the ancients saw her – a sentient Goddess with a purpose and foresight – but alive like a tree. A tree that quietly exists, never moving except to sway in the wind, yet endlessly conversing with the sunlight and the soil. Using sunlight and water and nutrient minerals to grow and change (Lovelock 1991:12).

Thus the earth is considered to have an active control system. Lovelock and Margulis (1999) suggest that life on earth provides a “cybernetic homeostatic feedback system, leading to stabilization of global temperature, chemical composition, and so fourth”.

As the scientific community debated the acceptability of the Gaia Hypothesis, its global and holistic perspective captured the imagination of a wider audience.

The indigenous cultures who saw the nature of earth as a sacred spirit, others who sought the 'oneness' in nature, those concerned for the environment – the trees, the rivers and the oceans, and those seeking contentious and revolutionary ideas, and those seeking religious frameworks – to an increasing multicultural and multi-disciplined audience the concept of the Gaia Hypothesis was nourished and supported as a New Age paradigm (Lovelock and Margulis 1999).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin a Jesuit, paleontologist, biologist and philosopher, suggested the Noosphere Theory. He proposed that while “the universe is made of matter, it is evolving into pure information or pure mind (the noosphere)” (Mizrach 1997).

The noosphere is analogous on a planetary level to the evolution of the cerebral cortex in humans. The noosphere is a 'planetary thinking network' - an interlinked system of consciousness and information, a global net of self-awareness, instantaneous feedback, and planetary communication (Judith 1996).

Anodea Judith (1996) in an Internet article entitled *Teilhard de Chardin: 1881-1955* quotes³ him as saying “It is not our heads or our bodies which we must bring together, but our hearts... Humanity... is building its composite brain beneath our eyes. May it not be that tomorrow, through the logical and biological deepening of the movement drawing it together, it will find its heart⁴, without which the ultimate wholeness of its power of unification can never be achieved?” The noosphere is considered to be the part of the world of life that is created by man's thought and culture while the geosphere is the non-living world, and the biosphere, is the living world (Cascone 1996).

The Omega point is the convergence of man's thought. A convergence of systems “where the coalescence of consciousness will lead us to a new state of peace and planetary unity. Long before ecology was fashionable, he saw this unity as being based intrinsically upon the spirit of the earth” (Judith 1996).

³ Judith makes note of the fact that she is not entirely sure where she got the quotes from. She assumes it was from her reading of *Building the Earth* and *The Phenomenon of Man*, but is writing only from notes so does not recall exactly.

⁴ See the Q'ero prophecy (Chapter Two) where traditional societies, specifically South American, are considered to be the heart, Europe the head, and North America the body.

Westerners have a fascination with shamans, and this is seen in the shamanic tours that are offered to destinations around the world. For the Westerner, the power of the shaman and the rituals that they perform lies in their exotic or foreign qualities. Acceptance of alternative or complementary healing is not only rising amongst the general public, but also among the practitioners of modern medicine. Visits to chiropractors and acupuncturists have become commonplace in many Western societies. Herbal remedies can be found in almost all pharmacies and alternative therapies such as aromatherapy, meditation and massage are being used to combat the stresses of the Western world.

Tourists travel to Peru, full of hope and wonder, with the expectation that the shamanic practices may provide answers to a variety of questions that they have been unable to sufficiently answer within their own cultural contexts.

Traditional healing practices are sought as an alternative, as complementary and as a last resort. Alternatives are usually sought for minor ailments, stress relief for example, or when herbal remedies are known to be of help. Complementary or 'additive' healing (Miller van Blerkom 1995:464) is where alternative therapies are used in conjunction with biomedicine for a more holistic approach. Finally alternatives are sought as a last resort, when biomedicine has failed.

While alternative systems of healing⁵, or rather their components, are becoming more widely accepted, adopting shamans into the biomedical system is still regarded with suspicion by most Western doctors. Heinz (1991:124) notes that she knows of two exceptions: "a clinic in Denver, Colorado, which has built a Mexican shaman into the therapeutic process and a hospital in Stanford, California, which calls a Brazilian shaman to assist in the healing process of certain patients". While in Peru, I went to a clinic in Tarapoto where biomedical doctors worked alongside shamans to cure patients of addictions.

⁵ E.G. Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine

The ethnobotanists⁶ that come to the Peruvian Amazon do so to study the plants. Many, including biomedical doctors, come to the jungle to learn about the medicinal plants found there while anthropologists come to study the relationship the people have with the plants. Biomedical doctors and psychologists have also come to Peru to study the medicinal properties of its plants. For the people that live in the jungle, plant use is a common part of daily life; their uses extend from building supplies, food, transport and general household items to the medicinal and spiritual. Shamans specialise in the spiritual and healing capabilities of plants⁷.

⁶ The study of plants utilised by a specific culture is called ethnobotany.

⁷ Each time I went for a walk in the jungle with a shaman, he would stop and tell me of the household and medicinal uses for a variety of plants and trees. Some plants had three or four different uses. It seemed to me that the shaman could barely walk past a plant without pulling off a leaf or scratching off some bark, rubbing it between his fingers and smelling it. He would then offer it to me to smell and tell me its uses.

Chapter Two

Peruvian Shamanism

Peruvian shamanism can be separated into three main realms. These realms are categorised by geographical region as well as by the sacred plant common to that region. Peru's trinity of magical plants: the ayahuasca vine, the coca leaf, and the san pedro cactus, are traditionally used in the Amazon jungle, the Andean mountains and on the Coast respectively¹.

These *maestro* or master plants possess healing properties and are used for religious, curative and divining purposes. Shoemaker (1997) comments that they can provide a guide to the healer within, giving us the knowledge to heal ourselves. The plants are considered to be sentient beings, which when ingested allow communication with the spirit of the plant. If you wish to learn about these plants the best teacher is the plant itself. Over the course of my research I was told a number of times that if I truly wanted to learn the nature of these plants I should experience them and let the plants educate me in their ways.

Jungle Shamans

Ayahuasca (*Banisteriopsis caapi*), the vine of the soul, is the magical plant of the Amazon jungle. Although other plants are mixed with the ayahuasca vine in order to create the hallucinogenic drink, 'ayahuasca' or 'yagé' is the name given to the brew. Most often, the leaves of the Chacrana (*Psychotria viridis*) or oco yagé (*Diplopterys cabrerana*) are mixed with the ayahuasca to make the magical beverage. Chacrana and oco yagé contain dimethyltryptamine (DMT), while the ayahuasca vine contains harmine and harmaline, which are MAO-inhibitors. DMT is metabolised by monoamine oxidase (MAO), a stomach enzyme, so the MAO-inhibitors in ayahuasca allow the DMT to be circulated through the bloodstream to the brain, and thus enable the psychoactive hallucinogens to manifest (Kidder 1998).

¹ Although use of the three sacred plants is usually considered to fall within their three respective regions, in reality use of all three plants can be found in each of these regions now and throughout history.

The consumption of ayahuasca in a ceremonial setting includes a variety of things. Firstly, a special diet must be followed, along with sexual abstinence. The idea behind this is that the body must be purified to be able to talk to the spirits. It is also claimed by some shamans that the dietary prescriptions should be followed because of the jealous nature of the spirit of the plant. In order to purify oneself the participant must abstain from sex before and after taking ayahuasca; the participant must also avoid the sun and eating foods such as salt, oils, sugar, pork, and spices. There are varying degrees of intensity in which the ceremonial diet and discipline are followed, and the time frame over which this diet must be adhered to differs considerably from one shaman to another. After experimenting with the diet by breaking it in various ways, Shoemaker (1997) concluded that when the diet is followed the spirit world becomes more accessible. While he did not experience any of the supposed negative symptoms, such as a rash, he did find it easier to reach a trance state. Luna (1991) believes that this strict diet is one of the reasons why there is a decline in the number of young *mestizos*² and Indians following the way of the shaman.

Also necessary in ceremonial settings for the taking of ayahuasca are protective rituals, the smoking of the sacred tobacco, various scents and perfumes of the jungle which are appealing to the spirits, and of course, the shaman who is quietly powerful and will navigate you safely through the spiritual experience. During the ceremony the shaman will sing his or her *icaros*, or songs, to control the session and visions, as well as using *schacapas*, or spirit brooms, made from the leaves of the schacapa plant. These spirit brooms make gentle rustling sounds and are accompanied by the sounds of whistling bottles³.

The *icaro* of a shaman is learnt from other shamans or plant spirits to be sung during healing sessions. When the spirits show themselves in visions they teach the shaman the songs as well as the purpose of these songs, whether it be for divining, healing, blessing or protection. *Icaros* “represent a transference of the spirits of each plant, with all their knowledge and theriomorphic and anthromorphic manifestations, into the body of the shaman (Luna and Amaringo 1991:13). The

² People of Indian and Spanish blood.

³ For a more complete description of an ayahuasca ritual see Chapter Three.

icaro, in a way, directs the experience of those taking the sacred plant. It is through these songs and chants that the shaman remains in control of the situation and the experience. Certain songs are sung when inducing the trance state, and still others during the visionary episode. If a patient becomes distressed, the shaman will bring them back to 'safety' via the *icaro*.

Each time I would start to gag, and each time don Riccardo would start chanting loudly and shaking his rattle at me, the nausea subsided (Siegel 1994:38).

These *icaros* often contain a mixture of languages, including various indigenous idioms, as well as Quechua and Spanish. Some shamans do not need to ingest the plants; their *icaros* are powerful enough to enable them to enter into a state through which they are able to communicate with spirits and initiate healing. Luna (1991:18) was told by Peruvian Don Basilio Gordon "If you know the *icaro* of a plant, you don't need to use the plant".

Dobkin de Rios (1972) reports that it is widely believed that a snake, or *culebra*, is the mother spirit of the drug. This snake is called *Sachamama*⁴ and is considered to be the true 'Queen of the Forest' (Biopark 2000b). If you are fortunate enough she will come during ayahuasca visions, as a giant anaconda with glowing eyes. To the lucky few she will impart the knowledge of her jungle.

Similar to the idea of 'chi' or life energy in traditional Chinese medicine, ayahuasca enables the Peruvian shamans to diagnose illness by revealing the patient's energy pattern, which becomes distorted when the patient is ill. Suction, massage, medicinal plants, hydrotherapy or restoration of the soul are some of the methods that the shaman can then use to treat the illness. It is also not uncommon for a shaman to, if available, refer their patients on to biomedical help if they are unable to cure the ailment.

Ayahuasca is seldom taken only once. As a general rule locals take it on a regular basis to maintain good health, and spiritual tourists will participate in a number of ceremonies. Otorongo Blanco (2000), in his article *Ayahuasca Spirituality and*

⁴ There is an ethnobotanical garden named after *Sachamama* just outside of Iquitos, Peru. It was founded in 1990 by Don Francisco Montes Shuna as a shamanic school. It is a place where people, indigenous or otherwise, can come to learn from the plant teachers.

Cleansing, describes the various stages of ayahuasca taking. It is uncommon to have a vision the first time you take ayahuasca. Usually the first time is purgative or cleansing. The second time tends to be a psychological or emotional experience. Repressed feelings come to the surface, memories good and bad, and an understanding and sense of your place in the universe is reached. The third and subsequent ceremonies open up the realm of spirituality and with it the visions. The taking of ayahuasca is holistic: cleansing, healing and stimulating your body, mind and soul.

Andean Mystics

Although Andean shamanism is very complex, there are a few basic principals that I will discuss here to give an overview of the type of spiritual experience that travellers to the region generally expect. The most basic premise of Andean shamanism is that of *kawsay pacha*, or world of living energy. For the followers of this tradition “the world of nature is alive and responsive, and the cosmos is a vibrating field of pure energy” (Wilcox 1999:10). The interchange of these energies is called *ayni*, which is defined as reciprocity. There are considered to be two types of energy: *sami*, a refined, light energy which equates with harmony, and *hucha*, a heavy energy which is not considered to be a ‘bad’ energy, but which is incompatible with our own energy and needs to be cleansed. Only humans produce *hucha*.

The *kawsay pacha* is dominated by the two primary spirit energies of the Andes: *Pachamama* and the *Apus*. *Pachamama*, the Earth Goddess or Mother, is considered to be the wife of *Inti* the Sun God and ancestor of the Inkas. *Apus* are the spirits of the sacred mountains, while *Wiraqocha* or *Pachakamaq*⁵ are the names given to God or the creator of the world.

The coca plant is the sacred plant of the Andes and the Andean people. It plays both a social and a sacred role in Andean society. Burrows (October 2000) states that the fundamental role of the coca is “as a nexus integrating and assuring the social cohesion of indigenous families and communities”. The social exchange

⁵ Also spelt Pachacamac.

and chewing of coca is called *hallpay* (Wilcox 1999) and is exchanged as an act of friendship and greeting.

The actual chewing of the leaf has a stimulating effect on the person, alleviating altitude sickness, hunger and fatigue. When chewing the coca leaves, lime ash is usually added and the leaves remain in a wad in the person's cheek to allow the slow release of the stimulating properties.

Coca has many medicinal uses. Bastien (1987) discusses many of these in his book *Healers of the Andes: Kallawayas herbalists and their medicinal plants*, including the relief of altitude sickness, the treatment of gastrointestinal disorders and relieving the discomfort of colds, bruises, sore joints and muscles, swollen and sore feet and headaches. The cocaine in the leaves is also recognised as an anaesthetic and fights some varieties of bacteria.

Using coca in the sacred context is called *akulliy* (Wilcox 1999). In this context, coca is used as a sacred offering, for divination and for healing. The coca leaves are the central ingredients in the ritual offerings made to the *Apus* and *Pachamama*. The bundle that is used as an offering is called a *despacho*. The *despacho* is prayed over and infused with *sami* and then burned or buried.

The primary method of divination in the Andes is through the reading of the coca leaves. Coca divination involves the tossing of coca leaves up into the air and then reading them in relation to how they fall. Another method of divination is also used; this involves the burning of the *despacho* and watching for the colour of and direction in which the smoke rises.

A *mesa*, which means table or plateau in Spanish, is a ritual bundle which contains sacred objects and is used in healing and divination. The *mesa* is a "place where the shamans come to meet the spirits" (Siegel 1994:33). In the Andes the sacred objects tend to be stones of power called *khuyas* which are charged with *sami*. Other objects also found in the bundle are various natural items such as feathers, crystals or shells. When the bundle is opened and laid out it acts as the shaman's altar.

In Andean cosmology there are three worlds, *hanaq pacha* the upper world, *kay pacha* the physical world and *ukhu pacha* the lower world. *Hanaq pacha* is the spiritual world and is comprised of *sami*, refined energy. This is because the beings of the upper world exist under perfect *ayni*. The totem animals for the *hanaq pacha* are the condor and the hummingbird. Totem animals in the Andean tradition are not animal allies as in the North, rather they are the physical manifestations of the *Apus*' spirits.

Kay pacha is the physical world in which we exist, and is comprised of both *sami* and *hucha* energy. This is because humans sometimes act with *ayni*, and sometimes they do not. The puma or jaguar is the totem animal of *kay pacha*.

The third world is *ukha pacha*, the lower world, and is comprised of *hucha* energy. It is important to note that *ukha pacha* is not negative or bad, rather the beings have not yet learnt to live in *ayni* and their energies are heavy or incompatible. The totem animal of *ukhu pacha* is the snake.

Andean prophecy states that in the age that we are currently living through the three worlds will come together as one, bringing in the Golden Age. This will occur through the exchange of energy. We, in the *kay pacha*, give our *hucha* to *Pachamama* and draw down *sami*, and in turn teach the beings of the *ukhu pacha* the way of *ayni* and bring *sami* to the lower world.

It is this interchange of energies with the three worlds with which the spiritual seekers of the West are involved. Their Andean teachers explain to them the concepts and give them the tools to exchange energies. These spiritual seekers in turn disseminate the information to others in the West through publications and workshops.

The Q'ero Indians and their Prophecies

The Q'ero Indians "live up where the rains begin, where the clouds originate. They live in the ravines, where the pumas also live. They live where the children grow up enfolded with the natural, cosmic vision" (Yábar in Wilcox 1999:5).

They are the keepers of the ancient knowledge in accordance with their prophecies. Although Andean mystical traditions are widespread amongst the indigenous populations of the Andes, the Q'ero are the recognised masters of these traditions (Wilcox 1999).

The Inca Prophecy

As told by Peruvian Spiritual Messenger Willaru⁶

We have been waiting five hundred years.

The Inca prophecies say that now, in this age, when the eagle of the North and the condor of the South fly together, the Earth will awaken. The eagles of the North cannot be free without the condors of the South.

Now it's happening. Now is the time. The Aquarian Age is an era of light, an age of awakening, an age of returning to natural ways. Our generation is here to help begin this age, to prepare through different schools to understand the message of the heart, intuition, and nature. Native people speak with the Earth. When consciousness awakens, we can fly high like the eagle, or like the condor...

Ultimately, you know, we are all native, because the word native comes from nature, and we are all parts of Mother Nature. She is inside us, and we are inside her. We depend totally on the Earth, the Sun, and the Water. We belong to the evolution of nature in our physical bodies. But we also have a spiritual body that comes from the Sun, not the Sun you can see with two eyes, but another Sun that lies in another dimension, a golden Sun burning with the fire of spiritual light. The inner light of humans emanates from this spiritual source. We came to Earth from this Sun to have experiences on Earth, and eventually we will return to this Sun.

We are Children of the Sun.

The prophecy describes three Ages, which are referred to by different names but whose essence remains the same. The following are the three Ages as described by Joan Parisi Wilcox (1999). The first Age is that of the Father and “began with the founding of the *Tawantinsuyu*, the Inka Empire and ended with the deaths of

⁶ Willaru Huayta is an Inkan Spiritual Messenger from Qosqo, Peru. Born a Quechua Indian, he learned to receive esoteric truth during his spiritual quests in the Amazon jungles. A few years ago he was asked to travel to the big city, Qosqo, as a Chasqui (messenger) for the Great White Brotherhood with messages pertaining to the transitional times in which we live (Labyrinthina 1999).

the rival Inkas, *Atawallpa* and *Waskar*” (Wilcox 1999:244). The second age was the Age of the Son, which began with the Spanish conquest and ended sometime between 1990 and 1993, when the world went through a cosmic transmutation and reordering called *pachacuti*. The third age is the one that we are currently in, the Age of the Holy Spirit, *Taripay Pacha*, the time where humankind has the potential to evolve spiritually.

Juan Nuñez del Prado, son of Oscar Nunez del Prado the man who ‘discovered’ the Q’ero Indians in 1949, has been researching the Inkan prophecies for more than twelve years. From reading historical records and speaking with many shamans, Juan has been able to piece together the prophecy. The period called *Taripay Pacha*, the time of transformation, the Age of Meeting Ourselves Again, that we are now in (1993–2012) is categorised with the progression through different levels of consciousness. The prophecy details a great change or *pachacuti* “in which the world would be turned right-side up, harmony and world order would be restored, and chaos and disorder ended” (Berg 1997). For this to occur we will witness the way of European civilisation continue to collapse and the way of the Earth people will return (Berg 1997).

Most of what we know of the prophecies in fact comes from Juan Nuñez del Prado and his research. Smatterings of information can be found on various websites and in books of *paqos*, or spiritual seekers, but most of this information has filtered down via Juan from his teachers⁷. The points that I would like to pull out and illustrate here are those of an inclusive, collective consciousness, which spans the cultures of the world, similar to Teilhard de Chardin’s noosphere and omega point.

Juan talks of a harmonious world culture and believes that;

Within the Andean vision for the *Taripay Pacha*, anyone of sufficient spiritual awareness, of any ethnic heritage or cultural or religious background, can contribute to raising the vibrational energy and the spiritual consciousness to the level needed to complete the transformation and fully manifest this ‘plentipotencia’ (in Wilcox 1999:57-58).

⁷ Another influential teacher of Peruvian cosmology is Alberto Villoldo who is discussed in Chapter Four.

More detailed descriptions of these prophecies can be found in books such as Wilcox (1999) and Jenkins (1997).

The prophecy speaks of individuals that will rise up through the levels of consciousness. Of the twelve that will rise up in the first instance, four will specifically come from the North, while the rest will come from South America. Those that will rise up through the next levels can come from any ethnic, racial, religious or cultural background.

One Q'ero master tells us that "The new caretakers of the Earth will come from the West, and those that have made the greatest impact on Mother Earth now have the moral responsibility to remake their relationship with Her, after remaking themselves" (Berg 1997). The Prophecy states that North America will supply the physical strength, or body; Europe will supply the mental aspect, or head; and the heart will be supplied by South America.

The prophecy is nothing, however, without the *Mosoq Karpay*, The Rites of a Time to Come. The prophecy announces the End of Time (as we know it), while the *Mosoq Karpay* are the rites of passage that enable the transition from one time to the next. Alberto Villoldo teaches this process in the form of the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel symbolises the four corners of the Earth, each represented by a power animal. For the South it is the serpent, for the West there is the jaguar, in the North the hummingbird and for the East the eagle or condor. When teaching the Medicine Wheel, Villoldo takes his spiritual seekers to the four corners of Peru to carry out the necessary rites. Each corner represents a step or task. The first is the South. Its task is to shed the past, as the serpent sheds its skin.

Next is the West, where we must "heal the fear and violence within us and learn the ways of peace"(Villoldo 2000). The jaguar is very important in Peruvian cosmology and is considered to be the bridge between worlds. In the West you must learn to discard the lifelessness from your life, learn to see the beauty in the world and begin to live again. Like the jaguar you jump from one life into the next.

The North direction involves becoming luminous beings. The North is the place of mystery teachings “it’s where you learn to listen and hear the voices of the ancient ones, where you have the ability to step outside of time, to influence events that happened in the past, to nudge destiny, and to summon to yourself the kind of destiny that you would like to live” (Villoldo 2000). The hummingbird is the power animal of the North and it represents “our tasting the knowledge of the many flowers” (Villoldo 2000), symbolising the ability to use our intelligence and wit and not just our physical strength.

Finally we have the East, the visionary direction. Here we must envisage the possibilities for all, become an agent of change and bring wisdom to the world (Villoldo 2000). It is this direction that links to the tourist and workshop ventures. Though these ventures, those that have learnt the way of the Medicine Wheel can share it with others, thus fulfilling the Rites of Passage and taking us closer to the *Taripay Pacha*. This is not a method of religious conversion, nor does it have undercurrents of a cult, as Villoldo (2000) explains;

let me emphasize that shamanism is not a religion. There's no Buddha, there's no Mohammed, no Christ that says, “Follow my footsteps.” You follow your own footsteps. You learn from nature, you learn from the wind, from the trees, from the rivers, the rain, the lightning bolt and you follow your own footsteps, and you honour the Christ, the Buddha, you honour all the great teachers.

World spiritual leaders, including the Dali Lama, acknowledge a shift in the Earth’s energy in 1987. The shift was from the masculine energies of Tibet to the feminine energies of Peru, centred on Lake Titicaca, Machupichhu and the Sacred Valley (Personal communication with a guide at Machupicchu, September 1998). This shift corresponds with the Q’ero prophecies.

Coastal Curanderos

For the *curanderos*⁸ of the North Coastal region of Peru, san pedro (*Trichocereus pachanoi*) is the principal sacred plant used in healing rituals. As with the other healers throughout Peru, the coastal *curanderos* have a vast knowledge of plant

⁸ Healers. Female healers are called curanderas.

lore and their medicinal and magical uses. Although the *curanderos* do cultivate plants themselves, many of these herbs are collected in the wild at powerful mountains or sacred lagoons. The most powerful of these lagoons are called Las Huaringas and are situated near Huancabamba, 284 kilometres from Piura. (See Appendix A for a map of Peru).

Las Huaringas (Quechua for sacred lagoons) are nestled amongst the Cordillera del Wamani, a chain of mountains in the North of Peru. These fourteen lagoons are thought to have magical and curative powers and are a site of pilgrimage for the followers and practitioners of local traditions and the tourists that seek an insight into this world of mystery.

Each of the lagoons are said to provide a specific benefit and the *curandero* will select the one to visit depending on his need or the needs of the patients. The spirits of the lagoons are feminine while those of the surrounding mountains are masculine.

The san pedro cactus is smooth, relatively thin, and night blooming with very few, if any, spines (Sharon 1978). San pedro can have different numbers of longitudinal ribs. Most commonly used by the *curandero* are those with seven ribs, although those with four are considered to be more magical, but also more scarce. The four ribs correspond with the four winds “associated with the cardinal points invoked during curing rituals” (Sharon 1978:39). It is the mescaline in the san pedro that elicits the hallucinogenic effects. The mescaline is contained in the top half inch of the cactus’ skin and is extracted when boiled.

Usually no other ingredients are added to the san pedro brew, however in some cases when witchcraft is considered to be the source of the illness, other ingredients are added, for example powdered bones, cemetery dust or dust from archaeological ruins (Sharon 1978). Some *curanderos* also add datura.

As well as the san pedro brew other plant mixtures are taken during the ritual. A tobacco mixture is taken and serves as an “auxiliary catalyst in support of the visionary function of san pedro” (Sharon 1978:37). A purgative mixture is also

served after the san pedro to induce vomiting. Also central to this ritual are the various medicinal herbs that are used in treating the client's ailments.

The most well known *curandero* in this region is Eduardo Caulderón, who was the subject of Douglas Sharon's 1978 book *Wizard of the Four Winds: A Shaman's Story*. Caulderón received a certain amount of notoriety as a result of Sharon's book and an ethnographic film (Cowan and Sharon 1978) was made about his work. He became associated with Alberto Villoldo and his *Four Winds Foundation* and became involved in spiritual tours as well as travelling to the United States and Europe to give speeches and demonstrations of healing rituals.

Sharon (1978:45) surmises from his conversations with Caulderón that,

the hallucinogenic San Pedro cactus is experienced as the catalyst that enables the curandero to transcend the limitations placed on ordinary mortals: to activate all his senses; to project his spirit, or soul; to ascend and descend into the supernatural realms; to identify and do battle with the sources of illness, witchcraft, and misfortune; to confront and vanquish ferocious animals and demons of disease and sorcerers who direct them; to 'jump over' barriers of time, space, and matter; to divine the past, present, and future – in short, to attain 'vision', to 'see'.

The san pedro, according to Caulderón (Sharon 1978:45) "reaches into the subconscious" of the *curandero's* patient. Caulderón defines the subconscious as "a kind of bag where the individual has stored all his memories, all his valuations" (Caulderón in Sharon 1978:46), and says "by means of the magical plants and the chants and the search for the roots of the problem, the subconscious of the individual is opened up like a flower, and it releases these blockages" (Caulderón in Sharon 1978:46). This is the principal task of *curanderismo*. On occasion soul flights⁹ are experienced after ingesting san pedro. One of the more common destinations of these soul flights is Las Huingas.

The *mesa*¹⁰ of the north coastal *curandero* is more elaborate than those of other shamans in Peru. The coastal *mesas* are set out in a particular way, a way in

⁹ Soul flights are when the person's soul leaves their body and goes on a flight to some destination.

¹⁰ The *mesa*, for the coastal *curandero*, means altar or ritual table, and usually refers to the area of the ground where the shaman sets out their ritual objects.

which good is balanced with bad. The *mesa* is split into three. The left side is negative while the right side is positive. In the middle is a neutral zone indicating balance or mediation. Again I must point out that the two sides are not seen as strictly good and evil, as in Western traditional thought, rather they are seen as “complementary halves of a whole” (Erowid 2000). The objects placed in the various zones are those with associated energies. Those on the left are associated with death; things from ancestors and poisonous herbs, those on the right associated with life; fertility symbols and medicinal plants. In the middle are objects such as good luck charms and sun images.

As with Andean *mesas*, the coastal *mesa* contains objects such as power stones, natural items and statues, however they also contain staves, which are not common with the *mesas* of Andean or Jungle shamans.

The rituals are always held at night as san pedro and the sun are considered to be opposing entities (Camino Diez Canseco 1997). First a purification ceremony is held, and then everyone takes a drink of the san pedro brew¹¹. The divination of the problem then takes place.

While the *curandero* chants the name of one individual, all of the others present watch the staves and wait for one to start to vibrate¹². The *curandero* takes this staff and using its power and the objects on the *mesa*, focuses his vision, which enables him to ‘see’ the cause of the problem. This supernatural cause may ‘attack’ during the session. If this happens the *curandero* will use the staff or a sword to do battle with the supernatural attacking forces, which the *curandero* can see in his san pedro visions. In the next part of the ritual, the particular plants needed to heal the individual patients are identified then confirmed through an act of divination (Camino Diez Canseco 1997).

Another way in which healing and divination is carried out is with the use of a guinea pig. The live animal is rubbed over the body of a patient. Because of the

¹¹ By the account of one anonymous author this brew is particularly unpalatable. “It tastes bad. It tastes gross. It is ten times worse than the worst thing you have ever tasted. It looks, feels, and smells absolutely gross. It is entirely possible to drink it, but very unpleasant” (Erowid 2000).

¹² This is agreed to under their collective hallucinogenic state.

sensitive nature of the guinea pig, any negative energy in the patient is absorbed into the animal. The guinea pig is then sacrificed and its internal organs are examined to divine the source of the patient's symptoms. Herbs are then prescribed to treat the patient's ailment.

Power Places

Each of these forms of shamanism has places of power, locations where the spiritual world is considered to be particularly reachable. For thousands of years humans have gone on pilgrimages to places of power to receive messages and inspiration or as an illustration of their devotion. Some would go on this journey often, while for others it was a once in a lifetime expedition.

Power places come in many forms: ancient ceremonial sites or astronomical observatories, sacred mountains or bodies of water, and oracle sites to name a few. Ancient civilisations have built shrines or temples at some of these power places. Many of these buildings to this day amaze architects and engineers. Many believe that it is at these power places that it is easiest to communicate with nature and the spirits of the Earth.

In the case of the Andean shamanic tradition, one of the reasons that spiritual tourists are taken to various power places to perform rituals is that they are exchanging their energy bodies with the sacred sites. "They are, in effect, cleansing and reinvigorating ancient power places on the light body of *Pachamama* that have become encrusted or dimmed from disuse or desecration" (Wilcox 1999:61). In Peru there are simply too many power places or *huacas* to mention, however I will briefly discuss some of the more visited ones.

Nazca Lines

The Nazca lines are giant animal figures and geometric shapes, criss-crossed with lines on the pampa de San José. The shapes are huge, spanning some five hundred square kilometres. Individual drawings are up to 200 metres in length. Because of their size, it is difficult to make out the drawings from the ground and they are best viewed from the air. The drawings include a condor, a spider, a monkey, a hummingbird, a lizard, a human form, various spirals, and ceques or

ley lines which are said to be sacred pathways connecting *huacas*, ceremonial sites or waterways.

No one really knows what they are or how they came to be there, but there are many theories. The most respected theory is that of Maria Reiche, a German mathematician who is considered to be the greatest expert on the Nazca lines (see Bridges, Lippard and Reiche 1986). She worked at Nazca from 1946 until her death in 1998. She believes that the lines are an astronomical calendar, used to help organise planting and harvesting and possibly even a way of predicting “cyclical natural phenomena like El Nino” (Lama 1998), although she died before she could sufficiently research this weather theory. Another well-regarded theory is that of English explorer Tony Morrison (1988) who believes that the straight lines connect *huacas*. Paul Devereux (1992) had a similar theory to Morrison, whereby he proposed that the ley lines were an element of shamanic cosmology and the evolution of the spirit. Other theories include those of Jim Woodman (1987), who believed that the Nazca people had hot air balloons in which they viewed the lines; Johan Reinhard (1986) and Evan Hadingham (1987), who believed they were used in mountain worship, and Swiss writer Erich von Daniken (2000) who thought them to be extraterrestrial landing sites. Whatever the reason for the construction of the lines, today they hold intrigue for locals and foreigners alike.

Qosqo and Surrounds

Qosqo is probably the most visited area of Peru for tourists. It is the gateway to the Sacred Valley of the Inkas, the Inka Trail and Machupicchu. It is the American continent’s oldest continuously inhabited city and was the imperial capital of the Inka. Qosqo, which means the navel of the world, is the Quechua name for the city. While it is often referred to as Cuzco or Cusco, Qosqo has, again, been the official name since June 1990.

Qosqo is a beautiful city with narrow stone streets and Spanish architecture with Inkan temples and palaces as its foundations. Qosqo city was originally shaped like a puma, with Sacsayhuaman as the head and Pumacchupan as the tail. Huacapata, the ancient ceremonial square and now the Plaza de Armas, is the

puma's heart. At 3,400 metres above sea level (11,150 feet), the air is low in oxygen and many visitors suffer altitude sickness upon arrival.

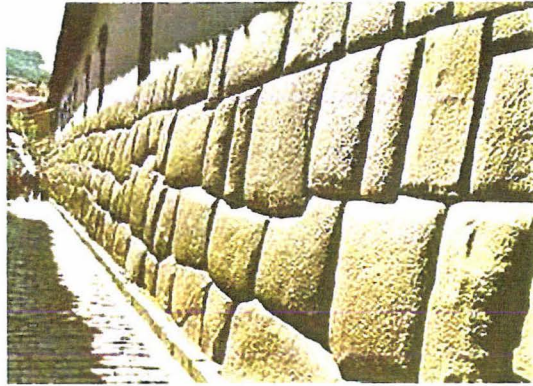


Figure 2. Inka wall foundations in Qosqo, Peru

There are many sacred sites in and around Qosqo. These include temples such as Qorikancha or Intiwasi. Directly translated these names mean 'Golden Palace' or 'Sun House' respectively, but it is best known as the Temple of the Sun. There are also important archaeological sites such as P'isaq¹³, Ollantaytambo¹⁴, Chinchero¹⁵ and Tambomachay¹⁶, all of which are destinations for spiritual seekers for various rites and rituals.

Not far from the city is Sacsayhuaman. There are a number of translations for this name: 'get satiated falcon', 'marbled falcon' and 'marbled head'. I tend to favour the 'marbled head' as Sacsayhuaman is considered to be the head to Qosqo's puma, with the zig zag construction thought to be its teeth and the circular foundations of Muyuq Marka its eye. Sacsayhuaman is where the annual *Inti Raymi* (Sun Festival) is held each June 24th, as well as the *Warachikuy Festival*, an initiation ceremony for young men.

¹³ P'isaq, a now ruined citadel, best known nowadays as a marketplace.

¹⁴ Ollantaytambo was a massive Inkan fortress. Nowadays it is the best remaining example of Inka city planning.

¹⁵ This site combines Inka ruins with an Andean Indian village, a colonial country church, wonderful mountain views and a colourful Sunday market (Rachowiecki 1996:265).

¹⁶ This is a small ruin consisting of a ceremonial stone bath, popularly called El Baño del Inka.

The Inka Trail is part of the vast road system that once linked Machupicchu and Qosqo, and for the more adventurous, or athletic, tourists is the perfect way to experience the Sacred Valley and ultimately Machupicchu.

Machupicchu

American explorer Hiram Bingham is credited with the discovery of Machupicchu, the ‘Lost City of the Inkas’, and with bringing the city to the attention of the West. Although Bingham ‘rediscovered’ Machupicchu in 1911, it was known to the people of the area and was in fact inhabited by a family who was farming the land.



Figure 3. Classic Machupicchu photograph, Peru

Machupicchu is Quechua for ‘Old Mountain’, and the mountain that features in the background of the ‘classic’ Machupicchu photographs is Waynapicchu or ‘Young Mountain’. It is generally believed that Machupicchu was built and used by the Inka Pachakuteq¹⁷ as his royal farmstead. Machupicchu is divided into two main sectors, farming and urban, with religious buildings and monuments throughout.

¹⁷ Pachakuteq, the eighth Inka, brought about great change throughout the Inkan Empire. “His reign marked the transformation of the early township [of Qosqo] into a resplendent capital, the reordering of the priestly hierarchy, and the moulding of primordial cults into a dynamic force, the spiritual expression of the Inka will to conquer” (Davies 1997:120). Pachacuti means ‘great change’, which is indeed Pachakuteq’s legacy.

There are various temples and ceremonial sites at Machupicchu. Most well know are the Temple of Three Windows, the Temple of the Condor, the Funerary Rock, the Sun Temple, and, most importantly, Intiwatana.

The Intiwatana (the 'place where the sun is fixed' or 'hitching post to the sun') is found at one of the highest points of the city, just off the Holy Plaza. The biggest celebration in Inkan society is *Inti Raymi*¹⁸ which occurs on the day of Winter Solstice. It is on this day that *Tayta Inti* (Father Sun) is farthest away and considered to be abandoning them. The *Inti Raymi* (Sun Festival) involves rituals and the symbolic tying up of the sun (Goyzueta 2000). Intiwatana is also thought to be a solar calendar of sorts, for calculating the different seasons.

The Funerary Rock is on the upper terrace near the Watchman Post, the place where those classic Machupicchu photographs are taken. It is thought that the Funerary Rock is where the embalming and drying out of mummies was conducted. This is a popular place for spiritual seekers to perform rituals.

The Temple of the Condor is the most visually spectacular building. Within the temple is a kind of labyrinth, while above the ground the temple is in the form of a landing condor, complete with outstretched wings, beak and collar around its neck. There is speculation as to the purpose of this temple - as a jail or for displaying mummies - although it was probably in fact built to worship *Apu Kuntur*, the Condor God (Goyzueta 2000). Machupicchu is the most popular tourist destination in South America and is breathtaking on many levels.

¹⁸ Today *Inti Raymi* is performed at Sacsayhuaman just out of Qosqo.

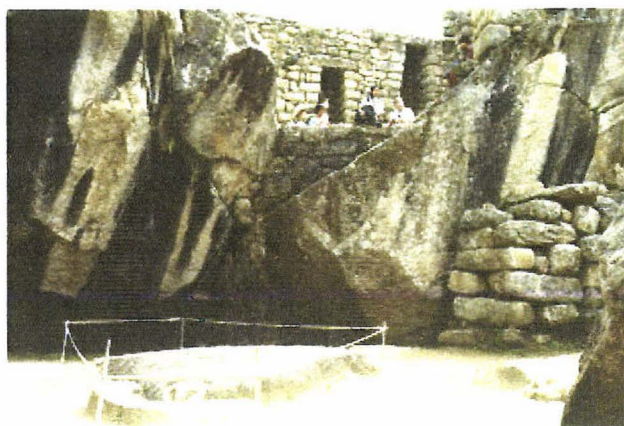


Figure 4. Temple of the Condor, Machupicchu, Peru

Lake Titicaca

Lake Titicaca (Quechua for Stone Puma), located on the boundary of Peru and Bolivia (see Appendix B for map of South America), is the sacred lake of the Inkas. They believe they were born from its waters at the Isla del Sol (Island of the Sun). In turn, the Isla del Sol sprang from the body of a drowned puma (Leger November 2000).

The entire lake is a holy place, but particularly sacred are the Isla del Sol, from which the original Inkas Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo emerged, and the Isla de la Luna (Island of the Moon), which is where the convent of the Virgins of the Sun was located. Lake Titicaca is also famous for its floating islands. The islands are made out of dried Totara reeds and some people still live on them.

Legend has it that a golden Solar Disc lies within Lake Titicaca. The disc is a kind of cosmic computer, which receives information from *Wiracocha* (Shapiro 1996). Before the Spanish conquest the disc resided in Qorikancha. When the Spanish invaded Qosqo, the disc was taken to Lake Titicaca for safekeeping and placed in a sacred city below the lake¹⁹. It is said that in this new age the disc will be reactivated in order to once again access the sacred wisdom.

Recently a news article appeared with researchers claiming that ruins had been found near the Islands of the Sun and Moon.

¹⁹ This is the same city from which Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo emerged.

Ancient Temple Ruins Found Under Lake Titicaca

August 23, 2000 – Reuters – Bolivia

The remains of what is thought to be a 1,000- to 1,500-year-old temple have been found below the waters of South America's Lake Titicaca, a scientific expedition says.

"We've found what appears to have been a 200 metre (660 feet) long, 50 metre (160 feet) wide holy temple, a terrace for crops, a pre-Inkan road and an 800 metre (2,600 feet) long containing wall," said Lorenzo Apis, the Italian scientist leading the ["Atahualpa 2000"] expedition in a region of the lake around 90 miles northeast of the Bolivian capital of La Paz

The results of their findings were due to be published in late 2000.

The spiritual traditions and systems of healing in Peru are diverse and it would seem relevant and transferable to the lives of the West. In the following chapters I discuss the tourists and researchers that come to Peru seeking the knowledge and experience of Peruvian shamanism. In the middle of the tourist researcher continuum there is a blurring of the two, the reasons that they come to Peru are similar in varying degrees. The distinction I make between the two groups is that the tourist seeks for personal reasons while the researcher seeks for predominantly professional reasons.

Chapter Three

Shamanic Tourism

These [intoxicating substances] have formed a bond in union between men of opposite hemispheres, the uncivilised and the civilised; they have forced passages which, once open, proved of use for other purposes; they produced in ancient races characteristics which have endured to the present day, evidencing the marvellous degree of intercourse that existed between different peoples just as certainly and exactly as a chemist can judge the relations of two substances by their reactions. Hundreds or thousands of years were necessary to establish contact between whole nations by these means. (Lewin 1964)

There are many reasons why Western tourists are interested in Peruvian shamanism. The conclusions that I have drawn are based primarily on anecdotal evidence found in trip reports on the Internet and in periodicals and books. These reasons include simple curiosity or those that see participation in Peruvian shamanism as part of the Peruvian experience, a spiritual quest, drug tourism and those that participate for medical reasons, physiological or psychological. Although I have divided the reasons up into four main themes, within each of these themes there are sub groups and those that participate with varying degrees of intensity. For many of the tourists it is a very personal experience and therefore individual reasons may include a combination of the four main themes¹.

¹ Kim Kristensen conducted a small survey of North American ayahuasca takers in the Peruvian Amazon. He wanted to find out why people would pay to travel to the Peruvian Amazon to participate in an ayahuasca ceremony, what type of person would do it and what did they get out of it. Kristensen notes that the ayahuasca trail drug users were not represented in his survey: "I do not wish to judge people seeking ayahuasca as a 'high', but merely distinguish them from the ones I interviewed for this paper" (January 2001). By his own admission, the sample size (10) was too small to reach any real conclusions, particularly in the area of what type of person would participate. However the reasons why these individuals decided to take part in the ceremonies are relevant here. His respondents gave four main reasons for making the journey: self-exploration and spiritual growth, curiosity, physical and emotional healings and the desire for a vacation to an exotic location (Kristensen January 2000). Also mentioned were the cleansing of the mind, body and spirit, connection with the Earth and an interest in shamanism. All of the respondents were satisfied with the results of the ceremonies, all wish to participate again and half had definite plans to return to the Amazon to take part in another ceremony.

For many, spiritual tours are a great way to see Peru. The tours visit many of the main highlight or magnet tourist sites. For the curious tourist it is a way to learn about the traditions, history and culture of a people, it is a way of getting off the beaten path, participating in the experiential and seeing how the 'real' Peruvians live.

Common to most tours is travel to, and exploration of, power places. Visiting one or all of these power places is incorporated into the total spiritual tour package. These include Machupicchu, the Inka Trail and the Sacred Valley of the Inkas in the Andes; Lake Titicaca, the Nazca Lines, Las Huaringas and the Amazon, to name a few². Coupled with the fact that the trinity of sacred plants³ are located and used, for the most part, in different areas of Peru, a tourist wishing to get the total spiritual experience can do so by taking one of these tours. These tourists will get a relatively comprehensive understanding of Peru, both geographically and through witnessing the varying traditions of the country, by way of a spiritual tour. Curious tourists tend to seek out any or all of the three shamanic traditions. These tourists are the ones that are *in Peru to visit Peru* and see a spiritual tour as a good addition to their overall experience.

The spiritual tourist, visiting Peru for a shamanic experience, is concerned with, primarily, embarking on a "journey of initiation into the world of the spirit" (Joralemon 1990:107) and has come to rediscover that which has been cast aside in the west. Many come to 'find themselves' through the spiritual experience and look for that *something* that has been missing in their lives, whatever *that* may be.

Rosaldo (1993) discusses imperialist nostalgia, the longing for something that they themselves have destroyed. Agents of colonialism, officials and missionaries (and now their descendants), who set out to deliberately transform a way of life, long for the way things once were. Alternatively, people responsible for destroying the environment now turn to it to worship. Rosaldo also comments on the profane (civilisation) and the sacred (nature), as defined by anthropologist

² Power places are discussed in Chapter Two.

³ See Chapter Two.

Allen Batteau, whereby a line is drawn between the two and “they worship the very thing their civilising process is destroying” (1993:72).

Those that visit Peru primarily for the spiritual experience fall roughly within two main categories: new agers and wannabes. The first belong to a group commonly referred to as the New Age. For some new agers the quest for spiritual enlightenment can become a way of life. Many bounce from one ‘finding yourself’ experience to the next with the goal of becoming at one with the universe, continually searching for a ‘spiritual high’. This is, of course, one of the more extreme groups on the new age continuum. Most new agers satisfy themselves with reading about various spiritual movements; the new age being more of an interest than a way of life.

On the periphery of this group are people looking for something, anything different. By taking themselves out of usual everyday experiences, they hope to find whatever it is they are looking for, be it simply a new experience or a different pace of life.

The second group are the wannabes⁴, those new agers that are not happy with just the shamanic experience but want to become shamans. Whilst visiting the Foundation for Shamanic Studies⁵ forum I came across some postings by ‘YonaGadoga⁶’, a North American member of the Southern Band of the Cherokees and editor of the newsmagazine *Cherokee Voice*, who had visited Peru twice on cultural exchanges. He mentioned these wannabes and made the following comment in reply to another member seeking advice on how to go about finding an in-depth and authentic shamanic-based trip in Peru.

The traditional elders joke about the ‘wannabe circuit’ of Cuzco-Machupicchu-Ollantaytambo, joking that they send people there so they won’t interfere with the real ceremonies... break this circuit to be taken seriously (YonaGadoga June 2000).

⁴ Also referred to as ‘shake-‘n’-bake’ shamans. (Harner September 1998).

⁵ Website can be found at <http://www.shamanicstudies.com/index.html>.

⁶ Sign in/member name used for discussion in forum.

Another group are those that are out for 'the ultimate high'⁷, people that are aware that the shamans use hallucinogenic plants to induce trance and participate for that experience. They are there primarily for the hallucinogens, searching for a drug induced spiritual high. This can be both dangerous and disrespectful. The psychoactive plants that these tourists seek have a powerful duality. They are a sacred plant and at the same time diabolic, depending on how they are used. The tendency of the Western world is to use them for diabolic purposes. Instead of using the plant holistically and ritually, people of the West reduce the plant to the chemicals that are most effective, in order to get the unusual high as quickly and as easily as possible. This is seen when the ritual coca leaf is reduced to cocaine and in the reduction of the ayahuasca vine to a powder to be packaged in capsule form⁸.

Peter Gorman (August 1999), a man of many talents⁹, comments that "The new interest in plant medicines, however, has brought fewer scientists and ethnobotanists into the jungle than it has psychedelic trippers looking for an unusual high". Spiritual leader YonaGodoga says:

There is also a general distrust of anyone who shows too much interest in hallucinogens like San Pedro and Ayahuasca. They refer to 'Ayahuasca tourism', North American and European stoners looking for a high, and warn that no reputable curandero will use Ayahuasca with a foreigner on the first trip to Peru (YonaGodoga June 2000).

Grunwell (1998) refers to ayahuasca tourism in the Amazon quite simply as drug tourism. This industry is the focus of his paper 'Ayahuasca Tourism in South America', published in *MAPS*. He comments on the way in which ayahuasca tourism is advertised on the Internet and in periodicals.

⁷ This is also the title of a book by Nicholas Saunders, his partner Anja and Michelle Pauli. *In Search of the Ultimate High: The Spiritual Uses of Psychoactives* is a guidebook to present day users of drugs for spiritual purposes.

⁸ While in the jungle, my guide told me of a Czechoslovakian research team that he had guided through the Amazon, and their plans to turn ayahuasca into capsule form.

⁹ There is no one word to describe Peter Gorman and the work that he does. He is often referred to as an explorer, adventurer and guide. He has studied several at risk tribal cultures, written about things as diverse as art, camels, daredevils, drugs, prisons and scuba divers. He is a writer of short stories, a playwright and a magazine editor. He collects artefacts for the American Museum of Natural History and herpetological specimens for the FIDIA Research Foundation of Rome. He has also led expeditions into the Amazon to experience ayahuasca.

Some make no specific mention of drugs, speaking instead of ceremonial healing traditions, heart-opening and mind-expanding journeys deep into the Amazon, or experiencing the wisdom of shaman so-and-so. To the cognoscenti familiar with the terminology surrounding ayahuasca and other plant drugs, such innuendo is transparent (Grunwell 1998).

This is a rather cynical view, however as most accounts of spiritual tourism in the Amazon region centre on the taking of the drug itself and Grunwell is in fact looking at ayahuasca tourism rather than spiritual tourism, it is a reasonable comment for him to make.

Anthropologist Jonathon Ott (1994:12) believes that “ayahuasca tourism can only disrupt the evanescent remnant of preliterate religiosity struggling to make a place for itself in the modern world, while attracting the wrong kind of attention”. To the Amazonians ayahuasca is a sacred plant with a living spirit that speaks to them, not merely a method by which the ultimate hallucinogenic high can be obtained. The influx of the drug tourists places ayahuasca in danger of becoming profaned (Grunwell 1998).

Ritual is important when taking a sacred plant, not to give the tourist an authentic experience, but because “Rituals are the gate through which we enter the sacred” (Mabit, in Malca 1997:65). Mabit uses the coca plant as an example. To take coca for an upset stomach, altitude sickness or to alleviate hunger, one does not need to partake in a twenty-minute ritual. The coca is being used to cure or alleviate an organic ailment. If however you were using the coca for divination or to communicate with the *apus*, then “a ritual is required, since at that moment you are using the coca plant at a different level. Your attitude needs to be different, in this instance you must bow before the coca plant” (Mabit, in Malca 1997:66).

Drug tourists tend to be primarily interested in shamanism in the Amazon, and in some cases in the Coastal region, as it is the taking of ayahuasca and san pedro which elicits the powerful hallucinations which they pursue.

For a growing number of individuals, turning to shamans for their knowledge in medical matters is the reason for visiting Peru. When biomedicine does not hold the answers, they look to traditional systems of healing.

The following is the story of one woman's experiences in Peru. Anna¹⁰ met Alberto Villoldo accidentally in a bookstore and ended up studying shamanism and travelling with him. Her first ayahuasca experience was in California with an associate of Alberto's. After a number of sessions she "discovered that she wanted to be a medicine woman working with ayahuasca" (Saunders 1996b). She sold her business and went on a vision quest to Costa Rica to look for shamans and become a medicine woman. Things did not exactly go according to plan in Costa Rica; finding "visible shamans" (Saunders 1996b) proved difficult until a woman she had once briefly met called her and asked her to be a translator for a Peruvian shamanic journey. This began a career as an interpreter for English speakers visiting shamans in Peru. Anna says:

The medicine¹¹ is part of my life: reading about it, speaking about it and examining the experiences that happen and how those experiences relate to the questions "Who am I?", "What am I doing here?", "Where did I come from", and "Where am I going?" (Saunders 1996b).

Anna had a healing experience herself. Whilst working, a shaman told her that there was something in her body that was making her sick. Anna brushed the notion aside, insisting that she felt fine and was very healthy. A few months later a biomedical doctor found a malignant lump in her breast.

Anna chose to seek help from a shaman. He gave her yage and capipa¹² and after a very shaky thirty hours, felt that everything "was in perfect order" (Saunders 1996d) in her body. Two weeks later, when she returned home and told her doctor that she had been through a spiritual healing, he dismissed her by saying that her case was very serious and that she needed surgery immediately. The surgery revealed no tumour at all.

¹⁰ Interview took place in Brazil, May 1996. Nicholas Saunders.

¹¹ Ayahuasca

¹² The bark of a tree that is used for cancer treatment.

Tour Operators: The New Age Gurus

The tour operators who run spiritual tours are commonly those with a passion for shamanism, either academically or experientially. Sometimes they are new agers who want to share their experiences and knowledge with others. Sometimes they are business people who see spiritual tourism as a potential money-spinner, and sometimes they are academics that have studied shamanism and want to bring it to people in a more experiential way, rather than through writing papers and books. For the academics, it is the relationships that developed during their research that are a catalyst for the tourism venture. The researcher, with their knowledge of the West, will often co-ordinate and market the venture in collaboration with the local shamans and guides as a source of income for the local community and as a way of sharing their knowledge.

The operators are often also the guides, although in many cases it is necessary to hire other guides to satisfy the demand. Again, the people that fill these roles come from a variety of backgrounds. There are both local and foreign guides, although generally speaking it is more common for the guide to be local. Some of the larger tourist organisations boast guides with degrees or post graduate degrees in the local area and cultural groups. This adds to the selling power of the tour as an educational experience which will take you beyond the surface.

All of the guides I used were local, although I did witness groups who had foreign guides. Most of these guides I spent only a few hours with, or at the most a day. The only one that I got to know on any real level was Hernan, my guide for the week I spent deep in the Amazon jungle. Both of Hernan's parents were shamans: his father was a tobacco shaman while his mother was an ayahuasca shaman. He himself had studied to be a shaman but preferred to be a guide "the hours were better"¹³. He did, however, collect one species of plant, and was researching the different varieties, seeing what uses the different members of the plant family had.

¹³ Informal conversation with Hernan, 28/09/98

Alan Leon (October 1999) comments on how quiet and unassuming the most accomplished and powerful healers and shamans in the Amazon and Andes are. This is something that also struck me with the shamans I met. On fishing trips and walks in the jungle, aside from pointing out plants and their uses, there was very little conversation.

The shamans do not live some parallel existence, but within the community carrying out daily tasks alongside the other members. The Internet newsgroup *soc.religion.shamanism* comments in its background section that “The shaman lives at the edge of reality as most people would recognise it and most commonly at the edge of society itself” (Edwards 1995). I did not find this to be true.

Shamanic tours can be experienced with varying intensity, duration and content and in a variety of locations. They can be organised by large organisations or individuals, Peruvians, non-Peruvians, shamans, adventurers, entrepreneurs, academics and researchers alike. They come in the form of tour packages, ‘extras’ in the package, a morning, afternoon, night or day trip, tour or programme. There are shamanic organised tours where a package is put together like a wine trail or ski holiday. These packages can originate from both inside of Peru and outside. Most well known are the packages that are advertised in glossy brochures, magazines and on the Internet. To give an idea of the types of services these organisations offer, I will briefly profile some of the better-known ones. These include; the *Four Winds Society*, *Magical Journey*, *Ancient Heritage* and *Myths and Mountains*.

The *Four Winds Society* is a research and training organisation that offers expeditions, training programmes, books and videos with the intent to educate members of the West in the ways of Peruvian shamans.

Our mission is to preserve the ancient techniques of Shamanism and bring them into the 21st Century through classes and in-depth training programs (Four Winds Society June 1999a).

The *Four Winds Society* collaborates with the *Four Winds Foundation*, although they are separate entities,

The purpose and mission of the foundation is to support the Q'ero people of Peru by preserving their spiritual lineage and economical development. We wish to support but not interfere. We wish to assist but not to interrupt. Input from the village is critical (Four Winds Foundation June 1999).

The guiding principle of the Foundation is reciprocity, or *ayni*¹⁴. Its role involves developing projects to help the Q'ero in a variety of ways. Existing projects include: the Mountain Medicine Team, the Alpaca Project, the Children's Project, the Shaman Scholarship Fund, the Weaving Project, and non-designated projects which support the one time, immediate or emergency needs for the Q'ero people (Four Winds Foundation June 1999).

Classes and training programs run by the *Four Winds Society* include both expeditions (or tours) and seminars. Expeditions typically include travel to power places, while experiencing ceremonies and rituals.

Each expedition blends core aspects of traditional shamanic training through experiential study, ceremony and ritual, with the natural beauty and spirit of sacred landscapes (Four Winds Society June 1999b).

Tours centre around the Andes, Cuzco, Machupicchu and the Sacred Valley. However, there are tours that also include the Amazon, the Nazca Lines and the giant Candelabra¹⁵. The Society's tours incorporate hiking and camping in remote areas with visits to ancient ceremonial sites, where they meet with various elders, master shamans and medicine people.

Although most of the tours are open to anyone, they are often experienced in conjunction with a programme and some tours are open only to those who have reached a certain stage in the programmes.

Designed as doorways to greater understanding, experiential programs offer an exploration into Inka shamanism, a 100,000-year-old tradition of power and knowledge to achieve personal and planetary healing (Four Winds Society June 1999c).

¹⁴ A Quechua word that means reciprocity, specifically the exchange and balance of energy from one source to another.

¹⁵ Etched into a hill at Pisco Bay on the coast of Peru is the Candelabra of the Andes, best seen out at sea and thought to be from the Paracas culture.

Some programmes include pre-requisites and can last up to three years¹⁶. Programmes include: learning the Inka medicine wheel, soul retrieval, shamanic healing, healing the luminous body, and the mastery program which trains individuals to become teachers of the Inka medicine wheel.

We will create a qualified group of master level teachers and shamans, expertly trained in the way of the luminous warrior and the Inkan prophecies (Four Winds Society June 1999c).

Alberto Villoldo is the founder of the *Four Winds Society*. He is a medical anthropologist and psychologist and has studied and practised shamanism in Peru for many years. His recent publications include *Dance of the Four Winds: Secrets of the Inca Medicine Wheel*, which focuses on the medicine of the Amazon, and *Island of the Sun: Mastering the Inca Medicine Wheel*, representing the teachings of Andean medicine. These books can be purchased through the *Four Winds Society* along with various CDs and videos introducing and teaching the ways of the Peruvian shamans. Jose Luis Herrera, a native to Peru, and Lisa Summerlot, an oncology nurse, join Alberto in bringing Peruvian shamanism to the world via the *Four Winds Society*. Jose has also studied shamanism in excess of fifteen years and is the Society's foremost guide, while Lisa "has assisted women undergoing transformational healing for more than two decades" (Four Winds Society June 1999a).

Medical anthropologist Dr. Philip Singer of Oakland University has strong feelings about the widespread popularisation of shamanism by anthropologists and others. He believes that "it is wrong for academic anthropologists to teach workshops in shamanism, or lead others to believe that they can easily become shamans" (Singer 1996). In an interview on *Brainstorm: Science of the mind*, an online chat site, with Keith Harary (1996) Dr Singer refers to anthropologists Alberto Villoldo, Timothy White and Michael Harner, commenting that he believes that "the ethics committee of the American Anthropological Association

¹⁶ Rather than running for three years, the participants meet two times yearly for three years.

should investigate them” (Singer 1996) for “reinventing shamanism and making money off it through workshops and travel agencies” (Singer 1996)¹⁷.

Another training and tourist company is *Magical Journey*. All of *Magical Journey's* expeditions begin and end in Cuzco, and last for two weeks. *Magical Journey* has its own garden guesthouse lodge called Willka-T'ika (sacred flower), where many programmes and special interest groups are held. This retreat is located between Qosqo and Machupicchu, situated within gardens filled with flowers and Andean medicinal herbs. The retreat boasts special sites used for traditional ceremonies, a massage or healing room, a meditation hut and areas for meetings, dance and yoga.

As well as retreats, *Magical Journey* also offers sacred tours of Peru for groups of six to sixteen people and programmes such as yoga, creative writing and culture clubs. Carol and Terry Cumes run *Magical Journey*; Carol, along with Romulo L. Valeria, is the author of *Journey to Machu Picchu: Spiritual Wisdom of the Andes*¹⁸.

Sacred Heritage Travel offers an “adventure with meaning” (Sacred Heritage June 1999a), which takes people “beyond tourism’s plastic curtain” (Sacred Heritage June 1999b) to interact with “the natives of our extended spiritual family” (Sacred Heritage June 1999b). These journeys are offered to the “spiritually mature” (Sacred Heritage June 1999c) - those that are no longer dependant on teachers, preachers and gurus. These journeys are considered by Alan Leon, the journey organiser, to be a pilgrimage, however he is happy for people to travel with him who are not interested in participating in the ceremonies, and are there simply for a culturally genuine experience. Alan emphasises the genuine nature of the tours that he offers, and contrasts them to “some put on paint and feathers show for the tourist” (Sacred Heritage June 1999d).

¹⁷ Singer is not the only critic of anthropologist turned shamanic teacher see also Johnson 1995, Harvey 1997, Atkinson 1992:322.

¹⁸ Previous title: *Pachamamas Children*

Alan Leon spent many years wandering through the wilderness of North and South America. During his travels he became known to some of the traditional elders of the Amazon and the Andes. They taught him their ways and revealed to him that the time was right to share their knowledge with the world. "It is they who foresaw this good work and requested that he bring the people to them..." (Sacred Heritage June 1999e)

Journeys offered by *Sacred Heritage* include: 'Kallawaya Healers', a visit to meet these healers who reside on the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca in the Andes, 'Titicaca Traditions', where you will visit wise women and priestesses and experience their ways of herbal and native natural healing traditions, 'Ausangate', Camp; a journey to the mountain deity Ausangate, where travellers meet with shamans and where ceremonies particular to the sites are performed; and 'Amazon Herbal Camp', a journey with native Shipibo healers who offer ceremonial prayers and the use of herbs for healing. On top of these basic tours, journey extensions can be added. These include visits to the Nazca Lines or incorporating parts of the other basic tours. Each journey includes visits to Qosqo and Machupicchu. Group sizes are limited to fifteen but most commonly number five to ten. As well as the various projects that are funded by *Sacred Heritage*, thirty percent of the journey proceeds go to the healers and villages that the journey visits, and donations or tips are also welcomed.

Myths and Mountains incorporates "educational adventures" (*Myths and Mountains* September 1999a) to Peru in its various itineraries. *Myths and Mountains* is a little different from the tour organisations that I have discussed previously. Although they are roughly the same in size, while the others are based primarily on tours in Peru, *Myths and Mountains* journeys to many other countries as well. Their tours are based on "learning themes: cultures and crafts, traditional medicines and healing, wildlife and the environment, religious and holy sites" (*Myths and Mountains* September 1999a). They also offer "learning journeys" (*Myths and Mountains* September 1999b) which are customised trips with the opportunity to learn about a particular subject, for example, to learn a language or a type of cooking in its native setting.

In Peru, *Myths and Mountains* offers a number of tours including 'Inca Rituals and Power Places', which lasts about two weeks and is guided by a man whose thesis from the University of Cuzco was entitled *Traditional Andean Medicine*. Also offered is a trip to the Manu Biosphere Reserve, one of Earth's largest conservation units covering an area of 2,233,693 hectares or more than five and a half million acres. Found in the northeastern corner of Peru, Manu is considered to be the most biologically diverse preserve on earth.

Antonia Neubauer is the president of *Myths and Mountains*, a former language teacher and researcher with a passion for travel.

Myths and Mountains is an outgrowth of her extensive travel experience and desire to share with other travellers the cultural, environmental, and spiritual wisdom of those she has encountered along the way (Myths and Mountains September 1999c).

Dr. Neubauer is also the founder of *Rural Education and Development* (READ). READ provides funding, guidance, and assistance in building libraries in villages throughout Nepal. *Myths and Mountains*' home office is located in Nevada, USA and offers an internship programme for students of marketing, travel, tourism and related studies, which involves training in administration and the travel industry.

These organisations tend to be based outside Peru, with tour parties commencing in their own country; they are grand in scale and tour all over Peru. In many instances these tours are not intended, or considered, to be vacations. The tour operators are quite open when explaining the intent and content of the tours: if your reason is spiritual travel, then there will be a lot of hard work to be done.

For those travelling for the cultural experience, the aim is to educate them in the ways of the Peruvian shamans – these are not 'lie by the pool and get a tan' tours. These tours are not just a spiritual experience but a spiritual education, as illustrated by the abundance of books, videos and programmes offered by the different organisations in order to help the spiritual traveller fully appreciate and experience Peru's shamanic heritage.

There are also smaller companies inside Peru, usually focused on one area (wherever their facilities are). They are run on a much smaller scale, usually for smaller groups (or individuals) and are more personalised with your own individual guide.

While visiting the South American Explorers Clubhouse in Lima, I picked up a brochure advertising 'Urpi Wasi: A Spiritual Sanctuary', with an invitation to "experience the vibrations of the Sacred Valley of the Inkas and awaken to the mysteries within" (Urpi Wasi 1998). Urpi Wasi is a hotel retreat, which offers conference facilities along with classes in therapeutic massage, meditation and healing with energy fields.

These tours tend to be advertised in brochures or flyers found in various accommodation or tourist spots around the country. You could also just 'happen along' one 'through word of mouth' or ask your taxi driver for a place to obtain a spiritual experience. However, you must always be careful, Saunders (1996c) warns of corrupt curanderos taking advantage of tourists. Some things to look for that he mentions include: phoney shamans, people who pretend to be a shaman to get the tourist dollar, and corrupt *curanderos* who half-heartedly perform the rituals with substandardly prepared ayahuasca. Participating in these ceremonies (good or bad) make you vulnerable, so you must be careful how you go about choosing a ceremony in which to take part. *Curanderos* who do not know how to sufficiently protect their patients during a ceremony, or one who intentionally sets out to deceive the tourist, can be a dangerous gamble. It is the *brujos*, however, who are considered to be unscrupulous and could do you harm. These *brujos* are the 'bad' shamans, who focus on magic and curses rather than healing. Organised spiritual tours lessen the likelihood of coming to any harm.

I had the opportunity to go on a tour myself. On my second trip to the Amazon I decided to go on a trip that the guidebooks recommended as one of the best ways to experience the Amazon. These trips typically consist of a river journey to a jungle lodge, trips into the jungle to look for wildlife, perhaps a trip to an Indian village, and especially prepared 'jungle food'. This trip was one of the highlights of my entire fieldwork experience.

The jungle lodge

My journey into the Amazon jungle began as I touched down at the Iquitos airport. As I stepped off the plane I could smell the jungle: a damp, hot, vine like smell. There were huge black beetles scuttling over the tarmac and throughout the terminal.

I was keen to take a trip to a jungle lodge, so once I had settled into my room at the hostel, I went to ask the manager if she knew where I could book such a trip, and was referred to an agent down the road. The agency was a little one-roomed office, with one desk, walls covered with posters and children running in and out with refreshments. It was here that I met up with the man that was to be my guide, Hernan. I explained to him, and the owner of the tour, that I was studying Westerners who came to Peru for a shamanic experience and I told them that I would like to observe a ceremony if possible, but not actually drink the ayahuasca. They said that that could be arranged. I also asked at this point if I would be able to tape a session and take pictures and they said, "Of course, it would be no problem".

As we got talking about my research, Hernan told me about a book he had written with two others about the healing plants of the Amazon. He was also organising a Czechoslovakian research team to come to the Amazon to study ayahuasca. They wanted to make ayahuasca into a powder to take back to their country in capsules, he said. When I asked him if they were taking shamans as well, he said no and that he didn't really agree with the idea of not taking people with the knowledge. We then got into a discussion about the power of the ayahuasca and the necessity to have someone present who knows what they are doing. He said that they were going to take it back to their countries and use it in their own ways.

He mentioned that people from lots of countries, mostly European, were interested in learning about ayahuasca for themselves. We also discussed the three types of shamanism in Peru: Andean (coca), Amazonian (ayahuasca) and Coastal (san pedro). He agreed that they were different and said that Amazon

shamanism was more natural and peaceful, whereas mountain shamanism dealt more with the psychological.

The following morning we met at the docks and waited for the boat to be readied. The boat ride took us two hours up the Amazon River and then down one of the adjoining smaller rivers. After pulling over to the riverbank, the lodge was a further hour's walk away. This was my first real walk in the jungle. I was apprehensive to begin with, dodging around the vines that hung down, and watching where I placed my feet, lest I walk into a hanging snake or step on something equally as horrifying. However, after trudging through the now midday heat and scrambling over the odd collapsed tree, my fears were soon a forgotten memory. There were more important things to worry about, like where I could stop to quench my growing thirst.

The lodge was very like the few houses we had seen along the river's banks, although there was one building that was larger than the others, a communal area where we spent the hottest parts of the day lying in hammocks and reading. There were also a few smaller buildings all linked together with raised walkways.

After having something to eat, we went for a walk in the jungle, while Juan, the shaman, pointed out many trees and plants that were used for various medicinal and household purposes.



Figure 5. Shaman pointing out an ayahuasca vine

That night, an ayahuasca ceremony was organised and performed. A tarpaulin was spread out under a tree with a couple of benches placed around the edges. The generator was turned off so that it would be ‘quiet’ and all of the candles in the lodge were blown out, to make it as dark as possible.

There were fourteen people present in total. Six people were going to be taking the ayahuasca. All of the participants were Peruvian¹⁹. The others were onlookers and children. Three of the ‘clients’ were taking the ayahuasca as a preventative, to stay healthy and to have good luck. One elderly man was sick, and wished the ayahuasca to heal him. The remaining two were Juan, the shaman and Israel, his son and apprentice. Hernan, my guide, began to explain to me a little about the ceremony, telling me what they would see and go through. The ayahuasca had been boiled for twelve hours.

Buenas, Senores, vamos a tomar²⁰. First we are going to drink this, that is called ayahuasca. We are going to get dizzy, to see everything that we need to see. To go for a ride to different cities, we are going to see animals, different forms of animals. This cleans your stomach of all kinds of struggle. The name of this ayahuasca is sky ayahuasca. It contains, its preparation is a plant called sanango another plant is

¹⁹ Although none of the participants of this ceremony were Western, I felt that it would be beneficial to observe an ayahuasca ceremony and this was the only chance that I had.

²⁰ “Greetings everyone, we are going to drink”

called bobensano²¹, another doctor²². And all of them are doctors. We are going to start to drink (Juan 1998).

He blew some smoke into the bottle to call the doctors, or the spirits. He took a drink... “Cheers with everybody”.

He had three bottles, one containing the ayahuasca, one containing white water and garlic, and the last with temolina, other doctors. They drank the ayahuasca. “Please heal my body.... Salud²³.”

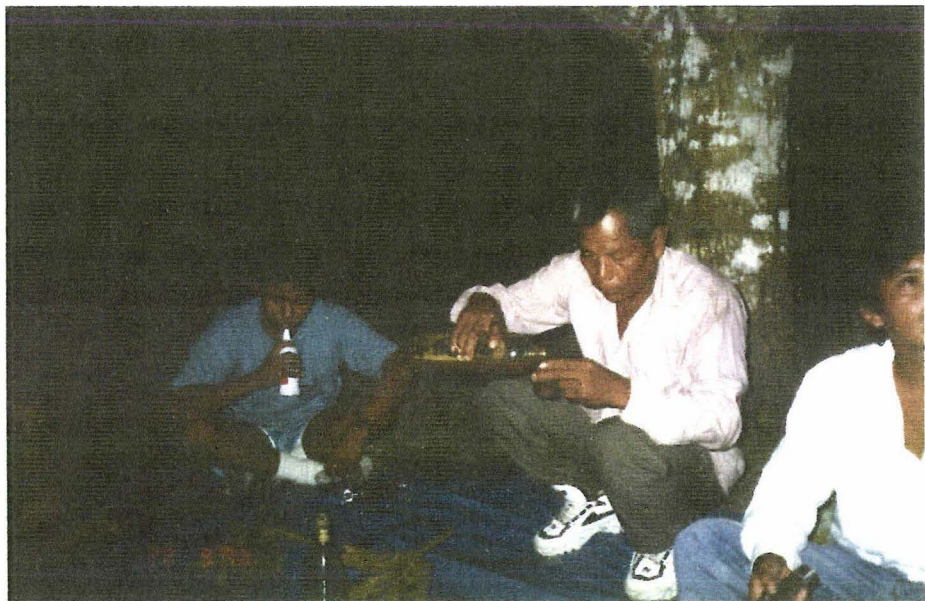


Figure 5. An ayahuasca night ceremony. From left, apprentice, shaman and guide.

The shaman then started to shake his ‘spirit broom²⁴’. The leaves for it had been collected earlier in the day when we had gone walking in search of medicinal plants. It is used to call the spirits. During this time the shaman also began to whistle. “We are going to wait for ten minutes, when the visions come we are going to start.”

²¹ I have been unable to find reference to this plant in the literature and am unsure of the correct spelling.

²² The spirits of the plants are referred to as doctors... because they help to prevent and cure sickness.

²³ “Cheers”

²⁴ The ‘spirit broom’ is made from leaves collected in the jungle, and bound together with a vine. By the time of the night ceremony they have dried sufficiently and make a rattling, whooshing sound.

The shaman explained to me what was happening and told me that all kinds of spirits would appear. "We wait, they will come. And they are preparing for that. They are trying to get full concentration. For that reason they close their eyes." The participants all seemed to retreat inside themselves, one woman hugged her knees to her body and placed her forehead on top. Others lay on their backs, one young man sat relaxed, but with his head hanging down, seeming to be deep in thought. The shaman and his son sat cross-legged, very calm and relaxed. They lit cigarettes and passed them around. "It is normal to smoke cigarettes because they believe that cigarettes are like a shield" (Hernan 1998).

After about ten minutes, once the ayahuasca had begun to take effect, the shaman began to sing an *icaro*. The *icaro* is used to control the visions and the spirits, the shaman controls the situation by varying the *icaros*. Again there was silence. The participants were having visions.

Juan kept checking to see that the participants were feeling okay. He called each person by name, making sure that he got an answer from each one. He showed great concern for their well-being and was completely and quietly in control of the whole situation. Every so often different people went off and threw up. Juan and Israel, however, did not.

During the one and a half hours that I sat there, all of the other onlookers went to bed. Near the end the participants sat around chatting. The elderly gentleman told Juan about the shaman that he had used previously. Hernan then told me that it was over, nothing else was going to happen, so I packed up, crawled under my mosquito net and went to sleep. The next morning he told me that they had had 'second visions', which was virtually unheard of. He also told me that Juan had 'seen' me taking ayahuasca in his visions.

Spiritual Quests

There are, of course, healing sessions that are run for the locals, as was the case with the session that I attended. Tourists can join one of these, as they tend to be run quite regularly. The package tours, however, are more often than not more satisfying for most Westerners. They are organised specifically with their culture

in mind, can be tailor made to fit new age ideals and can supply the tourists with culturally comfortable facilities.

Advertised tours may lack romance, but they do provide most seekers with what they really want: to have the opportunity of a spiritual experience in reasonable comfort without being robbed or abused. It is much more likely that you will be satisfied by people organising such tours from your own culture who can identify with your needs (Saunders 1996c).

You can also arrange your own group, and then hire out a venue. Sacha Mama in Iquitos was specifically built for this purpose. It is owned by Francisco Montes who has spent time living with an Indian tribe and can offer a choice of *curanderos* including a user of san pedro. Sacha Mama is situated in the jungle by a stream, with a circular clearing among trees for holding rituals. There are various venues like this in and around Iquitos, which act as good bases for groups of spiritual seekers.

In Part III of Joan Parisi Wilcox's book, *Keepers of the Ancient Knowledge: The Mystical World of the Q'ero Indians of Peru*, exercises are provided for the spiritual seeker enabling them to "find greater well-being as a human being and as a spiritual being through an enhanced interaction with the kawsay pacha" (Wilcox 1999:xv). "You don't have to travel to Peru to be an 'Andean' mystic, you have only to believe, as Andeans do, that you are in energetic interchange with the world of living energy" (Wilcox 1999:xv). She goes on to make a distinction that I believe gives some explanation as to how shamanism and its practice has been brought from the realm of the primitive and exotic of past literature, and into the realm of modern and conventional. "I have learned that real spiritual work, mystical, shamanic, or otherwise, is not practiced in the otherworld, but in the here-and-now, in the harried, anxiety-filled, self-interested world that most of us wake up to every day" (Wilcox 1999:xvi), and that "In practice being a shaman or a mystic is about living the principles of your spiritual path every day in your own humble way, not running to exotic places in search of unusual experiences" (Wilcox 1999:xvii).

One of the reasons that people travel to Peru for the spiritual or hallucinogenic experience is because of a kind of respectful fear. Casual use of these drugs can be mentally or physically harmful, so travelling to Peru and taking the sacred plant under the watchful eye of a shaman eases these fears.

Our culture has no all-encompassing model for controlling and ritualising psychoactive drugs beyond alcohol, so those who wish to use ayahuasca often seek out what they imagine to be a proper set and setting, in this case Amazonia (Grunwell 1998).

Kristensen (January 2000) comments on 'ayahuasca analogues', chemicals taken to simulate the ayahuasca experience. The practice of taking these ayahuasca analogues is growing amongst those who opt to stay at home, in North America or Europe, rather than partake in the often more inconvenient trip to the Amazon jungle. Dekorne (1994) warns that ayahuasca and its analogues are not recreational drugs and uneducated use could prove fatal. Leary, Metzner and Alpert (1992) state that it is the set (what you bring to the ceremony) and the setting (location and ambience) which are critical to the quality of the experience.

Shamanism at Home

Another phenomenon that has emerged due to the West's interest in Peruvian shamanism is the exported experience, "All the wonders of working with a jungle shaman in the comfort of our luxury condominium" (Saunders 1996a). These can be run by a Peruvian shaman who has been brought to the country, or by Westerners who themselves have experienced or studied Peruvian shamanism and are now running workshops in their own countries.

Several Indian and Mestizo curanderos are regularly flown to the States, where they give ayahuasca sessions to high paying New Agers (Gorman August 1999).

All over North America and Europe individuals and organisations can be found, offering to teach the ways of the Inkan mystics or inviting participation in a

Peruvian ayahuasca experience. Nicolas Saunders²⁵ has written various articles on the Peruvian workshops that he has participated in, outside of Peru. He mentions a workshop in California (Saunders 1996a), held in the home of two 50-something 'bodyworkers' overlooking San Francisco Bay and run in a relaxed nature; a substandard workshop in London run by a Californian; and an experience in Amsterdam (Saunders 1997a). These types of workshops have become relatively popular over the last ten years for those individuals and groups who are unable to travel to Peru for the total experience, but who still wish to partake in the rituals.

A relatively recent use of ayahuasca in the spiritual context is the inclusion of its use in Christian churches, where instead of symbolic bread and wine sacraments, ayahuasca is taken. It has been reported (Geopolitical Drug Watch 1999) that there are 22 religious groups using ayahuasca, although I have only come across three. The churches of União do Vegetal (UDV), the Santo Daime, and Barquena, a split from the Santo Daime, incorporate beliefs from spiritism, Christianity and indigenous jungle tribes into their religious practices. They were originally formed in Brazil but have now moved further afield to North America and Europe. The taking of ayahuasca in this context differs from the traditional: while in the traditional context ayahuasca is taken primarily for diagnostic or healing purposes, in the churches it is taken primarily for religious purposes. The taking of entheogens in institutional churches is not unheard of - the practice is also found in North American peyote churches as well as in the African Bwiti cult where they use iboga.

It is not only tourists who visit Peruvian shamans for medical and magical reasons, but also researchers in the search for knowledge and 'new' cures through scientific research. The scientific community is interested in researching both the

²⁵ Nicholas Saunders and his partner Anja Dashwood have done a number of interviews on Westerners' shamanic experiences, including some in Peru. They were compiled for a book, *The Ultimate High*, (2000). They uploaded a number of interviews and personal experiences onto the internet and it is this information that I draw from, as unfortunately time and money did not stretch far enough to enable me to do interviews of this type. I am indebted to them for this resource that they share with us.

chemical makeup and abilities of plants, as well as shamanic knowledge of the plants. Academics such as anthropologists, ethnobotanists, environmentalists and medical doctors are travelling to Peru to catalogue and save the medicinal and magical plants.

Chapter Four

Shamanism and Research

Each time one of these medicine men (or women) dies, it is as if a library has gone up in flames (Plotkin 1993:236).

There is a sense of urgency concerning the study and documentation of shamanic use of sacred power plants. This stems from both environmental and cultural factors. The rainforests are disappearing at great speed (about 1% every year) and with it the plants that could hold the cures for a variety of diseases. Another aspect that must be considered is that the shamans are aging and the young are not taking up apprenticeships as often as they once did. The strict diets and study necessary to become a shaman is competing with the allure of a more cosmopolitan life, whether it is in a move to the cities or a desire for what modernisation brings. I often quote Mark Plotkin's truism, "Every time a shaman dies, it is as if a library burns down" (Plotkin 1993), when people ask me why I feel it necessary to research such an obscure area. I believe that it is vital to responsibly and respectfully record this knowledge before it is lost forever.

John Harshberger, an American taxonomist, coined the term ethnobotany in 1895, replacing Stephen Powers' aboriginal botany, which had been created in 1874 (Bennett 1996). Although it was originally a discipline that studied the plant use of 'primitive' people, it has since evolved. Ethnobotany is the study of how the people of a particular culture and/or region use the local plants, for example, the ways in which plants are used for food, shelter, medicine, clothing, hunting and religious ceremonies:

To discover the practical potential of native plants, an ethnobotanist must be knowledgeable not only in the study of plants themselves, but must understand and be sensitive to the dynamics of how cultures work (Veilleux and King September 2000).

The three major goals of an ethnobotanists, according to Mark Plotkin (1993), are to record and preserve the plant knowledge of forest peoples, to use the expertise

to benefit the tribes in their dealings with the outside world, and to uncover new, potentially useful plant-based medicines.

Ethnobotany is multidisciplinary, a combination of ethnographic research of the medicinal plant knowledge of indigenous communities and scientific assessment of the plants identified (Hammer 1993). Ethnobotanists usually have a grounding in botany or biology with additional graduate training in areas such as: archaeology, chemistry, ecology, anthropology, linguistics, history, pharmacology, sociology, religion and mythology (Veilleux and King September 2000), although the two principle fields of ethnobotany are botany and anthropology.

Richard Spruce's *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes* is considered to be one of the first ethnobotanical records of the area. Although his travels, and use of (primarily) ayahuasca, occurred during the 1850s, his *Notes* were not published until 1908. Richard Evans Schultes, the 'Father of Ethnobotany', retraced Spruce's steps through the Amazon recollecting many of the plants¹. Schultes spent many years living with various Indian groups in the South American Amazon investigating hallucinogenic plants (Dobkin de Rios 1972). The Schultes tradition of ethnobotany relies upon the importance of "focusing on ethnobotany itself rather than on the mere collecting of data about useful plants as an adjunct to other studies" (Plotkin, in Bennett 1996:714). It is virtually impossible to read anything about ethnobotany without a mention of Schultes, or a citation of one of his papers, and the current generation of ethnobotanists trained by Schultes or Schultes' students would read like a "Who's Who" of the discipline (Bennett 1996).

Schultes was the professor of renowned ethnobotanist Mark Plotkin. It was Plotkin's first class with Schultes which launched his "lifelong commitment to documenting medicinal plant lore among tribal peoples of the rainforest" (Plotkin 1993:10).

¹ It is interesting to note that one specimen of ayahuasca vine that Spruce had collected was still psychoactive a century after he had sent it back to England for chemical analysis.

Rainforests are shrinking. In addition, the medicine men and women – or shamans, as they are also known – who have traditionally guarded and passed on the tribal lore of healing plants, are finding few in the younger generation who will continue the tradition. Thus it has become the goal of most ethnobotanists – myself included – to record and preserve the plant knowledge of forest peoples. It is our hope that this wisdom might someday benefit the tribes in their dealings with the outside world and at the same time, perhaps, uncover new, potentially useful plant-based medicines (Plotkin 1993:13).

Ethnobotanists often work as part of a team. In the field of ethnomedicine, ethnobotanists work with physicians. The physicians work with the shamans to identify diseases common to both cultures, and the ethnobotanist then works with the shaman to identify and collect the plants used to treat these diseases (Veilleux and King September 2000).

Pharmaceutical Companies

Many of the articles on the various sacred power plants break the plant down into their pharmacological properties, pointing out how each of the chemicals react with the patient. They pinpoint the psychoactive chemicals and describe how to extract them from the plant. As Alan Shoemaker (1997) explains in his article *Magic to Miracles*², the extraction of these psychoactive chemicals is how you prepare a drug, not a medicine, “It takes the magic away” (Shoemaker 1997). Medicine is all about balance and energies, which come from the way that the plant is harvested, prepared and ceremoniously consumed, it is about healing the mind, body and soul. By taking parts of the plant and discarding others, it tilts the balance and alters the energies needed for holistic healing.

Western medicine has a reductionist tendency, we want that magic bullet, hold the maracas, hold the smoke, give me the alkaloid (Plotkin September 2000³).

The problem with this philosophy is that these plants can contain many alkaloids. By reducing the plant down to a singular alkaloid, it may be rendered ineffective or dangerous. It is often the natural or ritual mixtures that make the active ingredients effective and safe. A growing number of pharmaceutical companies,

² Later renamed *Grace and Madness*.

³ Plotkin in an interview with Sean Henahan, *Access Excellence*

however, are seeking out traditional plantlore as a way to develop medicines for the Western market.

Despite the expansion of the western medical model and the rapid erosion of traditional knowledge, plant medicines remain the primary form of medical treatment for an estimated 75 percent of the world's population, including most of Africa, Latin America and Asia. And even in our own western pharmacopoeia, nearly half the medicines we use contain plant material or synthetics derived from them (Gorman August 1999).

Shaman Pharmaceuticals, a San Francisco based company, was founded in 1990 by Lisa Conte. Shaman, a drug company, works with indigenous healers in thirty countries throughout South America, Africa and Asia using plant lore as the primary focus in its drug development process. Shaman has sent teams of ethnobotanists and physicians into remote areas to liase with shamans and collect plants with medicinal potential.

Over 25% of pharmaceutical prescriptions used in the United States and Britain today contain compounds that originally came directly or indirectly, from medicinal plants (Oubré 1997).

Shaman Pharmaceuticals focuses on plants that were used by indigenous healers to treat viral and fungal infections, central nervous system disorders, and diabetic concerns (IDRC September 1999).

As a form of reciprocity for the knowledge that the indigenous healers impart, Shaman Pharmaceuticals devotes twenty percent of its ethnobiological field research budget to financing local projects that are proposed by the local people themselves (Rheingold 1995). A percentage of the profits are also distributed among the local people. In Peru, Shaman has negotiated with Consejo Aguaruna y Huambisa, an indigenous federation, to harvest and supply plant material on a sustainable basis. This sustainable harvest provides a source of income to the local community, while protecting biological and cultural diversity (IDRC September 1999).

Shaman was the first commercial United States effort to work exclusively with plants for the development of pharmaceuticals (Rheingold 1995). Other

organisations involved in pharmaceutical pursuits using plants from the Amazon include; Nutraceutix and the Heffter Research Institute. Dr. Dennis McKenna was the director of Ethnopharmacology at Shaman Pharmaceuticals, but moved to Nutraceutix, a company developing natural products for health care, to become a consultant. From there he co-founded the Heffter Research Institute. This Institute explores the influences of psychedelics on the brain and mind, at the chemical and neurological level as well as the psychological and spiritual levels.

In early February 1999, Shaman Pharmaceuticals closed its doors. Modern technology won. "It may look more elegant to ask the locals, but screening everything, regardless, is now faster and cheaper" (*The Economist* 1999). Although there are undoubtedly plants in the rainforests that hold the secrets for medicinal cures, reciprocal relationships with indigenous communities have proved to be uneconomical. Illnesses and cures that the traditional healers are most well versed with have little marketable value in the rich Western countries. "They are much less adept at diagnosing and treating diseases such as cancer, where the real money is made" (*The Economist* 1999).

Shaman Pharmaceuticals still exists, albeit in a much diminished form. It exists on the Internet as ShamanBotanicals.com, its stock is worth next to nothing, and the staff has more than halved, but the scientists still hope to bring new plant derived drugs to the market place. Metabolex, a diabetes research firm based in California, bought hundreds of vials of partly purified plant extract that Shaman had screened and had found to have glucose-lowering properties (Santiago 2000). Although it has not yet come up with any marketable drugs, the potential is definitely there.

There are numerous other companies that continue to prospect for drugs in the rainforest, however in many instances, the knowledge of the healers has become too costly to collect. There are also small organisations that work with individual plants, including the Una de Gato (Cat's Claw) which is commonly used as a tonic and blood cleanser and is currently being studied as a possible AIDS treatment.

It is important that we do not disregard traditional healing knowledge because it is not as easily come by as modern synthetic alternatives. If the illness comes from nature, odds are, it can be cured by nature. Francisco (don Pacho) Piaguaje, a curandero of the Siona Indian community of Buenavista in Coloumbia states,

Many of these pharmacists are only in it for the money, and the pills and potions they sell you, which are mostly sugar and starch, only treat the symptoms not the real causes of the illness. They only give a temporary relief so that you have to go back to the same drugstore a few weeks later and buy something else. It is not only expensive, but unnecessary, for the plants in the wilderness are very good, they cure everything (Pacho, in Wieskopf 1993:47)

Drug rehabilitation

Two friends, Allen Ginsberg, a poet, and William S. Burroughs, a writer, wrote to each other about their personal search and experiences with ayahuasca. The correspondence spanned 1953 to 1963 and was published in a book entitled *The Yagé Letters* (1963).

The Yagé Letters was an extension of Burroughs' infamous beatnik book *Junkie*, which documented the lead up to his drug addiction and his exploration of the 'junk world' in the 1940s and 1950s. In the final chapter Burroughs sets off to South America in search of yagé and the 'final fix'. Through the pair's experiences with the vine and the correspondence that ensued they became convinced that ayahuasca held the cure for junkie addiction. Similarly, Howard Lostsof, who used the hallucinogen Ibogaine in Gabon and stopped his heroin addiction cold, told anyone that would listen and finally convinced the National Institute of Drug Abuse to begin testing it as an addiction-interrupter twenty years later (Gorman August 1999).

As my research on shamanic tours in Peru progressed, I decided to look into the phenomenon of medical doctors coming to Peru to learn aspects of traditional Peruvian healing. I travelled up to Tarapoto, in the northern jungle department of San Martin. There was a clinic there where a French doctor was using ayahuasca to cure drug addiction. This also tied into my research on tourists, as many Westerners travelled to this clinic to take part in healings. The clinic was called

Takiwasi, the 'singing house' in Quechua, and the French doctor's name was Jacques Mabit.

Mabit, whose speciality is traditional medicine, came to Peru in 1980-1983 as part of the 'Doctors without Frontiers' Program and became interested in Peruvian traditional healing. He had planned on starting a research programme to compare the curanderismo of the coast to those of the highlands and the jungle, but after spending some time in Tarapoto discovered that there was more than enough to research there.

He started looking into the holistic approach to medicine; he didn't understand what the traditional healers and medicines were doing, but saw that it was effective and decided to find out. He discovered ayahuasca.

Mabit, along with José Campos, a Peruvian descendant of an Andean family of curanderos, completed an apprenticeship under two curanderos, one from the Lamas Province, and the other from Ucayali. As Mabit and Campos trained together they had the added benefit of different cultural and psychological backgrounds, which proved extremely fruitful when confronting and evaluating their respective experiences (Mabit 1988). It was during this apprenticeship that the spirit of the plant told Mabit that he was going to work with drug addicts. He spent three years (1986-1989) learning how to cure himself using ayahuasca. Then in 1989 the ayahuasca spirit told him that it was time. Mabit travelled all over the world making contacts and looking for support. He also went to Thailand to visit a Buddhist temple where they cure drug addicts with plants and include a strong spiritual dimension. Takiwasi was opened for the treatment of addicts in 1992.

Takiwasi's addiction therapy is a blend of traditional and modern therapies. First patients detoxify with medicinal purgative plants, then they continue to detoxify through bodywork such as massages, baths with plants, sauna and physical exercise. Psychologists work with the patients using group dynamics, personal interviews, music therapy and dream interpretation. There is also ergotherapy, involving participation in the centre's economic activities such as handicrafts and

art workshops, the processing of medicinal plants, animal raising and carpentry (Takiwasi 1998a). One of the most important elements of the therapy is the spiritual evolution.

What is different about it is that we suggest to the patient that he himself explore his inner world through ayahuasca, so that he alone can discover what is going on in his life, and then, according to his own terms, he can discriminate between what is important and what is not (Mabit, In Malca 1997:66).

Personal Evolution Seminars are also offered at Takiwasi. These seminars are for non-addicts who have shown an interest in the initiation rite of ayahuasca. The seminars last for three weeks and are not considered to be complete initiations, as “true shamanic consciousness can only be acquired through years of following the principles demonstrated in the seminar” (Takiwasi 1998b), but rather a step on the way.

The brochure that offers and explains the Personal Evolution Seminars states quite strongly that the seminars are NOT, “A holiday workshop, an exotic or esoteric vacation, a ‘training course’ for your curriculum-vitae, a ‘new age’ seminar, a way to contact extra terrestrials, a doctrine of proselytism or a sectarian experience with a guru and disciples (Takiwasi 1998b). Instead the seminar is for adults who seek an authentic personal quest with “their feet on the Earth and their head in the stars” (Takiwasi 1998b).

Along with drug rehabilitation and the evolution seminars, Takiwasi is involved in training, education and investigation. Investigations are carried out by members of the Takiwasi team as well as external researchers that come to the centre for short periods of time. Areas of study include medicinal plant resources, psychocultural and energetic aspects of shamanism and traditional healing, neurophysiology, psychoanthropology, botany and phytochemistry (Mabit 1996).

Another important part of the work at Takiwasi is the dissemination of information pertaining to the Centre and its research. This involves running courses, speaking at conferences, TV and radio programmes, articles in journals and magazines, as well as the publication of their own magazine entitled

Takiwasi. *Takiwasi* is published in order to facilitate debate and the exchange of information on the use and abuse of psychotropic substances, induced modifications of states of consciousness and the preventative and curative approaches based upon local traditions (Peddro 1995). Authors from a wide variety of backgrounds contribute to the magazine, which is published biannually.

When asked if he knew of similar addiction programmes in other parts of the world, Jacques Mabit answered,

Well, I know of a similar project in Thailand, directed by Buddhist monks who have been using psychoactive substances to treat heroine addicts for 35 years. They have had 70,000 registered cases, with high levels of success. In the islands of Mauritius in Africa, there is another place managed by Hindus who employ the herbal medicine of India; that is to say, plants, as well. The same order is always followed: first the body, then the mind and then spiritual counselling (Mabit, in Malca 1997:66).

The day after I arrived in Tarapoto I caught a motorbike taxi to the edge of the city where *Takiwasi*, The Centre for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts and for Research on Traditional Medicines, lay amid its own self-sufficient farm and botanical reserve. I spoke with the receptionist there and she gave me some brochures and organised a meeting with the man who “knows about the herbs” and liased with the shamans. He didn’t speak English so I arranged to take a translator with me. The meeting was set for the following morning.

I returned to *Takiwasi* for the meeting and spoke with Javier Zavala. He had been working at *Takiwasi* for six years. For five years he had been learning from the shamans how to make the ayahuasca for the healing sessions. It had been only in the last year that he had been preparing it himself. He said that it took a minimum of five years to learn how to prepare the ayahuasca and to safely lead an ayahuasca session.

The shamans do not actually stay at *Takiwasi*, they visit from Iquitos, Pucallpa and Chazuta, usually for about fifteen days at a time. Most of the people who come to *Takiwasi* are foreigners, about 80%, and the staff is also made up of people from all around the world. As well as healing for addicts, *Takiwasi* offers

none-the-less that I did not want to miss. I jumped at the chance, although I was very nervous. Jacques spoke "a little" English so I was able to talk to him myself.

Firstly I told him about my research, what I was studying and how it had come about. I told him that I had read about him on the Internet and he seemed surprised and amused. The Interview was rather informal - I had not prepared anything to ask him, as I did not think that I would get to meet him, but we chatted about Takiwasi and my research.

He said that most of the people who came to Takiwasi were Westerners, but that they were not a 'quick fix' New Age facility. He said that Westerners often expected an instant experience or cure, but this was not what Takiwasi was about. "It takes a long time for the healing to take place – it does not happen over night" (Mabit 1998). Addiction therapy takes a minimum of eight months and personal evolution seminars take three weeks. But even then it is just the first step not a cure. Jacques spoke about the 'battle'. He said that Westerners expect serenity and peace when seeking spirituality but that it was not like that, "It is a battle, inner turmoil. It is not all peace, love and happiness, being at one with nature. It is a struggle" (Mabit 1998).

He talked about how the young Peruvians were not interested in learning the ways of the shaman, so the shamans were happy to teach Westerners about their knowledge. The young Peruvians preferred to move to Lima and become Westernised, and it was very difficult to become a shaman: "It takes a lot of work and willpower. They have to take special diets, live in the jungle by themselves for periods of time and abstain from sex" (Mabit 1998).

He gave me the German woman's phone number so that I could get in touch with her and organise an interview, and he gave me some contacts around Peru (also names that I had come across in my preliminary research). Unfortunately the German woman was away on holiday until after I left Tarapoto and my funds did not allow for visits to meet with the other researchers throughout Peru.

I returned the following day to watch two videos that had been recorded in English. One was specifically on Takiwasi, made by a Chilean production company for a weekly television journalist show. The second video was made by CNN about psychedelic drugs, using Takiwasi as one case study, and an LSD healing experience in America for another. I also had a chance to look through the library there. There were some articles there published by Jacques and others, and I returned later in the week to get copies. Jacques came to check on me a few times while I was in the library, to see how I was getting on. At one point he said "Ah, I have something to show you", and disappeared into his office. He came back with a framed picture of a Maori chief, that he had bought on his trip to Auckland, and said that he thought that it was very beautiful.

As I left the Centre, a camera crew arrived. They were there, no doubt, to yet again record the work and wonders of Takiwasi.

Research

Claudio Naranjo, a Chilean psychiatrist, is interested in the cross-cultural effects of ayahuasca. In his study he administered harmine (one of the three major alkaloids found in ayahuasca) to urban elite Chileans and compared their experiences to those of reported shamanic experiences. The participants were thirty volunteers who were administered the harmine in Santiago, Chile under controlled (clinical) conditions.

His conclusion was that ayahuasca does have a fundamental cross-cultural experience, as his Chilean subjects reported having similar visions (swirling colours, jungle cats, reptiles and lakes) as their Indian counterparts, as well as sensations of flying which can be likened to the shamanic soul flights. Weiskopf (1995) tells us how a shaman once explained to him the idea of visionary ascension and goes on to say that this sequential progression of visions could account for the base level cross-cultural visions.

At a later date, Naranjo also administered mescaline and found that harmaline affected emotional activity less than mescaline and that under harmaline the visions tended to be religious or philosophical in nature (Dobkin de Rios 1972).

His research into the experience and healing properties of ayahuasca and its compounds has been ongoing. In 1974 he published *The Healing Journey: New Approaches to Consciousness*, in which he claimed that ayahuasca produced the catharsis necessary for some dramatic cures of alcoholism and neurosis.

The Hoasca⁴ Project, which began in 1993, sets the foundations for bringing the magico-religious drink into the realm of biomedicine.

The focus for the scientific study and understanding of ayahuasca has shifted from the ethnographer's field notes and the ethnobotanist's herbarium specimens, to the neurophysiologist's laboratory and the psychiatrist's examining room (McKenna et al. 1998).

Essentially, the study was an investigation of the effects of hoasca on long-term users, while also studying the composition of hoasca teas, pharmacokinetics of hoasca and the effects of hoasca on serotonergic functions.

The project was carried out by a number of researchers including Dennis McKenna, Charles Grob and Jace Callaway, and was funded by Botanical Dimensions, The Heffter Research Institute and the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS). The participants were members of the União do Vegetal (UDV) religious movement who take the ayahuasca tea as a sacrament.

The Hoasca Project is intriguing for a number of reasons, one of which is the fact that the research model that the scientists chose to use stays true to the way that ayahuasca should be ingested. The participants did not take a pill containing only the active and 'important' ingredients, instead they drank the mixture much the same as they would if they were taking it in the church.

Further biomedical study of ayahuasca would be beneficial. The Hoasca Project has provided the baseline data and has highlighted other necessary areas of study. In particular, the effect of ayahuasca on women, especially pregnant and/or lactating women; the effect on children (children are able to participate in UDV sessions at age thirteen) and those exposed in utero; brain imaging and

⁴ Hoasca is the Brazilian Portuguese transliteration of the Quechua word ayahuasca.

control the people; it was not seen as a valuable entity on its own, but rather as a way in which to learn what the colonists were dealing with.

Through the World War II years and on into the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, indigenous knowledge continued to be collected as a way to best formulate policies. During the war this knowledge enabled policy makers to predict cultural patterns of both adversaries and allies alike (Purcell 1998:263). Post war the information enabled, primarily the United States, the facilitation of development and modernisation in Third World countries, in order to incorporate them into the world economy.

In the 1970s and through the 1980s, it was recognised that rather than introducing methods from outside 'experts', indigenous groups themselves could contribute to their own societies' development, particularly in the area of culturally appropriate and sustainable development. It was finally acknowledged that the people themselves were more aware of their needs than the outside developers (Purcell 1998). Anthropologists began to collect ethnographic information, including "agricultural and forestry knowledge, ecological and environmental knowledge and ecopolitics, issues of resource management and property rights and health and healing" (Purcell 1998:266), as an aid to the politicisation of indigenous groups. Following this came what Purcell (1998:267) refers to as ecoliberalism: "a body of scholarly work and a set of economic endeavours that combine political and economic liberalism with the desire to mitigate environmental degradation". Ethnobotanists are part of this ecoliberalist group, who help to seek less devastating alternatives to logging and other such economic pursuits in the rainforests of South America. These alternatives are considered to be sustainable and give the local people relative autonomy in the areas of business decisions and production. Anthropologists have also seen themselves as the protectors or cataloguers of the knowledge of cultures who themselves follow an oral tradition. By providing a written record of this knowledge, anthropologists, through collaboration with indigenous communities, are able to save it for future generations.

Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, the West finds itself in the position where traditional indigenous knowledge could very well be the saving grace of its own civilisation. The idea of the dawning of a new world as we know it, a reconnection with our spirits, the need for the reversal of the environmental damage brought about by the industrialised world, and the search for cures to diseases such as Cancer and Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), has seen a reverence for the ways of traditional people and the desire to seek out their knowledge. Western development policy makers are now interested in the transferability of indigenous knowledge: the ability to apply solutions to problems in one country, to similar problems in another country (Rouse 1999).

The traditional knowledge of the shamans is in danger. As the Western world encroaches further and further into the jungle, the ways of the shaman and the environment in which they work is in danger of disappearing. That the rainforests are being depleted at an alarming rate is no surprise to anyone. The destruction of the forests for monetary gain jeopardises the plants, the animals and the people who rely on them to survive.

The enculturation of the indigenous people into the way of the West is also a concern when evaluating the ability of these cultures to survive. Young Indians choose to migrate into the river cities away from the jungle and all of the knowledge that it keeps. Shamanism is an oral tradition and with the young migrating into the cities, there are fewer apprentices left behind to study and carry on the traditions of their people. It only takes one generation to disrupt the preservation and perpetuation of traditional knowledge in an oral tradition (Rouse 1999).

There are various groups throughout the world now working to save this endangered knowledge. Conservation International, along with Mark Plotkin, has established The Shaman's Apprentice Program, whose primary goal is to preserve and perpetuate indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants and other rain forest products (CI November 1999). They do this by:

- supporting the collection of plant specimens for herbaria and recoding scientific descriptions in computerised ethnobotanical archives;

- convening workshops for shamans from different tribal and cultural groups;
- sponsoring the establishment of medicinal plant gardens for both educational and medical purposes within forest and rural communities (CI November 1999).

It is hoped that this programme will re-establish the value of the plants of the rainforest as well as instil community pride among the youth. There are also various online databases of indigenous knowledge and sites, which have been established to educate the world in morally responsible applications of this knowledge.

Over 200 research organisations worldwide, in academia, private industry, and government, are now actively engaged in the screening of plants (Bird 1994, cited in Oubré 1996:73). This interest has brought ethical issues such as biodiversity, biopiracy, intellectual property and sustainable development to the forefront of the discourse.

The Western concept of intellectual property has been regulated, since the early nineteenth century, by patents, copyrights, trade secrets, trademarks, industrial designs and plant breeders' rights, based on the premise that the intellectual property must be novel, useful, and non obvious. Intellectual property rights apply to the individual for a limited time. This enables the creator (individuals or groups) and their families to receive financial and social benefits from their work, before it is passed over to the public domain.

Although the basic premise of intellectual property rights was to protect the inventor and the investors as a way to ensure that their work was rewarded and not stolen, it has now become a way in which corporations can protect markets rather than inventions and ideas. Until recently, most countries excluded living organisms, food and medicines from intellectual property legislation and thus the production of monopolies in these areas, but this has all begun to change.

Although intellectual property laws are national, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) administers international agreements. WIPO administers 21 international treaties as well as seeking to,

- harmonize national intellectual property legislation and procedures,
- provide services for international applications for industrial property rights,
- exchange intellectual property information,
- provide legal and technical assistance to developing and other countries,
- facilitate the resolution of private intellectual property disputes, and
- marshal information technology as a tool for storing, accessing, and using valuable intellectual property information (WIPO 2000).

In recent years, two international agreements have made a significant impact on intellectual property legislation. These two agreements are the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, or the Biodiversity Convention, and the World Trade Organization/General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades: Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement of 1994, or WTO/GATT TRIPS. Both of these agreements protect the biotechnology industry and require signatories to pass intellectual property legislation.

At the Rio Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) in 1992 the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted and came into force in 1994. Essentially it is an international agreement for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity², which stipulates that intellectual property legislation over life forms must be respected. The following are experts from the convention:

ARTICLE 1 Objectives: The objectives of this convention...are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies...

ARTICLE 16 Access to and Transfer of Technology, clauses 1 and 2: 1. Each Contracting Party, recognizing that technology includes biotechnology...undertakes...to provide and/or facilitate access for and transfer to

² All living organisms, their genetic material and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

other Contracting Parties of technologies that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and make use of genetic resources... 2. In the case of technology subject to patents and other intellectual property rights, such access and transfer shall be provided on terms which recognize and are consistent with adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights... (Excerpts from the *Convention on Biological Diversity* 1992).

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT), founded in 1947, is an international forum for the regulation of trade and tariff agreements and lays down the rules for international trade. In 1994, as part of the Uruguay Round negotiations of GATT, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created and began operation in 1995. During the Uruguay Round, intellectual property, as a trade issue, was also discussed.

The United States and Japan argued that the absence of intellectual property protection in developing nations was an unfair trade barrier and should be subject to retaliatory measures. The United States maintained that there should be "no exclusions³" to the subject matter protected under intellectual property laws, with biotechnology products and processes high on their agenda (RAFI 1996:21).

The result was the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS), which requires member states to conform to industrialised nations' notions of intellectual property and for all signatories to pass legislation for patenting life forms. Now, under TRIPS, those countries that had avoided the patenting of life forms and human essentials such as food must make allowances for it in their national intellectual property legislation.

When trying to transfer the idea of intellectual property rights from the Western domain to the indigenous, a number of issues are raised. The most fundamental of all issues is the belief of indigenous people that knowledge is not individually owned, but created and owned collectively and held in trust for future generations.

While Western society believes that land, ideas – in fact anything, can be privately owned, indigenous societies believe that land and nature is there to be used and managed, but not owned. In a form of stewardship, indigenous groups

³ In US intellectual property legislation, there are allowances for the patenting of all life forms including human genetic material.

care for the land and its biodiversity then pass it, and the knowledge gained from it, on to the next generation where they in turn care for it and add to the body of communal knowledge. Although in some cases specialised knowledge is only passed on to certain members within a group, it is not their private property. They are the holders of this specialised knowledge *for* the group. While the knowledge may not be shared amongst all, the fruits of the knowledge are, as in the case of the shamans.

For most indigenous cultures the world is seen holistically. The land, the people and their cultures cannot be separated: “rural people insist that living things cannot be understood separately from the land that nurtures them” (RAFI 1996:27). However, intellectual property legislation insists that they fragment biodiversity into little pieces so as to patent its microorganisms, germplasms and genes.

For many indigenous cultures the earth itself and all life that exists on it are sacred. “The notion of intellectual property over living things is often a sacrilege” (RAFI 1996:27). Their spiritual belief systems arise from and incorporate nature and all that it has to offer. To claim ownership of this seems absurd.

Information that is given freely in one culture, both within the culture and to visitors, is now being appropriated and used for private profit in the visitors’ culture. The public and communal nature of indigenous knowledge has meant that it has been noncommoditised. As it becomes valuable in the West, by virtue of its unknown nature, it becomes a product that can be sold on the global market.

While the concepts of intellectual property may still be foreign to indigenous populations, their governments have to put in place legislation in accordance with the TRIPS agreement. The logistics of this causes some difficulty. Boundaries are a problem when awarding intellectual property rights to a community. Ayahuasca, for example, has been used in over 400 different cultures throughout the Amazon Basin. Who receives the patent? The individual, the village, the cultural group, the country, the continent?

There is also the issue of the legal status of indigenous peoples. It is often difficult to get effective legal representation or attention from policy makers for indigenous groups regarding basic human rights, let alone complex and abstract intellectual property issues. Any profit from intellectual property would most likely remain at governing levels.

The history of prejudice and discrimination against indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities around the world suggests that the benefits from intellectual property protection for biological resources and indigenous knowledge will not reach the indigenous people (Brush 1993:665).

TRIPS protects intellectual property rights for industrialised countries, but does nothing to protect the knowledge of indigenous communities other than mentioning its critical role in nurturing biodiversity.

Under TRIPS, the only intellectual property in the world that is not protected is the genius of farming and other rural societies. The WTO legitimates the piracy of community innovations on a global scale (RAFI 1996:8).

Enter the bioprospectors of the West, groups who are entering the rainforests to gather plants, genetic material and indigenous knowledge to take back to their own countries for commercially viable research. International legislation must be adopted to ensure that indigenous land and knowledge is not stolen and exploited. Oubré (1996:74) reports that,

the ethics of bioprospecting for medicinal plants requires a delicate three-way balancing act among (1) indigenous knowledge rights and pharmaceutical profits, (2) society's increasing health care needs and species conservation (including sustainable cultivations and harvesting), and (3) global conservation and local indigenous use of land and natural resources

Ethnobotanists often hold privileged positions of trust in the indigenous communities with which they work. They are often revealed information that remains secret from members of the indigenous communities themselves. Veilleux and King (2000) speak of an unwritten code that ethnobotanists follow regarding ethical issues on the ownership of the plant information. The trust that is bestowed on these scientists and academics should not be compromised or abused by the stealing of the information or plant material.

The idea of reciprocity is important when working with indigenous communities. Reciprocity works on an honour system, a system that most researchers in this area feel very strongly about.

I believe that the country of origin should reap some monetary benefits from the sales of drugs made from its plants. To that end, I decided that before I would have the plants I collected in the forest analysed in the laboratory, I would wait for two things to happen: for the drug companies to regain their interest in natural products and for some company, some mechanism, some law to appear that would help me channel profits from the potential drugs back into the hands of the Indians themselves. Until then, I would just store my plant specimens in the herbarium and keep the data I collected on ethnobotanical usage to myself (Plotkin 1993:16).

Although researchers go into communities to obtain plants and knowledge from the people, they do not want the benefits to be one sided. It is often difficult for the individual researcher's sense of honour and integrity to translate to that of the big pharmaceutical companies and corporations, but that does not stop the researchers from fighting to help indigenous communities preserve the land, the people and their cultures. Examples include, of course, Shaman Pharmaceuticals who gave back a percentage of their profits to the local communities, provided vaccines or medicines that indigenous healers did not have access to, gave money for setting up schemes for the training of local scientists, and provided lawyers for land and intellectual property disputes.

Brush (1993:661) quotes Posey (1990a) when he "estimates that the annual world market for medicines derived from medicinal plants discovered from Indigenous peoples is US\$43 billion." He goes on to say that "less than 0.001% of the profits from drugs that originated from traditional medicine have ever gone to the indigenous peoples who led researchers to them" (Posey 1990b:15, in Brush 1993:661).

Biopark is an organisation who is dedicated to "re-establishing the natural balance that best supports the life of our planet by honouring the interdependent nature of the relationships of all life forms and re-educating humanity to the unique responsibility that we share in this endeavour" (Biopark 2000a). It believes that the sharing of ethnobotanical knowledge should be based on a partnership

between the West and indigenous peoples, provided that relationships are established under informed consent, with a legitimate representative of indigenous communities, and with the assurance that:

- traditional indigenous use and access to these plants is not compromised in any way,
- the biological survival of any plant species is not threatened by commercial harvest,
- a competent professional biological assessment is done to determine range and distribution, critical ecology, reproduction/propagative requirements and fecundity of any plant proposed for commercial export,
- a fair profit-sharing plan is established to provide long-term income for indigenous communities from cultivation or sustained-yield harvest of medicinal plants,
- the rightful indigenous custodians of these botanical treasures and knowledge be named as the principal patent holders if such patents are allowed, and
- certain plants and their cultivars serving vital spiritual functions in indigenous cultures are forever exempt from any foreign or colonial proprietary exploitation or prohibition whatsoever (Biopark 1999a).

One of the more controversial issues surrounding intellectual property rights in the Amazon in recent years involves the patenting of the sacred ayahuasca vine by an American. In 1986, Loren Miller, of the International Plant Medicine Corporation, was granted a patent for ayahuasca by the United States Patents and Trademark Office (PTO), despite the fact that ayahuasca had been used for millennia by more than 400 indigenous groups in the Amazon Basin.

The patent gave Miller exclusive rights to produce, trade and develop ayahuasca, a right that the people of the Amazon saw as an affront to their own rights. At a meeting of the Coordination Body for the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) in 1996, Loren Miller was declared “an enemy of the indigenous people” (Biopark 1999b) and was banned from their lands. The Inter-American Foundation, a United States funded agency established to help indigenous peoples, responded to this declaration and demanded that COICA retract their ‘threat’ towards Loren Miller. COICA responded by stating that their dignity was worth more than the US\$1.1 million that they received from the foundation (Reuters 1998).

In November 1999 the PTO cancelled Miller's patent. The patent was revoked on the grounds that the ayahuasca vine was known of prior to the patent application and therefore was not novel. It was not attributed to the knowledge of the indigenous people, rather the publication of descriptions of *Banisteriopsis Caapi* in various texts.

Indigenous groups have asked the United States PTO to look hard at their rules and application processes to ensure that such an episode does not occur again. They suggest that the PTO,

Should require that patent applicants identify all biological resources and traditional knowledge that they used in developing the claimed invention. Applicants should also disclose the geographical origin, and provide evidence that the source country and indigenous community consented to its use (Environmental News Service 1999).

The cancelling of the ayahuasca patent is the first of its kind, "the first time that any native group has sought to revoke the patent on a product based on its medicinal and ceremonial qualities" (The Western Australian 1999). This case sets a precedent to ensure that future patent applicants cannot "simply take the knowledge and materials of indigenous people and claim them as their own" (The Western Australian 1999).

Based on the people of the Amazon Basin's experience thus far with intellectual property rights, namely the Miller patent, COICA has called for indigenous peoples to work together in "our international campaign to achieve the recognition of our own intellectual property rights" (Biopark 1999a) to insure that this appropriation of their knowledge does not happen again.

Conclusion

As we enter the twenty first century and contemplate what the future may bring, many people in the Western world feel dissatisfied with their current situation. They feel dislocated from the institutionalised religions and the biomedical practices of their own cultures and look elsewhere for a more holistic approach to life. Those with the luxury of time and money can go on quests to find answers, whether it is in the form of reading self-help books or travelling to exotic locations.

Governed by the romantic idea that the past holds the key to the present, and the allure of far away places, Westerners are looking to the practices of traditional cultures around the world as a way in which to solve problems in their own lives. These traditional societies are seen as similar to our own culture, while at the same time, idealised as different, exotic and foreign. The similarities exist in the historical past each different culture supposedly shares.

When perceived strictly in a time-line dimension, traditional knowledge becomes a collection of facts and practices frozen in the past. Its relevance for the modern world becomes tangential, reduced to ahistorical and acultural attempts to bring clusters of information forward to resolve diverse problems of the present (Moralez-Gomez 1993).

If each society exists on a single continuum of development through time, and the West views itself as the pinnacle of such social development, then Westerners seeking answers from their own past feel justified in adopting the practices of so-called less developed cultures. People of the West are turning to the exotic other, those that are considered to have succeeded in retaining their ancient wisdoms, albeit in a different cultural context.

It is very easy to get caught up in these romantic ideals, but the reality is that answers are never easily come by. As Dr Jaques Mabit commented in my interview with him, new agers are often out for the 'quick fix'. They expect an instant experience or cure, but it takes a long time for a healing to take place.

They expect peace, love and happiness, but the reality is that it is a battle, an inner turmoil, involving confrontation and hard work.

Tourists and researchers have sought shamanic knowledge in the hope that it may add value to their lives and the lives of others. For the tourist it is an individual quest, be it a search for a new and exciting experience, a drug induced high, to find oneself, a medicinal cure, to feel at one with nature and the universe, or looking for a long lost religion. For the researcher, knowledge of the sacred power plants and other plants and animals of Peru may hold the cures for diseases in the West, the hallucinogens could unlock psychological problems and help cure addictions, while indigenous knowledge of the natural world could be transferred to aid in the sustainable development and preservation of other regions.

The topic that I have chosen to research within is huge. I have had to narrow my focus to why Westerners are interested in shamanism, specifically Peruvian shamanism, and why this interest is occurring now. As a good friend once said to me, research is about telling the story of a story, and becoming part of that story yourself. I have tried to tell the story of tourists and researchers and their quest for knowledge within the Peruvian context. By doing this I have become at once tourist and researcher and have placed myself firmly within the story.

The bulk of literature on the West's interest in shamanism sits within the realm of shamanic studies. This is a body of literature which has largely been built up through the writings of spiritual seekers with little attention to the analysis of their experiences and an emphasis on general theorising of shamanism. In the Introduction I quoted Atkinson (1992:309) when she says, "without an ethnographic counterweight this literature slips quickly into unwarranted reductionism and romantic exoticizing of a homogeneous non-Western Other"; this thesis attempts to be part of this counterweight. Further research in the areas of other cultural contexts, positive and negative effects, issues of authenticity, cultural appropriation and globalisation would add to this growing literature.

Searching for the exotic within the familiar bounds of a romanticised past is not unique to those travelling to Peru. The people of the West journey to traditional

cultures all over the world. Personal reasons, such as the opportunity to travel to Peru, impacted on my research focus. Reasons as to why people have chosen to seek out a shamanic experience, such as romantic ideas, dissatisfaction with aspects of their own societies and shifting worldviews, can also extend to travellers to other traditional societies. However decisions to seek out specific traditional knowledge, power places, geographical locations, cosmologies and power plants are, of course, specific to Peru.

Peru has three very different geographical regions. Although the coastal areas are not as well known in the Western world, the Amazon jungle and the Andean mountains hold an element of awe, wonderment and mystery. The jungle, with its mighty river, spectacular plants and wildlife and the romantic myth of lost tribes lures the traveller to sample its exotic beauty, as do the majestic Andean mountains which hide ancient ruins, a complex cosmology, the turbulent history of Inkas and conquistadors, gold and intrigue. Taking away any shamanic aspects, Peru is a magical country to visit. Add the belief that the spiritual centre of the Earth has changed from Tibet to Lake Titicaca and the Andes and you have a stereotypical scenario to lure any member of the new age.

It is a two way process: not only are the West seeking out shamans, but the shamans wish to share their knowledge, thus ensuring that it lives on. Shamans also act in accordance with, and to fulfil ancient prophecies. "In this age, when the eagle of the North and the condor of the South fly together, the Earth will awaken...Our generation is here to help begin this age, to prepare through different schools to understand the message of the heart, intuition, and nature" (Huayta on Labyrinthina 1999).

Locals and foreigners alike have tapped into the West's fascination with Peru and bring knowledge and experience to the individual via tours, workshops, programmes and books. For the host community, tourism is a generator of income and a catalyst for investment, it is used to argue for the protection and preservation of historical structures, the environment and cultural traditions, and as justification for restricting other forms of development that could jeopardise natural or cultural resources. Tourism gives local families alternatives for the

generation of income. They are not dependant on selling off and depleting biodiversity to live; instead they can sell the opportunity for others to experience that diversity. Spiritual tours and research institutes will continue to exist for as long as answers are sought and while people and nature are willing to share their wisdom.

Current intellectual property rights laws and the resulting appropriation and control of knowledge perpetuates imperialist ideologies. These laws are being imposed on traditional cultures, who do not believe in the ownership of knowledge, by Western cultures who believe wholeheartedly in the necessity of legalising ownership to 'protect' all those involved.

Although outside researchers can assist with the recording and transmission of indigenous knowledge, indigenous forms of communication and organisation are vital for the decision-making, preservation, development, and spread of this knowledge (Grenier 1998). Indigenous communication of cultural practices and knowledge occur orally, by specific example and through cultural processes such as, stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws and local language (Grenier 1998).

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (1996) in a publication entitled *Recording and using indigenous knowledge: A manual*, suggests some guidelines for non-indigenous researchers when studying indigenous knowledge, I quote them below,

- Include local people as authors or credit them when recording their practices.
- Always include names, dates, and places in your records and in any document describing indigenous knowledge (IK) of a specific person or community.
- Help local people document their information, to become authors themselves.
- Record and use IK in the context of applied development projects.
- Leave copies of the outputs of fieldwork (e.g., maps, seasonal calendars) with the community.
- Make the outcome of your study available to the community (e.g., translate report, make copies of videos, establish village-based databases, etc.).
- Help community members (or communities) copyright documents and patent technologies which are unique and promising.

- Help communities organize to determine for themselves how they wish to respond to inquiries from researchers and commercial companies. They might be able to bargain with such outsiders to ensure that they receive same benefits from sharing their knowledge.
- Know and comply with the local laws on export of artefacts and germ plasm.

Adhering to these guidelines and others formulated with the indigenous communities in which you work can aid in ensuring that the knowledge cannot be misappropriated.

The West has a history of imposing its own worldview on societies throughout the world; now it turns to others' worldviews to give meaning to its own existence and future. The respect and value now being placed on indigenous knowledge puts it in a different light. The West is moving from a position of cultural dominance, to a place where others' cultural knowledge is seen as holding the solutions to problems of the modern world. The danger lies in the West's predisposition to control and thereby the initiation of laws which enable them to continue to do so.

I believe that learning from and borrowing cultural traditions can enrich the lives of those who seek them, it is the appropriation and control that must be carefully guarded against. Let us hope that this interest does no lasting harm, but instead facilitates understanding and unity.

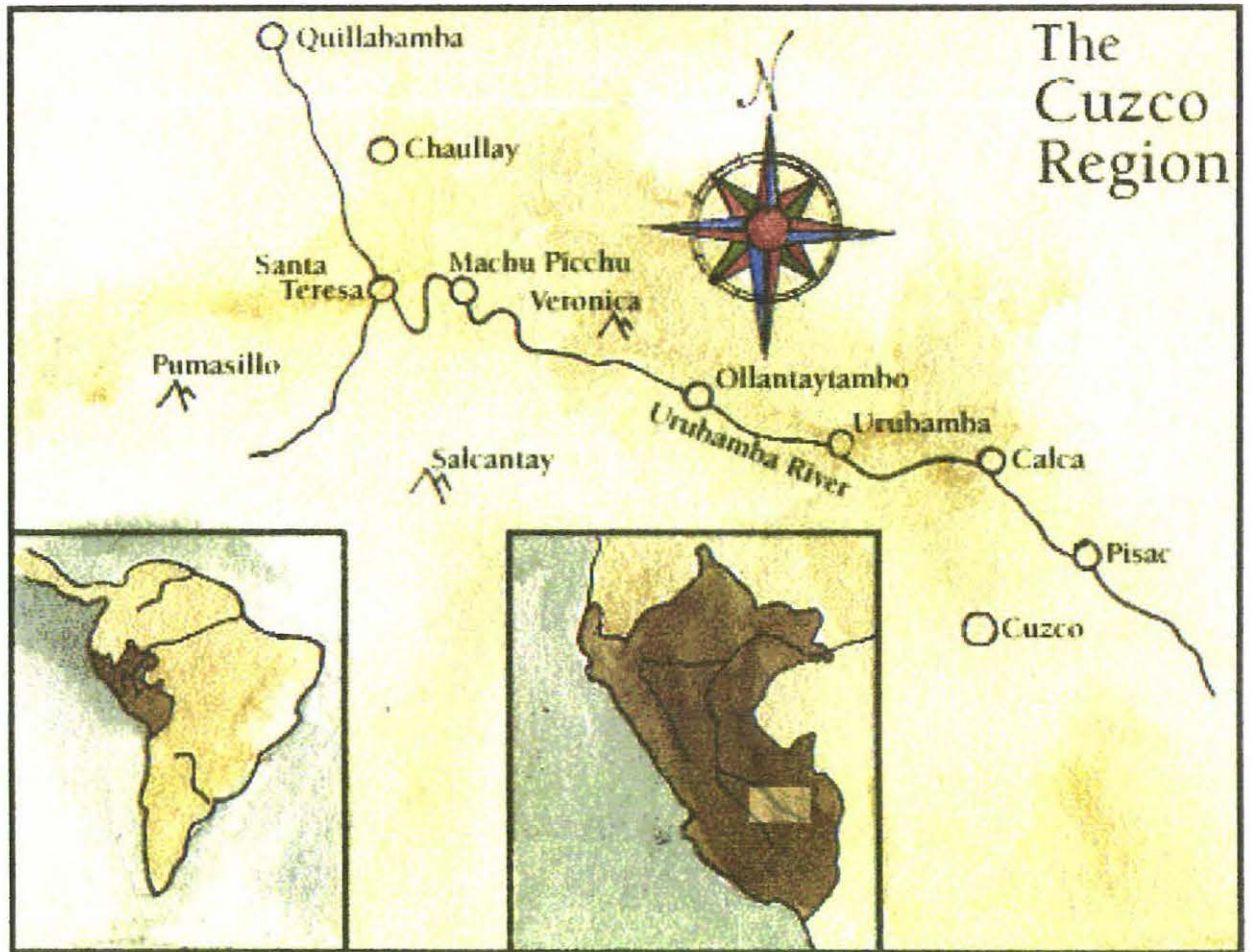
Appendix A



Map No. 3838 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS
September 2000

Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

Appendix C



<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/peru/>

Glossary

This glossary is to help the reader understand various Quechua and Spanish words the way that they are used in this thesis. These are not definitive definitions, the meanings are often more complex than what I have explained here.

Akulliy: Taking of the coca in the sacred context.

Apus: Spirits of the sacred mountains of Peru. Considered to be the most powerful of all nature spirits.

Apu Kuntur: The Condor God.

Atawallpa: The Inka ruler at the time of the Spanish conquest.

Ayni: Reciprocity. In the sacred context it refers to the interchange of energy with the spirit realm.

Ayahuasca: Vine of the Soul, the sacred vine of the Amazon Jungle shamans.

Chacruna: Plant, leaves are mixed with the ayahuasca vine to make the hallucinogenic ayahuasca brew.

Coca: The sacred plant of the Andes. Used by Andean mystics for divination, diagnosis and healing.

Culebra: Snake

Curandero: Healer.

Cusco: See Qosqo.

Cuzco: See Qosqo.

Despacho: Ritual bundle comprised mainly of natural items, most commonly made to honour Pachamama or the Apus.

Hallpay: Social exchange and chewing of coca.

Hanaq pacha: The upper world in Andean cosmology.

Huacas: Power places.

Hucha: Heavy energy.

Icaro: Song

Inti: The Sun God. Father Sun.

Inti Raymi: The Sun Festival held each June 24th

Kawsay pacha: World of living energy.

Kay pacha: The physical (middle) world in Andean cosmology.

Khuyas: Stones of power.

Machupicchu: The Lost City of the Inkas, discovered for the Western world by Hiram Bingham in 1911.

Maestro: Master.

Mama Ocllo: One of the first Inkas

Manco Capac: The mythical first Inka who rose from Lake Titicaca.

Mesa: Altar or table.

Mestizo: People of Spanish and Indian blood.

Mosoq Karpay: The 'new initiation', the Rites of a Time to Come. The 'instructions' of how to reach Taripay pacha.

Pachacamac: An ancient city located just outside of Lima. Pachacamac was one of the most important pilgrimage sites in pre-Columbian Peru. The Pachacamac Oracle was consulted on various issues of politics and religion. Named for the deity Pachacamac or Pachakamaq.

Pachakamaq: See Wiraqocha.

Pachamama: The Earth Goddess.

Pachakuteq: The eighth Inka that brought about great change to the Inka Empire and is thought to have been the builder of Machupicchu.

Pachacuti: Great change.

Paqos: Spiritual seekers, a practitioner of Andean mystical work.

Qosqo: Also known as Cusco and Cuzco. The capital of the Inka Empire and today a great tourist destination.

Quechua: The native language of Peru. Spoken mostly in the Jungle and Andean regions.

Sachamama: Queen of the Forest. A snake which is considered to be the mother spirit of ayahuasca.

Saladera: Consistent bad luck

Sami: Refined light energy.

San Pedro: Sacred plant of the Peruvian coast.

Schacapas: Spirit broom, made from the leaves of the schacapa plant.

Shaman: In the most basic of terms, shamans are people who provides healing, therapy, advice, teaching or spiritual meaning, often through altered states of consciousness.

Taripay Pacha: The Age of the Holy Spirit, the time where humankind has the potential to evolve spiritually.

Tawantinsuyu: The Inka Empire.

Ukhu pacha: The lower world in Andean cosmology.

Warachikuy Festival: An initiation ceremony for young Andean men.

Wiraqocha: Creator of the world. Also refered to as Pachacamac or Pachacamaq.

Yagé: Ayahuasaca

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