

Manifesto

An alert about American Indigenous Traditional Medicines (AITM)

1. AITMs represent a profound knowledge of the human being and communication and communion with Nature.

For hundreds of years, indigenous peoples of the Americas (Peru, Colombia, USA, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia and Venezuela, among others), from numerous ethnic groups (Ashaninca, Shipibo, Siona, Coreguaje, Navajo, Mazatec, Huichol, etc.) have carried out investigations and therapeutic processes, which defy western scientific methodologies. Their pragmatic results represent an undeniable patrimony for humanity and nevertheless, many plants have been taken advantage of by western industry, frequently without due respect and acknowledgement.

The AITMs offer a treatment addressed to the totality of the human being. They imply an ancient knowledge, expanding unstoppably today. However, they are not easily understood by Western mentality, and for this reason action is needed, involving both worlds in order to avoid fraud and disastrous misunderstandings. Furthermore, they are today the objects of study in Western psychology and medicine because they address the whole body, the mind, and consciousness. Many professionals accept and validate this inheritance, and abundant scientific literature is available on this subject.

It is important to note the convergence between the knowledge of AITMs and the most forward models of contemporary science (neurosciences, psycho immunology, molecular biology, quantum physics, etc.) which makes consulting the AITMs not a nostalgic return to the past, but rather a fecund path toward the future.

For these reasons, The AITMs should be recognized, protected, studied, and promoted to their full extent.

2. The AITMs approach disease and healing in an open, complex, and profound way, penetrating into the mystery of existence.

The use of certain plants, which has been transmitted for many generations with methodological respect and with indications and precautions based on necessary knowledge, opens up a path that turns out to be surprising at times and still posits many questions. It offers invaluable therapeutic resources, in fields where conventional allopathic medicine still has serious limitations (mental health, auto-immune system diseases, degenerative pathologies), and allows health professionals, researchers, and the public in general, to find a new meaning in life.

Of the hundreds of plants utilized, a small group is characterized by their ability to produce altered states of consciousness (ASC). We wish to underline the present alert concerning the latter aspect.

3. Psychoactive teacher plants and the care regarding altered states of consciousness (ASC).

- i. The sense of emptiness resulting from unchecked consumerism and the individualistic materialism of Western society generates an intense search for other, different experiences. Many forums are already talking about a crisis of civilization.
- ii. Teacher plants that produce altered states of consciousness (ASC) are being unscrupulously utilized by false healers and "shamans" guided by a profit motive, and that does not include other abuses of a sexual and power-seeking nature. Opportunists, both Westerners and local, exploiters of indigenous traits, disguised, and inflated with self-appointed titles of shamans inventing false genealogies, exploit the growing market of anxious clients in need of healing, knowledge, and existential meaning.

- iii. Teacher plants like ayahuasca are being fraudulently commercialized, as the use of them requires, both at the physical and psychological level, an essential preparation (purges, diets, diagnostic filters, etc.) and the utilization of guides and monitoring which these AITMs have highlighted for over hundreds of years of empirical investigation.
- iv. Both the depth of knowledge as well as the "newness" of AITMs for the modern mind, highlight the difficulty that many Westerners encounter in discriminating true healers from false ones, including being able to unmask opportunistic Westerners who, due to pathological inflation, can be lead to abusive extremes. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on health professionals, sincere therapists, and committed researchers, who being familiar with these AITMs thanks to of years of preparation and training, can offer ethical soundness, solvency, and adequate and well-founded guidance to those wanting to learn the tradition of AITMs.
- v. We join together with movements such as those of the Colombian indigenous Ayahuasca masters or "Taitas" (UMIYAC) in their protest against the fraudulent use which can generate grave consequences, and their proposals for ethical codes and careful and proven methodologies.
- vi. We recognize that the extension of this abuse takes place in European as well as American and Asiatic (Australia, Japan) countries, being that in the last few years so-called "shamanic tourism" has given rise to amoral opportunists as well as those simply ignorant of the risks they expose themselves and their patients to.

4. Signers of this Manifesto.

The signers of this Manifesto, professionals accredited in their respective disciplines (psychology, medicine, anthropology) as well as politicians of all tendencies, intellectuals, religious persons, and the public in general, wish to contribute to having society become conscious of this immense patrimony and promote adequate means for preserving the ancestral knowledge of destruction and abusive exploitation, that it be studied and put at the disposition of the majority, being that this indigenous tradition represents an invaluable support in attempting to have this post-modern society move away from the crisis of values in which it is currently immersed.

We propose that the following regulations be carried out with respect to the use of these plants:

- i. Accreditation of those centers where their use is transmitted with experience and integrity.
- ii. Accreditation of health professionals with qualifications and practitioners in the tradition of AITMs recognized by their equals, in order to contribute to the creation of bridges of investigation and cooperation between both fields of knowledge
- iii. Establish these accreditations (i and ii) through recognized associations of practitioners of AITMs and in conformity with the ethical codes elaborated by these.
- iv. Promulgation of public education on the beneficial use of AITMs as well as underlining warnings about the abuse and degradation of practices put in place in the last few years.
- v. Invite the research laboratories, universities, and academic institutions respectful of indigenous traditions to support and finance projects and research about AITMs; also invite different churches to open up to and enrich themselves with the spiritual contributions offered by AITMs.

- vi. Call upon the governments of the Americas, the political classes, clerics, intellectuals, and society in general, requesting their support of this Manifesto.
- vii. We hope that national governments such as those of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, USA, Canada and other regional governments such as San Martin (Peru), which have shown awareness and support for the cultural patrimony of these AITMs, also give support at national and international levels to the indispensable recognition and respect toward the use of these medicines, ancestral and current.
- viii. It is crucial that Western science be honest, more open and inclusive, and that it recognize these indigenous methodologies that, although distant from centers of conventional power, constitute an authentic and legitimate expression of the evolution of the human being faced with the mystery of our existence.

It is just and necessary

Promoters of the Manifesto

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