

Declaration of Yachac

We, Yachac Runa, traditional doctors, Quichua followers and apprentices from Pastaza, Tena and Napo, have met in the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park, in the city of Puyo (Ecuador), from January 17 to 19, 2002, to continue talking about the defense and strengthening of our medical tradition, after the International Meeting we had in Peru (see "Declaration of Tarapoto", Takiwasi, November 2001).

This meeting has been a great opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to continue searching for the recognition of our wisdom and the enormous value of our sacred plant: ayahuasca or yagé. Also, we have been able to share with other doctors, apprentices and followers, know each other better and make new friendships. That is important for us. Likewise, they have been pleasant moments to remember our beloved Taitas brothers of Colombia, especially those that constitute the Union of Indigenous Yagé Doctors of the Colombian Amazon (UMIYAC). Thanks to their valuable initiative and the documents that have sent to us, we have been able to guide our conversations and be guided by their example. We take this opportunity to send our most friendly and fraternal greeting to them, hoping that in the near future we will all be closer to strengthen each other.

After these three days of meeting, and having performed our healing ceremonies or rituals with ayahuasca, we decided that it was important to write this Declaration to put in evidence some of our most important thoughts.

1. We are persuaded that the best way to defend our medicine and make it better known is, first of all, by seeking the union among all the indigenous doctors who practice the wisdom related to ayahuasca. We believe that from now on we must have a common thought and leave aside all that in the past has kept us separated or divided one from the other.
2. We affirm that ayahuasca is our sacred plant. It is a gift from God. It has always been preserved by our grandparents and ancestors with much suspicion, care and respect. Now, we are very concerned by seeing how they are treating our sacred plant, using their name to do business or selling it to anyone. Likewise, we are concerned by seeing how our territories and cultures, which form the fundamental basis of our medicine, are being destroyed.
3. We do not reject people with a desire to know, as long as they have good intentions and understand that it can only be used as our tradition teaches. But we do not admit doing business with our sacred plant, neither we can nor the tourism agencies.
4. We commit ourselves to offer our services first of all to our indigenous brothers and our communities. Also, we are persuaded that our medicine can benefit all of humanity. Therefore, we will pay attention to all those who request and recognize our services as doctors.
5. But, now we know that we have to put order in our own house, establish some basic rules of conduct and behavior to be able to guide our brothers doctors, apprentices and followers who wish to join us.

6. From now on we will seek to support and take care of each other. Also, we will look for ways to reprimand those of us who break the rules of conduct and distort the practice of our medicine.
7. Queremos invitar a todos los hermanos médicos ayahuasqueros, seguidores y aprendices de otras nacionalidades indígenas del Ecuador, para fortalecer la UNION que todos necesitamos para restablecer la dignidad de nuestra medicina y contribuir al restablecimiento de la salud integral de nuestros pueblos indígenas y, por ende, de la humanidad entera.
8. We want to invite all our brothers ayahuaqueros doctors, followers and apprentices of other indigenous nationalities of Ecuador, to strengthen the UNION that we all need to restore the dignity of our medicine and contribute to the restoration of the integral health of our indigenous peoples and, finally, of the whole humanity.

Puyo, January 19, 2002