



PERUVIAN SHAMANISM
THE PACHAKUTI MESA
REVISED EDITION

MATTHEW MAGEE

FOREWORD BY DON OSCAR MIRO-QUESADA



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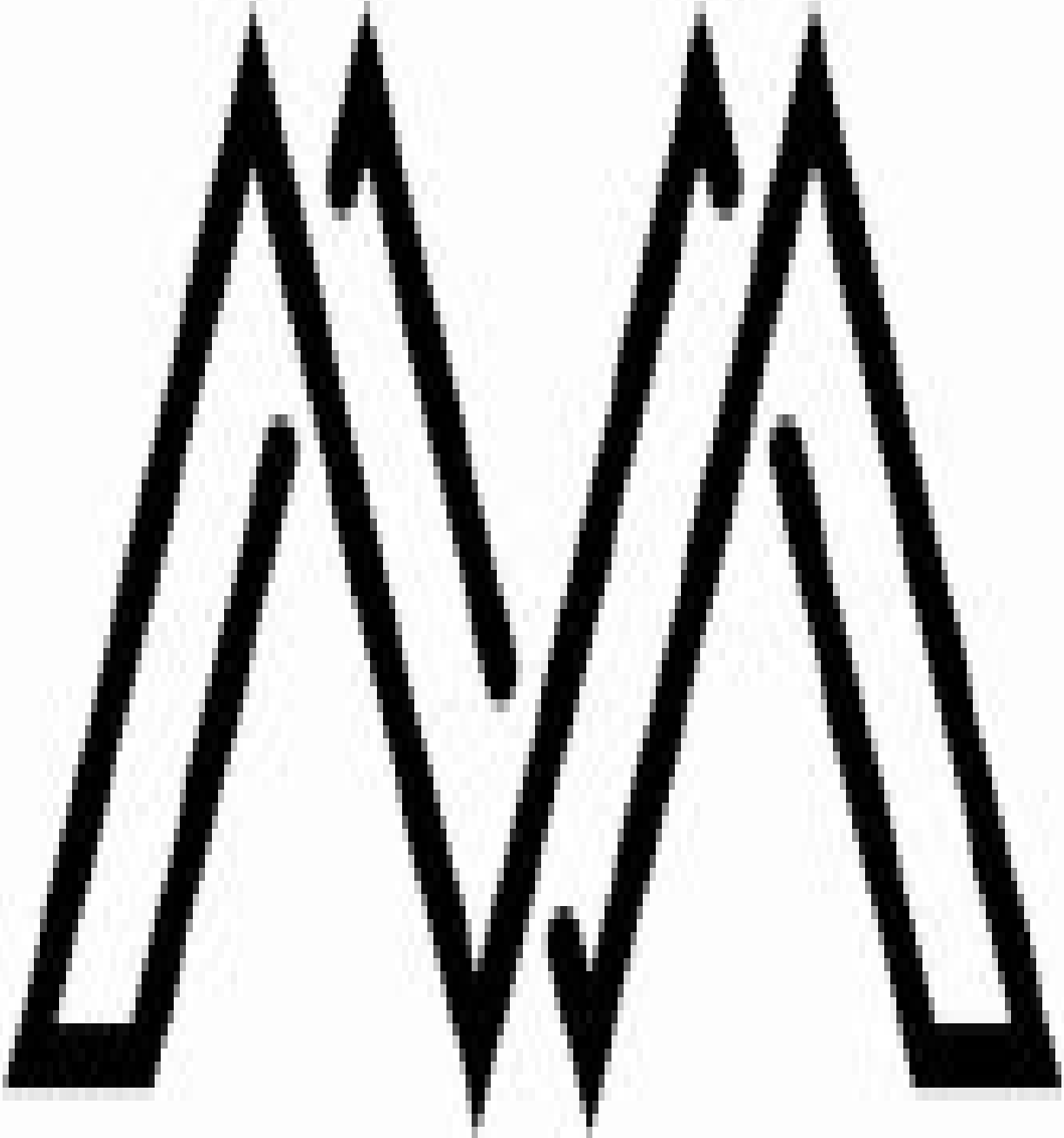
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This book is intended as an informational guide. The approaches to shamanic healing described herein are not to be taken as a substitute for professional medical care or treatment. Any applications of the treatments set forth in this book are to be conducted at the reader's discretion.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017907418

ISBN- 0-9720511-2-5

eISBN- 978-0-9720511-3-2

Editing: Christine Thom (www.stardusteditorial.com)

Graphic Design & Typesetting: Julie Larson, Polar Graphics, Inc.
(jl Larson@polargraph.biz)

Cover design, artwork, diagrams*, book illustrations, and photos*: Mateo Magee

*Cosmovision and Pachamama Renewal Process illustrations designed by don Oscar Miro-Quesada: Designs implemented by Tom Crockett, and modified by David Ward and Julie Larson. Bio Photo don Oscar by OMQ Inc. Author Bio Photo by Yannik Rohrer. Soplando image by Ben Newman. Cover Image Shutterstock.com.

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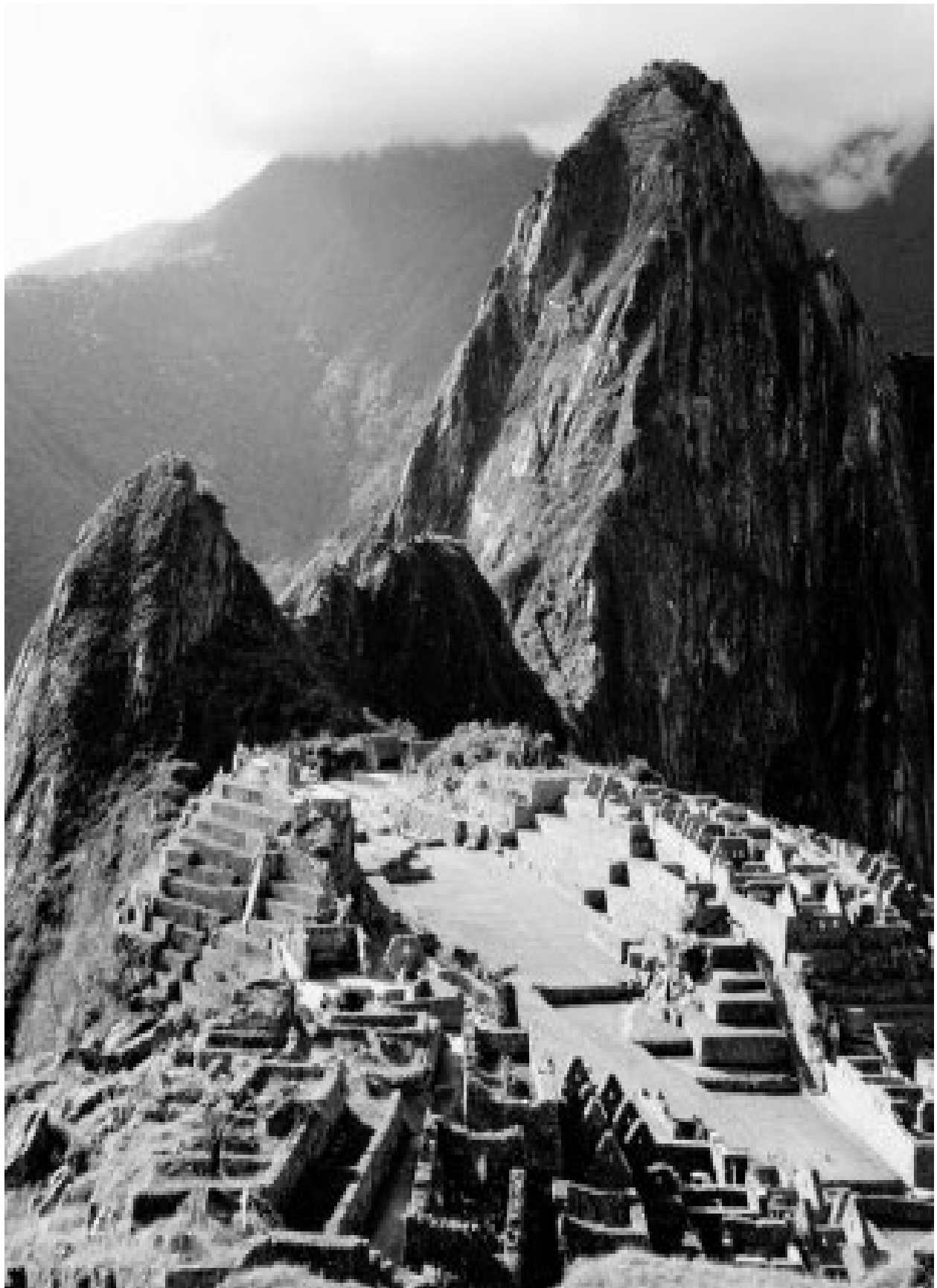
10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Printed in the U.S.A. by

Morris Publishing

3212 East Highway 30

Kearney, NE 688471-800-650-7888



Machu Picchu, Peru

When faced with the task of expressing the richness and fullness of this spiritual tradition, I was reminded of a contemporary movie about the life of Mahatma Gandhi. The movie begins with the following quote:

No man's life can be encompassed in one telling. There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape a lifetime. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record and try to find one's way to the heart of the man (Columbia Pictures, 1982).

In this way, it is beyond the scope of this book to express the richness of this millennial indigenous tradition in one written account. There is no way to chronicle each event that contributed to its formation, to mention the individuals who helped shape it, or to articulate the uniqueness of its present expression. Therefore, in keeping with the above, I simply did my best to remain faithful to the spirit of this ancient heritage, and I have tried to find my way to the heart of the tradition.



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In ayni to my dearest brother, Mateo Magee, for his dedication to disseminating this information to the world ...

In an era when shamanism and holistic healing are among the most popular topics in bookstores, at newsstands, and on television, Matthew Magee's book is a heartfelt gift to the world. He has managed to capture the essence of a quite complex, ethnospiritual healing tradition in a refreshingly pragmatic manner. This book is invaluable not only for all those current Pachakuti Mesa carriers and practitioners of Heart Island (South American) medicine ways, but to the world at large – to those seeking communion with the ancestral wisdom teachings of our beloved Pachamama (Mother Earth).

For decades, I have been urged to put into words the wisdom teachings and cross-cultural shamanic healing traditions that I have been exposed to around the world. The choice to articulate in a verbal, linear medium – a fundamentally oral, ethnospiritual cosmovision, with its evolving culture-specific healing practices and creative ceremonial tradition – seemed contrary to the ancestral lineage of my experientially lived mentorship in Peruvian curanderismo with don Celso Rojas Palomino. Yet, for the many moons I have been sharing Heart Island “medicine” ways with people from all walks of life, it has become increasingly apparent that I would eventually need to satisfy the insatiable hunger of my beloved ayllukuna (extended families) with some sort of basic written synthesis of the rich cosmology and healing essence underlying the use of the Pachakuti Mesa.

Of all the beautiful brothers and sisters who offered their assistance in such a formidable task, Mateo seemed to embody that rare combination of diligence, passion, and patience when it came to reminding me of the importance of giving form to my teachings – or as we are fond of saying in the Andes “growing corn and potatoes with it.”

My brother Mateo has been a divine gift in my life, with his inimitable, gentle persuasion for me to accomplish this written foreword, and his extraordinary patience and tolerance of my own struggles with expressing an inherently oral tradition through a linearly written medium. He has shown me the way of least

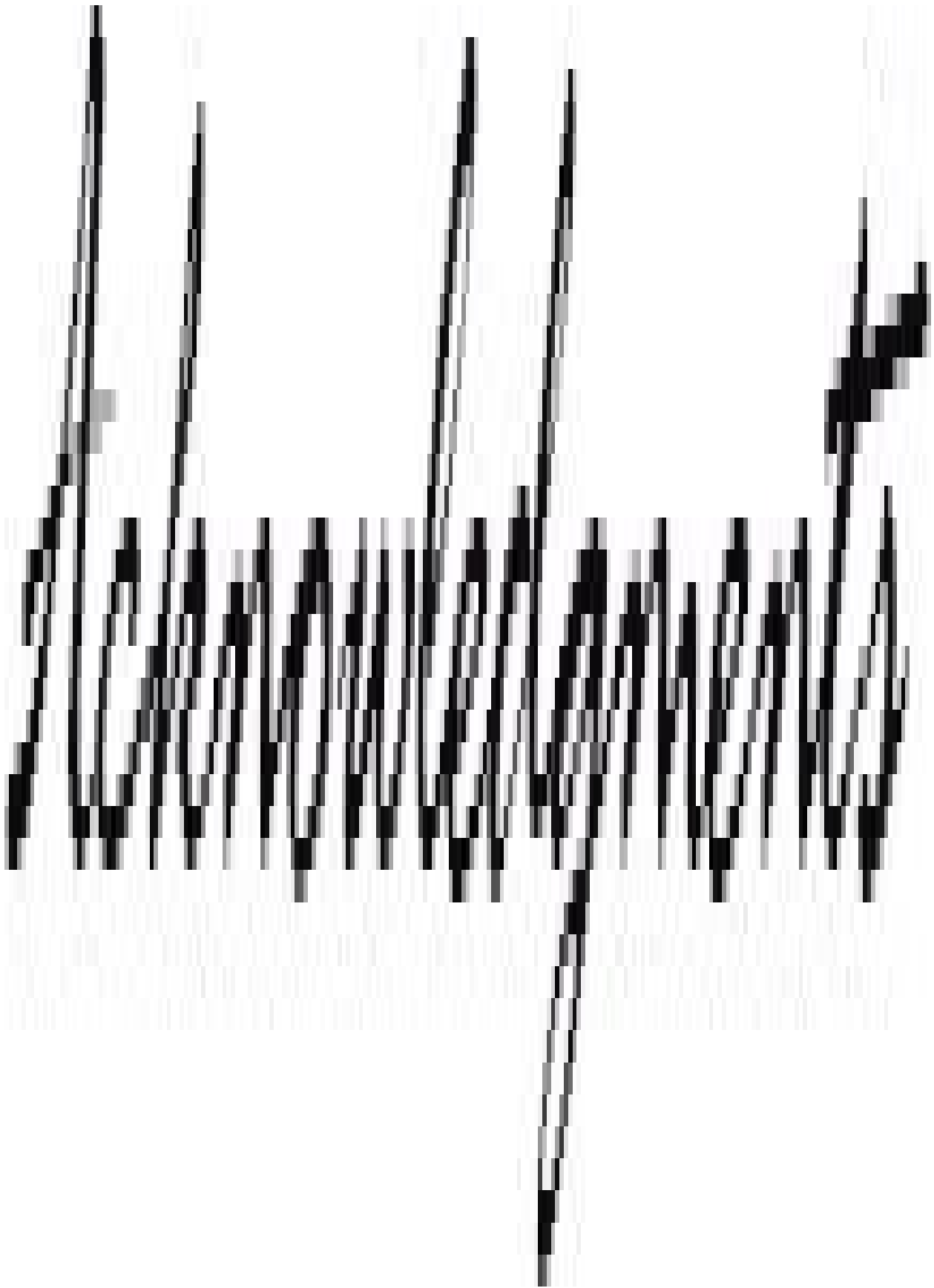
resistance, of wu wei as the Taoists call it, that path which requires both self-care and service to others. I am deeply appreciative and grateful for this beloved brother and cherished friend to have taken on this endeavor with such heartfelt passion and dedication.

In reality, I have always known that someone other than myself would first be “called” to give formal expression to the shamanic wisdom teachings gleaned from my apprenticeship – with both human and non-human mentors – that I was entrusted to share with the world. Since I began bringing the practice of Mesa curanderismo into sacred hoops throughout the United States in 1986, my very demanding teaching and healing responsibilities precluded the possibility of creating the space and time to write. So, Great Spirit sends my dearest friend and brother, apprentice and teacher, Mateo Magee onto the scene.

The countless hours spent together in apprenticeship circles, traveling in Peru, on the phone, at my home in Florida, as well as whenever we could fit in a few nanoseconds between our harried schedules during my visits to the New England area, have revealed the true *raison d’etre* behind Great Spirit bringing us together. Therefore, it is with great honor and deep gratitude that I offer the reader a loving endorsement to this visionary gift in the form of Matthew Magee’s first book.

In sacred relationship we remain,

Oscar Miro-Quesada



The invitation to explore this Earth-based shamanic wisdom has inspired a decades-long courtship with the Divine and a relationship with the Natural world that I did not know existed. To say I am grateful for having discovered this path would be the largest understatement of my life. How does one properly thank the countless generations of ancestors who kept this wisdom alive, or the encyclopedic list of allied spiritual forces and energies that have helped inform my soul in magical and mystical ways? The only gesture of gratitude that makes any sense is to live a full, vibrant life of celebration in service to these ancestral forms of wisdom and to share my gratitude with all whom are interested or called. I extend my gratitude to all the forces, seen and unseen, that have offered their unceasing support for this work finding its way in the world.

In reference to support, I consider myself incredibly fortunate and exceedingly blessed to have been born into the Magee family. To Patricia, Paul, Michael, and Robyn Magee, it has been the greatest honor of my lifetime to share the journey of this life with you. Your stable, trustworthy modeling of honesty, embodiment of generosity, integrity, and unwavering love is the bedrock of my life. I am grateful every day for the life we have created together. I could not have asked for a better family, and I love you all more than I could ever hope to express.

Extending my heartfelt gratitude as well, to my dear friend, teacher, and mentor don Oscar Miro-Quesada. Your truth lives in me in ways too numerous to mention. Your wise and generous heart is the content of this book, and its pages have been written into the fabric of my life. I am eternally grateful for how lovingly, generously, and openly you have shared your teachings, and your life, with me over the years. And, I am honored to have had the opportunity to give form to the vision you have held for decades through this book.

I would also be remiss if I did not also extend my deepest praise to the tradition of Peruvian curanderismo. This living example of shamanic wisdom has helped guide my life and connect me to the Spirit of the Earth beyond my capacity to express. It has led me through the arduous chasm of inner discovery and into a life of unending exploration and revelation.

Finally, this book revision was made possible through the incredible support and generosity of my community and extended Pachakuti Mesa family. Sending my eternal gratitude to each and every soul who answered the call to support this

book revision project. Extending heartfelt gratitude to all those who have gone above and beyond the call, especially Christine Thom for her beautiful job editing this entire book revision and for her tireless efforts, generous spirit, and amazing advice, which has served me beyond the scope of this project; and to Julie Larson for her beautiful graphic design of this book, and for her ability to catalyze support and offer assistance with so many elements of this project. Sending gratitude as well to every individual who donated to the fundraiser that fueled this revision, with special thanks to Robin Rather, the Qollasuyu Council, Nan Corwin, Darcy DeTienne, Nina Keller, Ezra and Amrita Moor, and Cynthia Ovando. It takes a village to bring a project like this to fruition, and I consider myself incredibly blessed and fortunate to be part of this amazing community.

In heartfelt gratitude,

Mateo Magee



Over the past few decades, there has been growing interest in world religions and spiritual traditions. In this time we have witnessed traditions like Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Native American spirituality transcend the boundaries of their cultural milieu and make their way into the homes and hearts of many modern Americans. For the first time, information once exclusive to the disciple of these traditions is becoming available to people the world over.

This is also true with Peruvian shamanism, or *curanderismo* as it is called in South America. As a result of the recent accessibility to ancient spiritual wisdom, specifically Peruvian indigenous medicine ways, the traditions themselves are rapidly evolving. Many *curanderos* (shamans or folk healers) believe the time has come to begin allowing written counterparts to their wisdom teachings, which have been primarily oral and experiential for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, words will always fall short of expressing an ever-evolving spiritual tradition – or to any aspect of spirituality for that matter. Written work contains only fragments of the true wisdom of a tradition, capturing evolving concepts in only a moment's time. In this way, there is little that can be done to avoid imposing certain limitations. As a result, there was, and will forever be, a certain degree of conflict and trepidation inherent in my attempt to render this spiritual tradition faithfully.

Merely writing about it changes it, makes it slightly more than it once was, and in some ways, slightly less than it once was as well. Ultimately, a written account can do very little to satiate the growing hunger for wisdom desired by the apprentice of this tradition. It would be like substituting an appetizer for the main course, or better yet, skipping the meal entirely and eating only the after-dinner mint. There are no alternatives to apprenticeship; however, when the entrée is not immediately available, it is my hope that this written work will act more as an *apéritif* than a replacement of true spiritual nourishment – which can be found only through observation and direct experience.

It is my hope that documenting aspects of this tradition's current expression will help preserve a piece of its ancient wisdom; thus, maintaining its availability to individuals called to pursue it. In addition, I hope this written material will act as a supplemental resource for (not the replacement to) the process of *Pachakuti*

Mesa apprenticeship as it continues to evolve in the modern world.

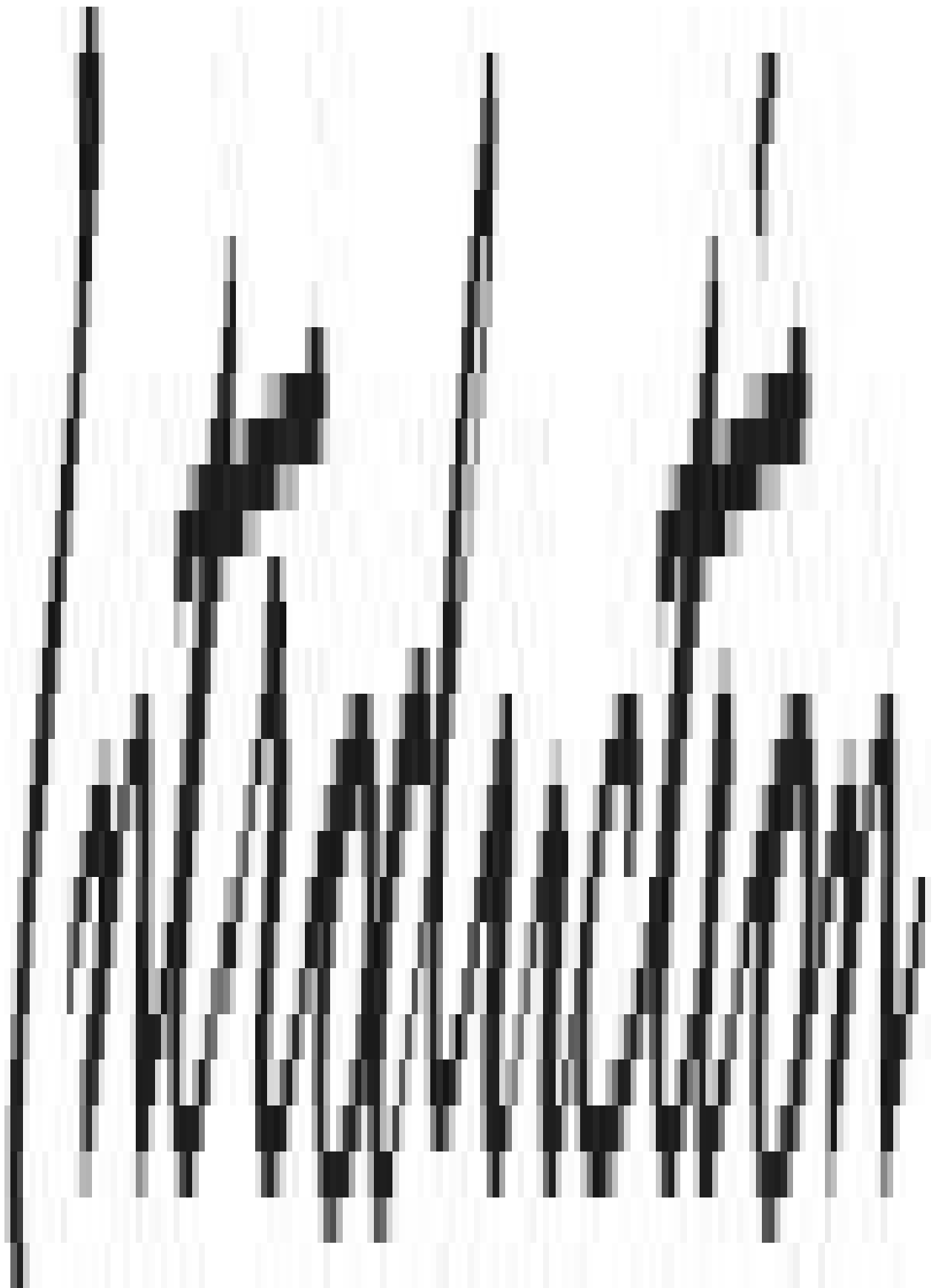
With apprenticeship in mind, this book has been written, first and foremost, for the many dedicated ayllu (extended family) members who have lovingly immersed themselves in this tradition for so many years. I have constructed a general introduction to the spiritual wisdom and healing art of this unique blend of ceremonial curanderismo. This has been done to empower the ayllus with a resource to begin internalizing the basic teachings received through apprenticeship. It is my hope that this resource will help the reader find in this tradition the means to learn more about the lifestyle of love, the process of self-discovery, and the interdependent relationship shared with Spirit.

For those of you who have not been part of this apprenticeship, the ayllus have been studying a synthesis of Peruvian shamanic wisdom teachings, which focus on the experiential use of a consecrated healing altar called the Pachakuti Mesa. The Pachakuti Mesa incorporates a syncretic blend of Peruvian folk Catholicism, pre-Columbian cosmology, cross-cultural indigenous healing practices, and Earth-honoring ceremonies. It is designed to encourage individual, communal, and planetary healing, the awakening of dormant human potentials, and the advancement of individual and collective consciousness. The core of this material is derived from don Oscar Miro-Quesada's formal apprenticeships in both Northern Coastal Kamasqa curanderismo and the Southeastern Andean Paqokuna shamanic traditions of Peru.

Basic concepts, teachings, and techniques of this ethnospiritual healing methodology will be provided within a contemporary framework so the reader may begin to enjoy and explore aspects of its archetypal wisdom. Many ideas presented in this book come not only from the aforementioned traditions, but from cutting-edge scientific paradigms, which have been woven into the cosmivision of the Pachakuti Mesa. Part of the passion of this work is finding connections between ancient spiritual concepts and modern day scientific discoveries.

It is my belief that science and spirituality will eventually prove complementary in the continuous discovery of the one, all-encompassing truth. Much like the Peruvian concept of tinku used to describe the juncture of two rivers, science and spirituality have the freedom to finally merge and flow together. Described best by anthropologist Joseph Bastien (1989, 76), this tinku is "a way of uniting opposite sides in a dialectic that clearly defines and recognizes the other as well

as establishes their independence” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 172). Perhaps this eventual joining of science and spirituality will widen the once narrow and divided paths to enlightenment, forging one unified river of truth.



Shamanism has mystified, healed, and inspired individuals for tens of thousands of years. Throughout history people have been drawn to this universally understood, yet uniquely expressed, form of spiritual practice. Despite its reputation for being an ancient or primitive practice, shamanic teachings are as applicable today as they were in ages past. Shamanism continues to be a wellspring of inner wisdom, mystical enlightenment, and healing artistry for all who pursue it.

As is common with many of the world's shamanic traditions, Peruvian curanderismo has long been this source of simple, yet effective, Earth-based medicine work for its communities. The use of the Pachakuti Mesa (altar-like arrangement of sacred objects) in ceremony and healing has provided a means to express concepts and spiritual experiences that are otherwise ineffable. This capacity to give form to the formless has allowed people to forge deeper connections with the world, the universe, and each other – revealing the interdependent nature and divinity of all things.

The role of this book is to document and preserve aspects of this spiritual practice that will contribute to this awakening process. Much of this wisdom has been passed down meticulously from teacher to apprentice for thousands of years and continues to provide a straightforward format for the advancement of consciousness, for healing (in its many forms), and for the restoration of balance between ourselves and the living universe. This approach, seen through the lens of don Oscar's unique expression of curanderismo, incorporates artifacts from an encompassing spectrum of wisdom teachings. The beauty of don Oscar's shamanic work is that it is not limited to Peruvian indigenous medicine ways. There is a distinct flavor of Hermeticism, Gnosticism, various Eastern Religions, archaeoastronomy, applied and theoretical physics, and leading edge science inherent in his teachings. Once grounded around the central focus of the Pachakuti Mesa and Peruvian curanderismo, this amalgamation of wisdom teachings can be viewed as one diversified system whose many expressions point to the same truth.

We are at a juncture in our evolution where the emergence of a global shamanism is rapidly taking shape. Every day new connections and similarities are being recognized between science, spirituality, and the world religions. This does not mean that fragments of the world's many spiritual and scientific

systems should simply be tossed into one gigantic melting pot; however, it does mean that these many systems are pointing to one cosmic truth. In this way, I have found the Pachakuti Mesa, with its ethical sense of inclusiveness, is well suited to be an active participant in this new vision as we journey together in pursuit of truth.

I feel the above is important to mention also, because all too often seekers of spiritual enlightenment are discouraged from participating in practices that are not congruent with their blood lineage, cultural, or religious background. This excludes many individuals from exploring traditions that may be of great benefit to their spiritual growth and development. I feel once one has established a solid spiritual foundation (in any of the world's love-based, spiritual traditions) it is healthy to explore and integrate the wisdom teachings of other traditions.

In this way, the inclusive nature of the Pachakuti Mesa teachings are intended to empower all interested parties with the means to create their own Mesa, perform their own ceremonies, and utilize some of the basic healing techniques employed by practitioners of this tradition.

The Pachakuti Mesa provides a simple system for learning to work with unseen forces and energies in order to promote healing and balance through spiritual mediation. Through development of this relationship, it is my hope that readers learn also to ceremonialize their life experiences through this practice; thus, attaining a heightened sense of meaning, purpose, and awareness in their lives.

The benefits of a ceremonial lifestyle are profound, as they help create an intimacy with Spirit (God/Goddess) and the forces and energies of the spiritual realm that we interact with constantly – both consciously and unconsciously. Through communion with Spirit balance is restored by harmonizing with the ever-present spiritual forces and energies in our midst.

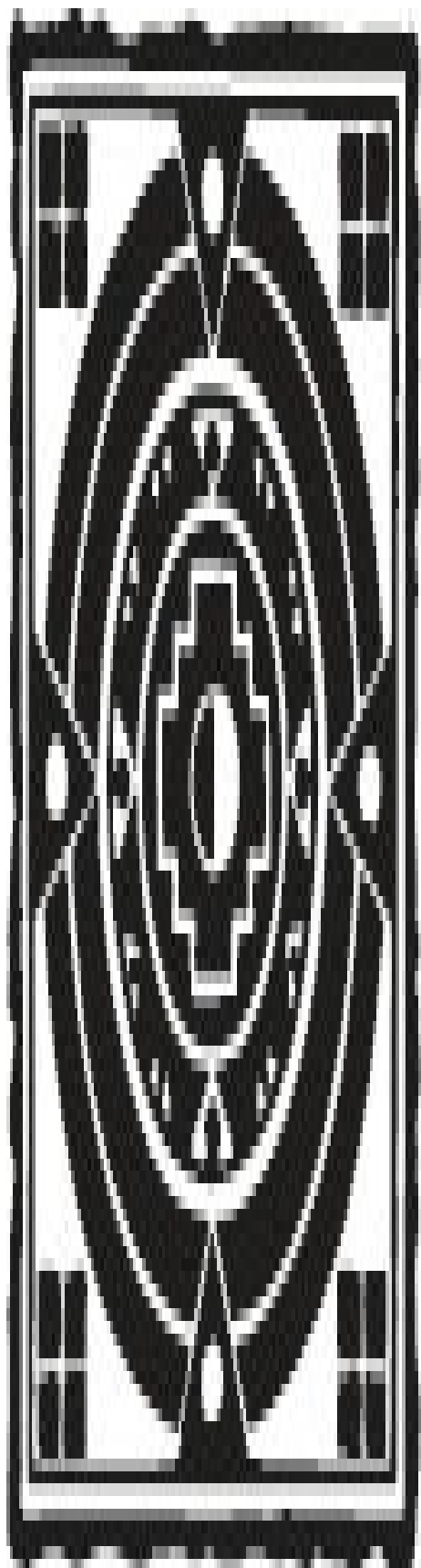
Ceremonializing this awareness provides us with the means to externalize our inner experiences. The Mesa itself is a mirror, a microcosm of the all-encompassing Self, which is paradoxically both internally experienced and externally expressed throughout the universe.

In light of the above, the Pachakuti Mesa could be seen as a living control panel, co-created by Spirit and the curandero, to become a vehicle for experiencing the ineffable, the limitless, the eternal; all accomplished while remaining firmly

planted in the physical world. As this takes place, one becomes a bridge between Spirit and matter, which, in turn, empowers the Mesa carrier to begin the journey towards individual truth and authenticity – the process of “re-membering” the self (re-entering into membership with our authentic self and other awakened souls, in service to Spirit). This consciousness-expanding pilgrimage reveals the authentic self as a vital strand intricately woven into the fabric of the universe – each fiber no more important than the next, each woven into an interdependent relationship of sacred reciprocity.

Life, as it was experienced by many of the indigenous peoples of the past, was seen from this enlightened perspective. Their communities were built ceremonially upon this philosophy, incorporating respect and reverence into their relationship with the Earth and with Spirit. By incorporating aspects of this ancient philosophy into our modern lives, we can supply the deep wisdom paramount in re-integrating authenticity into our daily lives. Understanding the Pachakuti Mesa and its system of beliefs, healing energies, and ceremonial practice can also enrich our sense of spirituality in the modern world – restoring balance to ourselves, our communities, and our planet as a whole.

In this relationship, all things are treated equally with compassion and veneration. Participation in this vision will promote conscious advancement of a moral and ethical standard of life, which is based universally on the principles of love and the beauty and gift of diversity. The reverent use of a Pachakuti Mesa provides an effective means to incorporate these principles and values into our modern lives.



Chapter One

Shamanism and Religion

Prehistoric rock art found in caves and on cliffs in many parts of the world suggests that our ancestors were working with shamanic themes perhaps 40,000 years ago, judging by the wealth of animal drawings and pictures of humans either dancing or lying in trance or ecstatic states, wearing bird or animal masks, and in some mysterious sense interacting with the power that emanates from the animals. (Cowen 1997, 5)

Throughout history, shamans have been called by hundreds of different names around the globe, such as folk-healer, mystic, dukun, seer, mudang, druid, soothsayer, prophet, witch doctor, faith healer, mage, kahuna, wizard, paqo, curandero, and medicine man/woman (to name a few). Regardless of name, the shaman is an individual who has not only established a direct connection and relationship with Spirit/God/Goddess/Source, but who has also cultivated the ability to clearly communicate that experience to others. As the messenger and mediator between the physical and spiritual worlds, it is the role of the shaman to hold the community in ritual and to be consulted for the healing needs of the individuals in that community.

Although the term shaman describes a certain type of individual who is able to enter into trance to connect with the spiritual world, the term itself is often overused. To this day, anthropologists cannot agree on a single definition for the term. Subsequently, the word has become a bit of a misnomer for the general public, and has been used inaccurately to describe individuals such as tribal storytellers, mediums, ceremonialists, herbalists, priests, and the like. This misapplication has unfortunately only led to further confusion about the term.

Initially, the word shaman was used solely to describe the indigenous, mystic-ceremonialists who were first observed by anthropologists in the cultures of Siberia and Central Asia (the locus classicus of shamanism) during the late 1600's.¹ The term shaman derives from the Tungusic term samán, which has been said to mean “one who knows” (the Tungusic root word “sa” means “to know”). For the shaman, this “knowing” is said to be linked to the ability to enter into some form of ecstatic trance, which allows the shaman to function as an intermediary between the physical and spiritual realms on behalf of the community.

Mircea Eliade (1964, 4), in his classic study *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, rendered a definition of shamanism that I feel is both tactful and eloquent. While honoring the cultural and geographical context of the term, he states “shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia...A first definition of this complex phenomenon, and perhaps the least hazardous, will be: shamanism = technique of ecstasy.”

Although seemingly cryptic, Eliade’s general definition touches upon the ubiquitous nature of shamanic practice as embodied by certain individuals the world over. The implicative nature of his definition boldly empowers the reader to understand that the core meaning of shamanism is universal, and not limited to any one cultural or geographical context.

Peruvian *curanderismo* fits the classic definitions of shamanism perfectly, and despite the obvious cultural and geographical differences, embodies the same universal concepts within its medicinal, ceremonial, and spiritual expressions. Due to the uniting principles inherent in Siberian and Central Asian shamanism and Peruvian *curanderismo*, I will use the terms *curandero* and *shaman* interchangeably throughout this book.

It is now accepted usage to refer to Peru’s curanderos as shamans, because their vocation fits well with classical definitions of shamanic healing as religious specialists who undergo controlled trances in a community context. The manner in which curanderos learn their art, as well as the specific therapeutic procedures they employ, also match Eliade’s (1964) comparative generalizations about shamanism. (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 4)

Since time immemorial, the world’s most brilliant thinkers, theorists, and philosophers have aspired to express the ineffable phenomenon of Spirit, God/Goddess, Source. Despite their many remarkable accomplishments, many, if not all, have maintained that their works have fallen short of fully expressing this Divine phenomenon. Nevertheless, the wisdom gained through these attempts propels us forward; each new insight acts as a stepping-stone for the next brilliant thinker, theorist, or philosopher to build upon.

With this in mind, I feel it is important to furnish some core characteristics of the

shaman. It is clear that my attempt to describe the shaman will undoubtedly fall short; however, I feel it will help to provide the reader with some basic information to refer to and to build upon.

One defining characteristic of a shaman is the capacity for, and ability to induce, profound transcendent experiences. These transcendent experiences, often called ecstatic trances or altered states of consciousness, create a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms. Like a bridge, the shaman becomes a liaison between worlds and is able to reconnect individuals and their community to the source of life, healing, insight, and wisdom. In order to be an effective liaison, these non-ordinary states of awareness must be accessed while remaining firmly grounded and connected to the collective experience of reality.

The shaman must have the ability to discern where an individual (or community) has become disconnected or estranged from the source of life, and they must also have the ability to establish a reconnection. Obtaining this wisdom can take many forms, yet often it requires some form of deep inner journey (and the willingness to be an open vessel for Spirit) that the shaman undergoes on behalf of their tribe or community.

Joseph Campbell (1988, 85), considered the world's foremost authority on mythology during his lifetime (and still today), described the process of this shamanic awakening as "an overwhelming psychological experience that turns the individual totally inward. It's a kind of schizophrenic crack-up. The whole unconscious opens up, and the shaman falls into it." This process requires the shaman to completely rewrite the body of laws that governed his or her former paradigm of reality. I refer to this as "the Great Unlearning" as it is less about gaining insight to new information, and more about dismantling outdated belief systems that obscure the deepest forms of truth. This movement back into the stillness, free from agenda or distraction, allows the shaman to view all of life with a deeper sense of clarity and from a more encompassing perspective.

This journey of "unlearning" often produces certain spiritual by-products including a deeply cultivated wisdom of self in relation to life's interconnectedness and interdependence, proficiency in comprehending and expressing supernatural experiences, highly developed intuition that is coupled with an ability to absorb, harness, and share/deliver seen and unseen energies for the purpose of healing; and the ability to accept and live comfortably with concepts of apparent paradox or chaos.

Although the above list is quite general, and covers only a small portion of the true capacity of the shaman, it does provide some fundamental shamanic qualities. In light of the above, it's easier to see why most shamans are known as the healers of their communities. For example, the cultivation of intuition coupled with the ability to manipulate energy allows the shaman to diagnose and work with a person's illness on an energetic level.

To put it simply, the shaman has an uncommon capacity to experience and convey their mystical experiences. In fact, many argue that the ability to handle the intensity of these experiences is what separates the shaman from the psychotic. Campbell (1988, 13) points out that the difference between a mystical experience and a psychological crack-up is "the one who cracks-up is drowning in the same water in which the mystic swims."

Although the shamanic path can be chosen by the aspirant, those who attempt to choose this path on their own, that is, without the guidance of a seasoned elder, often drown in the sea of mystery that surrounds this role. In tribal cultures, individuals with the capacity to hold a shamanic worldview were (and are) recognized by the elders and trained at an early age to handle the responsibility. That said, there are many ways that a person can be called to this path.

Americo Yabar, a Peruvian shamanic practitioner with a life-long connection to the Q'ero, identifies three general ways a person can be called to the Q'ero shamanic path. Yabar says, "to become a [Q'ero] shaman involves a transmission...[that] can come from lightning, from a master who determines you are ready, or from a feeling inside yourself that you have been called to that path as a vocation" (Cowen 1997, 10).

Following his dialogue with Americo Yabar, shamanic researcher and author Tom Cowen observed that Yabar "calls attention to the three traditional paths to becoming a shaman found in native cultures the world over: a personal life crisis; selection and training by elders; and the inner call by close attention to the spirit within" (ibid., 10).

Unlike the ancient systems of support that were prevalent and considered integral in tribal cultures, the ability to recognize and mentor individuals with shamanic potential is not as commonplace in the western world.

In some native societies, vivid ceremonial dramatization of shamanic initiation is prominently displayed. In these societies, the cyclical process of birth, death, and renewal is, likewise, as understood and established as birthday cake. However, where this is not so, and where “rites of passage” have become insipid, the same transformational imagery is forced to seek alternative modes of expression. For example, predisposed images may seek spontaneous expression in an individual’s dreams, fantasies, or visions; occurring in order to narrate the course of an individual’s personal upheavals. (Miro-Quesada 1995, 1)

One of the greatest gifts I have received in this life was to have the opportunity to reconnect with an ancient system of support and guidance. The Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, founded by don Oscar Miro-Quesada, has created an opportunity for shamanic aspirants the world over to reconnect to an essential support system. It is my hope that this book, which honors the traditional wisdom of don Oscar’s teachings, will help point the way towards universal truth, love, and the awakening of the dormant shamanic potential within every human heart.

Folk Catholicism and pre-Colombian Cosmology

For those who are new to this tradition, there is often a bit of confusion and curiosity regarding the presence of folk Catholicism found within many Peruvian spiritual traditions. This blending of religious beliefs is a result of the sixteenth century Spanish invasion and colonialization of South American natives.

In 1532, Francisco Pizarro led the Spanish, in their conquest for dominance and riches, into the land of the Inca Empire. This conquest, called the extirpation of idolatries, proclaimed the religious practices of the Inca peoples immoral and incorrect (Arriaga 1968). For example, the Incans were no longer allowed to pray to Mother Earth, whom they called Pachamama, nor could they justify their ritual practice of venerating certain animals or sacred mountains in a way that was acceptable to the Spanish. The Spanish immediately labeled the peoples' shamanic beliefs and practices as "devil worship" or the honoring of false gods. As a result, the religious icons, statues, and ceremonial objects that depicted their spiritual traditions were either confiscated or destroyed, and in due course, the Incans were forced to convert to Roman Catholicism.

Although practicing Inca rituals publicly was outlawed, the core shamanic traditions and beliefs of these peoples were miraculously preserved. This was done, in part, by overtly practicing prescribed Roman Catholic rituals while covertly keeping the Inca tradition alive through intention and belief. For example, the Inti Raymi, or Sun ceremony, was initially celebrated on June 21st, the summer solstice. This celebration gave thanks for the harvest. After the Spanish conquest, the people simply celebrated this event on the Roman Catholic feast day of St. John the Baptist, which occurred on June 24th. And although effigies of Catholic saints would be carried and displayed in their ceremonies, the people would place the ash or remains of mummified Incas inside the effigies. In this way, the essence of the Inca and pre-Inca cosmologies survived. The preservation of the core tenets of their shamanic traditions eventually allowed ancient rituals and beliefs to merge with the experience of Roman Catholicism rather than be extinguished. Over time, the two dissimilar practices became one expression of the same faith.

This merging also occurred because curanderos eventually found enough commonality within the Roman Catholic tradition to establish parallels that they could relate to and embrace. They resonated with the healing power and life testimony of Jesus Christ – so much so, that they named one of their sacred mountains Apu Tayacha Jesu Christo. Similarly, they felt connections with some of the Catholic saints, such as Saint Ciprian of Antioch, Saint James, Saint Anthony, Fray Martin de Porres, Santa Rosa de Lima, and with Saint Francis, who shared their love and affinity for animals. This eventual embrace of Catholic spiritual figures, although genuine, also provided a clever way for the people to honor their sacred mountains and animal totems in a way that was “acceptable” to the Spanish.

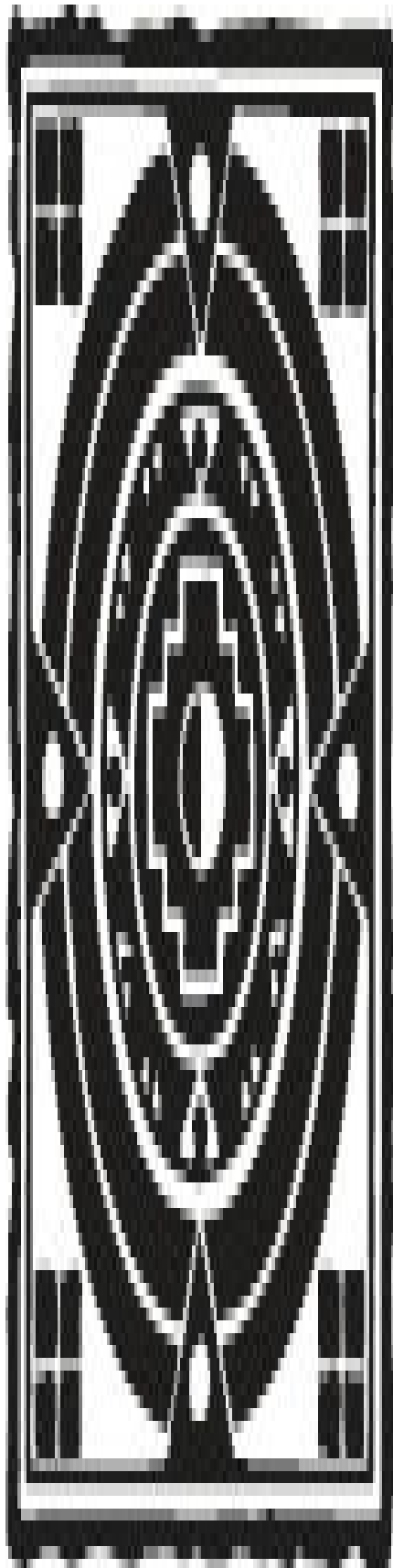
Today, Christian figures play legitimate and important roles in the medicine ways of many curanderos throughout Peru. Among the many saints venerated by curanderos throughout the Andes, perhaps the most recognized are Fray Martin de Porres and Saint Ciprian, who have been dubbed the patron saints of Peruvian curanderismo.

Formerly an ego-driven magician inspired by personal gain, Saint Ciprian eventually awakened to the path of love and selfless service, turned his back on the path of harm (daño), and became a powerful figure in this tradition. His deep knowledge of sorcery, and the dance of manipulation, gave him the rare ability to recognize the “darker” tendencies of human nature (both in himself and in others). This insight subsequently endowed him with the skillset to unravel and transform many of the unconscious, ego-driven human motivations that inspire harm, and replace them with the wisdom found through a path of healing service. As such, curanderos saw Saint Ciprian as a soul who embodied the Mesa, in that his life path expressed the dualistic principles of the universe (i.e., the powers of creation and destruction, light and darkness, positive and negative, etc.) coming together in balance to produce and sustain life.

It is important to note here that the concepts of “light” (i.e., “good”) and “darkness” (i.e., “evil”) were European concepts brought by the Spanish during the time of their conquest. In fact, the structural framework of “good” and “evil,” or rather “good versus evil,” was as foreign to the Inca as the people who brought them; however, much like the incorporation of the Roman Catholic saints mentioned earlier, the European concept of “opposites in opposition” also fused with Andean cosmology over time. As a result, many of the healing altars used by curanderos today depict this dualistic understanding of the universe.

There was a colonial source for the moralistic dualism of contemporary curanderos in [American anthropologist Irene] Silverblatt's (1983, 418) contention that native Andean cosmology had no "notion of evil or an embodiment of a Satanic-like force which was comparable to Western conceptions." The indigenous ideology, as Silverblatt sees it, "entailed a dialectic vision of the universe in which dualistic forces were viewed as reciprocal and complementary," while "balance in the universe as a whole was intrinsic to reestablishing the health of an individual" (420). (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 174)

Although Roman Catholicism is currently embraced by many curanderos, in light of the above, the implementation of Roman Catholic iconography and belief systems seems to be more appropriately understood, as the above authors point out, as "an adaptation to – not an adoption of – the Christian ethos" (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 176). And although many of the shamanic practices of Andean curanderos are often painted with a Roman Catholic brush, the manner in which they are employed, and perhaps more importantly, the way they are understood, are intrinsically Peruvian.



Chapter Two

Pachakuti Mesa Cosmology

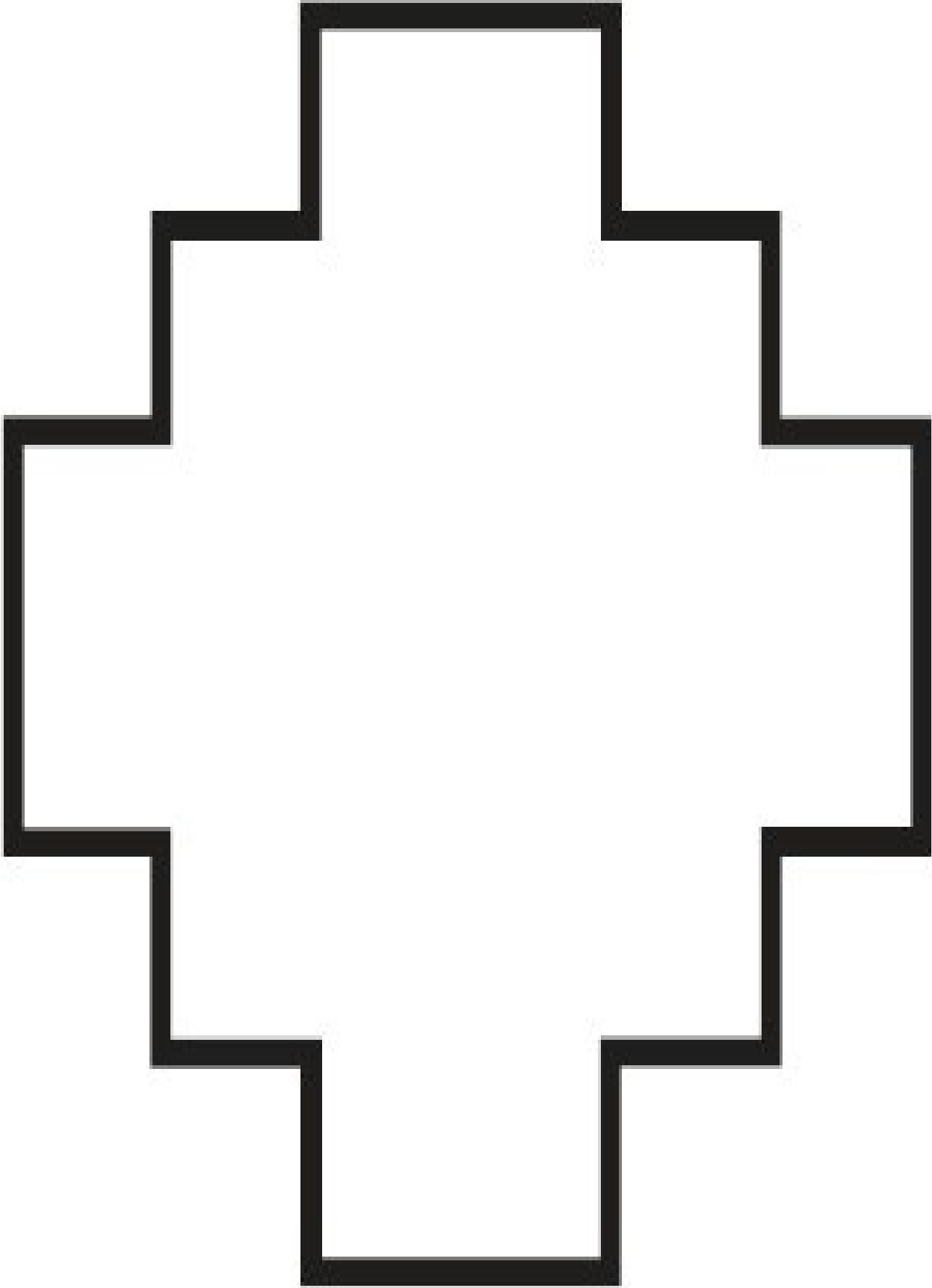
The Three Worlds - Los Tres Mundos

In common with many of the world's shamanic cosmologies, Peruvian shamanism shares the notion that we inhabit, and have access to, three distinct realms or realities. To the Quechua speaking people of the Peruvian Andes, these realities are called the Ukhu Pacha (Lower World), the Kay Pacha (Middle World), and the Hanaq Pacha (Upper World). The term pacha can literally mean "space," "universe," "realm," "place," "ground," "world," or "earth," as in soil. These concepts are not thought of as places that exist outside of the self, but rather as existing both within and around us simultaneously. Moreover, the three worlds are not seen as existing in different places, but rather are woven into the same experience of this life as interpenetrating and interdependent elements of consciousness.

Awareness of these three interconnected realms is not unique to shamanism. From a modern framework, C.G. Jung's and R. M. Buck's theories of consciousness, which identify three levels of the human psyche: the subconscious, conscious, and cosmic consciousness (dubbed the "collective unconscious" by Jung), bear a striking resemblance to this shamanic notion. Closer inspection of the Quechua definitions of these terms yields a translation that more closely resembles the above references. In other words, rather than describing the worlds as Lower, Middle, and Upper, a more accurate translation of the three worlds would be "inner" (Ukhu Pacha), "outer" (Kay Pacha), and "transcendent" (Hanaq Pacha) realms or realities.

One of the archetypal images used to describe the concept of the three worlds is the tree of life. This is based on the observation that a tree has three parts: the roots, the trunk, and the branches. Many ancient indigenous cultures believed that one could access the various dimensions of the spirit world by ascending or descending the tree of life. The three-tiered configuration of the Andean cross (see figure 1) also embodies the understanding of a three-world universe. The top tier (or step) represents the Upper World, the middle tier below it represents the Middle World, and the third/bottom tier represents the Lower World. If one were to draw a horizontal line through the center of this symbol, it would reveal

a pattern of reflection where the top section mirrors the bottom (i.e., symbolizing the ancient concept of “as above, so below”).



[Figure 1. Andean Cross or Chakana.](#)

The Pachakuti Mesa also reflects its own version of this three-world cosmic understanding. It's spatial arrangement, both vertically and horizontally, expresses this understanding. The vertical symbolism is represented through the construction of the Mesa itself: the bare Earth (Ukhu Pacha) lies beneath a sacred textile (Kay Pacha), and the third/upper world is represented by the objects placed upon the cloth (Hanaq Pacha). The horizontal representation, which stems from its Northern Coastal Huachumero roots, is divided into left, right, and center sections. These sections, more appropriately called campos, or fields, each possess their own pacha, or realm. The left field is the campo of the Ukhu Pacha, the right field is the campo of the Hanaq Pacha, and the center field is the campo of the Kay Pacha.

Further reinforcing the Mesa/pacha correlation is the fact that the left side contains objects from below the surface of the earth (e.g., pre-Columbian artifacts from ancient burial grounds), or from the bottom of the ocean (e.g., shells) – all associated with “down,” [or] hurin. On the other hand, the right side contains materials from highland lagoons (e.g., herbs), or objects linked to the sky (e.g., saints' images) – all associated with “up,” [or] hanan. [German ethnographer Claudius Cristobal] Giese (1989) demonstrates how the metaphysical connotations of light and darkness are clearly related in terminology with the upper and lower worlds, respectively, as well as with the right and left sides of the Mesa. The central sector of the Mesa, like the earth's surface, is the place where these dualistic forces are expressed in human life, in this case, through the instructions of the curandero as he receives information from the right and left (or up and down) and then directs the concentrated forces of the Mesa. (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 179)

Like the tree of life concept, the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition affirms the existence of humanity's ability to access these three dimensions of reality (inner, outer, and transcendent). The Mesa itself is an embodiment of this multidimensional

gateway or portal (often called the central axis or axis mundi). In the Pachakuti Mesa, this point is found in the center of the middle field (campo). Peter Furst (1973–74), an American anthropologist, describes the Andean understanding of the cosmos as “stratified, with an Under World below and an Upper World above...each with its respective spirit rulers and other supernatural denizens. There are also gods of the principle world over the celestial and chthonic spheres (for example, sky gods, lords of the dead, etc.)...The several levels of the universe are interconnected by a central axis (axis mundi)” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 177).

Joseph Campbell’s description of the hero’s quest in his (1972) book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, mirrors the shamanic journey in that both occur in three stages. In the hero’s journey, a person is called upon to fulfill a destiny (one that is usually divinely inspired) that will benefit the people. The hero must leave the familiar, overcome difficult obstacles, and finally, return to the community to share the message learned and to restore or enhance the lives of the people he or she represents. Campbell depicts this universal myth as having three stages: “separation – initiation – return” (ibid., 30). Similarly, in the shamanic journey, the curandero or curandera leaves the realm of the familiar and either ascends to the Hanaq Pacha or descends to the Ukhu Pacha, gains otherwise inaccessible knowledge or power, and then returns to the Kay Pacha.

In this journey, the shaman travels from the domain of the defined, the named, and the ordered world of social customs to the chaotic, unconceptualized, ambiguous, and murky realm beyond human conception and back again. This account of the shamanic journey emphasized the dichotomous nature of these categories, the transcendent nature of the shaman’s journey, and his active role in transforming the suffering of others. His power comes from transcending the primordial struggle between the knowable and the inchoate, and from mastering both sides of this dialectic. In the classical shamanic journey, power is achieved through “transporting a man beyond the boundaries of himself” [Sharon 1978, 49] and transcending both physical and natural worlds. The shaman gains power through mastering the perils of the journey itself and by successfully returning to this world. In other words, the shaman’s journey parallels the crises and reintegration of his own path to healing. Just as learning to place oneself above worldly oppositions (e.g., life/death, goodness/evil, social obligations/individual desires) so as to master or transcend them is key to

becoming a shaman, these same stages of separation, transcendence, and return are often expressed in the symbols of the shaman's trance – and in the healing philosophy which he communicates to patients. (Glass-Coffin 1998, 142)

The Pachakuti Mesa provides the curandero with a tangible vehicle from which to access the otherwise inaccessible dimensions of this three-realm universe. Like the “hero” (and the “psychopomp”¹ from Greek mythology), the curandero is a journeyer who travels, using the sacred technology of the Mesa, into apparent chaos and returns with order – restoring balance to the community and bringing healing to the people who require it.

Ukhu Pacha

The term ukhu in Quechua means literally “interior,” “inner,” or “deep.” These meanings infer an Andean concept of the Lower World, or Under World. Hence the true meaning of the Ukhu Pacha has commonly been misconstrued – specifically in relation to the Judeo-Christian tradition and its understanding of hell. Unlike the Christian version of hell, one is not sent to the Ukhu Pacha as a form of punishment for a sinful existence on Earth. On the contrary, the Ukhu Pacha is a place one must journey to in order to grow and mature as an individual. This could be seen as bringing aspects of the unconscious (shadow archetypes) into conscious awareness, bringing healing to elements of the psyche that are repressed or fragmented, and aiding in the development of aspects of the self that are unfinished.

In addition, the Judeo-Christian concept of hell refers to a realm separate from heaven and Earth, which can only be experienced in the afterlife. The shamanic notion of the Ukhu Pacha, however, is not seen or experienced as separate, rather this realm is present and available within every soul in all moments. The Ukhu Pacha is understood by don Oscar as the place within us where true ayni (sacred reciprocity) has not yet been fully realized. Therefore, when one has an encounter with the Ukhu Pacha, either through vision, journeying, or life-experience, immense potential for healing and integration exists.

Ukhu Pacha experiences occur in order to assist the individual through a process of surrender and illumination. This surrendering process has the potential to release unhealthy patterns of thought, belief, and behavior, and in their absence, a new truth may be discovered and integrated into the fabric of one’s experience of life. Ultimately, an encounter with the Ukhu Pacha requires one to bow to the pattern of nature itself, including the essential elements of entropy and decomposition, in order to perpetuate one’s freshly emerging life. Just as Nature prompts the tree to release its leaves to weather the storms of winter, the Soul prompts the ego to release hardened beliefs that are no longer serving the soul’s evolution. Arguments, disagreements, and other triggers often bring these elements of the self to the surface, and therefore all forms of conflict can be

tremendous catalysts for growth. In the shamanic arts, one does not shy away from exposing the parts of the self that are longing to be seen, more deeply understood, and ultimately embraced. Therefore, standing unwaveringly in these moments of fiery discomfort allows a space for illumination and authentic transformation to take place. Ultimately, authenticity emerges through a surrendered embrace, and in its own cryptic way, reveals a self that is free from the self.

According to don Oscar, in ancient times, this process of surrender would often be described mythically through the experience of “tutelary animal ally embodiment.” Through vision, journeying, or dream work, the shaman would occasionally encounter an animal (usually anthropomorphic) that would begin stalking them as prey. This vision would often culminate in the animal attacking, killing, and devouring the shaman. Oral accounts describe the shaman as having vivid experiences of being fully consumed in the belly of an animal. They would experience their bodies being digested and excreted, and they would experience the process of decomposition as they became soil and food for the plants and trees. This surrender to a complete death of identity would merge the shaman’s soul back into the pattern of nature itself and the unending continuum of life. From this transcendent vantage point, the shaman would be able to see both the deeper nature of the animal that devoured them and their own, personal place in the greater whole. The spirit of this animal would then bestow its wisdom, vision, and power into the shaman’s reconstituted body. After returning from this vision, the shaman would be able to call upon the spirit of this animal as a guide, to better navigate any future dismemberment experiences for self or others.

Kay Pacha

The Quechua word kay means “to be,” “to exist,” and, simply, “this.” Therefore, the Kay Pacha is properly understood as our experience of being in this worldly existence. It is the world we are born into, having a linear or space/time quality to its lessons. It could also be viewed as the collective, multi-sensorial experience of humanity; however, the Kay Pacha is not exclusively the temporal realm of ordinary conscious experiences. It also includes realms that exist beyond these ordinary states containing both seen and unseen sources of guidance for shaping our world.

In between the chthonic and the celestial was the world of human relations and discourse. Called simply “this world” (Kay Pacha), it was here that the dialectical forces came together (sometimes violently) to create new life, biological as well as social. (Glass-Coffin 1998, 143)

Curanderos view the Kay Pacha as vitally alive and permeated with both seen and unseen forms of consciousness – mineral, plant, animal, human, and ethereal inhabitants are always present to instruct us in how to attain mastery within the realm of this material world. They exist to assist us in learning how to interpret Spirit in the form of underlying symbolism and universal patterns, and they teach us how to apply this knowledge into our everyday lives. Several of these teachings have been categorized into specific guiding principles or attributes to help us live in accordance with natural order. These attributes are known as llank’ay, yachay, and munay. Llank’ay is understood as hard work, labor, industriousness, or manifestation in the physical world. In relation to Abraham Maslow’s levels of hierarchies, llank’ay is equivalent to meeting one’s survival needs in order to continue with the spiritual pursuits of life. Yachay refers to the attribute of wisdom that involves acquiring knowledge beyond intellectual understanding. In other words, there is a wisdom that transcends the limitations

of the body, one's thoughts, or one's emotions, and connects us to a more expansive and inclusive form of universal wisdom (i.e., the higher mind or hanan uma). Finally, munay is the essence of deep empathy or divine love. It could be compared to Greek word agape, which describes a form of love that embodies creative and redemptive goodwill for all living beings. When these three attributes are brought to fruition, a greater harmonization of the body, mind, and heart occurs.

Astute observation of the synchronistic² events that transpire as a result of this sacred lifestyle and relationship with the T'eqsimuyu (living universe) ultimately reveals a Divine Source behind all things. In other words, the multiple levels and visionary experiences of this highly animated cosmos seem to have been created in order to initiate individuals into a reality that mirrors their own divinity. The medicine of the present moment offered through an engaged experience with the Kay Pacha is a supreme opportunity for the soul to learn about itself, others, the universe, and the creative source/force that speaks through all that is. Therefore, shamanic mastery is attained not merely through a singular insight of universal truth or order, rather, it is discovered over and over again through joyful surrender to the process of revelation and transformation.

Hanaq Pacha

The Upper World, or Hanaq Pacha, is considered the “superior” realm of a higher or more evolved state of consciousness. In Quechua, the term hanaq means “above” or “over.” Placing the words hanaq and pacha together roughly translates into “highest heaven” or “highest realm.” This highest realm is inhabited by celestial denizens, angelic beings, and tutelary allies. Just as one journeys to the Lower World to restore balance within the self, the shaman ascends to the Hanaq Pacha in order to bring back awakened blessings to the Kay Pacha.

The Hanaq Pacha is a realm of infinite wisdom, divine light, and universal power. In this way, it could be equated with the Christian notion of heaven, or the angelic realms of Spirit, which also embody the divine nature of the universe. The Upper World could also be equated to a “living” akashic³ space, through which the shaman is able to embody universal wisdom and through magical flight,⁴ deliver insight to the Middle World. It is an elevated archetypal realm replete with universal symbolism, celestial guidance, and healing vision. As don Oscar is fond of saying, the well-known hermetic axiom “as above, so below” truly applies to the shamanic journey within this refined spiritual domain.

Unseen Forces and Energies

It is important to remember, that in this tradition, spirit and matter are viewed as different manifestations of the same energy: spirit is a subtle form of matter and matter is a dense form of spirit. This concept is similar to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's understanding of "spirit as the higher state of matter and matter as the matrix of spirit" (1976, 35). This implies spirit and matter are comprised of the same energetic particles, but one (spirit) is vibrating more rapidly than the other (matter).

The ability to work with different forms of unseen energy through focused intention is another important lesson for the apprentice of this tradition. Three of the main healing energies utilized in this process are k'anchay, kawsay, and sami. These energies can be tangibly experienced by cultivating a greater sensitivity to specific, beneficial forces and energies that permeate our living universe.

K'anchay

K'anchay, or light energy, is analogous to celestial energy or electromagnetism in physics. It is the highest form of spiritual energy utilized by curanderos of Peru. It is effective because it accesses the timeless realms of Spirit, allowing the person in need of healing to step out of time and experience a sense of infinity. The healer experiences k'anchay energy as a subtle, laser-like pulsation or very rapid vibration.

In the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, k'anchay is used when working with conditions of deep illnesses and conditions of a spiritual nature. For example, if an individual has become closed off to the expansive nature of the transcendent (i.e., Spirit/God/Goddess/the Divine), one's resistance to the mystery can shrink or constrict their experience of reality. This can result in any number of experiences, including (but not limited to) disconnection, despondency, insecurity, or egoic overcompensation. In contrast, one may occasionally create a problematic schism in their field of experience if too much attention is placed on purely transcendent realities, and not enough attention is placed on remaining grounded and connected to the collective experience of reality. In either case, working with k'anchay energy can help maintain the necessary balance between the influx of Spirit and the grounding energies of the Earth, which are both essential for sustaining a natural equilibrium between one's physical and luminous bodies.

Kawsay

Kawsay, or vital life force, permeates all things in the living universe and all things depend on this energy for health and life, much like chi or qi in Taoism. When felt or “scanned” with the hand, kawsay feels warm, dense, and magnetic, and is comparable to gravitational energy, in that, its essence draws you to the Earth.

Kawsay moves through all three worlds, yet it is most abundantly present in the Kay Pacha or Middle World. In the physical body, this energy relates to the root or sacral area, which is located at the base of the spine, and in the spatial layout of a Pachakuti Mesa, this energy is anchored and located in the southern direction of the altar.

Kawsay is essentially the force of life itself. This force runs through us at all times, and as thus, its familiarity renders it to be among the easiest energies to learn to work with. This energy is used to treat all conditions that are considered “physical” in the body (i.e., illness, ailment, injury, disease, etc.), as well as the conditions that are considered “material” (i.e., secure homelife, work, or the resources needed to survive).

Physical and material conditions are said to be directly connected to an energetic depletion of kawsay in one’s qosqo, or navel area. For this reason, it is believed in curanderismo that most physical conditions are directly attributable to an exhausted energy base. Therefore, maintaining an energy body replete with kawsay is deemed indispensable for one’s overall health and wellbeing.

One method of maintaining a solid energy base involves absorbing kawsay energy from the Earth by drawing it in through the soles of the feet, the perineum, and the left hand, as if these parts of the body could breathe. This process is greatly enhanced if one connects directly with the elements of Nature (i.e., the wind, the rivers, the soil, etc.). The vital life force of kawsay is then stored in the qosqo or navel (and also the adrenals, spleen, and reproductive glands), to maintain a sufficient resource of kawsay to prevent (or remedy) most

physical or material conditions.

Sami

Sami energy is generated whenever any change from one state of being to another occurs in the universe. For example, the moment a supernova explodes in the cosmos or the instant water boils and becomes a gas, sami is being generated. Sami energy is experienced as a subtle effervescence, and it is drawn into the body via the thymus, the seventh thoracic vertebrae, and the left palm.

The Peruvian concept of sami has been likened to many forms of energy, including animating essence and prana. Anthropologist Catherine Allen (1988, 207) contends that “sami resembles the Polynesian mana” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 172). In physics, the expressions of sami are comparable to “weak” and “strong” nuclear forces.

Sami is most commonly associated with treating conditions of mental or emotional instability. Both the mind and one’s emotions are in a constant state of flux. As sami energy is also of an ever-changing nature, it is uniquely suited to address these issues. In mental and emotional conditions, sami energy helps the client to accept change, and to embrace it and flow with it. This shift in consciousness allows one to begin to see the necessity and beauty of transformation and impermanence.

Mental Conditions

Sami energy used for mental healing is contained in the east of the Pachakuti Mesa. The healing energy of sami in the east helps alleviate many of the psychopathological conditions that would be addressed in Western culture through traditional psychotherapy. Peruvian shamanic practice, however, does not typically refer to the mind from the framework of pathology, but rather from a causal, formative perspective. Moreover, to live solely and completely in the

mind is to live apart from the deeper truth being offered through the larger experience of life, and establishing meaningful contact with a Higher Power often breaks many of the narcissistic or self-referential patterns that result from not being connected with something greater than one's self.

Emotional Conditions

The west direction of the Mesa also holds sami energy and is used to work with emotional conditions. Unlike the energy of sami in the east, which works on the causal plane, the healing energy of sami in the west works on the astral plane. In either case, the energy one works with is essentially the same, yet the former (issues of the mind), is simply functioning at a lower rate of vibratory frequency than the latter (issues of the heart).

Hucha

The Quechua word hucha means “heavy or dense energy.” It is most often generated by one’s resistance to uncomfortable experiences in life, such as conflict, strife, injustice, or controversy. Resistance is typically based in fear, ignorance, and disempowerment. Its energy constricts. Hence, closing-off-from or resisting the discomfort of a particular encounter can hinder the natural flow of energy through the runa kurku k’anchay (luminous body). When this type of “friction” occurs, hucha accumulates. In other words, our bodies can accumulate density through resistance to the natural flow of life and to circumstances that we perceive do not best serve us.

Much like a steadily clogging drain, continued resistance causes more and more “residue” (hucha) to accumulate, eventually leading to blockage. Once a blockage occurs, this dense energy can begin to manifest in more tangible forms, such as physical conditions or psychological dis-orders. For example, depending on the severity of the block, this could manifest as benignly as a skin rash or headache, a worsening experience of depression, or as pronounced as a cancerous organ or schizophrenia. For this reason, cleansing the body of any hucha has long been among the most common healing techniques employed by curanderos.

Known generically as the *limpia* or “ritual cleansing,” there are a variety of ways this healing or purification can take place. In *curanderismo*, *Agua de Florida* (Flower or Florida Water) – an alcohol-based cologne, originally made with crushed flowers – is commonly used to cleanse the *poq’po* (the energy bubble surrounding the human body). This process is usually done with the assistance of another practitioner in a process called *soplado*, or ritual spraying (see figure 2). However, this technique can be done alone by praying into the Florida Water, pouring some into the hands, rubbing and clapping the hands together three times, inhaling the vapors, then brushing this medicine over one’s body. (The *limpia* process will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six).



Figure 2. Soplando. Ritual Spraying with Florida Water.

Apart from the use of Agua de Florida, there are a number of other techniques that are equally effective. Smudging with incense is a common method of purification for hucha removal. Feathers and staffs are also effective tools for removing dense energy through limpieas, as they can be used to absorb or remove density from within and around the human body. Some practitioners prescribe submerging the body in cold flowing water, such as a river or stream. Others recommend fasting or enduring periods of isolation in the form of a paqo wachu, or vision quest.

Once released, however, one discovers the important role hucha plays in the greater system of life. For example, once hucha has been cleansed and released from the poq'po, it becomes food for Pachamama. She, in turn, composts this energy and transmutes it into the same food that sustains life. A mirror of this cyclical process of renewal can be observed in the way plants absorb our waste (carbon dioxide) and transmute it into our nourishment (oxygen). From this perspective, hucha is as equally important to humanity as some of the more refined energies spoken of in other sections of this book.

The Ceque System

The ceque system refers to the theory known to dowsers as geomagnetic leys, or ley line theory. This practice holds that the Earth is covered with a grid-line pattern of invisible energy. A current definition of this theory states that leys are “alignments and patterns of powerful, invisible Earth energy said to connect various sacred sites, such as churches, temples, stone circles, megaliths, holy wells, burial sites, and other locations of spiritual or magical importance” (Guiley 1991, 329).

In ancient times, ceremonial places of worship and communion were constructed in, or around, these places of geomagnetic convergence to gain access to the vortex of energy that resides there. In the Peruvian understanding of ceques, a vortex is the place where the energies of two or more ceque lines intercept and converge. Often times, these places of geomagnetic power were clearly marked by a pile of stones (similar to the Celtic cairns) called apachetas. An apacheta is a stone mound used to designate, or “link-up” to, a place of power that is infused with refined energy. An apacheta is also an intensifier and an accumulator of the energy that filters through the ceque system. Much in the same way a dam accumulates energy from the water passing through it and then is able to distribute that energy to a larger geographical area, the shaman is able to use an apacheta to generate, absorb, and distribute energy from these key sites.

The top of an apacheta is built to be flat in order to accommodate offerings made by passing journeyers. Because of this, an apacheta is also often referred to as an ushnu, which means “throne” or “sacred platform.” As travelers add stones from other pilgrimage sites to an apacheta, an energetic connection between those two spots is established.

In the past, the places where apachetas were built also often became the building sites of tambos, or “waystations,” for travelers. These areas of shelter along the Inca trail were commonly filled with supplies and information for the chaskis or chasquikuna (the messenger-runners of the Inca empire). Tambos and apachetas conveniently marked spaces that offered forms of energetic nourishment from

the converging lines of the ceque system.

Natural vortexes, or the confluences of ceques or “ley lines,” are also understood as places on Earth that inherently possess abundant energy. It is believed that the veil between this world and the spirit world is more easily breached in these places, and a blending of the three worlds is more evident. For this reason, most of the spiritual temples, churches, or ceremonial complexes are built over these places of energetic import.

The Qorikancha (enclosure of gold), a sacred temple located in Cusco, is built upon one of the most powerful of these sacred places (i.e., at the convergence of 41 ceque lines). As a result, the Qorikancha acts much like the hub of a wheel, its spokes radiating outward into the Tawantinsuyu⁵ (Four Quarters) (see figure 3).

From Qorikancha as a center 40 [41 in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition] ceques or invisible “lines” of force beamed in all directions out to a vague circumference some 12 miles in radius. It is evident that these rays, emanating as they did from the home of the sun-god, represented a symbol in a solar theology. Along them were plotted the huacas of Cusco to the number of about 350. Each ceque had an Inca family or group assigned to it and charged with care of maintaining the various ceremonial usages all along the line. (Brundage 1963, 154–155)

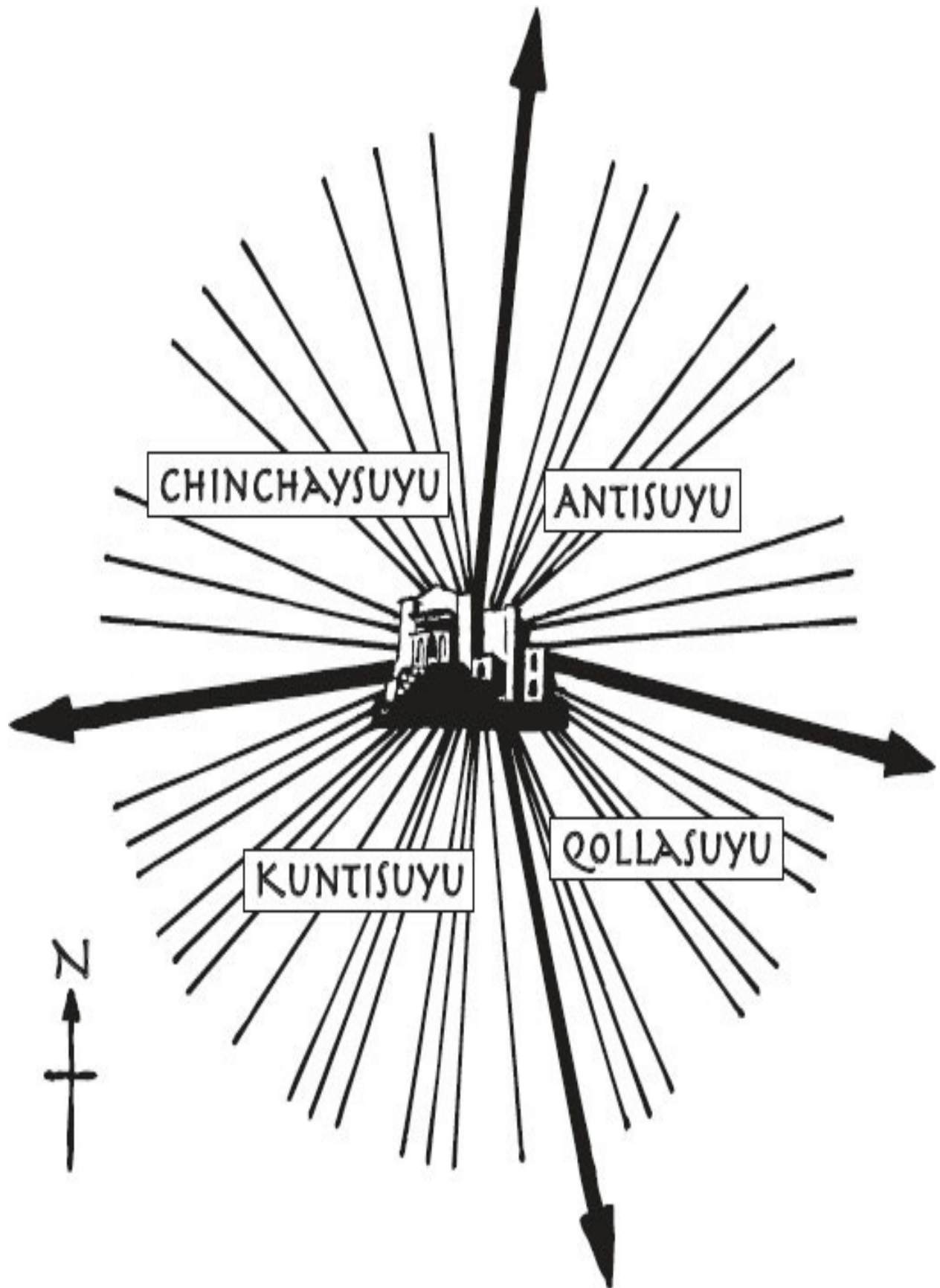


Figure 3. Ceque System of the Tawantinsuyu

Once linked together, there are 349 ceques emanating from the Qorikancha throughout the Tawantinsuyu. These ceque lines connect with various other geomagnetic anchor and transmission points. The smaller of these anchor points were supervised by groups of seven priests who would monitor the influx of energy emanating from the Qorikancha. According to don Oscar's mythical account, these ancient priests were chosen for their extrasensory abilities – they were able to interpret the psychic information sent by the Sapa Inca (the reigning ruler of the empire) from the Qorikancha. In this way, the transmission would be telepathically “downloaded” and subsequently woven into the community. Much of the communication was done in this way except in the rural, remote communities of the warrior tribes or where administrators were not required to develop these skills because of their chosen trade. In those cases, messages from the Qorikancha were delivered via the chasquikuna, or messenger runners.

The ceque system is similar to a spiderweb because the system itself is a ceremonial reticulum with a prescribed order. In keeping with this analogy, the Sapa Inca functioned like a spider, keeping his finger on the pulse of community within the four regions (suyus). He would sit in the center of the web and attend to any energetic disturbances that occurred in the network he governed. If he felt a piece of the web break, or if a section of it was out of balance, he would gather the priests together in the Qorikancha and they would journey (in the shamanic sense) to the area of disharmony in order to discern the proper course of action needed to restore balance.

The Qorikancha is like the center of the spider's web, or the hub of a revolving wheel, in that it its central point of connection can feel every strand of the ceque system. One of the foundational elements of don Oscar's teachings revolves around the ceremonial use of the Mesa to connect to these strands of energy in much the same way a spider weaves its web. “Like the Inca, a Mesa carrier is able to link up with the ceque system to help weave an extraordinary, luminous tapestry around the planet, awakening the internal light within ourselves, and, subsequently, in those who have not yet awoken to it” (Miro-Quesada, 1998).

Hanaq Pacha Qaqya Rayo

A supernatural phenomenon associated with both prophecy and shamanic initiation in this tradition is the Hanaq Pacha Qaqya Rayo (rayo del supramundo de iluminacion mistica), or lightning bolt of mystical illumination. Mediated and delivered by Siwar Q'enti (the Royal Hummingbird), an encounter with lightning results in an “enlightening vision of the universe,” known to Mesa carriers as the T'eqsimuyu surrounded by Amaru, or T'eqsimuyu Amaru.⁶

This concept of an animated universe, the T'eqsimuyu Amaru, operates like the archetypal symbol of the snake eating its own tail. It is both circular and self-governing, functioning like an ovum, and perpetually giving birth to itself. Visions of this self-creating universe were said to be witnessed by Andean shamans who were either physically, or figuratively, struck by lightning. Their accounts revealed a living universe comprised of infinite filaments of conscious light that appeared to look like tiny amarus (sacred serpents). These filaments were believed to be individual souls or “divine sparks” incarnating themselves within the fabric of time.

This extrasensory insight played a significant role in shaping the ancient Andean cosmological notions of time and space that are still utilized today. Even through the lens and language of modern science, one can observe the insights and deep truth of this vision. For example, ancient curanderos could observe that lightning crosses through the three worlds by simply witnessing the lightning coming from the sky (Upper World), touching the Earth (Middle World), and disappearing into the ground (Lower World). Today we know that when lightning strikes, it causes an electrical breakdown, or ionization, of air to occur. This, in turn, creates a pathway for electricity to travel through from the clouds to the ground. The energy forging the pathway from the clouds is called the stepped leader. The stepped leader descends from the clouds to meet and connect with one of many upward leaders extending from the ground. The interaction of positive and negative forces, when the leaders make contact, equalizes the two energies, creating what is called the return stroke. This return stroke instantly heats up to a temperature that is hotter than the surface of the Sun, creating the lightning seen

by the naked eye. This thunderous clash of positive and negative charges gives birth to a powerful expansion of energy that sends light and sound waves in all directions (often creating fire).

The shamanic initiation process of being “struck” by lightning has many similarities to this extraordinary phenomenon of nature. In both shamanic initiation and the phenomenon of lightning, we find the necessity of the following: (1) breakdown of previously existing conditions to create a pathway from the sky to the Earth, (2) interaction of opposite energies to create equalization or balance, and (3) combination of opposites to create a powerful expansion of energy that creates a phenomena that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Just as an electrical breakdown is part of a transformational process that both opens and empties a space for lightning to flow through, a psychospiritual breakdown is part of a transformational process that empties the self to create an open pathway for Spirit to flow through. However, instead of “ionic emptying,” the shamanic breakdown is one of emptying the self of resistance to fear, attachment, and egoic-identification in order to create a pathway for divine energy to pass through unhindered. In both cases, a breakdown is required in order for a breakthrough to occur.

In lightning, this “breakdown” allows the stepped leader to connect with one of many upward leaders, creating a flash of lightning. Similarly, shamanic initiation allows energy from above (spiritual) to connect with energy from below (material), creating an illuminating experience (mystical enlightenment) in the present moment of the middle world. It is also interesting to note that, of the many human upward leaders that extend from the ground in their attempt to connect with the stepped leader, proportionately very few ever make the connection as it often requires one to relinquish their body in death to do so. To take this example further, there are many individuals extending their arms to the heavens, yet very few are either willing or able to embody the energies necessary for such “connection” to be established and sustained. More often than not, the fire of revelation burns too brightly, and the unprepared initiate commonly ends up preferring to avert their eyes.

In addition, the phenomenon of being struck by lightning has three stages: entry into the body, passage through the body, and the exit from the body. This corresponds to the three stages of initiation: the call of the self, the

dismemberment of the self, and the reconstitution of the self. According to don Oscar, accounts of curanderos who have been hit by lightning in this way have described their experience as feeling like they had been struck three times, or experiencing three different “hits” through the single strike of lightning. In essence, this is reminiscent of Campbell’s account of the hero’s journey in that being hit by illumination catalyzes an insight that first, completely challenges one’s notion of self; second, this self is surrendered and laid to rest like the dragon of Campbell’s imagery; and third, the hero is reborn through the return to the familiar as a changed being and can share the wisdom gained from the journey with community.

This imagery abides to the most ancient forms of our human archetypes, so it is no wonder why being physically struck by lightning was, and is, considered a sacred rite of passage for the curandero. The metaphor of embodying a sustained connection to the deepest forms of truth (i.e., life and death, light and darkness, emptiness and fullness, and the interaction of positive and negative forces, etc.) is the life path of the curandero. They must consciously choose, and in some ways be selected (from among the many upward leaders), to do the work required to freely travel through this life with sustained access to each of the three worlds.

In relation to the cosmovision of the Pachakuti Mesa (depicted in the diagram below) the Lightning Bolt plays a significant role in describing an element of Peruvian prophecy known as the Taripay Pacha (or Age of Reencounter). It states that the influx of energy from the cosmos would shift from its current experience of patriarchal power within the heart of humanity to a time of empowered feminine essence and wisdom. As these elements of prophecy are currently occurring in the field of human consciousness, the depiction of this tradition’s cosmovision has changed to reflect these truths. Specifically, the direction of the lightning bolt of mystical illumination (depicted in the following diagram), previously flowed into the field of human consciousness from a dominant masculine energetic field into the feminine (from the right side of the Mesa to its left), has now changed its direction and its influence. In other words, the cosmic shift that is currently unfolding renders the influence of the lightning bolt entering from left to right, signifying the rise in power and influence of the divine feminine within the collective field of human consciousness. It is said that this shift and new age will not, as it has in the past, usher in a transfer in dominance, but will bring a new level of balance (and sacred androgyny) to the elements of the divine feminine and divine masculine qualities that every soul

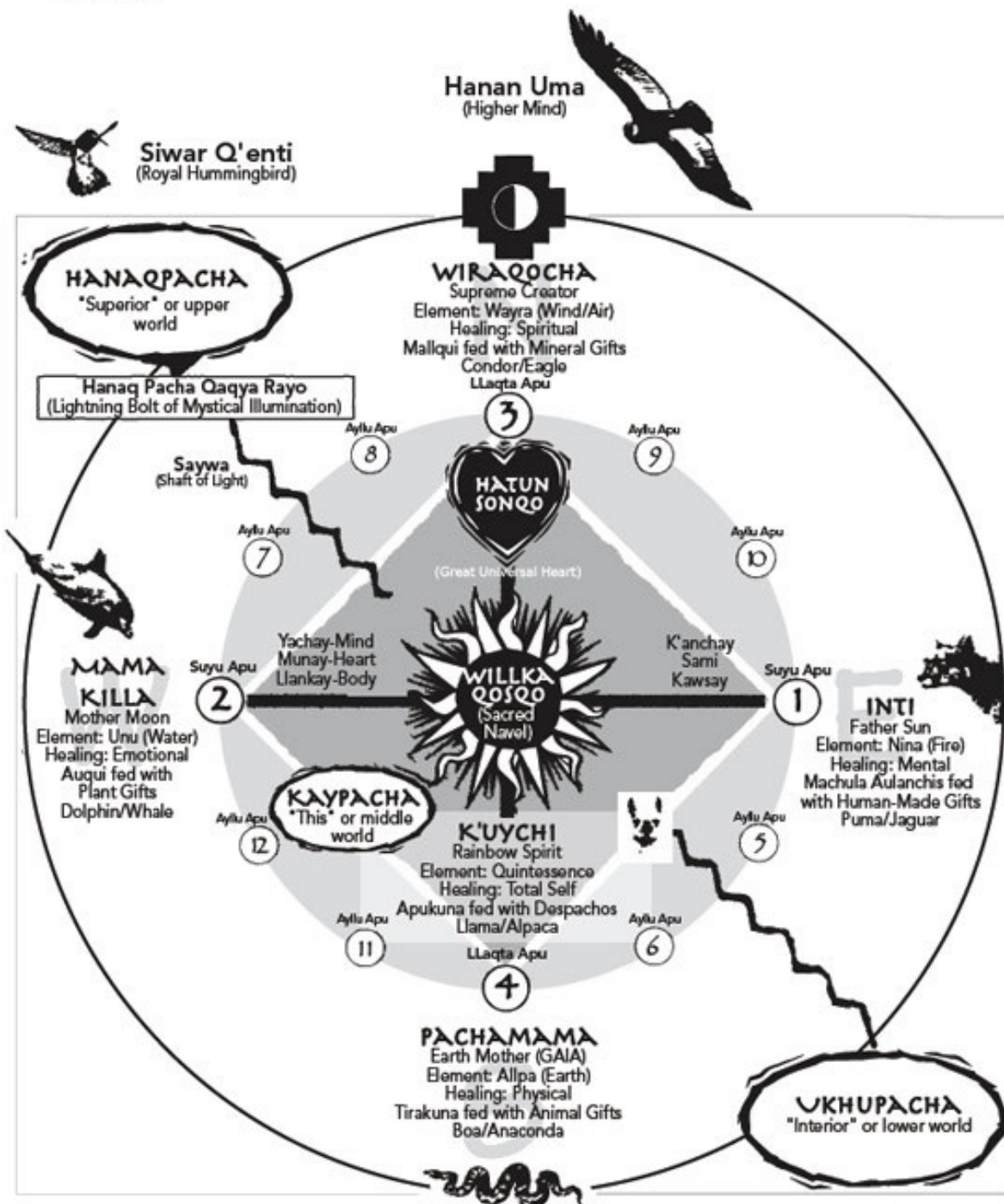
inherently possesses.

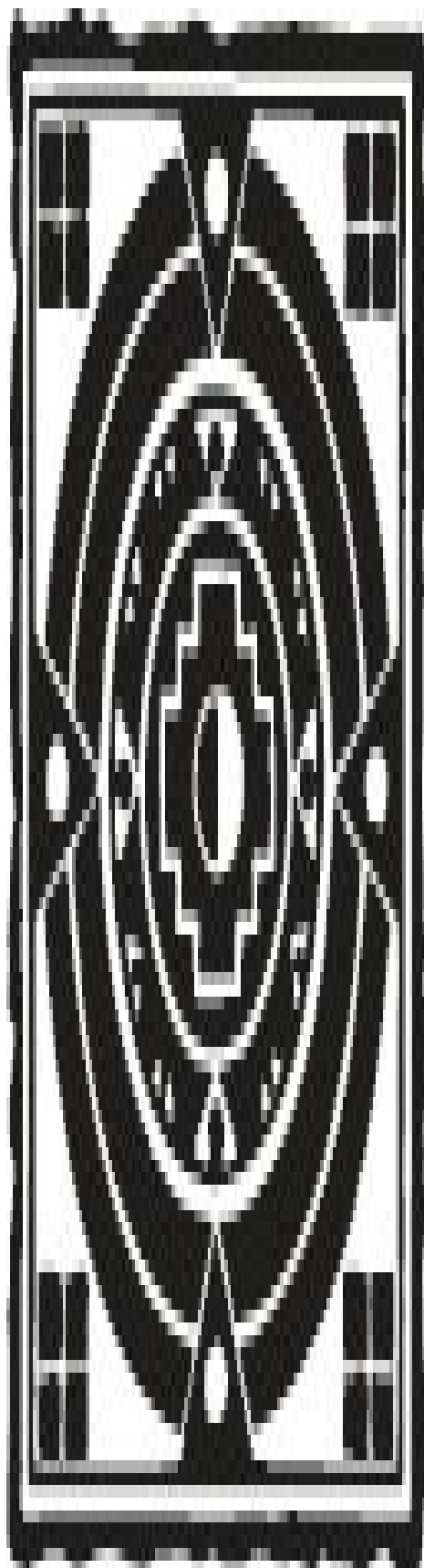
PACHAKUTI



MESA

COSMOVISION OF A PERUVIAN CURANDERO'S MESA





Chapter Three

Tutinary Spirit Helpers

Within the three worlds of experience there are literally limitless forms of consciousness expressing themselves throughout the vast universe. Over time, certain forms of this consciousness have been recognized as beneficial, and deemed essential within the experience of awakening, both for the individual and within the collective heart of humanity. And although the list of allied forces, awakened beings, and tutelary guides is far too lengthy to list comprehensively, the following are a few examples of the most engaged forms of guiding consciousness within the tradition of Peruvian curanderismo.

Tirakuna

The Tirakuna are believed to be “the Watchers” of the Kay Pacha or material world. They are representatives of the land, and some would say they are the spirit of land itself (i.e., the term stems from the Spanish “tierra,” which means earth, and the Quechua plural “kuna”). They seem to more heavily populate and inhabit rock outcroppings, ancestral temple sites, burial grounds, deserts, forests, and the entrances into the Kay Pacha from subterranean chambers. While they are rarely utilized as medicine helpers, and many experience their demeanor as inimical or demanding, they still play an essential role in the balance of all things within the Kay Pacha: they maintain the flow of kawsay and the balance of ayni or sacred reciprocity. They keep watch to remind humanity of its interdependent role in the natural world, and to maintain balance, both on the Earth and within our everyday interaction with self and others.

Andean mythology teaches that if we are not regularly performing regular acts of reciprocity (or some form of ritual offerings of gratitude) with the intent to give back to the Earth, the Tirakuna will give back for us by taking our energy and giving it to Pachamama to maintain balance. If, after embarking upon the shamanic path, one neglects the practice of giving back through selfless service, an inner nudging or hunger, or an indescribable longing, will eventually arise. This is believed to be the prompting of the Tirakuna. In this way, the Tirakuna make sure that human communities are ritually and ceremonially giving back to Pachamama.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the Tirakuna is their eyes, which are large and look very similar to the popular representations of the eye of Horus.¹ In psychiatry, it has been frequently noted that many paranoid schizophrenic individuals are fascinated with or troubled by eyes, as well as the fear of being watched by something that exists outside the physical realm. Curanderos may interpret this response as a misunderstanding of their relationship with the Tirakuna: we are not meant to engage with the gaze of the Tirakuna directly, but rather to heed their guidance – the sense of being watched is the prompt for an act of reciprocity. In other words, the Tirakuna call us to a deeper invitation to be

responsible caretakers and accountable stewards of the Earth.

Represented in the southern direction of the Pachakuti Mesa, the Tirakuna feed on the energies associated with the animal kingdom. For this reason, certain ingredients in most despachos (ceremonial Earth offerings) offered to the Tirakuna will typically include untu (llama fat). This is because fat is essentially stored energy, and it is replete with kawsay (vital life force).

People tend to be unaware of the Tirakuna until, through spiritual practice, they become more energetically open. Being energetically open creates an availability of your kawsay and that is alluring to the Tirakuna, because energy derived from the animal world (of which humans are a part) is food for them. Therefore, it is recommended that shamanic aspirants remember to perform acts of selfless service or ritual feedings. In this way, the Tirakuna are an invaluable reminder for us to live in ayni (sacred reciprocity).

Auquis

The Auquis (also called Auquikuna) are the nature spirits and are represented in the west of the Pachakuti Mesa. Although they are considered to be harmless, they are described as mischievous beings who love to occasionally hide our belongings and prompt us to search. They reside in marshes and moist, fertile fields that are rich in plant life, and they feed upon the energies of the plant kingdom and of the fertile Earth (which is rich in organic material). While feeding upon these energies, the Auquis also assist in the growth and health of plants; they thrive in areas of biodiversity.

If a person experiences restlessness, depression, or a loss of love, it is recommended that plant offerings be offered to the Auquis. Plants are good medicine for the heart, and many curanderos believe that making an offering to the Auquis in the form of a plant product will help bring love and joy into your life.

Malquis

The Malquis (also called Malquikuna) are the tree spirits. As trees absorb most of their nutrition through their root systems, shamans feed the Malquis with Earth from sacred ground – powdered minerals and crystals are especially welcomed. When one is feeling disconnected from Spirit, healing can come through work with a Hatun Malqui, or Great Tree Spirit.

Trees are revered in this tradition because they are able to feed directly on k'anchay (light energy), draw minerals from the soils of Pachamama through their roots, and link the energies of heaven and Earth within their trunks. In form, the trees resemble the neurons (the functional unit of the human nervous system) and can be likened to the nervous system of the planet. Through calling upon the Malquis (represented in the north of the Mesa), the shaman anchors both heaven and Earth in consciousness.

Machukuna

The Machukuna, the “Old Ones,” are also referred to as Machula Aulanchis, or “Benevolent Old Ones.” They are our ancestors – they consist of deceased Sapa Incas (such as Atahualpa and Huascar), revered healers, and the departed loved ones we knew in our own lives with whom we shared a loving and healing relationship.

The Machukuna are represented in the east of the Pachakuti Mesa because they are accessed primarily through memory (the east is associated with the mind). Offerings most appealing to the Machukuna are objects fashioned by human hands. Every time a curandero prepares a despacho (Earth offering) or opens and lays out his or her Pachakuti Mesa – a human endeavor – the Machukuna are honored.

When one suffers from an unsettled mind, memory loss, confused thinking, or an overly cerebral nature with separation from the heart, curanderos may say that the Machukuna are not being properly honored.

If we are not giving offerings of mineral, plant, animal, and human-made products back to the Earth through ritual and ceremony, de-stabilization or imbalance can occur in our lives. For this reason, it is important that we cultivate a ceremonial relationship with the natural world. As Pachakuti Mesa practitioners, it is important to cultivate a ceremonial relationship with the natural world. By offering ayni through action, ritual, and ceremony – using such gifts as mineral, plant, animal, and human-made products – we can maintain balance, stability, and harmony in our lives.

Siwar Q'enti

Siwar Q'enti, the Royal Hummingbird, is a central mythological figure in Peruvian cosmology. The myth of Siwar Q'enti is rendered much like the coyote, or the trickster, in the Lakota Sioux tradition in that Q'enti is often sly and cunning. In the Andean myth, Q'enti (the hummingbird) tricks Kuntur (the condor) to get to Wiraqocha (God/Goddess). According to don Oscar, the mythological account goes something like this:

The role of the condor (Kuntur) was to petition Wiraqocha in the heavens for guidance on behalf of the Sapa Inca (the reigning ruler of the Inca Empire). It was believed that no one, not even Kuntur, was permitted to see Wiraqocha face-to-face. So whenever Kuntur arrived in the Hanaq Pacha, the condor would go to its paqarina (place of origin) and politely sit with its back to the Creator.

Q'enti greatly desired to see Wiraqocha, but it was not born with wings strong enough to fly to the heavens on its own. So, one day when the Sapa Inca sent Kuntur to bring back information from Wiraqocha for the betterment of the empire, Q'enti hid under Kuntur's wing.

As Wiraqocha was telling Kuntur the responses to the Sapa Inca's inquiries, all of a sudden, Q'enti flew out from under Kuntur's wing and buzzed around Wiraqocha's head, landing on his right shoulder. Q'enti saw Wiraqocha's face. For its act of brave curiosity, Wiraqocha dubbed it Siwar Q'enti, the Royal Hummingbird and granted it the ability to travel freely through the three worlds.

Since that time, Siwar Q'enti has been the symbol of the supreme psychopomp – the navigator of the spiritual realms – functioning as the intermediary or liaison between all three worlds. According to don Oscar, Siwar Q'enti moves freely through both time and space via a column of light known as the saywa. The power of light itself is believed to be mediated by the spirit of the hummingbird. “Hummingbird medicine takes our nectar and cross-pollinates us with the universe so that we are always connected in interdependence to the great web of being. Hummingbird helps us recognize our role as unique strands within the

luminous tapestry of life.” (Miro-Quesada, 1998)

Apukuna

The Apukuna, also referred to as Apus, are the spirits of the sacred mountains of Peru (and parts of Bolivia and Ecuador as well). They are considered to be the most powerful of all nature spirits and are the main source of spiritual connection and protection for curanderos in most regions of Peru (the exception being certain parts of the deep Amazonian rainforest). These majestic peaks stretch toward the stratosphere, connecting the Earth to the Heavens, functioning as the Divine's guardians of the Kay Pacha.

The mystical capacity of the mountains has been sung into legend and myth by nearly every culture of the world throughout history. These havens of life and death emerge into form through massive collisions, or volcanic rebirth and consume all that are unprepared to journey to their highest peaks. Journeying to the liminal space and thin air of a sacred mountain peak is essentially a pilgrimage to meet the God of your understanding directly. It brings one closer than ever to the pronounced essence of our own labored breath, and reminds us of how closely related the pattern of life and death relates to simple inhalation and exhalation. As such, the Apus are considered regents of supernatural power and function as the closest and most potent representatives of Wiraqocha (Creator/Creatress) available to humanity in the physical plane. This pure resource of divinity serves to influence our own lives in the same way that the great mountains influence the weather patterns of nature.

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountaintop, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance. - Khalil Gibran

Although sacred mountains are considered predominantly masculine in nature, many are said to also embody a feminine counterpart called a ñusta (or princess of the mountain). This harmonious pairing of masculine and feminine energies –

coming together to create life, energy, and form – is pristinely embodied in the spirit of a mountain. The paired spirits of the mountains are said to create an elevated view of one’s inner and outer landscape. Just as a physical pilgrimage to a mountain’s peak expands one’s ability to see in all directions without obstruction, encountering the wisdom of this sacred pairing illuminates the sacred relationship of partnership and how this harmonious joining creates something greater than the sum of its parts (i.e., life).

Although all mountains are believed to have an influence over humanity (and nature itself), the intensity of this connection varies in strength from mountain to mountain. These varied “strengths” have been grouped and sorted into three major categories known as ayllu, llaqta, and suyu, ranging from least powerful to most powerful respectively.

Ayllu Apukuna are the sacred mountains of small villages; ayllu is the Quechua word for “extended family” or “a group of people joined by blood or communal ties.” Just as an ayllu is the smallest civic unit in the Andes, so an ayllu Apu is a sacred mountain that influences the smallest geographical area. For example, the small community of people called the Q’eros, who live near one of the most powerful mountains in all of Cusco (Apu Ausangate), still utilize the smaller, less powerful mountain called Apu Huamanripa to mediate the energy of their ayllu (extended family) in everyday life. Yet, while observing key times of ceremony, pilgrimage will be made to other Apus to access their greater strength and influence (e.g., llaqta or suyu Apukuna).

Llaqta Apukuna are the sacred mountains that watch over and protect a group of several villages; llaqta means “city” or “town,” thus, a llaqta Apu influences a geographical area that encompasses a city or a group of villages or towns. Two examples of llaqta Apus are Apu Pachatusan and Apu Huanacauri, which lie north and south of the city of Cusco respectively.

Suyu Apukuna are the sacred mountains of a much more expansive territory; suyu is the Quechua word for “a large region.” Therefore, a suyu Apu – such as Apu Ausangate or Apu Salcantay – influences an entire region, which consists of many llaqtas and ayllus.

On the most basic level, the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition honors and includes the medicine of 12 Apukuna that surround the city of Cusco. A Pachakuti Mesa has 12 khuyas (healing stones), each associated with one of the mountain spirits.

Four of the khuyas are placed in the four cardinal directions. The stone placed in the east represents suyu Apu Ausangate, the stone placed in the west represents suyu Apu Salcantay, the stone placed in the north represents llaqta Apu Pachatusan, and the stone placed in the south represents llaqta Apu Huanacauri.

All of the remaining khuyas represent ayllu (extended family) Apukuna. The two khuyas placed in the southeast quadrant of the Mesa represent the ayllu Apus known as Apu Pikol and Apu Chimbolla. The northwest khuyas represent ayllu Apus Machu Picchu and Huacawillka, the northeast khuyas represent ayllu Apus Sawasiray/Pitusiray and Colquepunku, and the southwest khuyas represent ayllu Apus Viracochan and Pumasillo (see figure 4).

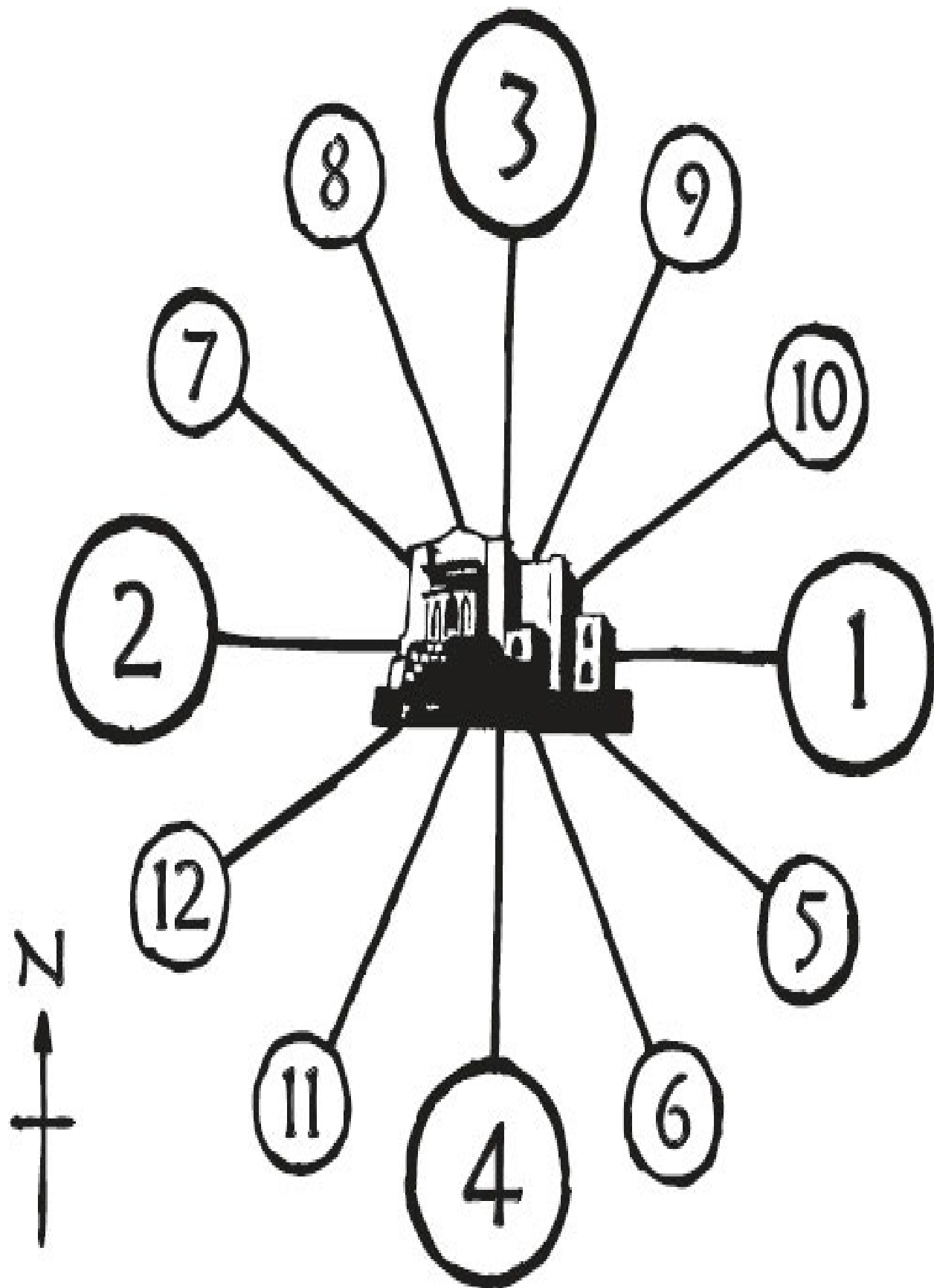


Figure 4. Apukuna of Peru, and the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition

1. Apu Ausangate
2. Apu Salcantay
3. Apu Pachatusan
4. Apu Huanacauri
5. Apu Pikol
6. Apu Chimbolla/Illimani
7. Apu Machu Picchu
8. Apu Huacawillka (Veronica)
9. Apu Sawasiray/Pitusiray

10. Apu Colquepunku

11. Apu Viracochan

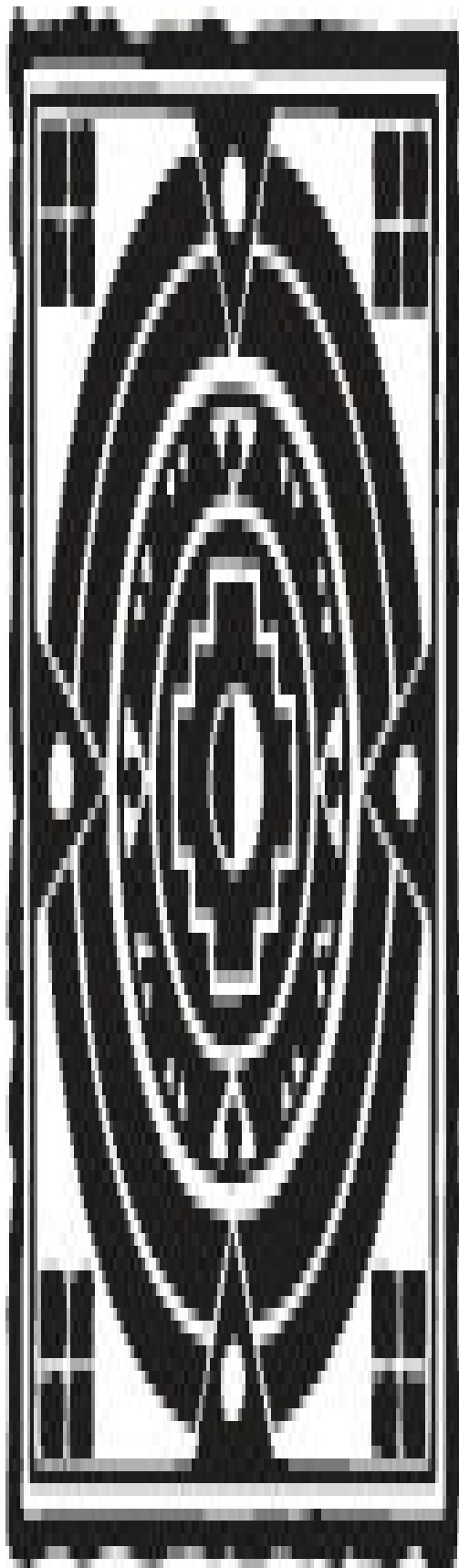
12. Apu Pumasillo

These stones are placed in relation to a corresponding geographic direction around the city of Cusco. As such, the stones themselves not only embody the specific sacred mountain they represent, but also contain the healing energies of the corresponding direction they are associated with (i.e., kawsay in the south, sami in the east and west, k'anchay in the north, and a blend of these energies exists in all of the inter-cardinal directions). Placing these 12 stones on the Mesa in a prescribed order (see figure 4) is a way of calibrating these forces of nature and integrating them into the field of a Pachakuti Mesa. The stones themselves are repositories of the energy, spirit, and medicine of the mountains they represent.

Obtaining these stones can happen in any number of ways. They may be passed down from an elder through shamanic apprenticeship, obtained from the mountain itself (i.e., found or presented to one from the specific place the stone represents), or a khuya may be fashioned by human hands. Regardless of how the item is obtained, the medicine piece can be programmed through intention, either by the Apu itself, or by the person who found or made it.

Ultimately, the process of directly engaging the vast forms of beneficial guidance available through the three worlds moves one into a deeper experience of relationship with all forms of life (both seen and unseen). Through the use of sacred objects, like the stones described above, one is able to bridge the gap between the concrete and the subtle, and directly engage with expressions of subtle consciousness. In other words, through the use of a simple stone, an often elusive, free-flowing spirit (encanto) can be held in the hand, and experienced directly through tangible forms of interactive communion. In this way, each piece that is placed on a Mesa becomes a bridge to an allied form of beneficial consciousness – and becomes a form of direct connection to the spirit, force, and

source of the consciousness that is held within it.



Chapter Four

The Pachakuti Mesa



Etymology of the Word Mesa

The Spanish word mesa is derived from the Latin mensa, which means “table,” or more specifically, “altar table.” In Roman Catholicism, the Latin term mensa refers to the altar tables of pre-Vatican II churches, which contain a flat stone that houses an ancestral relic of a saintly figure within the church. Similar to the concept of sepulchrum (meaning “ancestral tomb” in Latin), the type of relic embedded in the flat stone determines the name that church is given. For example, if the mensa contains a relic of St. Francis, the name of the church would contain his name (e.g., the Church of Saint Francis, or the like). In other words, the altar is a place of direct communion and physical contact with the ancestors.

This place of connection and contact is an essential characteristic of most Peruvian altar systems (Mesas); the objects placed upon Mesas are seen and experienced as direct forms of contact with our ancestors. In the Peruvian tradition, one’s ancestors are not limited to the kingdom of humanity, but extend to include the plant and animal kingdoms as well, not to mention ancestral mountains, caves, rivers, lagoons, and the like.

Another linguistic correlation that helps clarify the use of the term Mesa, as it applies to the curandero’s altar, is through the Spanish word misa, which means “Mass” or “the liturgy.” Working with the Mesa is, in many ways, like participating in a liturgical Mass in that when a Pachakuti Mesa is opened (ceremonially activated), the distinction between the symbol and that which the symbol represents is dissolved. The objects arranged upon the Mesa become what they represent – the mountains, the rivers, the animal allies, the lagoons, etc. When one works with these pieces, they are able to commune with those forces directly. A liturgical comparison can be found in the Roman Catholic belief in the Eucharist, as bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

A Brief History of the Mesa

In the early 1980s, archeologists discovered evidence that Peru's Central Highlands were inhabited as early as 8000 BC. "This area was an important traveling route for the coastal inhabitants to the highlands. Two major sites have been discovered within this area, namely Tres Ventanas and Kiqche. The people of the Andean culture inhabited this region from the Early Archaic Period through the Formative Period or from 8000–4500 BC" (Jennings, 1983).

Anthropologists acknowledge that shamanism is a universal phenomenon among both primitive and modern human societies, and may have its origins as far back as 40,000 years ago. If the Mesa expresses aspects of primitive indigenous animism, we could speculate that the origins of the Mesa may go back as far as 8000 BC – to the early inhabitants of Peru's Central Highlands during the Early Archaic Period.

Exactly when and where the Mesa originated, however, remains unknown. According to don Oscar, the lineage of Peruvian curandersimo spans through time starting with the Sechin culture, and reveals expressions of its evolution through the Cupeshnique, Tiwanaku, Parakas, Nasca, Moche, Lambayeque, Chimu, Wari, Inca, Aymara, Quechuaruna, Mestizo, and Pachakuti Mesa traditions. Donald Joralemon and Douglas Sharon, who have done extensive research on Mesas, believe the origins of this shamanic technology date back to about 2000 BC.

From the foregoing, it appears that the manner in which the Mesa organizes and defines space is the contemporary, transformed manifestation of a 4,000-year-old cultural configuration. In spite of the fact that the Spanish Conquest eliminated the native political and religious institutions through which these cosmological concepts found spatial expression, associating them with the work of the devil, nonetheless, these ideas have maintained themselves at a grass-roots level. This has occurred because the dialectic governing Peruvian Mesas

and curing rituals is a profound expression of a folk wisdom and tradition which has practical as well as symbolic value. In addition to integrating two distinct historical and ethnic traditions – Spanish Catholicism and indigenous animism – the Mesa dialectic provides a code for the problem-solving activities entailed in curing. (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 187)

Although the Mesa's date of origin is ambiguous, it is clear that it has accrued a mass of wisdom through a substantial process of refinement that has lasted for thousands of years. The fact that it is still alive and thriving to this day is testimony to the timeless wisdom embodied in this tradition. The Mesa, and its rich cosmivision, continues to function as a perennial resource, replete with guidance and deep wisdom.

Composition of a Mesa

Among the Mesa carriers of Peru's Andes and Northern Coast today, there are some objects and universal symbols that are commonly seen, including textiles, stones, ancient artifacts from sacred sites, and objects from both Colonial and pre-Columbian times. These items are reverently placed on a sacred textile, and together, they make up the foundation of the curandero's sacred altar or medicine ground. From within this sacred space, the curandero can commune with Spirit, mediate change, provide healing, and access information from a greater totality of existence.

The Pachakuti Mesa is a shamanic altar containing ritually empowered objects, which are aesthetically arranged on a sacred textile to reflect the system of medicine work employed by its carrier. The Pachakuti Mesa Tradition was born through an amalgamated synthesis of both the Paqokuna¹ (southeast Andean) and Huachuma² (Northern Coastal) traditions of Peru. Both traditions revolve around the use of a personal altar in ritual and healing to mediate the energies of the three worlds in a way that serves the Earth and all of its inhabitants. Both traditions also show elements of balanced dualism, indigenous animism, and pre-Colombian cosmology. The blend of the Paqokuna and Huachuma systems make up the core guiding principles of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, including the spatial arrangement of the items and their use in ritual, ceremony, and healing.

Although the list of items that can be incorporated in one's personal Mesa is limitless, there are a few common objects that are found regularly within the Mesa systems of Peru's indigenous peoples. A few examples are: sacred healing stones (khuyas), power objects and alabaster carvings (sepkas), gifts from the spirit of a mountain (estrellas or istrillas)³ and "living" totem fetishes that are commonly carved into stone figurines (enqas, also known as illas, qonopas, and inqaychu). Each of these categories hold rich depth in the ceremonial lives of the people who carry them, and each piece is experienced relationally as a direct encounter and interaction with the "living spirit" embodied within each piece, item, or object. In other words, the pieces themselves are the mountains, the rivers, the wind, rays of light, corn, livestock, etc., – they do not merely

represent them in symbolic form.

The word “representing” is problematic because it implies an iconic (i.e., metaphoric) relationship of one-to-one resemblance between the stones and domestic animals. From a herder’s perspective, however, the inqaychu operates according to an entirely different mode of signification. An inqaychu doesn’t represent anything; it presents itself. Its animu derives from the Apu in a kind of fractal relationship. Recognizing the personhood of places and stones (as we must in this context) entails shifting our terms of analysis to presentation rather than representation, and to predication rather than symbolism. “Resetting” the terms of our discourse opens the way for more nuanced relationships with other ways of living in the world. A powerful object is not symbolic of anything – it is what it is, a crucial node in a nexus of empowering relationships. (Allen 2016, 341)

Basic Directional Components

The five main components of a Pachakuti Mesa are a stone, a seashell, a feather, a white candle, and one's most personally meaningful sacred object. These components correspond to the south, west, north, east, and center of the Mesa respectively (see figure 5).

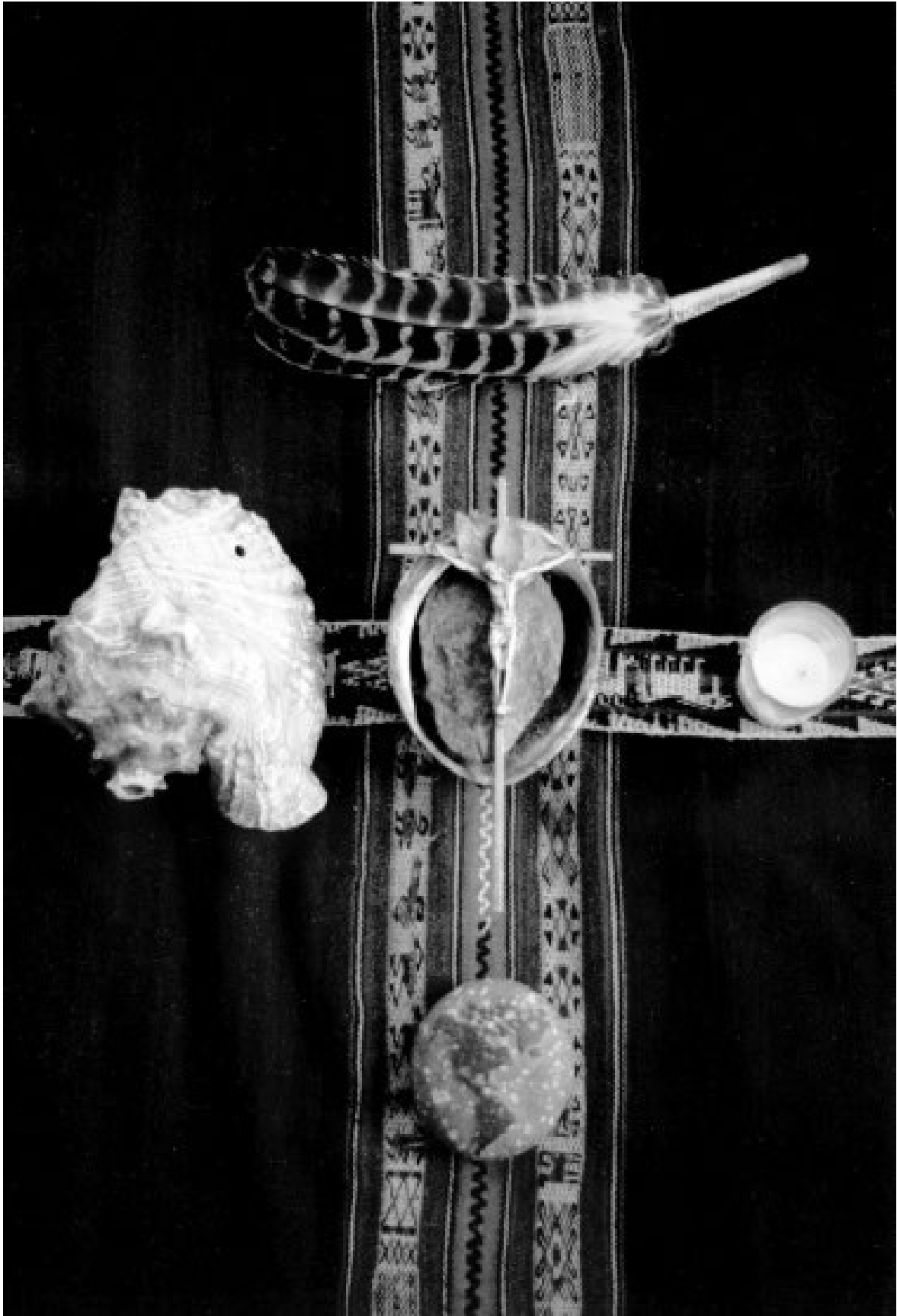


Figure 5. Basic Components of the Pachakuti Mesa

The five components are placed on the Mesa in alignment with the city of Cusco. The exact center point represents the Qorikancha (or enclosure of gold), which is a sacred building/temple that resides near the center of the city of Cusco. From the Qorikancha, the city of Cusco is divided into four unequal portions known as suyus (regions) that roughly correspond with the four cardinal directions. These four regions are known as Qollasuyu (southern region), Kuntisuyu (western region), Chinchaysuyu (northern region), and Antisuyu (eastern region). This system is, in turn, aligned with the constellation in the night sky known as Hatun Chakana or the Southern Cross (see figure 1).

According to pre-Columbian cosmology, the Southern Cross, called both Huchuy Cruz (Small Cross) and Hatun Chakana (Great Cross), is the main entry point to transcendent worlds. For this reason, many of the main entrances to pre-Inca and Inca monolithic temples are located in the southern direction. In honor of this ancestral tradition, the Pachakuti Mesa is also aligned to this constellation, and when a Mesa is used in ceremony, its field of medicine is likewise accessed through the southern direction. In other words, just as one would enter into the ceremonial complex of a sacred site, one enters into the energetic field of a Pachakuti Mesa through the southern direction (i.e., facing north).

In this ritual configuration of objects that establishes the five directions, a stone is placed in the south to represent Mother Earth, the sea shell is placed in the west to represent the ocean, feathers are placed in the north to represent Spirit, a white candle is placed in the east to represent the sun, and finally, one's most meaningful sacred object is placed in the center to represent the essence of the Mesa carrier (see figure 5). Although each direction is represented by a single object, there are multiple layers of symbolism and meaning inherent in each direction, and together, they are able to create a manageable manifestation of the entire Andean cosmovision – its lineal history, mythology, etc., – through a simple arrangement of items.

As all of the inherent symbols and meanings of the Pachakuti Mesa are brought

to life through ceremony, there is also an alchemical process of refinement that takes place when the Mesa is used. This process takes place in a clockwise manner, gradually transforming expressions of dense energy into more refined expressions of energy. From a scientific perspective, the stone, shell, feather, candle, and centerpiece also correlate with the five states of matter. These states – solid, liquid, gas, plasma, and quintessence – have the same respective equivalence to the elements of the directions – earth, water, air, fire, and ether. From an alchemical perspective, if heat were to be added to the solid Earth, it would cause that solid state to melt and eventually liquefy: water. If more heat were to be added to the element of water, the increased molecular motion would cause it to evaporate and transpire, becoming vaporous: air. If still more heat were to be added to air, it would ignite and become electromagnetic: fire. Finally, if an even higher frequency of molecular motion were to influence fire, it would eventually return back to a state of energetic emptiness or pureness. This state of pureness is known as the ether in physics and is said to be a hypothetical substance that occupies all space. It is believed to account for the propagation of electromagnetic radiation throughout the known universe. In other words, the center of the Mesa is the space or firmament where all of the elements are contained and expressed.

The layers of symbolism and tangible energies inherent in each area of the Mesa, when activated in sequence, create an alchemical process of refinement that transforms dense energy into more refined states of energetic medicine. In other words, the clockwise progression of ceremony, as it moves through each of the five directions, is helping us to move and transform the stagnant energy we hold within us. More often than not in nature, when things stop moving they begin to move into a process of entropy. By continuously moving, and progressing through the refining qualities of the five primary directions, one is able to keep energy moving through the physical and luminous body in a fluid and unblocked manner. This is one of the main functions and benefits of working with the Pachakuti Mesa.

The Five Primary Directions

The essential components of the entire Andean cosmovision can ultimately be contained within the five primary directions of a Mesa and the landscape it represents. This understanding – the cosmovision in reflection – was expressed continually throughout ancient Andean culture; it was found not only in the structural configuration of their ancient sites, but more spectacularly, it established the spatial layout of the major cities they constructed. For example, the city of Cusco was not only constructed in the same manner described above (i.e., divided into four suyus with the Qorikancha at its spiritual center), it was also built in the shape of one of their most venerated animal spirits.

When the city of Cusco is viewed from the mountaintops, one can see that the city itself is constructed to depict the distinct shape and likeness of Choqechinka, the jaguar or puma. The puma is among the most important mythical figures in pre-Colombian cosmology, partially due to its powerful connection to the stars – Choqe Chinchay is the brightest star within the constellation Canis Major (also known as Sirius) in Western astronomy. The following passage describes the layout of the city of Cusco from a bird's-eye view.

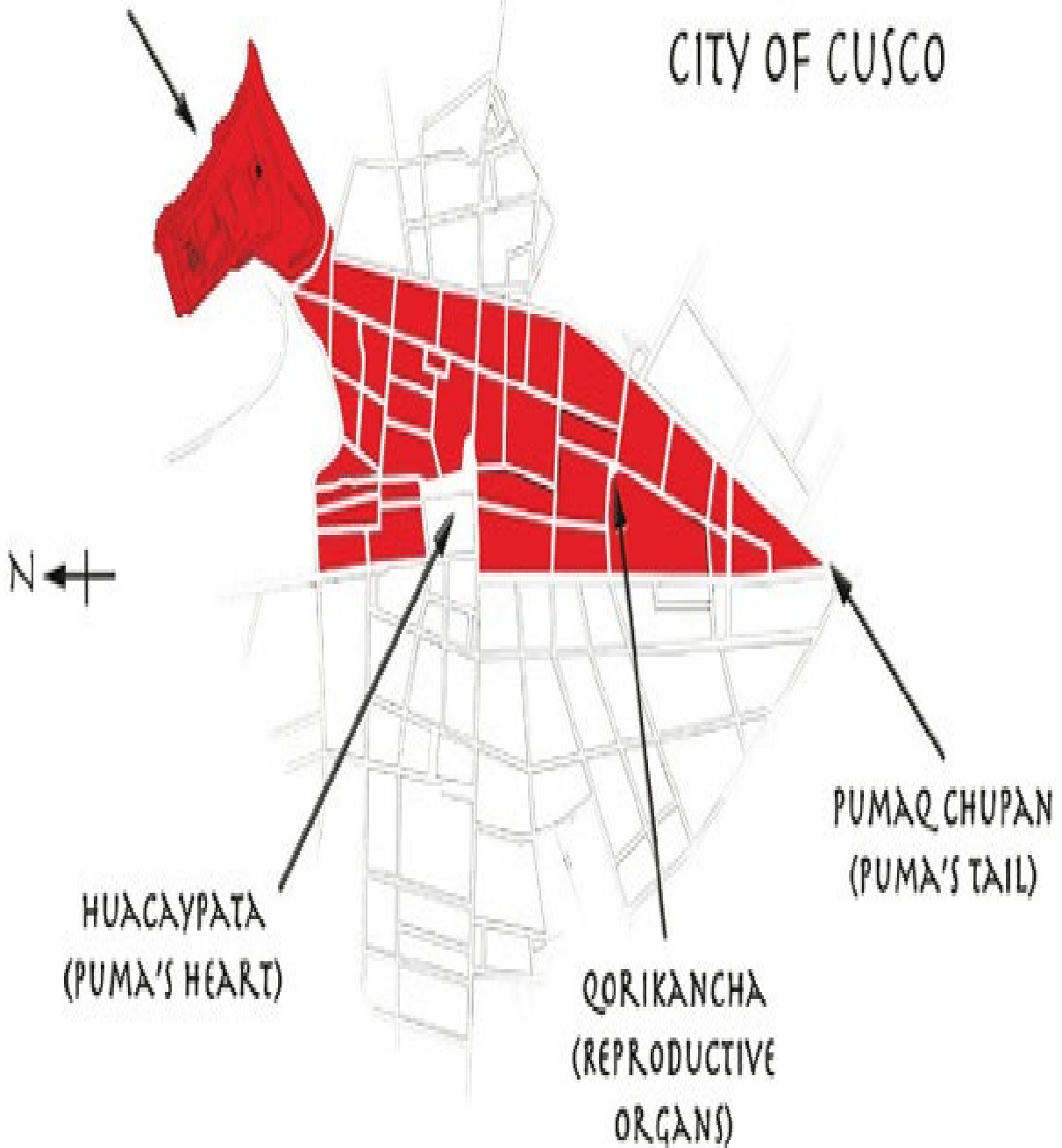
Seen from above, the lion's body lies on its right side with its muzzle, the heights of Sacsayhuaman, pointing northwest. Rump and tail are the tapering end of the triangle where the streams join, the barrio of Pumapchupan. The outline of its back is the Tullu River and of its belly the Huatanay; the spine is the street San Augustine. The massive thorax (Hanan Cusco) was separated from the belly (Hurin Cusco) by the diaphragm, the Antisuyo road, today the street of the Trifuno. (Brundage 1963, 145)

A closer look at the city reveals far more than just a human-sized reconstruction of the cosmic puma. Contained within the body of the puma itself, one finds an astonishingly elaborate system of structures, each built to attract and manifest

specific energetic conditions within the city. For example, huge ceremonial complexes were constructed to embody different parts of the puma's body (i.e., its head is the ancient site of Sacsayhuaman, which means "speckled head," its heart is the central plaza (Huacaypata), and its reproductive organs are the Qorikancha.

SACSAYHUAMAN
(PUMA'S HEAD)

OVERLAY OF PUMA CITY OF CUSCO



N ←

HUACAYPATA
(PUMA'S HEART)

QORIKANCHA
(REPRODUCTIVE
ORGANS)

PUMAQ CHUPAN
(PUMA'S TAIL)

Figure 6. Cusco from Above

Between the legs of the puma lay the city's three-sided main plaza (Huacaypata) which had the form of an inverted U, open at one end. Buildings at the closed apex of the u-shaped plaza were dedicated to Viracocha (Wiraqocha), the bisexual creator-god of the Incas, while buildings on the left and right sides of the plaza were associated with the female and male activities, respectively. (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 181)

The four main roads that run directly through the center of Cusco, which spatially divide the city into four quadrants or regions known as suyus (i.e., Qollasuyu, Kuntisuyu, Chinchaysuyu, and Antisuyu), are also built in alignment with specific lines of Earth energy, known as ceques. For example, Qollasuyu Road heads south (approximately 36 degrees south of east) toward Apu Huanacauri, following the Huatanay River. Chinchaysuyu Road (angled approximately 36 degrees west of north) moves through the ceremonial complex of Sacsayhuaman and heads towards Apu Salcantay. Kuntisuyu Road heads southwest from the city toward Apu Puquín, and finally, Antisuyu Road heads northeast toward the town of Písaq.

The way this spatial layout is reflected in the Pachakuti Mesa is seen when the textile (unkhuña) is set up in alignment with the Southern Cross (i.e., aligned to the south, facing north). From this position, the corners of the unkhuña point roughly in the same directions as the aforementioned roads (e.g., the northwest corner of the textile points 36 degrees northwest, which places it in alignment with the Chinchaysuyu Road).

When viewed from the stratosphere, the city of Cusco is seen as the heart of a slightly larger geographic area known as the Tawantinsuyu, or the four regions of the Inca Empire. These regions are divided into: the area of the plateau in the Lake Titicaca region, which is located southeast of Cusco (Qollasuyu); the coastal area located southwest of Cusco (Kuntisuyu), the highland area located northwest of Cusco (Chinchaysuyu), the jungle area located northeast of Cusco (Antisuyu), and the center area (Chawpinsuyu) is the city of Cusco itself.

Although, geographically, each of the four quadrants refers specifically to an inter-cardinal point, when referencing the Mesa, the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition will often use these terms to describe the cardinal directions. Therefore, depending on the context, Qollasuyu can mean either the inter-cardinal point of southeast or its predominant cardinal direction, which is south. Similarly, Kuntisuyu can mean both southwest and west, Chinchaysuyu northwest and north, and Antisuyu northeast and east.

The South – Qollasuyu

The south of the Mesa represents our Mother Earth, called Pachamama in Quechua. Pachamama is the animating energy of the physical earth. Much like the understanding of the Gaia hypothesis,⁴ Pachamama is seen as a living, conscious being. Although commonly seen from a dualistic perspective (i.e., containing both masculine and feminine energy, as well as creative and destructive forces), Pachamama is understood primarily as a creative, feminine being.

Pachamama is revered, praised, and thanked daily throughout the Andes. She is the living embodiment of ayni, which is a lifestyle of sacred reciprocity and interdependence. This reverence reflects the understanding of Pachamama as a fertile goddess and a giver of life in the deepest sense of the word. She is the quintessential nurturer, yet she must also be nurtured and cared for in order for life to thrive. For this reason, the Tirakuna are also represented as a layer of symbolism in the southern direction. Their constant prompts invite us to engage in a lifestyle of balanced reciprocity, which is key to staying in harmony with our greater body known as Pachamama.

It is with her that people share life and, just as giving and taking is a basis of existence among people, so the Quechua [peoples] believe they must give as well as take from Pachamama. So dependent are the Quechua on her, so involved is their relationship, that they regard Pachamama as an extension of themselves – a being that needs taking care of – a force that must be nourished and protected lest it die. (Cumes & Valencia 1995, 32)

This sacred “give and take” spoken about by Cumes and Valencia, is referring to a lifestyle called ayni in Quechua. Ayni, or sacred reciprocity, is the ethical tenet that guides the people of the Andes to live in sacred relationship with the Earth and with each other. It focuses on an awareness of interdependence between

seemingly disconnected things. It is also a relationship of “today for you, tomorrow for me,” a concept that weaves the people and the Earth together into the same, luminous tapestry. Through this relationship they realize, as the great Nez Percé Indian Chief Joseph did, that all things exist as unique strands within the “great web of life.” Ayni continues to be the core guiding principle of Andean life, and helps people relate to the Earth in an intimate way.

As well as symbolizing the Earth, the south represents our physical body and the material world. Its element is allpa, or earth (soil or ground). It is a container of the vital life force known as kawsay, and is the abode of Amaru (the serpent) in the form of the boa or anaconda as tutelary animal spirits, as these creatures live close to the Earth and often burrow within it.

Working with Amaru teaches us how to shed our historical past. It teaches us to cast off self-imposed paradigms that limit us from living fully in the present moment. The serpent represents the power of life in the field of time (emerging anew from within its own skin); it is the symbol of how life repeatedly requires us to shed the past in a constant process of self-renewal. The shedding of the serpent’s skin is also a symbol of mastery over the inner self, or Lower World, known as the Ukhu Pacha. In other words, we exist in a process of revelation as we repeatedly reveal the deeper truth of our inner nature to the outside world, just as the snake sheds its old skin to display the new, brilliant color that lies beneath.

Geographically, the south of the Pachakuti Mesa corresponds to the Urubamba River in the Sacred Valley, as well as the Madre de Dios and Tambopata Rivers, and the deep rainforest. Among the Andean people, this area is the most fertile, feminine part of Pachamama. The area located south of the Tambopata River and southeast of Cusco, known as the Altiplano in the Lake Titicaca region of Bolivia, is also affiliated with the south of the Mesa.

The south is also affiliated with the constellation of the Southern Cross or Huchuy Cruz or Hatun Chakana. The Southern Cross is the most prominent astrological configuration in the Peruvian night sky. And as it is considered an interdimensional portal, one may journey – in the shamanic sense – through it to other dimensions of reality. For this reason, the Mesa is always systematically arranged and aligned to the directions of the Earth, and the curandero always sits in the southern area below the Mesa. Sitting in the south allows the curandero to view the Mesa as it is aligned with specific geographical reference points on the

Earth and in the stars.

The West – Kuntisuyu

The west also has many layers of symbolism. It represents the Divine Feminine, the potential of rebirth, the element water, the animal totems dolphin and whale, the spirits of nature, and Grandmother Moon.

Looking west from the city of Cusco and up into the night sky, one can see the ever-changing figure of Grandmother Moon (Mama Killa) prominently displayed over Peru's coastal ocean waters. The moon is a symbol of the divine feminine principle – the emotions, intuition, and magic. It is also a symbol of death and rebirth, as each month it “waxes, wanes, vanishes from the heavens for three days, and then reappears to grow again to fullness” (Guiley 1991, 375).

The term “mania,” derived from “moon,” means ecstatic revelation; “lunacy” means possessed by the spirit of Luna. Nights of the full moon provide the greatest power for magic and the world of spirit. (ibid., 376)

Curanderos have long been aware of Mama Killa's ability to influence water. Not only does Mama Killa play a role in the regulation of the ocean's tides, her energy has a powerful effect on water in general, influencing even the water contained within our bodies. As a result, the west is also a symbol of the element water, or unu, and the animal totems dolphin and whale, who are masters of water.

Water has long been a symbol of human emotion and the unconscious aspects of the self. Both the dolphin and whale have developed an exceptional ability to navigate the depths of the ocean. They are masters of the ever-changing currents of this life (both literally and figuratively) who have evolved to become great masters of the breath, submerging for long periods of time comfortably to navigate the depths. As water is a symbol of human emotion, this mastery of the waters ties these great cetaceans to humanity. The dolphin and whale are seen as

the keepers of our truest emotions, holding the wisdom of love carried deep within our emotional bodies and the unconscious.

A shell is placed in the west of the Pachakuti Mesa to represent Mama Qocha, or Mother Ocean; she is seen as the container of all life. The west is also affiliated with the Auquis, or Nature Spirits, who, in their mischievous way, bring joy into the hearts of humanity, and help us understand aspects of our emotional body by bringing awareness from our unconscious into our conscious experience.

The moon is most often the brightest light in the darkness, illuminated by the light of the Sun. In this way, the west teaches us to see ourselves like the moon - as reflections of God/Goddess.

The North – Chinchaysuyu

In the Pachakuti Mesa, the north is affiliated with the Apukuna or sacred mountains. Looking to the north from Cusco, one beholds the Cordillera Blanca, or the high white mountain range. “This is the region where the highest peaks of Peru reside.

The north is also associated with Wiraqocha (supreme creator/creatress of the universe), Kuntur (condor), and Anka (eagle). The condor and eagle, being able to fly high into the heavens, are liberated from the “weight” of the material world. They are humanity’s revered communicators with the spiritual realm, able to return from the heavens with wisdom and guidance to assist in the process of the conscious evolution on our planet.

The north is also home to the Malquis, known as the Tree Spirits, who teach us how to commune with light directly yet remain firmly planted in the Earth while doing so. The Malquis of the north play a large role in providing the air we breathe, and therefore represent the element air, or wayra (wind). They sustain our lives through their constant exhalation of oxygen and inhalation of carbon dioxide. As such, the elemental force of air is seen to be the presence of Spirit moving through the material world: the breath of the Goddess. As a result, the north relates to our connection with Spirit as incarnate beings here on Earth and to the spiritual issues of the self.

These many layers of symbolism are anchored into the field of the Mesa by placing a feather in the northern area of the textile. The feather represents the high-flying birds, like the condor and eagle, who are the symbols of transcendence: Spirit gliding on the breath of Pachamama.

The East – Antisuyu

The east is represented by the Sun, known as Inti or Inti Tayta (Father Sun). The Sun played an important role in the lives of the Inca peoples. The Sun, as the most visible embodiment of light during the day, was seen as a giver of warmth (in the form of fire) and as the giver of life. The daily cycle of the Sun rising in the east and setting in the west made it a symbol of birth, death, and resurrection. The cycles of the Sun also helped mark the times of the harvest, and the sun's life-giving principle made the harvest flourish. In this way, it is no wonder that the Inca peoples believed the Sun was their maker, and that they too were beings of light.

This belief spawned their self-given name Intiq Churikuna, or Children of the Sun. They knew that being keepers of wisdom meant bringing the light of authenticity and truth into the darkness of ignorance and emptiness. In this way, all who are drawn to the shamanic path are also Intiq Churikuna, in that there is a call that is felt to rise each day anew and to use our lives to illumine darkness and to bring warmth, light, and nourishment to the world.

The east also exemplifies the mental aspects of the self and the element nina, or fire. Otorongo Achachi (Grandfather Jaguar) and Choqechinka (puma), who are masters of adaptability, are the animal keepers of this direction, and it is home to the Machukuna, or Machula Aulanchis, who are the Benevolent Old Ones – the ancient ancestors of this lineage.

Geographically speaking, the suyu of the east shares some aspects of the Qollasuyu (south), in that both directions share regions of the Altiplano (high plateau). Also, both the east and the south eventually drop into different sections of what used to be called Alto Piru, now called Bolivia. However, true east from Cusco leads one past Santa Cruz and Cochabamba and into the ceja de selva (eyebrow of jungle), and eventually into the tropical rain forests.

These many layers of symbolism are anchored into the medicine ground by placing a white candle in the east on the Mesa.

The Center - Chawpinsuyu

The center acts much like the still point of a revolving wheel, also called taq'e (hub) in Quechua. It is represented by one's most personally meaningful sacred object called a hatun misarumi sepka (great center power object). In other words, it is immensely beneficial as souls to find the still and centered point that resides, in all moments, within us. From this vantage point, we are able to orient to the rest of the world as authentic beings. Without this centered stance, our source of original movement and action is not available or accessible. Like all of the other directions, the area of the center, or misarumi, has many symbolic representations. It is an embodiment of all that is, has been, and will be: God/Goddess. For this reason it is known as K'uychi, which translates to "the full spectrum of light and color that we know as the rainbow."

The llama and alpaca, the tutelary animal allies of the center, assist one with the attainment of mastery. Like the balanced part of the Pachakuti Mesa in the center, the llama and alpaca are masters of balance. They are able to navigate the most treacherous mountain trails and passes with elegance and grace. These animals are also examples of supreme service. Their backs are offered as beasts of burden, they give their meat as food, their wool for clothing, and their milk to raise children – even their feet help seed the grass as they walk. As supreme servants, they live in perfect alignment with the sacred practice of ayni, the principle of sacred reciprocity or divine exchange. The llama and alpaca are tutelary animal allies for those striving to engage in a lifestyle of balance through selfless service.

The centerpiece of the Mesa, as an embodiment of Cusco or Qosqo, also acts as a microcosm of the center of the universe, with the outer surrounding pieces of the Mesa representing the universe itself. In this way, the centerpiece holds within it the energy, wisdom, and symbolism of the universe as it exists in macrocosmic form. Just as all energy and matter originated at a single center point before it inflated into our known universe, the center of the Mesa and its surrounding pieces are extensions of that same energy. In this way, it functions much like a hologram, in that when its particles are broken down and separated,

the completeness of the original image is depicted in each individual particle.

As an embodiment of Cusco, the navel of the Tawantinsuyu, the center also represents the willka qosqo (spiritual stomach) from which sami (animating essence), kawsay (vital life force), and k'anchay (light energy) are ingested. This process of alignment and digestion is described in greater detail in chapter six. The center of the Mesa is also the integration of the seven spaces (above, below, left, right, before, behind, and within). In other words, the center represents everything that is available to human beings, both through and beyond the experience of this life. Seating oneself in the center is an act of finding the still point in the center of a revolving wheel. When one discovers this space, one can stand unwaveringly in the eye of the storm without being effected by the swirling winds of the perimeter. From this place of stillness, one is poised to serve the world from a place of deep authenticity and stability.

Surrounding the centerpiece are 12 healing stones, or khuyas (see also chapter six), which are associated with the spirits of the Apukuna (sacred mountains) surrounding Cusco. Grouped according to the spirit they embody, these 12 mountains are the main source of guidance and power for curanderos of this tradition.

The Centerpiece of don Oscar Miro-Quesada

One example of how a centerpiece can be represented as a personally meaningful sacred object can be seen in the centerpiece of don Oscar Miro-Quesada's Pachakuti Mesa. Called a hatun misarumi sepka (great center power object) in Quechua, his centerpiece is comprised of a large scallop shell (qocha), a marble-like square stone with etchings (chaqra sepka), a colonial crucifix, or cross, made of hard wood (cruz de chonta); and a three-leaf coca k'intu, or ritual offering of coca leaves (see figure 7).



Figure 7. The centerpiece of don Oscar Miro-Quesada, 1998

His centerpiece, which is also referred to as a hatun khuya sepka, meaning “container of great affection,” was presented to him as a gift from his teacher, don Benito Corihuaman Vargas, upon completion of his Paqokuna apprenticeship in the South Eastern Andean region of Peru.

The shell represents Mama Qocha, or Mother Ocean – the container of all life. The alabaster square carving represents the four corners of the world (Tawantinsuyu), which are contained within that ocean. The cross not only honors the example of Jesus Christ as a masterful curandero, but also symbolizes the axis mundi (within the Mesa itself). However, as Joralemon and Sharon point out, “an axis is not apparent until one realizes that the Christian cross, which is found on most curing Mesas, can function as a pivotal ‘center’ or axis mundi” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 186).

The cross, when viewed through the lens of Andean cosmology, was seen by the ancient Inca peoples as the plus sign, which refers to the connections made when the four directions come together to declare a center point. The connection of the east and the west, or the horizontal line of the plus sign, is symbolic of the Sun rising in the east and setting in the west. Like the sunrise and sunset, the horizontal line also refers to biological life and the lessons that are learned within that framework of diachronic time. We are born in the east, like the rising Sun, follow the path of our life’s trajectory, and die in the west, like the setting Sun.

The vertical line connecting the north to the south is symbolic of spirit descending into matter. It represents the soul urge of humanity or the spiritual unfolding of humankind: our true nature as experienced in synchronic or non-linear time.

The connection of the horizontal and vertical lines of the plus sign represents a bridging together of the higher self, or the soul’s purpose in this life, with the lessons of the biographical self, merging in the center as the maestro curandero or hierophant.

The three-leaf coca k'intu placed on don Oscar's centerpiece represents: the concept of the three worlds (Ukhu Pacha, Kay Pacha, and Hanaq Pacha), the three attributes humans have come into this world to bring into balance (llank'ay – mastery of the physical world, yachay – wisdom or knowledge, and munay – love and compassion), the three healing energies (k'anchay – light energy, kawsay – vital life force, and sami – animating essence), and the three fields of the Mesa (Campo Ganadero, Campo Justiciero, and Campo Medio). The k'intu is a symbol of the integration of body, mind, and heart working in ayni within the center.

The Pachakuti

A human being is part of the whole called by us, the universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts, and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty...We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive. – Albert Einstein

This “new manner of thinking” described by Einstein bears strong resemblance to the ancient Quechua concept of the Pachakuti utilized by the Inca peoples. An example of this can be found through the naming of their ninth Inca emperor, Pachakúteq, who completely remade the entire social fabric of Cusco during his reign. His name derives from the word Pachakuti, which means “cosmic transformation” or “world reversal.”

The centerpiece of a Pachakuti Mesa embodies the energetic conditions capable of inducing this cosmic transformation or world reversal. As a result, the Mesa itself is a powerful catalyst for awakening one’s consciousness, which subsequently has dynamic, life-changing results. Experiencing a Pachakuti can completely dismantle one’s paradigm of the self, ultimately creating the empty space needed for the authentic self to emerge. When one is stripped of their defenses, and is asked to stand directly in the fire of truth, one has the potential to discover a self that exists beyond the self. This process often draws people toward a path of service and a newfound devotion to life, and thus is deeply honored in this tradition. Holding and creating a nurturing space for this powerful experience of transformation to take place is one of the primary functions of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition.

Cosmic transformation can happen on both an individual and a collective level.

In fact, each is dependent upon the other for the continued process of evolution itself. Once the accumulation of individual Pachakuti experiences has reached a critical mass, the awareness attained ultimately spreads to become a global, universally understood phenomenon. Through this transformation, a new foundation is established, acting as a stepping-stone for the next generation of visionaries to continue to stretch toward more refined understandings of this truth.

The Pachakuti is a natural state of transformation and ultimately happens of its own accord in the life of a soul. It is simply the byproduct of a soul completing a large cycle in their life and becoming ready for major change. This process was recognized and honored in ancient tribal cultures, yet has been all but forgotten in the Western World. More often than not, this experience is dismissed as some form of psychic break or midlife crisis where a person abandons their old life in a futile pursuit of the past. In ancient tribal cultures, this prompting of the ego to grip onto what is falling away would have been redirected in healthier ways. In ancient times, the wise tutelage of an elder would be present to facilitate this process of transformation with, and through the support of, the tribal community. Like a midwife, the tribal shaman would be present to help facilitate the mysterious encounter of a new, emerging life that is being born from within one's self.

The manner in which a curandero facilitates such an encounter is ultimately unique to the practitioner, yet in most cases, this process usually involves making repeated offerings to the elements of nature. Through these offerings of gratitude, all of the energetic support from the spiritual hierarchy is made available to the person in the midst of experiencing a Pachakuti. For example, as the Tirakuna, Auquis, Malquis, and Machukuna are fed and nourished on the person's behalf, the individual is rewoven back into the matrix of the natural world. And as these ceremonies are repeatedly witnessed, the ceremonial apprentice is exposed to a greater level of awareness regarding one's connection to life through simple and relatable forms (i.e., our interdependent relationship to the elements of nature, and their guardians). The new life that emerges in the aftermath of a Pachakuti experience, is therefore re-absorbed by the present moment of time, and realigned to the emerging essence of life itself.

The Mesa as a Living Field

The Pachakuti Mesa is spatially divided into three sections: lloq'e, paña, and medio. The terms lloq'e and paña are the Quechua words for left and right respectively. Medio is the Spanish word for middle, and it can be substituted with chawpin (the Quechua word for middle) if the reader desires linguistic continuity. The lack of uniformity exists simply because the word medio is more commonly utilized among Northern Coastal curanderos when describing the middle field of the Mesa.

These three sections are also called campos or fields. The left field is called Campo Ganadero or “field of gain,” the right is called Campo Justiciero or “field of justice,” and the middle is called Campo Medio or “field of the middle,” which refers to a central place of safety known as the seguro. The three fields are also commonly understood as “the field of the magician,” “the field of the mystic,” and “the field of the master healer” (see figure 8).

THREE FIELDS OF THE MESA

Campo Ganadero	Campo Medio	Campo Justiciero
Field of the Magician	Field of Mastery	Field of the Mystic
Lloq'ë	Chawpin	Paña

Figure 8. The Three Fields of the Mesa

Each of these sections contains a different quality of healing energy, a set of teachings, and a cosmological principle. “Symbolically, they express a moralistic dualism of good versus evil. However, due to the symbolic role of the third or middle field, it could be termed a ‘balanced dualism,’ probably best described as a dialectic of good and evil” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 20–21).

Campo Ganadero

In Runasimi, the more rural form of the Quechua language, the left side of the Mesa is called the lloq'e. The term lloq'e, meaning left or left-handed, can also mean relatively sinister or powerfully lunar. The left side is not intrinsically evil or bad, it simply contains the energy that can be used to neutralize acts of daño (harm) or negative events that have already taken place in the life of the person seeking healing assistance. In this way, the left field of the Mesa is not only used to discern the source of the problem, it can be used in defense to counteract the problem and, occasionally, to return it to its place of origin.

The left side of the Mesa is more commonly referred to as Campo Ganadero, which roughly translates into “field of personal gain,” “field of domination,” or “field of the magician.” A magician has an ability to effect change by governing the power of the unseen world through his or her intent. This change “is accomplished through ritual, in which cosmic powers, supernatural forces, deities or other nonphysical beings, or the forces of nature are invoked and made subservient to the will of the magician” (Guiley 1991, 336).

The widespread use of the word ganadero, literally “rancher, livestock herder,” for the left side of the Mesas of curanderos is difficult to explain, especially given the associations to sorcery and forces of the dead. However, several possibilities suggest themselves: 1) the name is incorrectly derived from the verb ganar, to win or dominate, and not from the noun or adjective ganadero; this yields the translation, “field of the one who wins or dominates.” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 273)

As the Pachakuti Mesa is an embodiment of the self, one could assume the above reference relates to the part of the Mesa that mirrors humanity’s intrinsic cravings for control, power, and dominion over outcomes. However, when control, power, and dominion are viewed spiritually and used properly, they

become essential characteristics of the curandero's working relationship with the living universe. For example, the curandero's ability to absorb, harness, transform, and deliver the subtle energies is essential when facilitating as a ceremonialist or healer.

The expression of Campo Ganadero dictates the importance of accepting all aspects of the human spirit. To the curandero, denial of any part of the self, risks allowing that same part of the self to become disproportionately powerful (i.e., pulling their awareness away from the medicine living in the present moment). Therefore, in curanderismo, all parts of the self, once understood, accepted, and healed, are re-employed for the greater good through the left side of the Mesa.

The Campo Ganadero is the field where one learns to master the movement of unseen forces and energies, and the illusive terrain of subconscious/inner world. This mastery is required if one desires to effectively corral and harness the subtle forces and energies needed to cure or heal. In many ways, the shaman must learn to gather energy, which is at times scattered, and direct it to those in need. From this perspective, the controlling of spiritual energies by a curandero or curandera could be seen in much the same way as domestic animals are corralled by a rancher or livestock herder. When the term ganadero is viewed in this light, one might find some appropriateness to its literal translation, as described by Joralemon and Sharon above.

Just as ranchers or livestock herders are responsible for governing their animals, so too must Mesa carriers attain a certain level of comfort with the responsibility of handling magico-religious power. According to don Oscar, the Campo Ganadero is a "superb teaching ground upon which to practice sympathetic and imitative magic." It is the place where the various forms of harm (known generically as *daño*), are unhinged, transformed, and dissolved. It is the place where the curandero commands and decrees, through his or her own will, the outcome of treatment. Yet, before this can be done effectively (and in the absence of the ego's agenda), one must first receive clear guidance from the right side of the Mesa known as Campo Justiciero.

Campo Justiciero

The Quechua term for right, or right-sided, is paña. This term can also mean that which is “correct” and in “alignment with truth.” For this reason, the right field is frequently called Campo Justiciero or “field of justice.” Among many Northern Coastal Mesa carriers, Campo Justiciero is also called banco gloria (“heavenly bank” or “the side of God”).

Campo Justiciero serves to restore a sense of righteous purpose to the lives of those experiencing personal or communal tragedy. It is the place where things are already in alignment with one’s highest good, and it is the campo or realm where the curandero trusts the evolutionary process of life itself. Like the mystic and sage, the curandero working the paña simply surrenders his or her will to the wisdom of God/Goddess, and defers to that form guidance in the present moment of time.

As a result, Campo Justiciero is also commonly known as “the field of the mystic.” The mystic is a master of transparency, possessing the ability to allow Spirit to flow through him or her unhindered. The free-flowing embrace of the mystic often requires the surrender of one’s personal agenda to remain open and unhindered to the guidance of Spirit. Through it one learns to embrace the abundance of what it being offered as medicine in the moment.

The intention behind one’s motivation to cure or to heal is the main contrast between the magical use of Campo Ganadero and the mystical intention within Campo Justiciero. Curing (el acto de curar) is the removal of symptoms or the extraction of a temporary condition, and is associated with the left side of the Mesa (lloq’*e*). Healing is the restoration of a healthy balance, or wholeness, in alignment with a higher spiritual purpose in one’s life, and is associated with the right side of the Mesa (paña). To cure, the curandero as magician takes on the responsibility of gathering and directing the energies of the unseen world to any form of imbalance within their patient. In contrast, healing occurs in the midst of constant change. Therefore, the curandero as mystic must learn to surrender to, and work with, the highest forms of guidance in order to effectively facilitate the

distribution of subtle energy.

When one learns to master both sides of the Pachakuti Mesa, and there is a balance of both aspects of the self (the magician and the mystic), one can begin learning what it means to work the middle field of the Mesa. The integration of curing mastery and healing wisdom creates a sacred relationship between the lloq'e and paña of the Mesa. In finding this balance of power, the shamanic practitioner becomes the master healer and can draw from either side of the Mesa at any time for assistance.

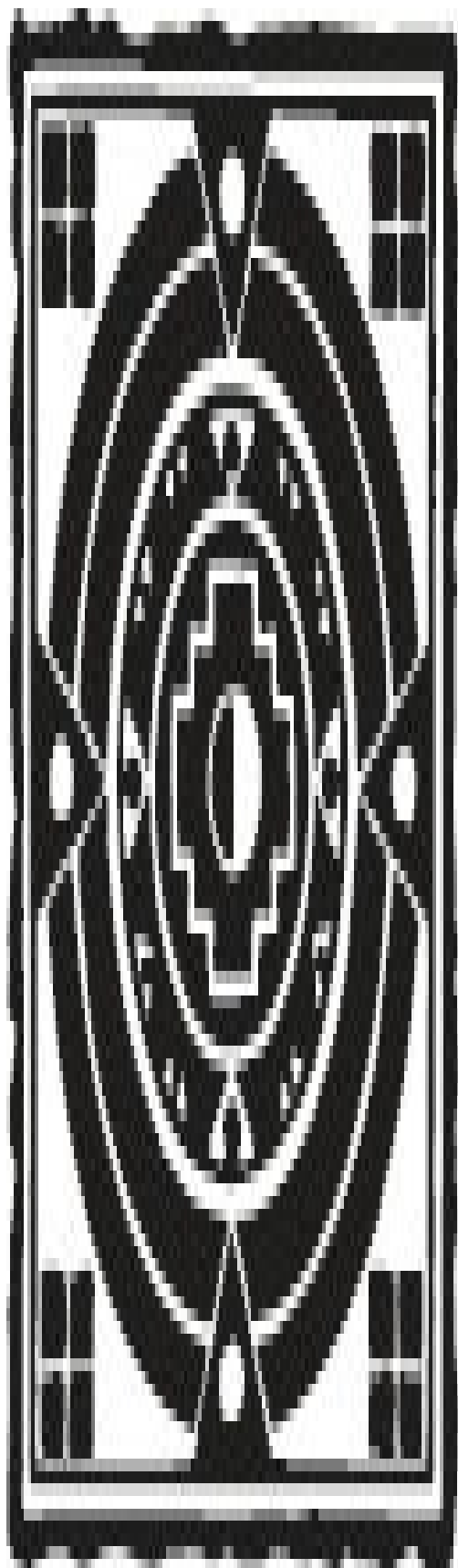
Campo Medio

The Campo Medio, or middle field of the Mesa, represents the path of the master curandero. Having worked the Campo Ganadero, one has learned to invoke and command distinct spirit helpers and universal forces. Through the Campo Justiciero, one has learned to trust the will of God – the force which orchestrates the entire living universe. This integration promotes a balance of personal power or, as Joralemon and Sharon put it, “a complementarity of opposites” (1993, 6).

This complementarity of opposites allows the expressive aspects of the self, which are motivated by personal intent (Campo Ganadero), to be driven by the intuitive aspects of the self, which are guided by the higher power (Campo Justiciero). This process can also be seen as balancing the feminine and masculine parts of the self.

Traditionally, the left side, associated with Mama Killa, or Grandmother Moon, is considered a feminine energy. In contrast, the right side, associated with Inti Tayta or Father Sun, is considered masculine. The blending of feminine and masculine energies creates the spiritually androgynous nature of the middle field, or the sacred balance of opposites called the yanantin.⁵

A curandero who walks the center path can draw from both sides of the Mesa at will. In finding this supreme balance, one experiences no separation between subject and object, and the apparent division of duality becomes a spectrum of complementary opposites working in harmony. When this level of mastery has been attained, the curandero becomes a taq’*e*, or hub, of the “medicine wheel” and begins the journey of moving with stillness in the Kay Pacha (i.e., becoming a “walking Mesa”).



Chapter Five

Ritual and Ceremony

Introduction

In this chapter I will break down the complex ceremonial process into 11 simple steps. These guidelines are not intended to be a rigid system that must be adhered to, but rather a set of concepts that can be brought together to create a rich and effective ceremonial experience. It is important to note that unlike the material offered in the first printing of this book, the information being shared in this new chapter is not being presented as a direct transmission from don Oscar's apprenticeship material in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. Rather, it is born from my own distillation of the wisdom he has shared with me over the years. As is true with any form of longstanding mentorship with a teacher, it becomes impossible to separate one's own personal insights from the tremendous body of wisdom that was offered through a longstanding apprenticeship. Yet, this point feels essential to clarify before the reader proceeds so I can both properly honor my respected teacher and share what his teachings have inspired in me as soul over the last two decades.

That being said, this new chapter is the distillation of everything I have learned about the ceremonial process to date, including wisdom gleaned from other cultures, traditions, and wisdom keepers, in combination with my own experience as a ceremonialist and facilitator for the past 20 years. It is with deep respect and humility that I offer this new information.

One of the most common challenges experienced by Mesa carriers is simply not knowing what to "do" with their Mesas once they have them set up. As a result, the Mesa often just sits like a racehorse in the stable, occupying a corner of a home, longing for the chance to get out and gallop. This section of the book is designed to start the process of demystifying the essential components of ceremony, to offer incentive, and to help practitioners start taking their Mesas out for a ride.

The information provided below can be used to structure any form of ceremony, from any tradition. I have been using this exact process for many years to design my own ceremonies and to structure and facilitate my trips to Peru, which are

designed as 11-day ceremonial retreats – each day moves through one phase of this ritual process. This process can be utilized just as effectively to design a short healing session for a friend or a client, or to more effectively hold the energetic container when building an apacheta. It could be used to establish structure for guided meditations, to plan a paqo wachu (vision quest) for yourself or another, or to design and lead elaborate workshops for your community. The applications of this 11-step process are limited only by one's imagination.

Basic Components of Ceremony

The basic components of ceremony are ritual and rite. Rituals are highly structured actions that serve as guidelines and transition points, which exist to bring order to the ceremony. Just as rituals are contained within ceremony, rites are contained within ritual. Rituals and rites focus the intention of the ceremony and help direct how the ceremony will unfold.

On a basic level, all formal ceremonies have the same core principles. For example, all ceremonies have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Most involve prayer and intention, and most focus on reverent connection with a force greater than the self. Ceremonies work best when there is a balance of structure and spontaneity. Having a well-designed structure in a ceremony gives participants the freedom to focus on the intention of the ceremony without needing to worry about what to do next, at the same time, an effective ceremony is also flexible and leaves room for the unexpected. If the structure of a ceremony is unbending, it may prevent the influx of spontaneous guidance, which can often steer movement in a more powerful direction. That said, it is important to learn when to break away from structure – to adapt – and to eventually weave the spontaneous encounter back into the pre-existing structure of the ceremony when the time is right. All of this should be considered when experimenting with the structure expressed through this chapter.

11 Steps to Creating Ceremony

1.Preparation – Physically create an environment that is free from distraction. Step back from the mind and let go of expectations, ego, and attachments to a desired outcome. Drop into your heart and operate from a deep place of intuitive, present-moment awareness.

2.Purification – Energetically release anything within you and around you that is not serving a higher purpose. Common purification practices involve the use of smudge, incense, floral waters, staffs (varas), feathers, etc., to create a clear field to operate within.

3.Consecration – Make some form of offering to the ceremonial ground you have created, honoring the interdependence and the sacred reciprocal exchange of ayni.

4.Pause – Move into astute observation of the silence and stillness – both within and around you. Deepen your sensitivity to all forms of sensorial awareness (sound, light, smell, temperature, etc.) found within the present moment.

5.Declaration – Present your intentions for the ceremonial space you are creating (i.e., healing, transformation, gratitude, alignment, etc.).

6.Invocation – Call in support from the unseen world, or rather, call yourself into deeper awareness of the support already in your midst. Move into a conscious recognition of Spirit’s grace and abundance.

7.Activation – Use a form of ritual expression (spoken prayer, medicine song, artistic creation, etc.) signifying that the medicine prayed for through the invocation is awakening and being made available, and can be used to bring this sacred space to life.

8.Pause – Once again, deeply observe the silence and stillness. Give yourself

fully to present-moment awareness. Allow yourself to drink in what your senses perceive.

9. Transmission – Channel and send the medicine and guidance you received during the Pause out into the ceremonial space or into the person(s) you are working with. This can be expressed in any number of ways, including spoken word, feather or staff work, or through a creative ritual act like blowing into the top of a person's head or into their heart, etc.

10. Completion – Close the sacred circle using a form of ritual expression, such as toning the directions three times each.

11. Integration – Remember that you are now carrying the medicine from this ceremony out into the world. Be conscious of living the ceremony, and the medicine you have experienced and received, in your everyday life.

Preparation

Preparing the Space –

A great way to begin the process of Preparation is to clear the ceremonial space of anything that is not related to the focus or intention of the ceremony. Think of this process like stretching out a fresh sheet of canvas to paint upon. Removing the items that are not pertinent to the vision of the ceremony helps to establish a clear field to operate within. This is also the time to gather all the items needed for the entire ceremonial experience and place them inside the ceremonial ground so that you can access them easily whenever you need to. It also helps to choose a palette of color based upon the mood and feel of the ceremony being designed.

It is essential to mirror this process on the inner level as well. Attending to one's internal preparation is arguably of greater importance. The process of letting go, and the surrender of willful agenda, begins here. It marks the movement away from the mundane patterns of common thought by offering space, time, and one's complete attention to the tasks at hand. Forms of inner preparation often begin by quieting the mind, focusing on the breath, enlivening the senses, and moving into a posture of ardent curiosity and openness to potential. This posture of receptivity prepares one to be fully available to the living mystery as it reveals itself through shamanic ritual.

Ironically, the best way to inwardly prepare for ceremony is to come to grips with the fact that one can never “really” prepare for this type of encounter. Ceremonial art mirrors life, and being alive has a way of reminding us that there are entirely too many variables to consider or predict with any degree of infallibility. That said, the best way to prepare for ceremony is to invite the mind to soften and get comfortable with being “unprepared.” Although an effective ceremony benefits from having a solid structure and design, strict adherence to this structure can be counterproductive. One must be willing to deviate from

structure and allow Spirit to inform the movement of ceremony in order for the true magic of ceremony to be revealed.

Several decades ago, while sitting with don Oscar in an advanced apprenticeship circle in New York City, I witnessed a perfect example of why spontaneity is so important in ceremony. As is customary with most apprenticeship circles with don Oscar, there is an immense amount of material to cover in the short time we have together. And everyone present is typically mindful of that.

In the midst of a powerful moment in ceremony, one of the participants (our beloved sister, Nina Murphy) made a courageous request to pause the proceedings, because she felt something needed to be added to the space. Normally a lighthearted individual, Nina became uncharacteristically serious, and asked the group to take a deep breath and blow out their east candles. Even though this is not common or customary, don Oscar was a gracious host, and was willing to pause within the midst of ceremony to accommodate Nina's request for a tangential interlude. She then asked us to become very still and to make no sudden movements, because she had a special guest named Veedor that she wanted to introduce to the ceremony. The room became still, quiet, and ripe with curiosity, and from down the short hallway we began to hear the sound of strange footsteps tapping their way toward the ceremonial space.

What emerged from around the corner was shocking enough to make the room wonder if we had fallen into a collective dream. A fully-grown Andean Condor, weighing over 30 pounds, slowly entered the room. I can still hear the crisp sound of its claws landing on the hardwood floor as he walked. He moved mindfully – he looked just like a monk with his arms folded behind his back, walking in meditation. He briefly examined each of the participants' Mesas as he meandered toward the center of the room, and when he finished perusing the space, Veedor stopped, and stood still in the open space to the north of don Oscar's primary altar.

Before our unexpected guest arrived, don Oscar had asked me to extinguish the east candle on his primary altar, so I was still crouched down to the right of don Oscar's Mesa. I had been frozen there, like a statue, since the moment Veedor had entered the room. What happened next sounds more like a line from a storybook, but is being written here without exaggeration or embellishment. This majestic bird decided it was time to reveal his glory and he spread his massive wings. Although I was over five feet away, the feathers of his left wing brushed

my cheek as they opened. The whole room gasped as we felt the powerful gust of wind he generated simply by opening his wings. We watched in amazement as this glorious animal turned slowly clockwise, holding his wings aloft, to soak in the warm rays of the sun shining through the windows behind don Oscar.

His caretaker John McNeely, who had been silently monitoring the entire event from the back of the room, now entered the center and stood next to Veedor. John widened his stance and lifted his arm to create a perch. This gesture almost instantly prompted Veedor to leap into the air, and after two huge bellowing flaps of those gigantic wings, John caught Veedor's feet with one hand, held Veedor above his head, and then slowly turned clockwise so all could see the beauty of this magnificent bird. The gust of wind created by Veedor's wings had blown a few of the feathers that had been sitting on participants' Mesas into the air, and we watched them all flicker in the sunlight as they floated slowly back toward the ground.

To this day, I have not encountered a more magical moment in ceremony. In light of the above, I can only imagine what a tragedy it would have been if don Oscar had not been willing to deviate from his structured course of ceremony to make space for the unexpected. This experience is a beautiful reminder that one never knows when something as grand as a condor is going to show up their midst. Since that moment, I have always made space for the spontaneous encounter in my circles, and this willingness has yet to disappoint. In short, without the balance of both structure and spontaneity, the alchemy of a ceremony runs the risk of being either too rigid for grace to manifest, or too malleable for the energetic container of medicine to be properly maintained. When balance is achieved, even a free-flying condor can feel safe enough within the ceremonial grounds to boldly spread its wings and explore the threshold of knowable experience.

Preparing the Mind –

If one wishes to silence the mind, fix its gaze upon the all-encompassing truth of the moment. Even the most fleeting glimpse of this boundless vision of Truth will force the mind to bow in humble reverence to the majesty of its infinite wisdom.

Overpowered by purity and simplicity, and the immeasurable abundance of Love...transfixed and forever transformed...astounded by the enormity of truth, the mind will fall blissfully into servitude. With joy and unrelenting adoration, it will welcome the saddle unto its back. It will toss the bridal over its own head and place the bit in its mouth. It will relinquish control in silent, awestruck surrender, and plead for this imponderable Wisdom to take the reins. (Magee 2013)

The mind may struggle a bit with letting go and moving into the role of being in service, or it may struggle with simply trusting the unknowable, yet the labor of this dance ultimately serves a greater end. It could be said that this struggle exists to remind the mind of where it has become divorced from the heart in relationship. The nature of the mind has a tendency to drive for finality, order, structure, and control. Its nature exists in stark contrast to the heart's proclivity to move willingly, spontaneously, and without the mind's consent, into the experience of mystery. According to permaculture farming practices, if one desires to spread the growth of a forest, one needs to work the edge, or boundary, of that forest in order to expand it. Similarly, the heart is designed to lead the soul out beyond the outskirts of the mind's comfort zones and into the vulnerable edges of fresh experience. This is where growth happens, on both counts.

Encountering the vulnerable edges of new growth is perhaps best described through the example of a physical partnership between lovers. If trust is not present in this experience, being asked to leap into the mystery can appear potentially hazardous, even unconscionable. But in a healthy partnership, the mind is on board with the heart's innate desire to experience the totality of existence. It ceases its attempts to control the heart's movements, and instead, falls in love with the heart's desire to encounter the Mystery. When this happens, the mind remembers that it was never designed to steer the ship, but rather to gather information by observing, on the heart's behalf, what is happening in the moment. The heart is able to use this information to navigate one's life: to make choices and manifest action based on a distilled essence of truth that lives deep within the soul. When this loving surrender into service occurs, the mind wants nothing more than to support the heart's guidance, and to shower it with lavish gifts.

When this relationship is restored, the innately supportive divine masculine

qualities of the mind fall once again into blissful trust with the heart's divine feminine wisdom and movement. When the mind remembers its role as information gatherer and hands the reigns of control back to the heart, and one experiences the healthy inner partnership of one's masculine and feminine qualities, the magic of life once again begins to flourish. Like the old Asian proverb describes, "The mind makes a wonderful servant, but a horrible master." That said, when inwardly preparing for a ceremony, it is supremely helpful to extend an invitation to the mind (and all parts of the self) to come and dine at the table of the heart. In doing so, one discovers that there is enough abundance in just one meal from the heart's garden to sufficiently feed the mind for all time.

Purification

In 1999, I audited a class at Boston College titled, “The Sacramental Principle.” In this course, Professor Michael Himes (author of *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology and Ongoing Incarnation*) described an ancient form of baptism that so beautifully captured the deeper meaning of purification for me, it has shaped the way I have approached the topic ever since. (Please note: My reference to it here neither infers a reduction of the diversified, cultural meanings of baptism down to a simple purification act, nor implies that purification itself requires some form of ritual bathing. It is merely being offered as an example to express the essence of what I am attempting to convey about the concept of purification).

In his lecture, Himes described this ancient form of baptism as a powerful, ceremonial rite of passage, designed not for newborn infants, but for the spiritually mature adult. When a soul would arrive at the juncture of their spiritual path where they understood what it meant to truly offer their life in service to the God of their understanding, the elders of this tradition would often extend the following ceremony to commemorate the occasion: A large, oval- (or sometimes rectangular-) shaped trench would be dug into the Earth, and its elongated points would be aligned with the east and west cardinal directions. At both of the elongated points of the oval, the builders would carve three steps that descended into the trench. This womb-like container would then be filled with holy waters and sanctified as a place of blessed reemergence.

The ceremony would begin before sunrise, and the person coming to be baptized would stand facing the west, amidst the fading darkness of the night, and disrobe. Surrounded by the aroma of purifying incense, the ceremonial facilitator would guide the person backwards into the trench. With each backwards step down into the water, the individual would be invited to let go of anything that was preventing them from being in full, deep, and sacred relationship with the God of their understanding. Through this process, the individual also released their attachment to form, on behalf of every part of their self, ultimately letting go of the entirety of their old life and its story.

Once they reached the bottom of the stairs, the elders would continue to move the individual backwards – away from the old – to the center of the ceremonial pool. Here in the center, just before the first rays of the sun broke over the horizon, they would invite the initiate to take one final breath. After which, the elders would plunge the individual under water and then slowly turn him or her clockwise 180 degrees. The individual would be held underwater until they released their held breath – the last breath of their old life – and then they would be slowly lifted up. And with their first breath in their new world, their eyes would behold the dawn of the new day arriving as the sun emerged from beyond the horizon. Like a spiritual midwife, the ceremonial leader would then move the individual out of the womb-like waters toward the emerging light and up the three steps in the east. As they ascended from the waters of baptism, the individual would realize that they were surrounded by the symbolism of rebirth everywhere in nature.

Once out of the water, the individual would be anointed from head to toe with special oils, adorned with sacred robes, and often given a new name. They were then sent forth into the world to live in constant remembrance of the baptismal renewal taking place in all moments of this life – they would see it mirrored in the exhalation and inhalation of the breath, recognize its constant invitation with the rising sun of each new day, and relive their own baptismal experience whenever they made contact with water.

The metaphor of this elaborate ceremony captures the essence of what I feel purification is truly about. It is an invitation to abandon the elements of one's old story that are preventing renewal – to release anything that is blocking the soul from experiencing a deeper connection with Source – and to come fresh to the moment with the curious eyes of a newborn. Essential ceremonies, like this one, beautifully illuminate the deeper truth of life: everything in nature is in a constant process of renewal through the act of releasing and rebirth.

One would be hard-pressed to find an ancient culture, from anywhere in the world, that did not celebrate this cyclical process through ritual in some way. In this light, one need not look far before finding similarities in the cultural context and practices of Peruvian shamanism. Similar to the example of baptism above, the healers of Peru regularly observe the following ritual: Once a year, both curanderos and paqos alike, leave the familiarity of their homeland to embark upon an arduous trek to Las Huaringas (a group of lakes located in the province of Huancabamba, Peru). They will journey for days to reach the high mountain

peaks of the Huamnaí landscape to renew their compacto, or “the sacred pact,” of their medicine path, by bathing in the waters of the highland lagoons (e.g., Laguna Negra and/or Laguna del Shimbe). Amidst the aromas of Palo Santo and Wiraqoya (Peruvian incense), they align themselves to the cardinal directions, disrobe, and then plunge into the frigid waters to release all forms of energetic density and negativity (hucha) that they have encountered through their year of communal healing service. They offer their breath in gratitude (phukuy) to the mountains, and they anoint themselves with sweet smelling perfumes after they emerge. Through this ceremony, they emerge from the sacred waters anew as the carriers of strong medicine (the hampiqamayoq).

Before departing, they will gather waters from the lagoon(s) they bathed in. They will also collect sacred plants from the area(s) they journeyed to, including the bits of Earth held in the plants’ root systems. They fashion these medicines into seguros, which, according to Dr. Bonnie Glass-Coffin, are “jars of ritually prepared herbs that protect against daño and pull luck and good fortune to their owners. A seguro consists of a clear glass bottle filled with healing herbs that have been collected from enchanted locations, especially the sacred lagoons of Las Huaringas. The bottle is also filled with water from one or more of the sacred lagoons, perfumes and flowered waters, honey, sugar, fragrant seeds, and it may contain liquid mercury, small figurines, crystals, and other miniature Mesa objects. The spirit-powers of all the objects that it contains are called upon by the maestro as dawn approaches [in ceremony]” (Glass-Coffin 1998, 23). When they return home, they weave this new medicine into the energy fields of their sacred altars (Mesas) and also use it to help the people of their community who come to them for healing.

Each time these medicine carriers open their bottled seguros, and they anoint themselves with the medicinal waters contained within, they remember their journey to the mountains and lagoons and their pact of renewed service to Spirit. It is through this repetitious remembering that they continuously renew their compacto.

This powerful, ritualistic revisitation to the purifying lagoons is further reinforced by the regular use of Agua de Florida at key moments during ceremony. For example, curanderos/curanderas will pour a few drops of Agua de Florida into the cupped hands of participants, invite them to clap their hands together three times, and then inhale the cleansing, floral scent. As the curanderos/curanderas breathe in the aroma, they are again reminded of their

ceremonial submergence in the great lagoons, and the rebirth they experienced while there. The sound of one's clapping hands (three times) is also a reminder of the three strikes of lightning, which itself symbolizes death, remembering, and rebirth in the form of the hanaq pacha qaqya rayo (lightning bolt of mystical illumination).

In this way, Pachakuti Mesa carriers around the world can connect to the purifying lagoons (or other potent moments of previous ceremonies) through the repeated ceremonial use of Agua de Florida. A trip to the lagoons is a pilgrimage of release, emptying one of all things that prevent pure alignment with the natural order of things. This journey is a powerful experience of purification, and can be remembered through the simple use of cleansing oneself with floral waters. In other words, even the simplest tools and rituals have the power to remind us that we have access to the most sacred and powerful places. If one cannot make the journey to the lagoon, one can simply call on its spirit (encanto), and the essence of the lagoon is made available. All that is required is to become fully present and to remember our connection to these sacred places and the forces that dwell within them. With this insight, one can bring greater depth and focus to one's intentions as incense is burned or floral water is used in ceremony. The same is true whenever a stone is held, a feather or staff is wielded, or when an object is moved on the Mesa. These simple ritual acts are ways of connecting directly to the healing forces, energies, and spirits of nature that are contained within the items of one's personal altar (Mesa).

Consecration

In 2015, I led a trip to Peru with anthropologist Dr. Bonnie Glass-Coffin, who is one of the world's experts in the field of Peruvian curanderismo. As we traveled through the Sacred Valley and into the Northern Coast, one of the themes we shared (and explored) with our group was the concept of kamay and its role in the ancient cosmovision of the Peruvian peoples. This concept refers to a method of “modeling” and “capturing” the essence of something, through a process of mirroring, reflection, and alignment (Magee and Glass-Coffin 2015).

The nature of kamay exists, on all scales, as an interwoven matrix of replicated forms throughout the universe, where the whole exists within the part and the part within the whole. An example being the majestic Oak tree, which exists within a tiny acorn, and the acorn exists within the Oak. Or the planets of our solar system (which are comprised of countless atoms) revolve around the sun, just as protons and electrons revolve around an atom's nucleus. Through deeper exploration of kamay, one discovers that it functions like a toroidal hologram that has been sculpted through fractal-like geometry. In other words, forms are not seen merely as expanding and contracting in scale, but rather as self-generating expressions of life that are simultaneously, and continuously, emerging from within their own center and folding back on themselves through time. Grasping the concept of kamay is key to understanding the essence of the ritual of Consecration, and the inner workings of the Mesa itself.

The concept of kamay was pervasive in Inca and pre-Inca cultures. Natural formations found across the landscape were seen as living embodiments of the peoples' ancient cosmovision. For example, the Willka Mayu (Sacred River), which runs north and south of the city of Písaq (i.e., the Urubamba and Patakancha rivers), was seen as a smaller model of the Milky Way, or Chaska Mayu (River of Stars). On a smaller scale, expressions of kamay were implemented into the construction of nearly every ancient ceremonial sanctuary built by the pre-Columbian peoples. For example, if the builders found a large stone that reflected the shape of a mountain behind it, they would implement that stone into their design to serve as a point of sacred focus and alignment (see

figure 9 – note the rock walls at the bottom of the photo are built around the stone referenced.)

If one were to view this stone from any other angle, it would appear anomalous and meaningless, but when one positions one's self in direct alignment with the mountain in the background, the stone in the foreground reveals itself as a smaller model or replica of it.



Figure 9. Expression of Kamay at Machu Picchu, Peru

Moving downward again in scale, we find the creation of a Mesa is likewise a miniature expression of the larger landscape. For example, the 12 Apu stones placed around the centerpiece of the Mesa reflect and model the actual mountain they represent through the process of kamay, anchoring an aligned presence of the mountains they represent in relation to the geography of Cusco.

Great value was placed on the occurrences of kamay, such as the stone in the image above, for its ability to catalyze insight into the deeper meaning and pattern of life. For example, in order to observe the world from a shamanic perspective, a certain posture of inner and outer alignment needs to be established. It is from this place of alignment that the shaman is able to channel energy from a source location (i.e., a mountain) and anchor it into a physical object in smaller form (i.e., an object on the Mesa).

Expressions of kamay – anchored in stone, water, the stars, the Mesa, etc., – not only reveal the interdependent connection we share with all things, but they also show us the path to imbuing Mesa artifacts, and the Mesa itself, with medicine through the power of telescopic magnification. This occurs in much the same way a curandero prepares an herbal remedy (remedio). In order to brew a potent batch of medicine, the shaman must bring a large volume of water and plant material down to a single, concentrated dose through reduction. This same reduction takes place when energetic medicine is gathered and channeled through the process of kamay (i.e., the medicine of an entire mountain is now contained within a single stone). When this is achieved, a Mesa becomes a portable version of the surrounding landscape (both seen and unseen). Yet before kamay can be fully understood, one must deconstruct, and rebuild, the cosmovision of the Andean peoples from its known point of origin (paqarina).

Expressing this act of creation through ceremony is one of the greatest functions of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. When a Pachakuti Mesa is constructed, the entire cosmovision of the Peruvian Andes is rebuilt, piece-by-piece, and its every element is brought into being through the alignment, reflection, modeling, and capturing of kamay. In other words, when one sets up a Mesa, one is

building a miniature model of the Universe itself. Yet rather than using large stones in the landscape to model a mountain in the background (like the image above), one uses miniature items (or *inqaychu*) on a textile to model something that may, or may not, be visible in the immediate environment. For example, a medicine piece may be connected with a mountain from another country, a star from another galaxy, or even to an energy that exists in another realm (e.g., the *Hanaq Pacha*).

In order to effectively weave medicine into a *Mesa*, and subsequently manage the many layers contained within it, one must establish a central point from which to view it all. In the *Pachakuti Mesa Tradition*, this process begins by aligning oneself to the cardinal directions by sitting in the south and facing north. That way, as a *Mesa* is constructed, its pieces will be mirrors of the surrounding landscape in relation to its geography. In other words, when one looks to the right from this position, one will see the candle in the east, and by looking “through” it, one sees in the distance the rising sun that it is aligned to. To the west one will see the shell, and by looking through it, one sees the ocean, and so on.

The ritual act of Consecration begins with this process of alignment. Once one is aligned with the cardinal directions, the ritual action of Consecration can commence and prayers can be offered to a bottle of *Agua de Florida*. Through these prayers, the medicine of the cardinal directions (*los cuatro caminos y los cuatro vientos*) is connected to, absorbed, and offered to the floral water by exhaling a full, deliberate breath into the contents of the bottle. Through this ritual act, one is using the inhalation of the breath to draw in medicine from the living world, and the exhalation of the breath to deposit this medicine into the bottle of *Agua de Florida*. A single drop of this water is then offered to the Earth, marking the exact center, and point of emergence (*paqarina*), of the ceremonial space. This drop of floral water is, in its essence, an expression of the birth of Creation, which emerged from a single point and expanded to form our known Universe. The *Qorikancha* and its connection to the *suyus* (regional directions) through the *ceque* system in Peru is another example of this symbolism, yet through a greater area of magnitude.

Once the drop of water has been placed, its essence moves into a process of expansion and replication through the creation of a cornmeal circle around the single drop of floral water. This is done in a clockwise manner, beginning and ending in the south. As the cornmeal is offered to the Earth, one can visibly see

the original act of creation manifesting into form. From a single point, the small drop of water has grown now into a single-cell organism, expressed here through the simplest form of creation (i.e., a two-dimensional circle).

Next, a horizontal line of tobacco is drawn from east to west, dividing the circle into equal halves like the process of cell division. This horizontal line, therefore, represents the biographical process of life as it begins to reproduce in the material world. The layers of symbolism inherent in this simple line of tobacco also reflect concepts of complementary opposites through the connection of east and west (i.e., the contrast of day and night, the elemental relationship of fire and water, the masculine and feminine qualities of nature, etc.). The correlation is further reinforced through the complementary relationship between the left and right fields of the Mesa (Campo Ganadero and Campo Justiciero), the past and the future, the connection between the Lower and Upper worlds, the relationship between the heart and the mind, etc. In other words, the horizontal line of tobacco tells the complete story of how vital life force (kawsay) and the animating essence of life (sami) move through form in diachronic time in the material world (Kay Pacha).

The vertical line of tobacco, drawn from north to south, marks the path of Spirit's descent into Matter and establishes synchronic time. Like a bolt of lightning, it moves from the heavens to the earth, and its illuminating force bridges the narrow gap between dualistic extremes through an exact point in time (i.e., the present moment). This is the story of creation as told through the simplest symbolic form known to humankind: from nothing came the one, the one became two, and the two became four.

In a larger context, this creation story is also told through the functional ceremonial systems of ancient archaeological sites like Tipon. For example, the perennial spring at this archaeological site starts off as a single fount and bifurcates into two channels. The two channels then split and become four. Finally, the water from all four channels pours into a larger pool – in essence, returning back to the one. From this second pool, the water was and is used to irrigate the plant life on the systems of terraced agriculture (i.e., the source of life for the people).

Returning to the process of consecrating the ground: As the symbol of the plus sign is formed through the overlap of the horizontal and vertical lines of tobacco, the exact point of emergence (the single drop of floral water) is once again

reinforced, aligned to, and illuminated. In ritual, this point creates a heightened focus regarding “where and when” the energy of a ceremony will be brought forth, and eventually contained, within the ceremonial body. And as the ritual continues, one begins to recognize their role as both the creator of, and the witness to, the process of creation as it takes shape through the present moment of time.

The first phase of Consecration is completed by placing three perfect coca leaves (k'intu) in the center of the tobacco cross. The k'intu reflects the coming together of the three worlds – and the bridging of the past, present, and future. These three leaves are also an embodiment of the three healing energies (k'anchay, sami, and kawsay), the three attributes (yachay, munay, and kawsay), and the wisdom imbedded in the three fields of the Mesa (Campo Justiciero, Campo Ganadero, and Campo Medio). Through the offering as a whole, an incredibly simple pattern of Life's emergence has been replicated, and the building blocks of life have been established as the foundation of the ceremonial ground that a Mesa is built upon.

With the first phase of Consecration complete, one can now begin the physical construction of a Pachakuti Mesa. This process begins with the placement of a sacred textile over the center of the consecrated offering of cornmeal, tobacco, coca, and floral water. The sacred cloth of the Mesa, called an unkhuña in Quechua or manta in Spanish, acts as a second layer of consecrated ground upon which the medicine work is conducted. The placement of this textile over the center of the consecrated offering is like laying down a more complex expression of the horizontal line of tobacco – it more clearly defines the physical plane, bringing it into being. Through its placement, the material world of form (Kay Pacha) emerges and begins to grow into more diverse forms through the placement of objects and items atop the textile.

That said, if the Mesa cloth itself represents a more complex replication of the horizontal line of tobacco, the vertical placement of staffs (varas), and the arrangement of medicine pieces (artes, khuyas, sepkas, etc.) on top of the textile reinforce the symbolism of the vertical line of tobacco. Like pillars reaching into the heavens, the staffs and medicine pieces bridge the Lower and Middle Worlds with the Upper World (Hanaq Pacha). When this occurs, the stone that is placed on the manta literally becomes the Spirit of a mountain through the alignment of kamay – a shell becomes the ocean, a candle becomes the sun, and so on.

The process of modeling and replication does not end here. Once the Mesa has been constructed for use in communal ceremony, the participants are asked to enter the ceremonial space and form a circle around the Mesa. Just as the cornmeal circle contains the tobacco cross, the participants sitting in a circle around the Mesa become the container of yet another layer of the ceremonial body. In other words, they become the cornmeal circle that is placed beneath the manta, as well as the circle of Apu stones placed upon it, etc.

Further still, the continued replication of layered symbolism is again reinforced when the ceremony begins. The entire Mesa is sprayed with Agua de Florida – reinforcing the drop of water originally placed in the center. Then, each individual is offered a few drops of the same water in their hands and invited to purify themselves by breathing in its medicine – reinforcing the point of origin (paqarina) of the ceremonial experience. The clockwise movement and progression of the ceremony is yet another replication of the dance and pattern of kamay; it replicates the same clockwise pattern that was used to create the cornmeal circle offered at the beginning of the Consecration ritual. In all moments of ceremony, the pattern of life is being replicated and reinforced to produce the energetic qualities needed for health to be restored on all levels (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual). This medicine is then carried in the hearts of the participants back to their homes, to be shared with their extended families and communities, continuing this process of expansion.

Through this system of expansion and replication, one eventually recognizes that the Earth itself is yet another drop of floral water, placed by the hand of Spirit/God/Goddess, to establish a central point for the ceremony of life on Earth to unfold. This is the deeper revelation of kamay as seen through the lens of the ritual act of Consecration.

“Through ritual offerings of gratitude, we beget new relationships of love, care, and compassion with ourselves, with others, and with the world. As we reclaim the deep understanding of our birthright, we naturally pay it forward into the world. Thus, ritual begets relationship and sanctifies a new pattern of being. As we embody the principle of ayni in All Our Relations, we align with the magnificence of who we truly are.” (Glass-Coffin and Miro-Quesada 2013, 62)

The Pause

In doing nothing, nothing is left undone. – Lao Tzu

The Pause is arguably one of the most important (and overlooked) elements of the ceremonial process. It is likely overlooked because at first glance, it appears completely benign, as if nothing is really happening during this phase of ceremony. While observing the Pause, all movement and ritual proceedings stop, and one's focus shifts from conscious action into active observation. Yet, through closer inspection, one discovers that more is happening in the stillness and the silence than may appear. A shift from "doing" to "being" is taking place, and this shift dramatically effects how the ceremonial field is engaged and experienced. For example, if the preceding rituals of Preparation, Purification, and Consecration were akin to preparing and serving a meal, the Pause would be the moment that meal was consumed and digested. The spiritual form of nourishment, in this case, derives from a direct experience and communion with the presence of Spirit. In the Pause, one communes with the essence of Life as it emerges from the stillness, and speaks itself into being from the silence, through the present moment of time.

The Pause is not a passive moment where one simply "turns off" and sits quietly waiting for something to happen. Rather, one is fully engaged, fully present, fully awake, and deeply curious about everything taking place in their midst. It is a state of exceedingly active awareness involving all of the senses in heightened acuity. The stillness and silence of the Pause reveals the timeless backdrop of consciousness unfolding everywhere, and all that is required to engage with it deeply is one's full attention on the emerging present moment (i.e., what do I see, hear, smell, feel, etc.). For example, one's full attention is given to the temporary absence of the warmth and light from the sun as it disappears momentarily behind the clouds, or a faint bird call heard off in the distance, or a scent carried on the breeze as the wind changes direction, or an insect crawling over a medicine piece on the Mesa. Everything is speaking in the Pause, and

when one is deeply available and receptive, its essence can be taken in and absorbed as medicine on the highest levels of sensitivity.

When the nature of the Pause is actively studied, another layer of the process and experience of kamay is revealed (i.e., the position of the observer in relation to that which is being observed through aligned reflection). It was alluded to above that the Pause refers to the cessation of all movement in ceremony, and this is true in a sense, yet it is not an entirely complete description of everything that is happening. The actual process of discovering this phase of kamay is more akin to floating in the center of a whirlpool. Movement is still happening all around you, yet in the center of that whirlpool, the forces that push or pull with influence are no longer as prominent or dominating. Dropping into the Pause is like finding (and residing in) the still point of the whirlpool's revolving spiral. This place of centered stillness, amidst unending movement, is the vantage point of reflection for the process of kamay. From this posture, one sees where everything is connected in sacred reciprocity (ayni), emerging from within itself, and folding back in on itself through time. It is within this space that the three worlds come together, and it is from this place of interconnected harmony that the shaman draws the medicine needed to heal self and others.

[Figure 9 shows a stone reflecting the mountain in the background through the process of kamay. Waking up to the deeper meaning of one's position \(as the observer or witness\) in relation to an aligned perspective is the nature of bridging the inner, outer, and transcendent worlds. Without the awakened Pause, and the aligned position of observation it creates, the platform between worlds is difficult to realize, access, or integrate. Steeping in the stillness of the Pause actively dissolves one's experience of separation and removes the lenses that obscure the truth of our unending interdependence. As such, a well-timed Pause is essential and can add immeasurable depth to the already potent experience of movement in ceremony.](#)

The stillness and silence also allow space for Spirit to offer its wisdom through a form of direct communication. It is through this discourse that one is able to not only gain access to healing energies, but to glean the innumerable insights required to distribute these energies in ceremony with precision. The Pause calibrates the senses to receive a deep transmission of the truth being broadcast in the moment through every element of nature. Viewing life through the alignment of kamay is like opening another set of eyes, which reveal the invisible infrastructure of life (i.e., the ceremonial container), as well as

everything that is reflected around it or moves within it. From this place of revelation, one is able to effectively determine the appropriate course of action in any ceremonial encounter, including which energies to avoid or absorb, and where, or to whom, they should be redistributed for healing or balance to occur.

Taking a moment to stop and still one's self can occur at any time during ceremony, and does not need to take place solely in the designated positions (i.e., steps 4 and 8) described in the 11-step structure of ceremony. Ultimately, anytime the ceremonialist feels the inner prompt to pause, there is an invitation to become still and drop in more deeply to observe. It is also helpful to revisit the Pause anytime a feeling of confusion or disconnection is taking place. As all forms of authentic movement are born from the stillness, be willing to revisit the stillness whenever needed and resource the next course of action in ceremony from this place.

It is important to note that shamanic guidance in ceremony is most likely to reveal itself with clarity when one meets the Pause with unattached receptivity. In order for Spirit to be witnessed as it is, it is essential that one suspends the willful presence of ego or any agenda-driven attachments to a desired outcome. These qualities obscure the clarity of wisdom being offered. The pause is ultimately a space that is free of judgment or analysis. Finding clarity simply requires the full attention of one's senses and for every part of the self to be available to whatever is occurring in the moment. From this space of pure presence as an active witness, free from any form of thought, analysis, or deliberation, all of one's faculties are engaged in a reverent bow to the mystery revealing itself from moment to moment. This is where the purest forms of medicine reside and emerge.

Be in this space for as long as the Pause embraces you. Treat it like a softly held breath that will eventually facilitate its own release. Let the Pause itself birth you back into action and movement toward the next phase of ceremony.

Declaration

You are what your deepest desire is. As is your desire, so is your intention. As is your intention, so is your will. As is your will, so is your deed. As is your deed, so is your destiny. – Upanishads

The ritual of Declaration sets the tone and trajectory of the entire ceremonial process. Presenting a clearly defined intention is a powerful moment of creation, and knowing what is happening behind the scenes during this phase of ritual can add tremendous richness and depth to the experience of ceremony. In this section, I will attempt to convey what is taking place behind the scenes of a potent shamanic declaration, as well as how words and intentions directly influence the energetic infrastructure of a ceremony.

During the course of my shamanic apprenticeship with don Oscar in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, I was repeatedly made aware of the transformative power of sound, and the potent medicine that resides within the spoken word. Great value was placed not only on the meaning of words, but on their phonetic resonance and morphological combination. He selected his words like an alchemist mixes potions, and his linguistic concoctions seemed to transport the listener into the cosmovision of his ancestral lineage. For don Oscar, words were more than the simple conveyers of thought and intention, they were mediums of creation – a way to bring form to the formless. It was from this deep-seated wisdom that Oscar encouraged his students to foster a lifestyle of radical, yet loving, honesty with the words we share, not only with others, but with ourselves. If we are able to explore the art of Declaration from this level of heightened linguistic integrity, we increase our potential to discover where this source of medicine lives and breathes.

The scientific study of Cymatics (see more in chapter six) describes how sound directly effects the way physical matter is structured. The undulating pulsations of sound (both heard and unheard) play a prominent role in shaping every form

and pattern we recognize in the living world. To take this study a step further, there are sounds that resonate harmoniously with the human form and there are sounds that do not. The disruptive nature of a baby's cry, which commands attention by literally transmitting discomfort, exists in stark contrast to the counteracting effects of a mother's soft lullaby, which has the ability to soothe and nurture. In other words, when sound is used to convey feeling, it holds tremendous influence in the material world. Moreover, on the subtle layers of consciousness, a noticeable difference can be instinctively felt between hearing a deep truth and being exposed to a lie, even if the words are spoken in the same tone (i.e., with compassion). In other words, the level of one's authenticity regarding ceremonial declarations is the invisible infrastructure of Declaration. The energetic nature of authentic truths creates an atmosphere of openness, safety, and expansion – in essence, healing – and the force behind a lie produces constriction, fear, and separation – in essence, harm. As such, the underlying intention of a declaration is just as important as the words used to describe it, and the tone of voice used to articulate it.

Considering all of the above, presenting a Declaration in ceremony that carries the power to truly heal or transform, although conceptually simple, is often challenging to execute. It is not enough to simply say the right things, at the right time, or to sound soft or poetic while saying them. In fact, if one's intentions are fixated on attempts to "sound" poetic, or lyrical, or profound, one will often move further away from the authenticity required to render a pure ceremonial decree. Speaking from a place of undiluted truth should be effortless, yet few things activate the distractions of the ego as strongly as speaking in public. So much happens when all eyes and ears are focused on a single individual. Once the ego gets involved, the ability to render a pure decree can become shrouded by the influence of social pressures, self-preservation, or attempts at self-glorification. In other words, the ego must learn how to bow before the soul has enough room to speak unhindered.

During the years I spent living with the Mik'maq peoples on the Elsipogtog Native American reservation, I was exposed to beautiful examples of communal ceremony that fostered the type of conscious communication described above. Their ancient culture still practiced the art of healthy dialogue through the process of tribal council and talking circle ceremonies. If an issue arose in community, the tribe would gather in a circle to discuss it. A ceremonial item (such as a talking stick, feather, stone, etc.) would be passed around the circle, and the individual holding it was given both the space to speak without

interruption and the full attention of everyone present in circle. The rules of this process dictate that no response may be given to any of the statements made by the person speaking, and “side-talking” is prohibited. In other words, the role of the community is to be fully present for the individual holding the ceremonial item (even if they hold it in silence) and remain in a state of pure witnessing. The role of the individual holding the item is to embody their own truth from a deep place of unrehearsed authenticity and transparency.

These guidelines, when adhered to, allow a group to avoid many of the pitfalls encountered in heated debates. In other words, through the structure of a talking circle, one becomes intimately aware of the voice of the ego, yet rather than allowing one’s self to act from its prompting or agenda, a space is created to examine it through a process of internal observation. When I asked my native friends how to be present in this type of ceremony, they responded by saying, “We are born with two ears and only one mouth for a reason. We must learn to listen twice as much (and twice as deeply) as we speak.” The same is true for the ritual act of Declaration. The ceremonial facilitator must have listened deeply in the Pause, and have distilled the wisdom found there into succinct pearls of wisdom.

That said, the art of holding space, and listening deeply, is one of the most important skills to master before a potent shamanic decree can be made. Unless an individual has grown comfortable in the space of still and silent observation as an awakened observer (i.e., wisdom gleaned from the Pause), knowing what to say in the moment of Declaration can remain forever elusive.

Back in 1998, at the ripe age of 24, I was asked to begin holding space as a ceremonial leader in my community. As I stumbled my way up the steep learning curve of this role, I encountered an unforgettable teaching about the nature of Declaration that remains a pillar of my work to this day. As I was setting up my Mesa to facilitate a weekend workshop, I made a silent prayer and commitment to only speak in authentic truths for the duration of the weekend. In hindsight, I had no idea what this prayer request actually meant, and if I had known what it would inspire, I would have likely been too afraid to make it. In any case, I believe it only took about an hour before the humbling moment of insight manifested. Out of nowhere, in the midst of a powerful moment of Declaration, I lost the flow of truth in mid-sentence. All at once, everything went blank, I felt my stomach drop, and I fell into the proverbial abyss of silence. The eyes and ears of nearly 40 individuals, most of whom were decades my senior,

remained fixed on me, hovering in anticipation.

The room was completely still and silent, but the noise inside my mind was unbearable. Every part of me wanted desperately to fill the silence, or to do something. My mind, my heart, and my ego all began wrestling with each other as I attempted to decide whether or not I was going to adhere to the prayer I had uttered in the beginning of ceremony – to only speak if my words were coming from a place of authentic truth. The first five minutes of this silent battle felt like an eternity. The next five minutes were worse – they came with the added discomfort of being in front of a confused and impatient crowd of paying participants who began fidgeting, checking their watches, and whispering to one another about what was happening. I would love to say that it was my inner strength that allowed me the fortitude to remain firm in my prayer, but truthfully, the experience was more akin to a moment of unavoidable surrender.

The awkward silence continued for approximately 20 minutes before any glimmer of hope or relief began to manifest. But eventually, the wrestling inner voices began to subside – the process of surrender had run its course. And in the presence of surrender, to my great surprise, I started to discover something: the embrace of silence began to usher in a shift. It began transforming the space within and around me, and the group moved almost effortlessly into an organic state of serene meditation. The silence turned into a place of deep, nourishing comfort, and when the Pause released me and I finally began to speak, I realized my words were coming from a place that was unquestionably different: they were pure and clear and free. In the absence of fear, analysis, or agenda, I had inadvertently stumbled into the birthplace of shamanic Declaration. Words flowed from an impersonal place of connection with almost effortless precision and with a wisdom far greater than I could hope to possess or comprehend. Through an experience of deep surrender, I found myself drinking from the wellspring of life, and the taste of those waters has been unforgettable. Since then, it has become more apparent to me when I am speaking from a place of pure, selfless Declaration and when my ego is attempting to insert itself.

The spiritual journey does not consist in arriving at a new destination where a person gains what he did not have, or becomes what he is not. It consists in the dissipation of one's own ignorance concerning one's self and life, and the gradual growth of that understanding which begins the spiritual awakening. The

finding of God is a coming to one's self. – Aldous Huxley

The shaman's declaration – and the observable power of manifestation embodied in their potent command or decree – has little to do with the power of the shaman as an individual (unless, of course, one defines power as the simple act of rendering unfiltered truth in discernable forms). This is what it means to be an open, transparent vessel for Spirit to flow through unhindered, or what is meant by the statement that healing does not come from the shaman but rather occurs through them. It is from within this deep state of transparency, free from personal agenda, that the shaman is able to make a potent Declaration. They let go of the self and dissolve into truth to become an embodiment of it – the walking Mesa. Their great power resides in the deeply humble role of translator or interpreter – the mouthpiece of Spirit. In this sense, the shaman is functioning like a diligent musician in devoted service to the conductor of the symphony. When one sings of what is, one sings along with what is becoming, and thus, the shaman is able to speak the world into being.

Shamanic ceremony simplifies the apparent complexity of life, stills the hurried mind, grounds the body in truth, and reconnects us to the wisdom and guidance that is always present in our midst. In its purest form, the ritual of Declaration is an act of speaking the soul's deepest desires into existence. It entrains one to a deeper focus, and reduces that focus down to what is essential and emerging. Through this witnessing, one can see what is pure and present in the field of natural movement, and discern what life itself is intending to flower. It is from this place of simple awareness, free from all distractions, that one discerns the next course of action in ceremony, and speaks it into being through the ritual of Declaration.

Invocation

In nearly every shamanic tradition there are spiritual support systems, allies, spirit helpers, and energies that are worked with to aid in the process of healing or the restoration of balance. In the North Coast of Peru, this shamanic act of “calling” on the spirits for assistance is known as *llamando* (to call upon, to call in, or summon). This process involves bringing greater depth and sensitivity to one’s personal awareness of the unseen. When one moves into a state of deep presence to what is being offered in the present moment, it becomes more abundantly available, and one can access its limitless potential. In the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, Invocation allows access to many different arenas (and resources), such as the elemental forces of the four directions, the spirits of the mountains and lagoons, specific animal allies, or to any number of other sources of guidance or support.

The process of Invocation is commonly thought of as “summoning” supernatural forces, and this is true in a sense. However, the concept of “calling in” the spirits may be more accurate if described as a process of “calling oneself in” or “attuning” to a deeper awareness of the spirits or forces already in our midst. The process of invocation (*llamada a los encantos*) connects us directly to the energetic qualities of certain places where healing forces are most abundantly available (i.e., the mountain peaks, flowing rivers, or elemental forces, etc.).

These forces and energies are not only coming into (and through) one’s physical and luminous body, they are also moving into the assigned, living fields of the Mesa. Through the process of Invocation, the medicine from these places of spiritual import are anchored into a designated arte, or medicine piece. This takes place in the Peruvian tradition through the mastery of both *encanto* and *calicanto* forces.

Encanto

An encanto is an unprincipled, free-flowing energy residing in a place that is considered magical or “enchanted” (encantado). If you have ever been to a place and thought, “something feels special, or magical, about this particular location,” it is possible that you were feeling the encanto that resides there. Essentially, these places exist in environments where the veil that separates the three worlds is thin or more permeable. As such, greater access to subtle forces and energies is more readily available in these areas. Discerning where these forces most abundantly reside, and whether or not they are manageable, is unique to the practitioner. Although these forces are described as “free flowing,” they are most commonly found in certain locations, such as mountains, lagoons, natural springs, converging rivers, and so on.

In order to harness the free-flowing forces of an encanto, the curandero must call it forth and also have a place to contain it. The “wild” nature of many of these forces can occasionally be challenging to anchor, and not all encantos can be harnessed (and indeed, others simply should not be). Some encantos are simply too strong or unruly to harness, and still others are too enervated to be of any use. But the ones that can be harmoniously embodied in the “second home” of a medicine piece can become repositories of great power for the healer to utilize. It is for this reason that nearly every medicine piece on the altar has a specific place it is associated with (i.e., the placement of the 12 Apu stones around the center piece). These stones are literally corralling the wild force of the encanto within them and providing a space for the encanto to anchor itself and grow roots in a specific zone on the Mesa. In this way, the medicine piece, and the encanto it embodies, has a space to live and grow in the field of the Mesa. Through the process of kamay (manifestation through modeled reflection) the medicine piece ceases to simply represent the spirit of the mountain: in a very literal sense, it becomes the spirit of the mountain in a more manageable form.

The act of governance over these raw forces of nature is not as simple as calling in the encanto and asking it to reside within a medicine piece. That would be like attempting to throw a saddle over a wild horse. Unless the trainer was very skilled, the horse would merely buck the saddle off of its back, and likely, knock the trainer to the ground in the process. In order to utilize the encanto in an effective way, one must also learn to master the art of working with the calicanto as well. “The encanto flows randomly but is particularly drawn to spots where calicanto forces are found. This can be a curer’s Mesa, where that force is then

under control, or it can be a mountain” (Joralemon and Sharon 1993, 151). In other words, one must create desirable environmental conditions that are attractive to the encanto, and suitable for it to reside within. This is the art of working with the calicanto.

When the flowers bloom, the bees come uninvited. – Ramakrishna

Calicanto

Unlike the encanto, which longs to be perpetually free moving, the calicanto is comfortable staying put once it has been assigned to a particular place. In this way, the calicanto can act in much the same way that mortar is used to secure a rock in place for the construction of a wall. It holds the encanto securely in place within a medicine piece so it can be accessed and utilized within the field of the Mesa. The combined relationship of the encanto and calicanto form a type of yanantin (sacred duality), in as much as the opposite forces attract one another. As such, if one can learn to manage the calicanto, one can, in turn, be able to govern the often-unmanageable force of the encanto within the Mesa field.

Once the encanto has been nestled within the embrace of the calicanto, it be called forth to be utilized in one’s healing practice. One example of how this force is summoned in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition is the use of the Quechua term *ajallo*, which means to call on the soul essence, or spirit, of a beneficial force, energy, place, or ally. For example, calling aloud “Ajallo Apu Ausangate” is to call on the soul essence of this mountain spirit, and everything that is embodied within its qualities, to aid in the process of healing.

Learning which force or energy to attune to is intuitively based, can take many years of practice, and will differ from moment to moment and from practitioner to practitioner. However, if one is just beginning on their medicine path, the following examples can be used as guidelines to better comprehend the nature of Invocation in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition: In chapter four, I referenced the basic components of the five primary directions of the Mesa. This section of the

book can be used as a reference to discern which forces to call in during a ceremony. For example, if you are working with someone who is struggling with a physical issue that requires attention, calling on the support system represented in the south of the Mesa would be helpful (i.e., Apu Huanacauri), as the south is where physical healing takes place in this tradition. Furthermore, one could also call in other additional qualities of the south, such as Pachamama, the Tirakuna, the Amaru, the energy of kawsay, the attribute of llank'ay, and so on, to provide continued assistance or to deepen the level of healing available in the moment.

Here is an example invocation to aid in physical healing: “Ajallo Hatun Hampikuna Qollasuyu, Apu Huanacauri, Apu Chimbolla, Illimani, Apu Viracochan. Ajallo Allpa Pachamama, Tirakuna, Amaru, Kawsay. Llankayniyoq. Ajallo Willka Hampikuna Hampuy!” Translation: “I call on the soul and spirit of the great medicines and mountains of the southern direction. I summon the soul essence and elemental force of the Earth, the Watchers, the Sacred Serpent, and Vital Life Force. I do this as an embodiment of my service work and ability to manifest in the material world. I call on this Medicine in a sacred way.”

It is important to remember that although the externalized prayer is powerful, it is less potent than the underling intention. One's willingness to align with, and attune to, the beneficial forces and energies available through the process of invocation is where the true power exists. As long as one's heart is true in its willingness to serve while aligning to these forces, they will show up and be willing to anchor themselves in the energy field of the Mesa as powerful and unwavering allies on the path. This heart-felt anchoring prepares the way for the Mesa's activation through the process of contar, or the accounting, of the medicine pieces that embody the encantos.

Activation

The activation ritual of the Pachakuti Mesa utilizes a combination of shamanic techniques to create a space that is replete with medicine, which can then be used to increase the potential for healing and transformation to take place. Among these techniques are Quechua ancestral chants, Apu invocations, tarjos or icaros (healing songs), breathing exercises, movement, journey work (viaje con sombra), and despachos (consecrated Earth/Spirit offerings). Each of these techniques helps one to connect more deeply to the source of life, and subsequently the source of healing.

Ritual and ceremony are designed to engage the senses, often through repetition, to help forge a path of reconnection to Source. One example of this can be found through the stimulation of the sense of smell and the repeated use of floral waters during a ceremony. According to don Oscar, the smell of the perfumes used in curanderismo were manufactured to mimic the smell experienced in the visionary states of the Hanaq Pacha. Certain frequencies of sound also aid one in the process of harmonizing to energies that are conducive to healing. Certain tones of sound and higher harmonics are used to awaken and crystallize certain beneficial energetic conditions in the body.

The chants used in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition to awaken these beneficial conditions are Pachamama, Mama Killa, Wiraqocha, Inti, and K'uychi (see figure 10).

Pachamama



Pah cha ma - - mah - -

The musical notation for 'Pachamama' is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of four measures. The first measure contains a whole note on G4. The second measure contains a whole note on A4. The third measure contains a half note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4, all beamed together. The fourth measure contains a whole note on A4. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Mamakilla



Mah mah ke - - yah - -

The musical notation for 'Mamakilla' is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of four measures. The first measure contains a whole note on G4. The second measure contains a whole note on A4. The third measure contains a half note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4, all beamed together. The fourth measure contains a whole note on A4. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

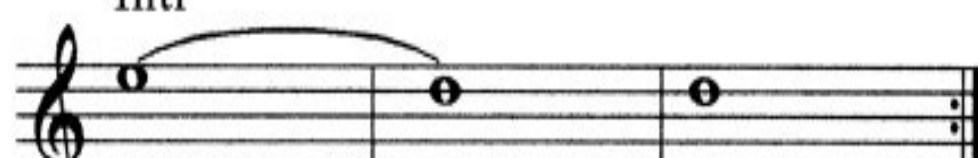
Wiraqocha



Wee rah ko-oh cha

The musical notation for 'Wiraqocha' is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of four measures. The first measure contains a whole note on G4. The second measure contains a whole note on A4. The third measure contains a half note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4, all beamed together. The fourth measure contains a whole note on A4. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Inti



eeennn - tee

The musical notation for 'Inti' is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of three measures. The first measure contains a whole note on G4. The second measure contains a whole note on A4. The third measure contains a whole note on A4. A slur covers the first two notes. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

K'uychi



Kwee eee chee

The musical notation for 'K'uychi' is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of three measures. The first measure contains a whole note on G4 with a sharp sign. The second measure contains a whole note on A4 with a sharp sign. The third measure contains a whole note on A4 with a sharp sign. A slur covers all three notes. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Figure 10. Musical Score for the Activation of a Pachakuti Mesa

Each chant activates different parts of the Mesa while simultaneously activating corresponding energy centers in the body. The south of the Mesa is activated by toning the word Pachamama three times. The chants Mama Killa, Wiraqocha, Inti, and K'uychi are subsequently toned three times each, activating the west, north, east, and center of the Mesa respectively. In doing so, the physical (south), emotional (west), spiritual (north), and mental (east) aspects of the self are able to merge together in the center of one's being (K'uychi) and become more awakened and integrated.

In biochemistry, activation takes place when molecules acquire the ability to perform their biological function. More specifically, activation is the moment when inactive proenzymes are converted into active enzymes that are able to catalyze their substrates into products. Metaphorically, this process describes the ceremonial activation of the Mesa perfectly, insofar as the ritual of activation catalyzes the amoral force of the encanto from its subtle substrate and turns it into a tangible and functional energetic field that can be utilized. In other words, the ritual of activation hastens an alchemical reaction of all the energy that has been gathered, generated, and harnessed through the process of Preparation, Purification, Consecration, Declaration, and Invocation. It is where the energetic template of the Mesa, and all that it has amassed, "rises up" from within each medicine piece, and becomes available to work with.

In the Huachumero roots of the Pachakuti Mesa lineage, the process of "raising" the Mesa and bringing it to life is often described as levantada de la mesa. This takes place through the act of contar, or the "accounting" of one's medicine pieces within the ceremonial container through a process of calling them out by name (citación). Doing so places the curandero in a working relationship with the encanto and calicanto forces embodied in each medicine piece, catalyzing a collaborative reaction of the forces embodied within all of the pieces. Activation is like turning a key in an ignition to start an engine. From this point, pushing on the accelerator will move the vehicle forward, in whatever direction it is pointed, with tremendous force.

In the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, activation is commonly conducted by toning the directions three times each. This section of the book describes a very specific way to activate the Mesa, yet it is important to note that this process can be conducted in any number of ways, and is limited only by one's creativity and imagination. When creating one's own activation rituals, it is important to consider everything that has been encountered in ceremony up to this point. The process of activation is about making visible what has manifested within your direct connection and encounter with Spirit/God/Goddess. It is the byproduct of both the movement of ceremony and the stillness encountered in the Pause. For some, Activation may take the form of spoken prayer or the singing of a medicine song. For others, it can be expressed through artistic creation, silent movement, the burning of incense, or the simple act of lighting the candle in the east of the Mesa.

When creating one's own Activation rituals, it is important to attend to each of the senses, and allow space for them to drink in the encounter. In other words, prayer may not be enough; one may also use floral water, song, and movement to express the ritual of Activation. Bringing them all together into a ceremonial crescendo of alignment opens the door for the ceremonial participant to view the great mystery on their own, rather than to be simply told of what it is. Shamanism is designed to create an environment for one to experience the mystery directly, and from their own unique vantage point.

The [Second] Pause

The ceremonial arts of the Pachakuti Mesa are built upon the principles of ayni (sacred reciprocity). In some ways, the entire pre-Columbian tradition revolves around this notion of balanced reciprocal exchange. This concept was deeply revered for its ability to guide and shape a healthy and sustainable ceremonial life. Through this living concept, one learns to have a balanced relationship of giving and taking. This is true in life as well as in ceremony.

All too often, the ceremonial aspirant gets caught up in the “doing” part of ceremony (i.e., making the offerings, smudging the space, performing the rituals, sending the energies, etc.). These are all essential tasks, and I mean in no way to belittle them, yet unless one is pausing in the midst of all the doing, the essential guidance that informs the spontaneous movement of Spirit is often missed.

The same is true with all forms of prayer. In my nearly two decades of private practice work, I have seen this issue reveal itself time and time again. The client comes protesting, “I am praying and praying for change, but the universe doesn’t seem to be responding.” When I ask how much of their time within prayer has been devoted purely to listening for the response from a place of still, silent receptivity, usually, (if the individual is being candid), the answer is “very little” or “none.” Praying is a deeply powerful act, but unless one is willing to pause after extending a prayer, the process runs the risk of becoming only a projected agenda – something (even in the form of a request) one is simply attempting to impose on the universe itself. When done correctly, one witnesses the ritual of Activation rather than facilitates it.

Through the ritual process of acts like Preparation, Consecration, Activation, and Transmission, we are putting ourselves, and our call, out there. We are handing ourselves over to Spirit/God/Goddess. And as the old Hadith Qudsi saying goes, “when you take one step toward God, God takes seven steps toward you.” Skipping the Pause increases the odds that we will miss the moment where the One is offering itself back to us. So remember to move once again into deep, still, silent observation and full receptivity. Remember to dissolve into a deep,

pure, rich, inhalation from the Source. Let it flood your entire being. The Pause is always the source of guidance for the stages of ceremony that follow it. As such, intentionally moving into the Pause after Activation deepens the vitality of ceremony, it's healing potential, and one's experience within it.

Transmission

The ritual act of Transmission is akin to the moment of a crescendo in an orchestral performance. It is the moment in ceremony where the volume of energy has reached critical mass and is then sent out through a rhythmic surge. This outpouring of medicine and transference of generated power is more than just the simple expression of energy, it is the delivery system for massive amounts of encoded information as well. Much in the same way that a plant releases a seed into the world to pass on the entirety of its genetic heritage, the complete wisdom of a ceremony (and occasionally, the essence of an entire lineage) is passed on through the ritual act of Transmission. And just as a single heirloom seed holds the accumulated wisdom of its entire history, a transmission from the Mesa is able to pass on a veritable forest of lineal wisdom through the ritual act of Transmission.

When viewed from this light, the preceding phases of ceremony are all building toward the moment of Transmission. In Preparation and Purification, a plot of land is cleared of undesirable weeds and the soil is tilled. In Consecration, heirloom seeds are planted in fertile soil, and space made for their coming into being through Declaration. Invocation makes available the organic matter to ensure the seeds have the greatest potential to emerge through Activation, and then, to be able to flower and throw off their seeds during Transmission. In other words, the ritual progression of the 11 steps attends to the energetic conditions of the space in order to establish a hospitable environment for the process of Transmission to take place: Preparation and Purification help create a clean inner and outer space, Consecration and Declaration ensure that the circle is nourished and focused, and Invocation and Activation bring the space to life. Each of these processes add to the integrity of the energetic container, and build the invisible infrastructure that allows it all to be contained, refined, and ultimately released through the ritual of Transmission.

It is important to note that directing energy through the process of transmission is less about a forceful push of energy, and more about the conscious release of energy in the direction you wish for it to move. It is the deliberate opening of the

container that inspires the movement of energy in a specific direction. It is a surrender and a release of all that has been cultivated and held in circle throughout the process of ceremony.

Beautiful examples of Transmission can be found when visiting many of the sacred sites of Peru. Many of these ancient ceremonial complexes revolve around the use of water from perennial springs, known as puquios or pukyokuna, that were used for drinking, ritual bathing, and to irrigate their fields of terraced agriculture (Cummins and Mannheim 2011, 16–17). Puquios were literally seen as the transmitting fonts of life that sprung forth from the remains of departed ancestors and tree spirits (Machukuna and Malquikuna) who exist as forces of fertility, and animators of life itself, in the material world (Kay Pacha).

The brilliant design of these water canal systems, many of which continue to function to this day, requires only the movement of a single small stone to shift the flow and direction of the water over large areas of farmland. A single individual can water acres of crops in a moment's time by simply lifting and moving a single stone. I suggest the same art of efficiency is employed when executing the delivery of an energetic transmission with the Mesa. In other words, the Mesa itself is like the perennial spring described above, and Transmission from the Mesa functions with the same efficiency as the irrigation systems used to water acres of crops. If the ceremonial container has been effectively constructed (e.g., if the container and water channels do not leak), Transmission is as simple as lifting and moving a single stone and allowing the reservoir of energy to flow like water toward a chosen destination (see figure 11).

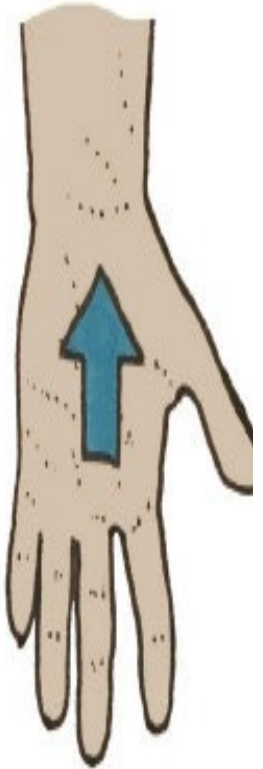
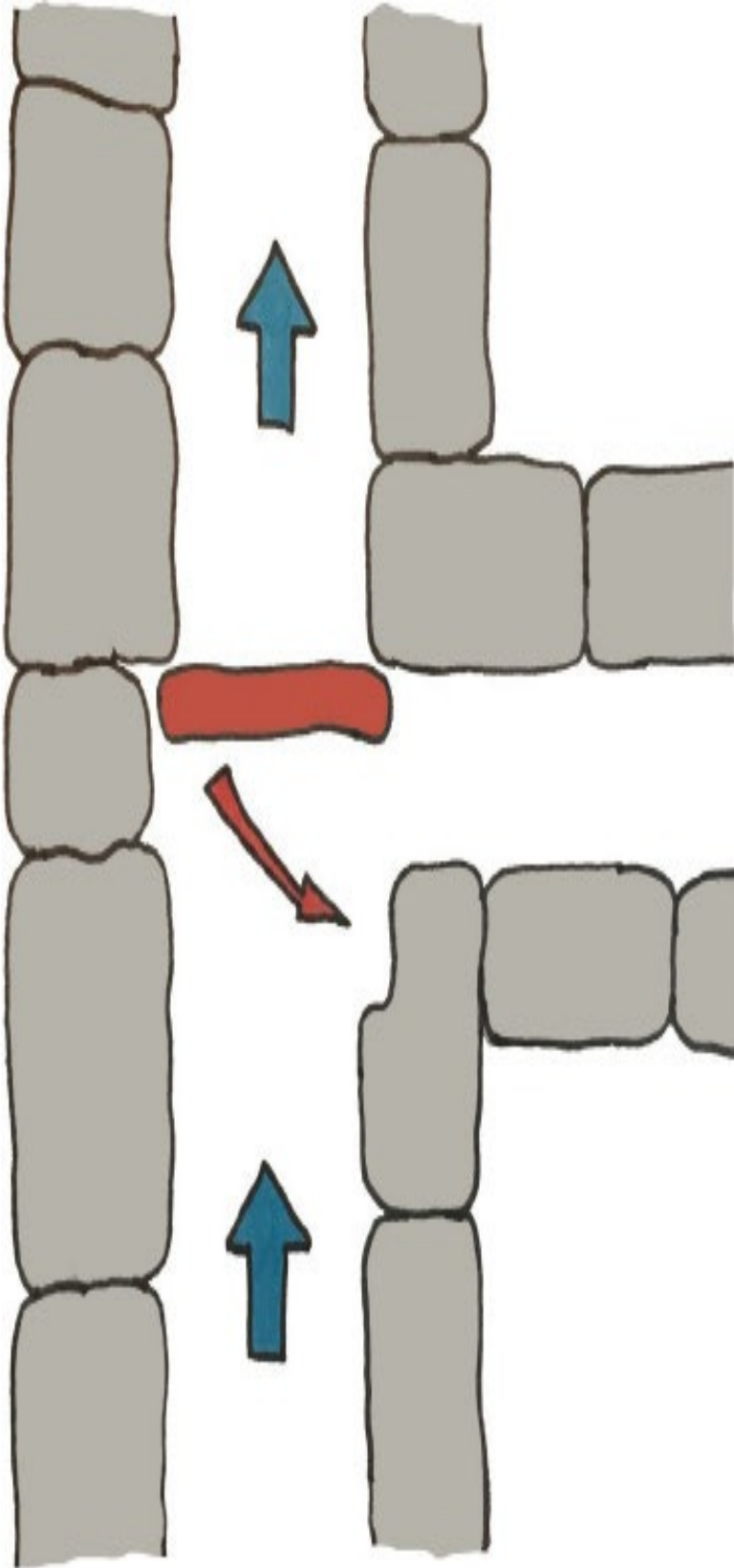


Figure 11. Inca Irrigation Stone Removal and Transmission through the Passing of a Medicine Piece.

The manner in which one executes the ritual of Transmission is ultimately unique to the practitioner and limited only by one's creative imagination. It can be as simple as passing a charged medicine piece to another individual to help heal an emotional condition, or as elaborate as passing on the elements of a shamanic lineage by breathing a full breath into the heart or crown of an apprentice.

As referenced above, the act of Transmission extends beyond the simple process of moving energy and information through a medicine piece. Advanced forms of Transmission play significant roles in how oral lineages are passed on from one generation to the next. Known generically as the process of karpay, this form of transmission is an initiation, or sacred rite of passage, where the wisdom of the tradition is transferred from teacher to apprentice. In much the same way that an encanto can be housed within a medicine piece on the Mesa, so too can the wisdom of the tradition be delivered to, and held within, an individual through the sacred rite of passage known as karpay.

In nearly every region on Peru (and indeed in many cultures the world over) the shaman utilizes the exhalation of the breath to administer a transmission of medicine from one space to another. The exhalation of the breath, in its essence, is a pure form of release. The inhalation and exhalation of the breath itself exists at the heart of ritual movement, and is wedded to every phase of ceremony (just as it is to life). Moreover, the entire ritual progression of shamanic ceremony could be seen as a reflection of the breath. In other words, the Mesa itself is a living, breathing, life-form.

Just as the ocean (Mama Qocha) inhales and exhales through the change of the tides, the Mesa inhales and exhales through ceremony with the charge and discharge of the medicine field – inhalation being the point of absorption (or the generation of a charge), and exhalation being the release (or discharge) of that energy. In other words, when one calls in the energy of a sacred mountain, the Mesa is inhaling that force into its body and holding it. Transmission is the

moment when that force is released, like an exhalation, to a specific place, person, or thing.

A great example of Transmission will be discussed further in chapter six regarding charging a stone with the proper intention. Reviewing that section of the book in the light of the information above may begin to add depth to one's existing shamanic practice.

Completion

Closing the Sacred Circle

When all of one's prayers and intentions have been expressed, the circle may be closed. This act can be done in many ways. Some curanderos prefer to close the circle by singing a medicine song (tarjo), some ring a bell in each of the directions, others chant and rattle, and still others close the circle in silence. This is proof that there is no right or wrong way to do medicine work, as long as it is done reverently and comes from a place of love.

The ancient Peruvians were expert farmers. They knew the wisdom of preparing the ground and they built elaborate systems of terraced agriculture, with the purest sources of water, to grow enough food to feed millions. They made regular consecrated offerings to the Earth in gratitude to ensure that their crops remained abundant, they petitioned the spirits for the well-being of their livestock, and they offered regular invocations for good weather. They made sure that the companion plants they put together in the ground did not have competing root structures (diversity of species was their form pesticide), and they offered the excess abundance back to the Earth itself to both feed the soil and rebuild it (this was their own form of successional agroforestry). They took time to build and shape their farms into a variety of ceremonial expressions that each honored the various elements of their cosmological belief systems, and their temples were built with the same level of awareness and consideration. Everything was done in reverence. Life itself was seen as a living ceremony.

If the ritual act of Transmission is akin to the launching of a seed by a plant into the wind, the ritual of Completion is the moment when that seed falls on the fertile ground of one's open heart and begins to take root. This type of ceremonial focus, like the pre-Columbian systems of agriculture, is designed to be a celebration of the promise of new life, revitalization, and the legacy of life-affirming truths worthy of ceremonial reverence. The ancient campesinos (tribal

farmers) held this level of ceremonial awareness in their work (llank'ay). They understood that when life is engaged with on a deeper level of awareness, and viewed through the lens of the heart, life itself becomes the truest form of ceremony.

The ritual of Completion is designed to place one in the posture of that awareness, and to recognize that balance can be restored through one's willingness to engage deeply in sacred relationship with every element of this life. It is an opportunity to move once again into a space of recognition and awareness that dissolves the illusion of opposition between the forces of life and death that operate in the Kay Pacha (material world). Like two perfectly placed companion plants, these two forces were believed to operate in symbiotic relationship with one another in sacred interdependence as complementary opposites.

In this light, it is no wonder why the beginnings and endings of many forms of shamanic ritual, and indeed, many forms of religious ceremony the world over, are nearly identical in their expression. An example of this can be found in the beginning and ending of a Catholic Mass when one makes the sign of the cross on their body while genuflecting to reaffirm the essential Christian doctrines. Similarly, those who have sat with don Oscar in his ceremonies will recognize this pattern through the toning of the directions (Pachamama, Mama Killa, Wiraqocha, Inti, and K'uychi) to both open and close the ceremonial circle. In the shamanic context, it could be said that these two phases of ceremony mirror one another in order to reflect the truth that all endings are new beginnings.

The other commonality shared by many traditions is the focus of gratitude as the primary intention behind all ritual movement. Most forms of ceremonial practice are offered to simply honor, celebrate, and be grateful for certain elements of one's life. The focus on gratitude has long been revered as an antidote, or remedy of sorts, in the act of curing, which continues to be seen as a powerful practice within the shamanic healing arts to this day.

As a posture, gratitude supports and encourages a deeply healthy and optimistic state of being. In his 1954 book, *Motivation and Personality*, the humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow coined the term "positive psychology." Through it, he emphasized how psychology typically has focused on our negative qualities, yet very little effort had been made to illuminate the potential of our positive virtues or aspirations, like gratitude (Maslow 1954, 354). Inspired by

Maslow's work, and through the subsequent work of Martin Seligman (who has been dubbed the "father of positive psychology"), studies have revealed that the state of gratitude encourages a lengthy list of life-affirming qualities, including (but not limited to): "improved physical, emotional and social well-being; heightened energy levels, strengthened heart and immune system, improved emotional and academic intelligence, a decrease in stress, anxiety, depression, and headaches; and an expanded capacity for forgiveness." (Seligman 1995). In light of the above, it is no wonder why the focus of gratitude is central to most forms of ceremonial practice the world over.

The essence of what is being celebrated in the ritual of Completion in ceremony can best be summed up through the example of offering a despacho (an offering of sacred reciprocity) to the sacred fire. This ancient Q'ero ceremony is an elaborate offering of gratitude, whereby one gives back everything that has been received from Source back to its place of origin. This humble act of reverence, honoring the source of life, is believed to place one into deeper states of harmony with the living world, and allows one to walk in balance with the sacred dimensions of life in deeper and more meaningful ways. Completion is the moment of recognition of when that balance has been restored through ceremonial re-membering, and then, one can once again move out into their daily life as a carrier of strong medicine (hampiqamayoq).

Integration –

Living the Ceremony

The role of the curandero is not only to disseminate the heirloom seeds of wisdom from a tradition; they are also charged with the task of empowering those who receive those seeds with the skill set to sew them effectively at home. Without the ability to see the wisdom of ceremony operating in one's daily life, one can never sustainably harvest an independent crop. Integration, therefore, is a necessary phase in the 11-step process of the structure of ceremony. It hints at the nonlinear nature of ceremony, and brings focus to its intended function, which is to operate as a continuum. It is the task of the curandero/ceremonialist, therefore, to create a lasting experience through ceremony that will encourage inspiration and curiosity regarding the presence of deeper awareness within the broader arena of one's life.

It is essential that one is sent home from ceremony with an invitation to investigate the awareness that was explored through ceremony, whatever its focus may have been. Ceremony is designed to inspire one to engage their life with fresh eyes as an unfolding shamanic apprenticeship: to greet it in the morning upon waking, to walk with it throughout the day, and to bring it into your dream state when you sleep. The goal, if there is such a thing in the shamanic arena, is to remember that the wisdom of ceremony is being broadcast unceasingly through the present moment of time.

Deepening one's awareness of the medicine that is perpetually available in one's midst is a primary function of traditional shamanic apprenticeship. The pupil of a lineage is, therefore, repeatedly tasked with a multitude of ceremonial challenges through the course of their training. They are not only encouraged to attend as many ceremonies as possible, but they will be sent out repeatedly on their own to practice what they have learned, to harvest and prepare the medicinal herbs they have studied, and to sit regularly in the solitude of paqo wachu (vision quest). During their apprenticeship, they are gradually brought into a lifestyle of deep ceremonial awareness, and their training is not complete until they themselves have integrated this ceremonial lifestyle autonomously and independently. This obligatory mandate to engage in repeated ceremonial encounters ultimately holds the potential to shift a person's awareness permanently. When the shamanic path is truly seen, felt, and experienced, one

learns that there is no way to be off of the path, no way to get lost, and no moment when the medicine one seeks is not already abundantly present.

Somewhere along the way, walking with the ritual practices, concepts of cosmological reference, and all of the mythological parables, etc., simply becomes life. The elements of ceremony are seen and reflected in the subtleness behind every conscious breath, and felt beneath one's feet with every step. One begins to recognize the ceremonial circle opening every morning upon waking, and can see the circle closing every evening while falling back into sleep. Dreamtime becomes yet another form of Integration. As the ceremony of life unfolds, one becomes aware that this cycle is continually repeating in large and small ways through everything we do and experience. Eventually, the seeker ceases their need to search for the path – as it is reflected everywhere – and they begin Living the Ceremony. This is what it means to walk the middle road, and to live in the middle field (Campo Medio) of the Mesa.

Through this book, the structure of ceremony has been broken down into independent parts. Beginnings and endings to the cycles of ceremony have been defined and its inner content has been embellished linearly. However, it is essential to mention that the nature of a ceremony is far from linear, and on some level, it is even inaccurate to describe it as circular.

The true nature of ceremony operates as an uninterrupted continuum. It is forever moving into uncharted territory, like the pioneering journey of our spinning planet on its elliptical course through the cosmos into the Great Mystery. Attempting to describe it is likely a fool's quest. To do it any justice, one would likely need to begin speaking of it at the moment it came to be, and not cease in describing it until it ceases to be. In other words, while we are here in form, and perhaps even when our form has been released, the ceremony never ends (see figure 12).

In this light, the ritual of Completion is no more an ending than the opening of the circle is a beginning. When seen as the spiral, Integration is only a pause away from becoming another version of Preparation once again. And as we witness the cycle recreate itself, we awaken to the nature of time and the infinitely diverse forms of life that move through it. Ceremony becomes an ongoing recognition of this unending process of emergence. And “living the ceremony” simply means one has invited every part of their self to be awakened and engaged in the conscious unfolding of their lives.

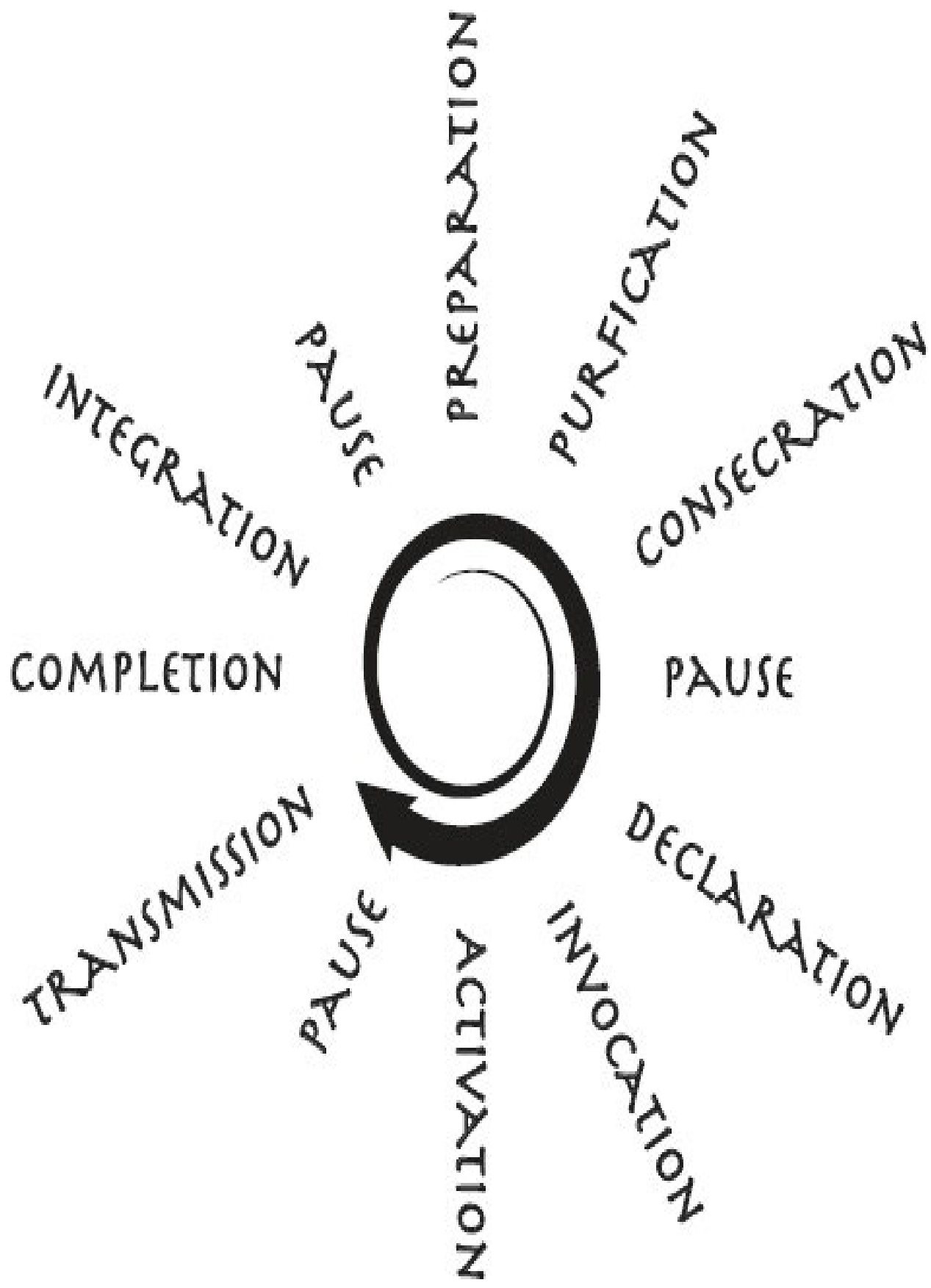
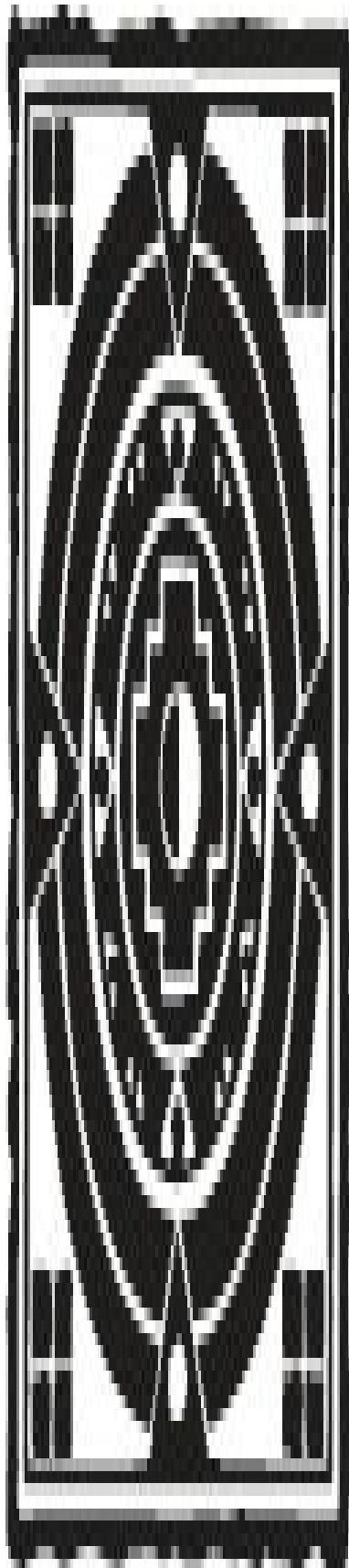


Figure 12. Spiral Pattern and Progression of Ceremony



Chapter Six

Healing and the Pachakuti Mesa

If scientists suddenly discovered a drug that was as powerful as love in creating health, it would be heralded as a medical breakthrough and marketed overnight – especially if it had as few side effects and was as inexpensive as love. – Larry Dossey

Shamanism and Healing

Long before the advent of contemporary medicine, ancient people sought healing from a variety of practitioners to address their medical and psychological needs. Over time, many of these methods were considered obsolete and were systematically replaced by more “civilized” treatments and procedures; however, some of the most ancient healing practices have survived on grass-roots levels and continue to be effective forms of treatment in modern times.

The spiritual beliefs and healing techniques stemming from shamanism are perhaps the oldest and most widely used of these ancient practices. Shamans around the world have developed healing techniques that are based in working with the condition on the subtle layers of its expression (i.e., at its core or point of origin).

Illness, as it is conceived of even in the modern sense, is regarded as something entering the body from without, something that needs to be removed or destroyed or protected against. In the shamanic system, however, the primary problem is not the external element, but the loss of personal power that permitted the intrusion in the first place, whether it be an arrow or an evil spirit. Therefore, shamanic treatment for all ailments first emphasizes augmenting the power of the sick person, and only secondly counteracting the power of the illness-producing agent. (Achterberg 1985, 17)

This ancient shamanic wisdom revolves around several core principles. The first stems from the fact that the human body is a complex system of energy (both subtle and palpable) that exists in a process of constant transformation. The second stems from the first, in that this energy body can be observed and influenced on the subtlest levels of expression through non-ordinary states of consciousness.

The approach to shamanic healing, in this way, exists in stark contrast to the traditional western model of medicine in that it does not focus primarily on the medication or suppression of symptoms, but rather addresses the root cause of the symptoms that have manifested. In other words, rather than treating the condition from the outside in, it works to address the condition from the inside out. It addresses illness, ailments, diseases, and disorders from within the invisible infrastructure of the condition. And when the underlying pattern of the condition has been transformed on the layers of the subtle, and the individual is able to see and understand this root cause, the potential for healing is dramatically enhanced. In rare cases, the transformation of this subtle infrastructure can even immediately remove the symptoms, because this inner shift has dismantled, addressed, and then rebuilt the energetic pattern that created the issue itself.

More often than not, dis-ease occurs because something is blocking or obstructing the body's natural energetic flow. For this reason, one of the most common healing techniques, and usually the first order of business for the curandero, is the general removal of dense energy (or energetic blocks) from within the physical and luminous body (runa kurku k'anchay). The Quechua term hucha is used to describe these energetic forms of density, which have a tendency to restrict the flow of energy in the physical and luminous body. If the level of density increases and solidifies, it can eventually begin to manifest in more recognizable forms, such as illness, ailments, diseases, disorders, etc. Yet when the approach to healing begins with the layers of the subtle, these energetic blocks can be detected and removed, energetic deficiency can be replenished, and discordant energetic conditions can be harmonized before they need to reveal themselves in more solidified forms.

One of the roles of shamanic apprenticeship is to pass on the wisdom of how to work with these forms of subtle energy. More often than not, these forces reside outside of our collective experience of reality, and therefore require one to develop a level of consciousness that is in harmony with the non-ordinary before one can learn to manipulate energy on the subtle levels of its expression. In other words, before one is able to work with the formless, one must learn to see beyond form.

One can only be fully in this mode when one has, if only for a moment, given up

all wishes and desires for oneself (since the separate self does not exist) and for others (since they do not exist as separate either) and just allow oneself to be, and therefore to be with, and be one with the all of existence...Any awareness of doing, or of the wish to do, disrupts this mode. During this state, the healer most often does not consider himself or herself to be the source of the healing, but only a conduit through which the healing flows from a higher power. (Dossey 1993, 198)

Daniel J. Benor, M.D. (1990), in the journal *Complementary Medical Research*, defined this type of healing as “the intentional influence of one or more people upon another living system without utilizing known physical means of intervention” (Dossey 1993, 211). Jean Achterberg elaborates, “healing, for the shaman, is a spiritual affair. Disease is considered to have origins in, and gains its meaning from, the spirit world. The purpose of life, itself, is to be indoctrinated and initiated into the visionary regions of the spirit, and to maintain oneself in concert with all things on Earth and in the sky” (1985, 17). In other words, the ultimate goal of shamanic healing is to harmonize the physical expression of the body with the spiritual expression of the self. Therefore, the essence of shamanic healing is first and foremost concerned with restoring the part of the self that is eternal. When this restoration occurs on a soul level, unneeded physical or psychological symptoms are able to miraculously dissolve.

In light of the above, we can clearly see why shamanic healing has long been the rival of biomedicine. Each seems to defy the other’s foundation; however, great potential exists if space can be made for the two resources to come together as a more encompassing form of complementary medicine.

As society grows in its recognition of the need for spirituality in all dimensions of life, perhaps we will see a long-forgotten kind of medicine emerge anew, wherein the doctor’s office truly can become a holy meeting ground between religion and medicine, the twin traditions of healing. When that transformation occurs, I believe we will witness a fuller flowering of the faith factor and greater opportunities for healing of mind, body, and spirit. (Matthews 1997, 288)

The Poq'po

In curanderismo there are a variety of techniques in which shamans engage in diagnosis. Many of the ancient indigenous techniques are still used by modern day practitioners, both conventional and unconventional. For example, the examination of stool, fingernail, and hair samples are used to formulate a diagnosis in both shamanism and biomedicine; however, there are methods of diagnosis still practiced in Peru that may seem less likely to be viewed as contemporary. One example is “scanning” the patient with a live guinea pig then examining the guinea pig’s entrails to formulate a diagnosis. Other examples include reading coca leaves, interpreting dreams, and the use of entheogenically induced altered states of consciousness to track the origin of a person’s ills (rastreo).

The poq'po, or sphere of living energy surrounding the human body, is yet another tool the shamanic practitioner can employ in the process of diagnosis. The concept of the poq'po closely corresponds to the Western notion of the aura, a term coined by Dr. Walter J. Kilner (1911) to describe the electromagnetic energy field surrounding the human body. This energy is subtle and vibrates at a frequency beyond ordinary vision.

To varying degrees, all individuals can learn to develop a sensitivity to subtle energies – to see beyond the ordinary, including being able to see the poq'po. Techniques of adjusting the cones and rods of one’s eyes, and looking through a form vs. directly at it, can often render this energy visible with only a few minutes of practice. Many believe that detecting the poq'po or aura can also be a multi-sensorial experience. In other words, some experience the poq'po clairaudiently or clairsentiently as well as clairvoyantly. Some shamanic practitioners even go as far as saying it can be an olfactory experience as well.

Whatever the case may be, it is clear that subtle energy has been understood for thousands of years in the Peruvian shamanic tradition, and in other traditions as well. Cultures the world over seem to have had parallel awareness of it, expressing it through various modes. One example can be found in the depiction

of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roman Catholic iconography. This icon portrays the Virgin Mary surrounded by an oval-shaped energy field radiating from her physical body. This imagery is prevalent in many Catholic icons, which commonly illustrate enlightened saints with circles of light surrounding the area above and around their heads. Many believe this imagery is used to express the nearly visible glow of highly evolved or “en-lightened” individuals (Osle, 1991).

As referenced briefly above, a person who has developed an ability to sense these subtle systems of energy is also often able to notice energetic blocks or places where energy has become deficient. The blocks and deficiencies can often be seen prior to the actual physical manifestation of a condition. In other words, what is seen in the poq’po usually precedes the manifestation of conditions in the physical body. This theory is consistent with psychological dysfunction as well.

One shamanic technique for dealing with blocks in the poq’po is called extraction. Extraction is the process of removing density (hucha) from a person’s energy field. The techniques employed vary greatly from practitioner to practitioner, yet commonly involve using some form of intermediary object (such as a staff, stone, feather, or item) to act as a neutral buffer between themselves and the dense energy they are removing. However, this is not always the case, as another common method for hucha removal is to pull it out with the breath using one’s mouth in almost in the same way one would suck out venom from a snakebite. This technique is usually only employed after the shaman has mastered the ability to transform density into more refined/beneficial forms of energy within their own body or be confident that they can release the energy they have removed without ingesting it themselves (like the venom from a snakebite).

That said (as energy can neither be created nor destroyed – only transformed), it is important to do something with this energy once it has been extracted. For example, the curandero can either transform that energy into kawsay through a process known as hucha mikhushanqu, or send it to a neutral place (ideally a healing lagoon or sacred mountain) to be transformed. When density is sent off to the mountains or lagoons, one is petitioning assistance from a force greater than the self to assist in the transformation of density. Therefore, the more common form of these two techniques is the latter, as sending energy is often simpler than trying to transmute it.

In either case, the transformation of density into life-force could be likened to the process of physical digestion in that the digestion of foods by the physical stomach parallels the digestion of energies by the mountain or lagoon (as well as one's spiritual stomach, or willka qosqo). In other words, some meals can be consumed in one sitting by the shaman, but for meals that are too large to consume all at once, one calls on the tremendous transformational power of a mountain to handle the transmutation.

Before one begins learning to heal through extraction, it is as important to become proficient in assessing the quality and quantity of energy that flows through one's system. To do this effectively, the shaman must cultivate a working ability to monitor his or her spiritual metabolism (i.e., personal capacity/ability to digest this energy), as overeating energetically can be as unhealthy as overeating physically. All of the above should be considered when performing the art of ritual cleansing, known as the limpia.

The Limpia – Ritual Cleansing

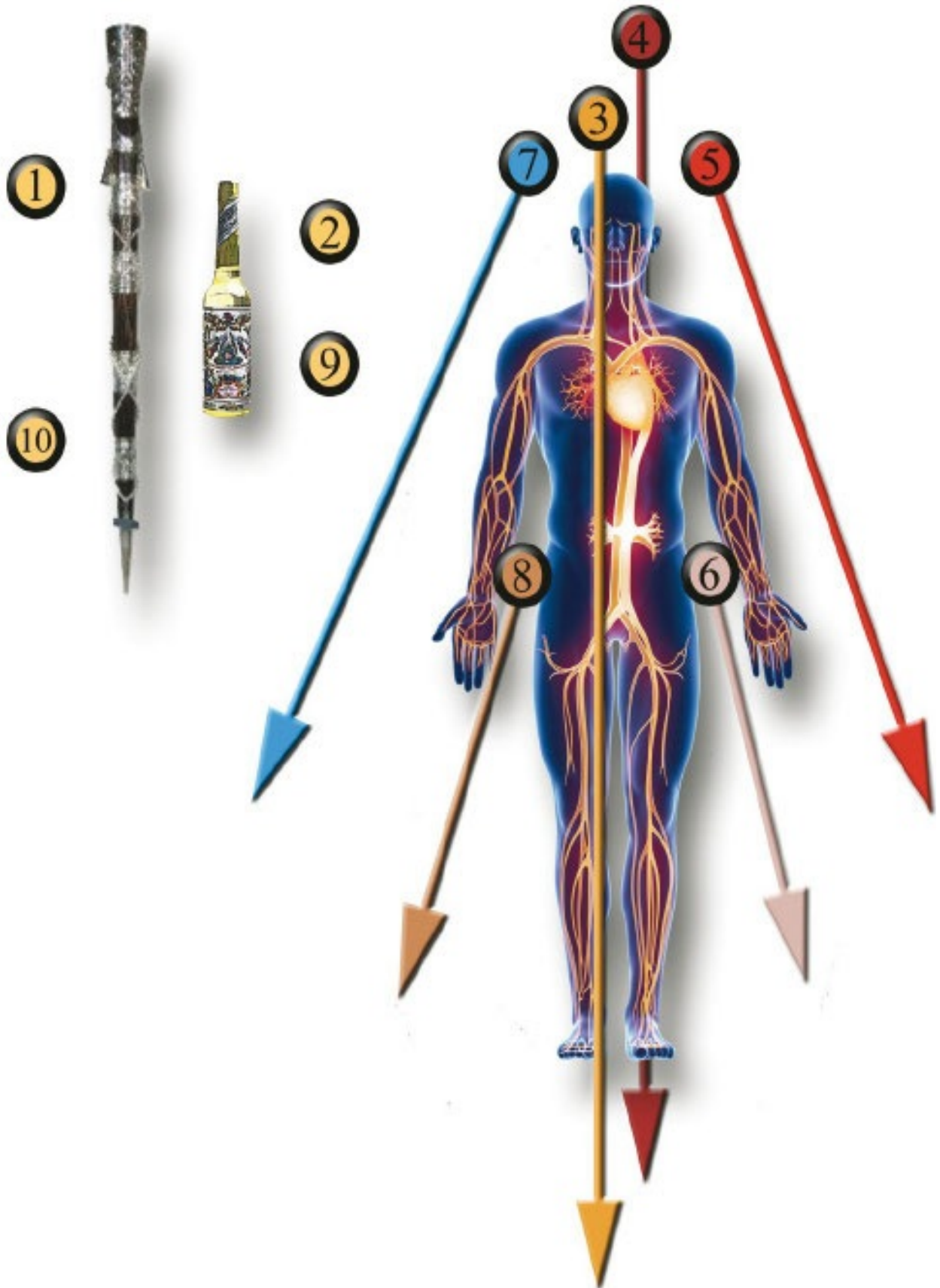
Ritual cleansings can be performed in a multitude of ways, and with any number of tools. For the purpose of clarity, I have chosen one tool (the staff or vara) to exemplify the ritual process of the limpia. Please keep in mind as you progress through the discourse below that this process can be conducted just as effectively with other shamanic tools, such as a despacho, feather, extraction stone or medicine piece, water, or even one's hands. This section is being offered to expand on the ritual of Purification and provides a step-by-step process of how one form of Purification ritual could be conducted.

Ritual Cleansing Using a Staff:

In the Northern Coastal Huachuma roots of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, staffs are among the most commonly used tools for limpia or ritual cleansing. These staffs, known as varas, are commonly carved in the images of specific patron saints of curanderismo, such as San Cypriano de Antioquia (St. Cyprian of Antioch). Totem animals and iconographic symbols are also frequently implemented into the designs of staffs. A few examples are Vara de la Señorita (Staff of the Single Woman, often analogous to concepts of Pachamama), La Mano de Dios (the Hand of God), Vara de la Luna (Staff of the Moon), Vara del Rey (Staff of the King/Divine Masculine), Vara de la Lechuza (Staff of the Female Owl), etc. The ritual process offered below is presented as a simplified example of how one form of limpia could be conducted in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. Note: The limpia techniques employed by curanderos varies dramatically from practitioner to practitioner.

10-Step Ritual Cleansing Process with a Staff –

Limpieza Con Una Vara



Limpia Process:

Step 1: Remove Staff from Mesa

Step 2: Soplando of Client

Step 3: Front of Client

Step 4: Back of Client

Step 5: Top of Left Arm

Step 6: Bottom of Left Arm

Step 7: Top of Right Arm

Step 8: Bottom of Right Arm

Step 9: Soplando of Staff

Step 10: Return Staff to Mesa

Step 1:

The process begins with the selection of the staff you will be working with from the Mesa ground. The typical Northern Coastal Mesa is constructed with a vertical row of staffs above the northern edge of the manta or Mesa ground. These staffs are planted upright in the Earth when the ceremony is held outdoors, but can also be placed in small troughs, vessels, or other containers filled with sand, small pebbles, etc., when the ceremony is held indoors. After the staffs are placed, the client will be asked to stand in front of them (i.e., to the north of the row of staffs), and face the Mesa. The curandero will peer through this vertical

row of staffs with his or her vista (vision), and while softly gazing through the merging energetic fields of the staffs (and the client), the etheric template of one of the staffs will activate (or “light up”) prompting the curandero to select it for use.

On a pragmatic level, even if one has not cultivated the ability to intuitively choose a staff through one’s vista, one can rely on the account (la cuenta) that a staff has been given. In other words, a staff can be created and programmed in much the same way a khuya stone is charged (See pg. 153). Each can be infused with intentions for a specialized purpose and be used to address the varied and diverse physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of the human condition. Cultivating a specialized array of tools to work with will come from the development of the practitioner’s unique skill set as their existing shamanic platform develops.

Step 2:

Once the staff has been selected, the spraying (soplado) of floral waters such as Agua de Florida, Agua de Rosas, Agua de Kananga, Siete Poderes, etc., is typically administered to the client, focusing on three areas of the body. Like everything in this ritual, the progression works from the top down, so the first part of the body that is sprayed is above the top of the head (hanan uma), then around the area of the heart (hatun sonqo), and lastly, the soplado is offered to the navel (willka qosqo) or to the feet of the client. The ritual act of soplado not only softens and opens the client’s connection to the three worlds (Hanaq Pacha, Kay Pacha, and Ukhu Pacha), it helps to awaken the three attributes (yachay, munay, and llankay), it avails the refined nature of the three healing energies (k’anchay, kawsay, and sami), and it grants access to the medicines available through the three fields of the Mesa (Campo Ganadero, Campo Justiciero, and Campo Medio).

Step 3:

This step occurs in several stages. First, the name of the staff, along with the qualities of its intended use, are invoked and activated. Next, the staff is held horizontally, with the bottom of the staff pointing toward the client's right side (this is because the overall directional movement of the limpia – as one progresses from step 3 to step 8 of this process – takes place from the client's left side to the client's right). Keeping the staff in a horizontal position, the staff is then “swept” down the front of a client's body, often until it makes contact with the Earth beneath the client's feet. This is usually done with the staff in full contact with the body, and using either one long continuous sweeping motion, or with short up and down rubbing motions. Both one and two-handed techniques are employed (i.e., holding the staff with either one or both hands), and will vary depending on the practitioner. If a one-handed technique is used, it is recommended that the right hand be used to wield the staff.

It is also important to mention that obvious respect and consideration should be made to avoid physical contact with gender-based parts of the body so that the client can remain in a comfortable space of safety, ease, and trust.

Through these downward motions, the person performing the limpia is attempting to remove every fragment of the condition that is causing illness or harm to the client. The density or hucha of the client's condition is being drawn into the staff where it is harnessed and contained temporarily. The staff provides a neutral place for this dense energy to be held outside of the body for the duration of the limpia, and it prevents both the client and practitioner from having to absorb these heavy energies directly.

Step 4:

Keep in mind that the horizontal position of the staff will be maintained from step 4 through step 8. Reposition yourself behind the client, place the staff at the top of the top of the client's head (crown), and move it down the client's neck, back, waist, legs, and feet until contact has been made with the Earth. As an additional note, while working down both the front and the back of client's body,

it helps to envision and embody the qualities of the Campo Medio, or the middle field of the Mesa. Moreover, it is also implied that an actual, energetic connection to the middle field of the Mesa should be established and utilized throughout this process.

Working the Campo Medio addresses the point of continuous emergence of a soul, and focuses on the part of them that is emerging in the immediate moment of time. It meets them exactly as they are, in the here and now, in the only true moment where shifts can be made. Working the middle field is working in the dimension of the Kay Pacha, or Middle World in the present moment of time. In other words, one is working to merge the middle field of the Mesa (and all it represents) with the field of the client's body, mind, heart, spirit, etc.

Step 5:

Once again place the staff in contact with the client's crown, and begin moving the staff down left side of the body. This downward sweeping movement should make contact with the crown, neck, shoulder, and arm, ending with the tips of the fingers on the left hand. When working with the left side of the body, it helps to embody the qualities of the Campo Ganadero, or the left field of the Mesa. Moreover, it is also implied that an actual, energetic connection to the left field of the Mesa is established and utilized throughout the process of step 5 (and step 6). In other words, merge this field of the Mesa with the field of the client's body and work with unwinding the grip of the shadow elements of their ego. Work as well with anything that is blocking them from being more rooted, anchored, and connected to their connection with the heart of the Earth. That is, attend to anything that is blocking access to their inner world (Ukhu Pacha), or with having a deeper connection to the divine feminine elements of their being. Remember that, as most Peruvian indigenous traditions teach, the left side of the body is where we most readily receive energy: energy flows in through the left side of the body and out through the right. As such, beginning with the left side and ending with the right is moving in concert with the body's natural energetic flow, not against it.

Step 6:

Using your left hand, slightly raise the client's left arm and position the staff underneath it horizontally. Starting in the armpit, move downward out past the fingertips. If their arm feels quite stiff, it often helps to invite the client to soften, let go, and release tension during the process of the staff's movement down the arm.

If the initial pass feels incomplete (i.e., if you feel the hucha has not been fully extracted), some practitioners will commonly add some additional steps to this process at this time. In this case, the staff is returned to the client's wrist, and the healer holds it in place with the forefingers of their left hand. Then, a short, gentle tug is administered to the client's arm in a downward motion. If more assistance is required, a similar technique can be administered to each of the client's fingers by tucking the staff under your own arm, and using both hands – one to hold the client's wrist, and the other to pull down on each finger with a gentle tug.

Step 7:

Reposition yourself on the right side of the client's body, and similar to the process described in step 5, place the staff in contact with the clients' crown, and begin the movement of the staff down right side of the body. This movement should again make contact with the neck, shoulder, and arm, ending with the tips of the fingers on the right hand.

When working with the right side of the body, it helps to embody the qualities of Campo Justiciero, or right field of the Mesa. Moreover, it is also implied that an actual, energetic connection to the right field of the Mesa is established and utilized throughout the process of step 7 (and step 8). In other words, merge this field of the Mesa with the field of the client's body, and begin bringing in the essence of the hollow bone (i.e., the fostering of emptiness as one becomes the open, transparent vessel). Work as well with anything that is blocking their

connection to the transcendent (Hanaq Pacha), or a deeper connection to the divine masculine elements of their being.

More often than not, the directional movement in ceremony occurs in a clockwise rotation (i.e., around the Mesa from south, to west, to north, to east, and returning to the south). However, there are moments when a counter-clockwise rotation is warranted (i.e., in the “unwinding” or “unraveling” of a condition). That being said, when working with the limpia ritual, if you choose to walk in a counter-clockwise direction as you transition from left to right, (i.e., by moving behind the client instead of in front of them), envision the unwinding of any old, unhealthy patterns. And if you choose to walk clockwise by moving in front of the client, envision the beginning of a new paradigm of deeper health and wellbeing. Both methods have value and deciding which is preferable is based purely on the intuitive guidance available in the moment. Also, for those interested in subtle areas of refinement to this process, the mindful adept may also choose to quickly move the staff back to a vertical position as they walk in front of (or behind) the client from their left to their right – effectively pushing the energy from left to right with the vertical staff. This attention to the subtle effectively begins to move density out through the right side of the client’s body. In this pass, one can recognize where blocks or resistance reside in the client’s field, and can begin to either push this dense energy toward the right side of the client’s body, or gather it within the staff, as they move through the client’s field.

Step 8:

Using your left hand, slightly raise the client’s right arm and position the staff underneath it horizontally. Starting in the armpit, move downward out past the fingertips. Again, if this initial pass feels incomplete, some practitioners will similarly add a few steps to this process. In the case of the right side, the staff can be temporarily moved back to a vertical position, and placed on the client’s back at the point(s) of resistance or block(s). Use short, gentle raking motions, moving toward the right side. Envision sweeping out a room, and envision the client’s right hand as the open door.

If energetic assistance is still required, the staff can be returned to the client’s

right wrist, and while holding their wrist with your thumbs, and maintaining a hold on the staff with your forefingers, a short, gentle tug can be placed on the arm in a downward motion. If still more assistance is needed, a similar technique can be administered to each of the client's fingers by tucking the staff under your own left arm and using both hands to pull down on each finger with the same gentle tug.

Step 9:

Once everything that is not serving the higher purpose of the client has been removed and housed in the staff, the process still remains incomplete until the staff has been energetically cleared. More often than not, the shaman will call on a local or regional Apu to assist him or her in this process. Mountains are chosen for their powerful capacity to transmute density into more refined expressions of life. The ritual act of sending this energy to the mountain for transformation often occurs in the following manner: The staff will be held in the right hand with its bottom pointing away from the body and outwards toward the general direction of the mountain being worked with. The staff is then sprayed three times with floral waters through the ritual act of *soplando*. As is customary in many ancient indigenous ceremonial practices, one may notice that the ending of this ceremony is reminiscent of its beginning. Just as the client was initially sprayed with *Agua de Florida* three times in step 2 (once above the crown, once around the area of the heart, and once at their root or feet), the corresponding energetic conditions now held in the staff on behalf of the client are likewise released through the spraying of the staff three times.

Step 10:

With the ritual process complete, the staff may now be returned to its vertical position in the northern section of the Mesa to continue its function as an anchor and transmission point within the energetic matrix. Each time the staff returns to

the Mesa, both depth and experience are added to its account (la cuenta), and the piece evolves in its use as a healing tool. Also, as it is planted back in the Earth, the wisdom gained from moving through this particular healing experience is sent into the fabric of consciousness, assisting the many (i.e., humanity as a collective) to more effectively transition through similar issues or challenging energetic encounters.

Closing Remarks:

Like all forms of ritual apprenticeship in the shamanic traditions, it is recommended that as soon as you learn to master the above Ten-Step Process, and feel it is deeply understood and internalized, let it go and forget you ever learned it. Strict adherence to the form at this point becomes counterproductive. Once the core teachings of a practice become second nature through deep knowing, it is important to free yourself from the confines of its structure. The shamanic arts evolve not only through the deep apprenticeship of mastering the ways of old, but through an allowing of one's direct connection to Source to inform the new. In this way, one's personal relationship to Spirit eventually informs the expression of all ritual movements and their underlying intentions, both through ceremony and through life.

The Use of Sound

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. - John 1:1

The transformative power of certain sounds has long been understood by indigenous medicine cultures the world over. Somewhere along the way, it was discovered that certain frequencies of sound have healing potential. Shamanic healers learned that all things emanate their own sound, often on a scale not detectable by the human ear. They also learned that the wave patterns of some sounds could be used to neutralize energetic blocks in the body, and others could be used to deliver energy to a depleted resource. Evidence to the efficacy of these understandings can be found in Peruvian cultures through their unwavering use of primal rhythm and medicine songs, in their history of ceremony, and healing artistry.

The sacred technology of sound has also been utilized in ritual and ceremony as a means to create sacred space. Chanting done in unison creates energetic synergy between the ceremony participants and the ceremony leader – it harmonizes the group energies with one unified rate of vibration. This process of attunement, known also in scientific circles as entrainment, aligns the frequencies of each ceremonial participant, allowing the group to exist in a temporary state of unanimity. In this way, the group, functioning on a similar plane of consciousness, may journey together experientially – a journey which is structured and governed by the ceremony leader.

A possible validation for the shamanic understanding of sound comes from scientific research into the effects of sound on matter. The field of Cymatics, established by the Swiss doctor and researcher Hans Jenny, explores the relationship between sound, matter, and energy. Stemming from Ernst Chladni's pioneering work in acoustics, Jenny took things a step farther by exploring how sound would affect certain materials, such as sand, metal filings, and water. He

would place these materials on top of a metal plate and direct an intensely magnified sound toward them using a tonoscope. When stimulated by certain sounds, the materials on top of the metal plate seemed to come alive, forming into extraordinary symmetrical geometric shapes. As different sounds were applied, new patterns formed, varying in complexity depending on the vibratory rate.

These initial experiments led to questions on how sound affects matter, energy fields, and the human body. Several of Jenny's later discoveries were quite stunning. His research not only validated that sound has a direct effect on human biology, it also showed that sound possesses a nearly autonomous, creative and organizing force; and the ability to make materials defy gravity. Today, the field of Cymatics is an important area of physics, and although Jenny's experiments do not give direct proof that sound is an effective medium for healing or altering one's consciousness, they do provide common ground for the both the scientist and shaman to stand on.

Working with sacred sounds interacts with corresponding endocrine, neurological, and spiritual centers in our physical body. Vowels internalize experience with sound, and consonants externalize experience with sound. We create a reciprocal play of vibratory frequency using sacred sounds, which interact with the natural world of form, and the formless spiritual world. In so doing, the luminous body is awakened through entrainment with spiritual energies. Ultimately, this can be used to form a deeper connection with the Mesa. Musical instruments can also be used to access shamanic states of consciousness. Continuous rhythmic music, such as rattling, drumming, or chanting, affects the reticular activating system of the temporal lobe of the brain, which helps brain wave patterns to slow, and allows one to more readily enter into non-ordinary states of waking consciousness, known as an alpha or theta brainwave state. (Miro-Quesada, 1998)

In relation to the Pachakuti Mesa, drums are associated with physical healing, and, thus, with the south of the Mesa. String instruments are associated with awakening the heart and with the west of the Mesa. Wind instruments are related to the spirit world, and they are associated with the north of the Mesa. Chimes

and bells have a powerful relation to the mind, and, thus, are related to the east of the Mesa. Finally, the human voice, which represents the totality, is beneficial in healing all of the above. Its location on the Mesa is in the center.

The use of the human voice is, perhaps, the most powerful vehicle for entering into altered states of consciousness. In order to speak, we must breathe; the spoken word is directly linked to life itself. Robert Gass, author of *Chanting: Discovering Spirit in Sound*, points out:

Our breathing is fundamental to the way we feel in our body, and the receptive nature of chanting induces us to breathe deeper, slower, and more rhythmically. The sound vibrations caused by making vocal sounds resonate throughout our bodies – as though we were being massaged from the inside out. Our brain-wave patterns are measurably altered, evoking states of relaxation, or heightened creative energy. (1999, 12)

In the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, chanting is not only used to harmonize the physical body, but it can be used to absorb and harness spiritual forces and energies. In essence, toning assists the process of becoming an embodiment of the forces and energies that occupy the Mesa.

Khuya Stones

To more effectively utilize the healing energies of the Pachakuti Mesa, curanderos have developed a technique that uses special stones to potentiate the transfer of energy during a healing ceremony. These khuya¹ stones, or willka rumikuna, are used as medicine pieces to enhance the transfer of healing energies to the patient.

The word khuya comes from the Quechua word khuyay, which means “to love,” or “deeply care for.” Technically, the Quechua word for stone is rumi; however, when a rumi becomes a stone of caring, or a container of affection, it becomes a khuya. This means it has been consecrated and set aside for a sacred purpose on the Mesa. Most often a khuya has a specific connection with a lineage of teachers and with a specific power spot, such as an Apu.

In the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition the energies of k’anchay, kawsay, and sami are anchored into these healing stones, and they are used to help the shaman deliver healing energies to their patients. These energies are primarily delivered through the shaman’s right hand. The curandero can simultaneously administer an additional dose of energy by placing a charged khuya stone in the patient’s left hand.

The reason a khuya is placed in the client’s left hand rather than their right is because one’s luminous body receives energy more efficiently through the left side of the body – particularly through the left hand and left foot. The right side of the body is more proficient at transmitting energy. The intentional practice of receiving with the left and giving with the right is found repeatedly in the ceremonies of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, from how groups hold hands in sacred circle (i.e., left hands are held palm up and right hands, palm down), to the healer’s use of his or her right hand to place a charged khuya in the left hand of a patient. Adhering to this prescribed system is certainly not mandatory, but it tends to help enhance the overall efficiency of all energetic interactions, and to maintain a healthy awareness of a balanced give and take (ayni).

Khuya stones are mainly obtained through shamanic apprenticeship, but they can also be found and are occasionally purchased. Ideally, an apprentice will be given a khuya as a gift from his or her teacher. When they are given as gifts, the student not only inherits the vast wisdom of how the khuya has been used in the past, but they now have the ability to contribute to the energy that has already been placed in the stone; hence, they are able to add to la cuenta (the “account” or history/story) of the stone.

Unfortunately, not everyone has the opportunity to participate in a formal apprenticeship with a curandero. Therefore, obtaining khuyas from a teacher may not be an option. If this is the case, the following methods for obtaining, charging, and possessing one’s own khuyas are recommended.

Finding a Stone

There are several things to keep in mind when searching for a stone to use as a khuya. First, one should call to mind the intention and type of energy that will be given to this specific stone. For example, one should hold the prayerful intention of kawsay when searching for a khuya to be used for healing physical and material conditions of the body. Second, it is preferable to obtain healing stones from places that are personally sacred or meaningful, such as a particular mountain or an area near a special river, lake, or ocean. Any place that brings forth feelings of love and a connection to Spirit for you will do. Finally, the process of taking the stone should be done reverently and respectfully. If you intuit that the stone has chosen you, as well as you it, it is respectful to leave an offering for this sacred gift, such as some cornmeal or tobacco. If cornmeal or tobacco is not available, some practitioners recommend plucking one of the hairs from your head and leaving it as an offering. These acts are done to remind us of the lifestyle of ayni and to participate in this sacred relationship of interdependence through reciprocal give and take.

Charging the Stone with the Proper Intention

Khuya stones are anchored with the intention to draw the energies of Wiraqocha, Mama Killa, Inti Tayta, and Pachamama into the luminous body of the person needing energetic assistance or healing. Placing an energetically charged khuya stone in the hand of a patient helps the human energy field of that person to be reworked and reconstituted. Khuya stones allow the curandero to be much more effective as a healer because they have been previously prepared, and can act as an aid or assistant in the healing process.

When charging a new stone with a specific intention, it is important to clear the stone of any energy it may already be holding. This is preferably done after the Mesa has been ceremonially activated and sacred space has been created. A stone can be cleared by simply placing it in a river or stream to allow the medicine of water to wash away anything that is not beneficial for the stone's intended purpose. A forceful breath (e.g., breathing through a stone and sending the energy it is holding to a mountain for transformation) can also be used to clear a stone to create a neutral container to receive medicine.

Once a stone has been cleared, it can be placed in the appropriate direction on the Mesa. For example, a stone intended to hold kawsay energy should be placed in the south of the Mesa so that it can absorb the energies of Pachamama and the element allpa (earth), as well as the wisdom and tutelage of the Tirakuna (the Watchers), and the Amaru (serpent). This should be done by "calling in" and asking for the spirits of these energies and tutelary spirit helpers to be present in the activation of your medicine object.

Next, one may begin chanting the Quechua word for the energy you wish to put in the stone seven times in order to begin drawing the appropriate hampi (spirit medicine) into your own body, which will eventually be delivered directly to the stone. As this is done, it is helpful to bring heightened focus to the place where this energy is entering into your body. For example, as kawsay is toned, draw the energy into your body through the soles of your feet and your perineum. For sami, draw the energy in through the heart, or the seventh thoracic vertebra. And

for k'anchay, draw the energy in through your crown, brow, nape of neck, and left hand.

Second, pick up the stone and hold it in your right hand. Rest your left hand on your left knee with your palm facing up. Enter into a meditative state with the intention of opening your heart and harmonizing your physical and luminous bodies with the healing energies of Spirit.

Third, to begin the activation of this medicine piece, tone sonqo (heart) one time. This will open the energy center of the heart, as love is the root of all healing. After sonqo is toned, chant the appropriate energetic invocation for the specific energy you wish to put into the stone: k'anchay (for spiritual healing), kawsay (for physical and material healing), or sami (for mental and emotional healing). The invocation is toned seven times to charge the stone with the appropriate healing energy. When you have finished toning the appropriate energy or direction seven times, tone sonqo once again to complete the invocation and the transfer of energy. In this way, the awakening of the khuya both begins and ends with the heart.

Finally, to seal the energetic transfer, take a deep breath through your qosqo, or navel, hold the breath for a moment, call to mind your intention, and phukuy (breathe sacredly) that intention into the stone by blowing through your mouth into the khuya in your right hand. When the energetic transfer is complete, you can snap your fingers over the stone to seal the delivery of energy within it. In Peru, some practitioners perform this act by simply making the sign of the cross over the stone.

Placing the Khuya in the Appropriate Direction

Once the khuya has been charged, it has been set apart for a holy purpose and will hold its hampi (spirit medicine) as long as you continue to work with it. When a khuya is placed on the Mesa, it also becomes an anchor for the healing energies charged within it: kawsay (physical) in the south, sami (emotional) in the west, k'anchay (spiritual) in the north, and sami (mental) in the east. The khuya can now be placed in the hands of others to potentiate the transfer of hampi to those needing healing assistance on their spiritual path.

Utilization of the Pachakuti Mesa in Healing

Conducting a healing ceremony occasionally demands a lot of energetic stamina from the healer. Apart from the obvious responsibilities of guiding participants through the ritual itself, the ceremony leader is responsible for the mediation of forces and energies, both of a spiritual and physical nature. Ironically, the only way the shaman can carry out these diverse and complicated tasks is to achieve transparency: to become merely the instrument of Spirit, free from personal agenda.

In all forms of shamanic healing, emphasis is placed on becoming an open vessel for energy to flow through unhindered. Done correctly, the healer becomes like an instrument used to carry out a specific function delegated by Spirit. This allows the healer to function as the surgeon's scalpel: the hands of the Divine.

The essence of transparency is quite Taoist in nature. Lao-tzu, the author of the Tao Te Ching, said it very well: "do by not doing." His name means "the Old Master" and his "do by not doing" statement teaches us, in poetic fashion, that mastery is not a self-governed phenomenon (Mitchell 1988, vii). The shaman must first become empty before spiritual forces and energies can flow through him or her unhindered. To paraphrase the great Lao-tzu, "clay may be shaped into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that makes it useful" (ibid., 11).

When using the Mesa to treat a specific condition, depending on whether it is physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental, it is beneficial to place the client in a specific location around the perimeter of the Mesa according to the type of healing he or she needs (i.e., physical, south; emotional, west; spiritual, north; and mental, east). This helps the client absorb the refined forces and energies held within each of the directions (see figure 13).

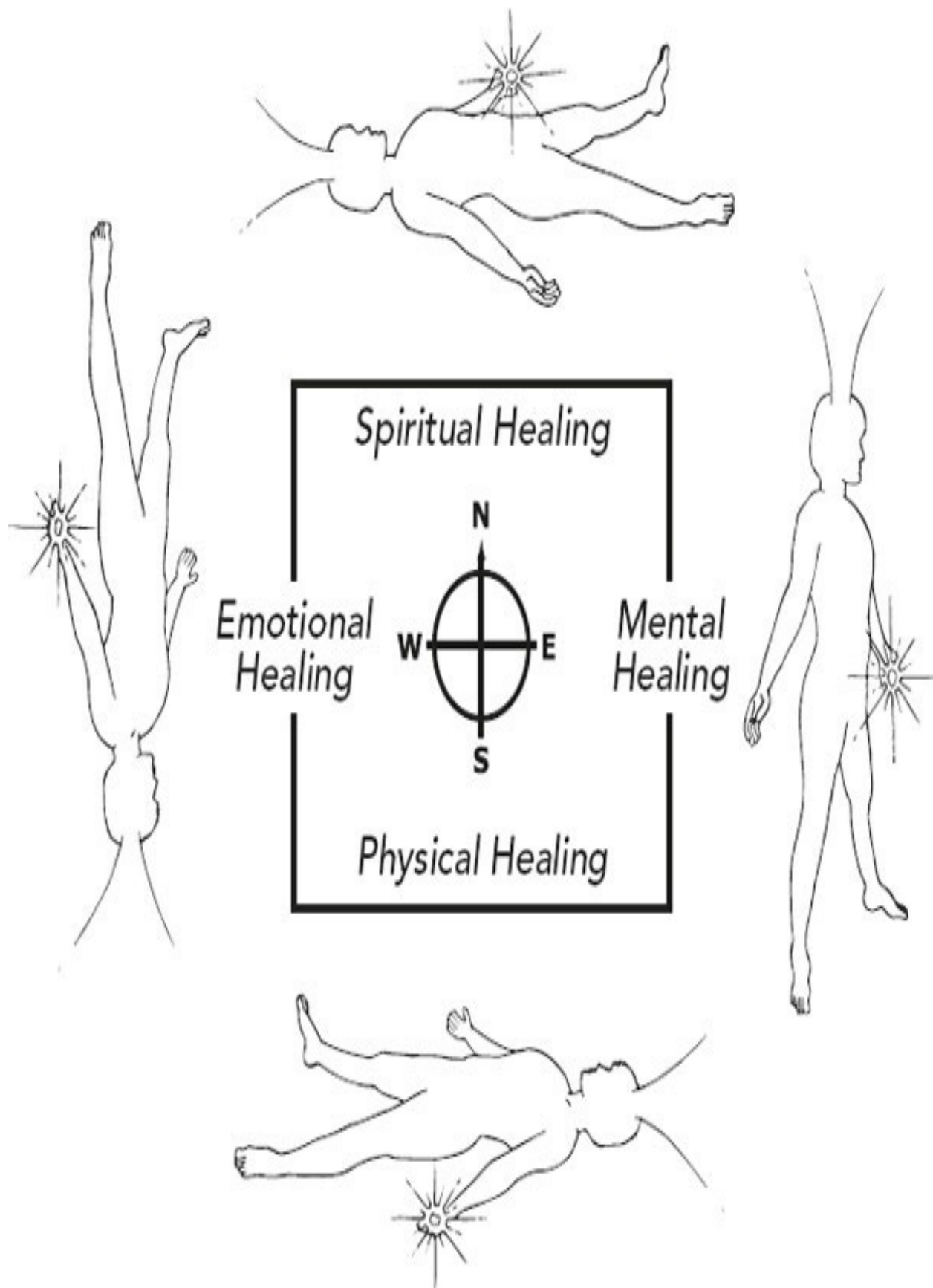
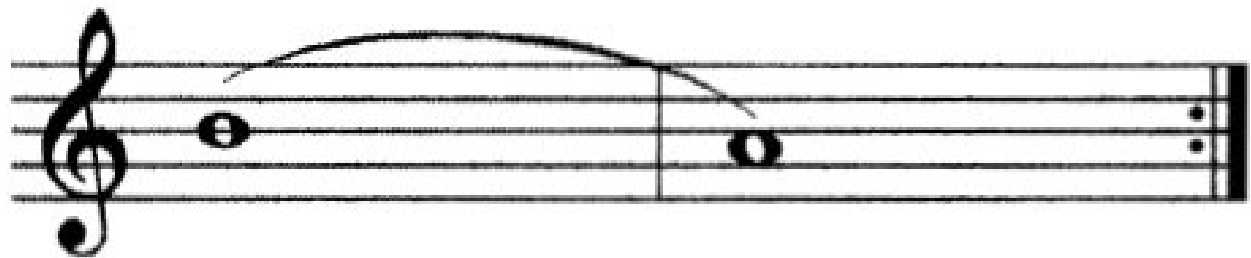


Figure 13. Positioning of Client in the Appropriate Direction

There are also prescribed chants that help entrain the physical body to the spiritual energies utilized for healing (see figure 14). Toning or chanting helps harmonize the vibrational frequencies of the body so it can more readily receive these spiritual energies. The tone/sound of these ancient Quechua chants brings the body into alignment with different vibrational frequencies of that particular healing energy. In addition, khuya stones, smudge, oils, staffs, and feathers can be used as healing tools, when appropriate, to enhance the overall effectiveness of the healing ritual.



Son qo



K'an chay



Kaw say



Sa mi

Figure 14. Musical Score for the Intonation of Healing Energies

Spiritual Healing

In the case of spiritual healing, it is preferable to have the patient lie down above the northern section of the Mesa with his or her head pointing toward the west (see figure 13). This is helpful because the north of the Mesa embodies the hampi utilized for spiritual healing, and the west is used to heal the emotions or issues of the heart.

A closed heart cannot absorb love. Subsequently, a heart that cannot love also feels disconnected from Spirit (which is love), and can often cause one to feel a lack of meaning or purpose. Therefore, the energies used to heal issues of the heart work in conjunction with the energies of the north, which are used to heal the effects of spiritual disconnection. This combination of supplemental forces is extraordinarily effective in re-opening the heart and restoring a connection with Spirit, hence allowing the client to return to a state of health, balance, and spiritual connection.

Delivery of K'anchay

After the client has been positioned in the north with his or her head pointing west, one can begin administering k'anchay energy for spiritual healing. The healer receives k'anchay energy from the Upper World through the top of the crown (head), the nape of the neck, and the left palm. The healer tones k'anchay seven times to create an intensified state of awareness of the energies as they are received from the seen and unseen world. As k'anchay is toned, the healer will often eventually begin to feel a slight pulsation in the tip of his or her index finger on the right hand. As the rest of the fingers are curled back and locked with the right thumb (see figure 15), an increase of energy should begin to accumulate more intensely in the tip of the right index finger. Many times this energy is so tangibly felt that it feels much like a tiny heart beating in the tip of

your finger. Once the practitioner feels this pulsation, delivery of this energy may begin.

The energetic delivery of k'anchay is administered either through the client's forehead (brow) or the top of their crown. The energy is delivered by gently placing your index finger on the patient's brow or crown and allowing the energy to flow through you from the Hanaq Pacha and into the patient. The administration of energy should be done for approximately ten minutes or as long as your intuition dictates. In addition, a charged k'anchay khuya can be placed in the left hand of the patient to potentiate the influx of spiritual energy.



Figure 15. Hand Position for the Delivery of K'anchay Energy

Physical Healing

In physical healing, the main concern is to first empower the patient with vital energy and, second, to remove the condition preventing the client from fully embodying his or her soul purpose. In most cases, a depleted energy source is what permitted the intrusion of illness in the first place. Again we recall Achterberg's emphasis on the augmentation of a client's personal power before attempting to counteract the illness-producing agent. In most cases, replenishing a client's energy is all that is needed. Simply infusing a client with vital life force allows the newly empowered body to utilize its inherent healing wisdom to restore itself to a state of balance and wholeness.

When addressing conditions of a physical (or material) nature through the use of the Mesa, the client should lie in the southern direction with his or her head pointing towards the east (see figure 13). In this way, the client will receive the healing energy of Pachamama (Mother Earth) in the south, as well as the additional influx of energy coming from Inti Tayta (Father Sun) in the east. The Sun and the Earth work together to produce and sustain life. The Mesa harnesses this reciprocal play of energies in order to infuse vital life force into a client's depleted energy source.

Delivery of Kawsay

The word kawsay should be chanted seven times by the healer to produce the appropriate vibrational frequency, which will, in turn, help to create an efficient, energetic flow from Spirit to healer and from healer to patient. The healer receives kawsay by drawing this energy in through his or her perineum, the soles of the feet, and the left hand. Using an open-palm hand position, kawsay energy is delivered into the qosqo of the patient in need of healing (see figure 16). The qosqo is where one learns to consume energetic forms of life-force or

nourishment. This process is known as kawsay mikhushanqu in Quechua.

This occurs in much the same way as our physical stomach functions. Our spiritual stomach (willka qosqo) is where kawsay (life force), sami (animating essence), and k'anchay (light energy) are metabolized. Like our physical stomach, our qosqo breaks down and circulates these energies throughout the luminous circulatory system, which is similar to the meridian system in acupuncture. Again, the primary delivery of energy can be assisted by placing a charged kawsay khuya in the left hand of the client. Kawsay should be administered to the patient for about five or ten minutes. Through the proper use of kawsay healing, the patient often experiences dramatic improvements in the condition he or she is trying to remedy after ten treatments.



Figure 16. Hand Position and Delivery of Kawsay

Mental and Emotional Healing

For mental healing, it is beneficial to have the client lie down next to the eastern section of the Pachakuti Mesa with his or her head pointing north (see figure 13). This helps the patient to simultaneously connect with Spirit in the north while receiving the healing energies of sami and Inti Tayta in the east. The complementary use of these energies is helpful because people with mental conditions often have very busy minds and a difficult time connecting to something bigger than the self. Often times this stems from an unhealthy level of self-absorption, which is characteristic of many psychoneuroses. Therefore, placing the client's head towards the north opens them to an enlarged sense of being, allowing them to let go of their focus on the ego-mind and embrace a more expansive vision of the truth.

For emotional healing, it is beneficial to have the client lie next to the western section of the Mesa with his or her head pointing toward the south (see figure 13). In this way, the medicine of sonqo sami is able to go to work on the issue of the heart – to help it embrace the change it is resistant to. The additional influx of kawsay being directed into the crown helps one to ground this experience of change in the here and now. Supplemental use of these forces and energies is extraordinarily effective when treating clients with emotional conditions.

Delivery of Sami

In the same way that k'anchay and kawsay are toned, sami should be toned seven times to entrain the body with the proper vibrational frequency. Sami is then energetically received through the left palm and thymus (for emotional healing), or the left palm, occiput, and seventh-thoracic area (for mental healing). The practitioner is then able to administer this energy through his or her right hand to the patient. The sami hand position is formed by placing the

thumb, index, and middle fingers together (see figure 17).



Figure 17. Hand Position and Delivery of Sami

For mental healing, sami is delivered to the patient either through the brow or seventh-thoracic vertebra. To access the seventh-thoracic vertebra, have the client position themselves on their left side in the east of the Mesa. For emotional healing, sami is delivered through the thymus or heart. This is done by having the client lie on their back in the west direction (see figure 13).

When working with emotional conditions, the heart will fill quickly; therefore, the client may feel a slight pulse or tachycardia. This is a normal reaction, and the patient should not worry if this occurs. Again, it is always beneficial to place the appropriately charged sami khuya in the left hand of the client so that they can receive an additional influx of hampi or spirit medicine.

Closing Ritual

After you have administered the energy to your patient, ask him or her to take a deep breath and hold that breath for a brief moment. Have the patient call to mind the appropriate intention for his or her healing – spiritual, physical, mental, or emotional. Once the intention has been made, ask the patient to gently exhale through the nose to seal the healing that has taken place. The healer can also mirror the client's inhalation and exhalation in order to energetically reinforce the client's intentions for healing. Once the exhalation is complete, the healer places his or her thumb over the entry point of the energetic delivery on the client's body to seal the delivery of medicine. In addition, the healer can also snap his or her fingers over the delivery point to further seal the healing.

The patient is now empowered with the energy they received, no longer needing to rely on an outside source for its delivery. Once the healing has been sealed, ask the client to gently open his or her eyes and, if comfortable, share any experiences that he or she may have had. At this point, guidance or follow up work may be recommended for the client so they can more deeply integrate the shifts they have experienced in the ceremony into their everyday lives. When these final pieces are covered, the ceremony may be brought to completion and the circle closed.

Despacho Rituals

The Spanish word despacho, and the Quechua word haywarikuy are both used to describe a type of ritual offering (ofrenda) that focuses on fostering healthy relationships of ayni (the sacred reciprocal balance of give and take). This reverent process is designed to keep one in a constant place of reflection regarding the balance of resources (energetic, physical, and otherwise), including one's consumption of those resources. This type of ceremony is used primarily to place one in harmony through a healthy and balanced exchange with the living world.

The term despacho derives from the Spanish word despachar, which means: to dispatch or consign, to send, to attend to, to serve, to settle or resolve, or to see to. When one offers a despacho, one is attending to the balance of resources with gratitude – and extending their awareness in service to that balance – to resolve any conflicts that may be present in their lives; the lives of their families, farm, or livestock; the things that sustain life, etc. The ancient Paqos (shamans) of Peru understood that maintaining a lifestyle of balance was a challenging endeavor, and one must be in constant reflection in order to not let this delicate balance tip in either direction. For example, if one is too passive and docile in nature, one will surely be eaten, and if one is too predatory and gluttonous, one will eat until there is nothing left to consume.

The wise elders of ancient times were aware of our potential and tendency as human beings to take more than we give back, especially from the Earth. The creation of a despacho is a way to give back through prayer, intention, and love. It is also a way to stay in constant remembrance and awareness of our obligation as healthy stewards of the terrestrial space we occupy in cohabitation with the living world. We must forever strive to care for Pachamama, as she cares for us – tirelessly, generously, and without asking for anything in return. In other words, if we do not honor and care for the natural world, which sustains our existence, the natural world will eventually be unable to care for us.

Ritual Components of a Communal Despacho

A despacho is comprised of a variety of natural items often called regalos (small presents; treats or delicacies) or recados (message bringers), which are arranged ritually on paper (see figure 18), infused with prayer and healing energy, and then folded into a bundle to be burned or buried. There are twenty-four basic elements contained within the despachos of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. There are six items from each of the following groups: animal products (for the Tirakuna), plant products (for the Auquis), mineral products (for the Malquis), and human-made products (for the Machukuna and/or Machula Aulanchis).



Figure 18. Arrangement of Offerings for a Communal Despacho

In the Paqokuna tradition, the pampamisayoq (ritualist or ceremonialist) may learn to create and perform several hundred different types of despacho or haywarikuy ceremonies. To name just a few, there are offerings for the sun and the moon, the rivers, lagoons, lakes, animals, as well as events like births, deaths, marriages, relational conflicts, and to bring good luck, prosperity, and longevity. It is also common for curanderos to create despachos to bless certain spaces, such as living quarters, work places, and sacred sites.

Typically, the contents of a despacho are assembled by a specialist and ritually prepared by an herbalist (yerbatera) or healer (curandera/curandero). In ancient times, the contents of a despacho would simply be found in nature: a small tuft of llama wool, some pieces of Palo Santo wood, wiraqoya flower incense, wayruro seeds, kernels of heirloom corn, salt from the ocean, a feather plume that falls from the wing of a great condor, colorful grains of quinoa, special shells from a beach, prized crystals or minerals from the earth, food from your own plate, things crafted by human hands, specific plants, herbs, trees, flowers, and even the miscarried fetus of an alpaca. Anything that was favored or honored as essential ingredients to the sustainability of life would be added. In modern day Cusco, however, the contents of a despacho are comprised of a mix of these ancient ingredients (like the fat from a llama, an alpaca fetus, minerals, feathers, a starfish, etc.) with a modern day splash of mass-produced items (such as candies wrapped in plastic, confetti, animal crackers, cotton strings and ribbons, lead figurines, etc.). All of these items are packaged by a ritual specialist, and are made available through certain herbal shops throughout the Tawantinsuyu (the four regions of Cusco). They are usually bundled into several generic categories (hatun, ayni, kuti, etc.) to cover the basic needs of the various ceremonies conducted by the ritual specialist (pampamisayoq /altomisayoq). A hatun offering is comprised of a “grand or complete” version of the essential ingredients needed to perform a wide variety of offerings. An ayni bundle is used mostly for specific forms of fostering reciprocity, and kuti is used primarily for rituals of transformation and transmutation.

Much like a painter chooses color from a palette, the ceremonialist is able to

draw the ingredients they need for whatever ceremony they are conducting from these generic prepackaged bundles. Each tradition, and each individual practitioner within that tradition, has a unique way of arranging these items to express the intentions of their offering. That said, it is difficult to provide the reader with a methodological set of guidelines for this process. But to provide an idea of how this lineal tutelage can be passed on, below is an account of how don Oscar was apprenticed in the art of despacho creation from his teacher don Benito Corihuaman Vargas of the Paqokuna lineage.

The way that don Benito passed on this particular expression of apprenticeship holds many similarities to the “trickster” or “coyote” teachings from native North America. In other words, he conveyed his traditional wisdom in unexpected ways that continued, and still continue, to reveal deeper wisdom through the process itself. To explain, don Benito would sit Oscar down and begin the process of describing and explaining how a specific despacho should be created. This explanation and demonstration would take several days. Then, don Benito would ask Oscar to replicate what he had just learned. Oscar would try to meticulously recreate the offering exactly as he had seen it done, yet every time, don Benito would declare it was all wrong, and begin showing him how to do the ritual all over again. This process went on for months, until finally, in a fit of frustration, rebellion, and autonomy, don Oscar began placing the items down on the paper however he wanted. When this happened, don Benito paused and examined the arrangement of don Oscar’s despacho, and rendered it acceptable.

The beauty and wisdom of these ancient forms of “trickster” teachings is, after months of instruction, don Oscar had learned exactly how to perform the ceremony: he had learned the essence, the heart, of how despachos had been conducted for thousands of years by these people. Yet he was not empowered to perform the ritual on his own until he arrived at a place of self-sufficient autonomy and stopped emulating his teacher.

With that in mind, the following description is one way a communal despacho ceremony could be created in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. After one’s personal altar has been set up and activated, a similar process of activation is conducted for the charging of the despacho packets and contents. One way this can be done is to lay out an additional unkhuña (textile) in the center of the room and spread out all of the offerings from the despacho kit around the perimeter of that altar cloth. Have the participants in the room place their left hand over their heart and direct their right palm to the center of the room, where the offerings are placed.

Have the participants channel the energy of love and gratitude from their hearts to the offerings in the center. Once complete, invite individuals to come up, select an offering, and bring it back to their seat. Note: It is optimal to have people stand in the west (facing east) when they select their items, so they will be in alignment with the life affirming powers and illumination of the rising sun. It is customary to request that participants walk clockwise around the Mesa to get to the west. Once positioned in the west, participants are invited to intuitively select an item with their right hand and return to their seat in circle. This process continues until all of the offerings have been chosen by the participants.

After the participants have returned to their places in circle, the leader of ceremony petitions the spiritual realms and creates an environment suitable for presenting the offering (see Invocation). Once the necessary energetic conditions are present, the participants place their intentions into the contents of their packets. This is done by holding the offerings in their right hands, visualizing their intentions, holding these intentions in their hearts, then gently blowing these intentions into the offering(s) held in their right hands.

When the prayers and intentions have been sealed within each individual offering through the exhalation of the breath, the packets are placed either on their individual Mesas and in the direction that corresponds to the intentions placed within it, or on the ground in front of each participant. At this time, the group commonly uses drums, rattles, whistles, flutes, and other musical instruments to externalize the celebration of giving back to Pachamama or the Apukuna through music and ceremonial invocations.

As the music begins, the leader of ceremony will place the sheet of white despacho paper in the center of the room (i.e., where the original offerings were just retrieved). Beginning with the first person on their left (then the next, moving clockwise), the leader will invite each participant to approach the center space, walk around the despacho paper in a clockwise manner, and stop once again in the west direction. At this point, the participant will prayerfully empty the contents of their packet(s) on the despacho paper in a way that both expresses and releases their intentions into the despacho.

Traditionally, each offering has an exact location on the paper. For example, the cross, llama untu (llama fat), and three-leaf coca k'intu (ritual offering of coca leaves) are usually placed in the center of the despacho paper on top of a small scallop shell. Animal products are placed in the south for the Tirakuna

(Watchers), plant offerings are placed in the west for the Auquis (Nature Spirits), mineral offerings are placed in the north for the Malquis (Tree Spirits), human-made products are placed in the east for the Machukuna or Machula Aulanchis (Benevolent Old Ones), and offerings of all four elements together are placed in the center for the Apukuna (Sacred Mountains).

In a communal despacho, participants should be encouraged to have the freedom to empty the contents on the paper spontaneously as they feel guided by Spirit. However, keep in mind that this process should be done with collaborative symmetry and with an aesthetic feel for balance. This process is continued until all of the offerings have been placed on the despacho paper.

After each participant has returned to his or her place in the circle, the pace of the music becomes more rapid, and the final invocations are made by the ceremony leader. Immediately following these final intentions, the leader of the ceremony signals for the music to stop, and the contents of the despacho are wrapped prayerfully inside the paper and tied in silence. Great care is taken in this moment to handle the despacho with great care and reverence, just as a mother would care for a newborn child, and many practitioners believe that the despacho should never be flipped upside down as it is being wrapped or offered.

The despacho, now in a ritual bundle, is commonly prayed over by the ceremony leader. The following is one example of a Quechua prayer utilized in this tradition:

Mamaqocha chaskiwaiku kay despachuta kay pachywaiku k'intuta hampicamayoq.

The English translation of this Quechua prayer is difficult to reproduce word for word, but the following embodies the essence of its meaning:

Sacred messenger, container of the maternal, we offer the Middle World to the above. In the realm of this world, we are all brethren, honoring the ordering of the three worlds with this symbolic act. May this offering be a container of

powerful medicine. (Miro-Quesada, 1997)

Once the despacho has been created and prayed over, it can be offered properly. This act is usually done at the site one wishes the energetic conditions to manifest. For example, a despacho created for blessing a person's new home is often buried underneath the foundation before the house is constructed.

The site where the despacho is offered is usually prepared ahead of time by chosen participants of the ceremony. Whether the offering is to be buried (for Pachamama) or burned (for the Apukuna), it is necessary to properly "feed" the space. In the case of burial, the Earth must be properly fed with libation, cornmeal, tobacco, and coca leaves (bay leaves can be substituted if coca leaves are not available). Similarly, in the case of a burning, the fire is constructed (if possible, in the east) and is also fed with libation, cornmeal, tobacco, and coca leaves. Medicine songs, such as icaros (Amazonian healing songs) or tarjos (Northern Coastal healing songs), are also commonly sung during this time to assist in the creation of sacred space.

The procession goes to the place where the offering will be presented, and the participants of the ceremony form a circle around this area. The carrier of the wrapped despacho, who is typically last in this procession line, will reverently and prayerfully place the offering in the ground or on the fire. This act could be seen as either planting a healing seed in the Earth (for Pachamama) or sending the healing prayers through the rising smoke to the Sacred Mountains (for the Apukuna).

Though there are prescribed methods for creating despachos, it is important that the curandero develop his or her own individual style. But most importantly, any despacho must be created with reverence, prayerful intention, and love in order to be effective.

Ingredients of a Despacho

Ingredients for despachos can be found in most rural and urban markets in Peru. The ingredients chosen will vary depending on the intention with which the despacho is to be offered. The following is a list of some common despacho ingredients used by don Oscar Miro-Quesada (1997):

1. One piece of white paper (minimum size: 1' x 1')
2. Coca leaves, if available, or bay leaves as an alternative
3. Wiraqoya (a type of Peruvian incense)
4. Llama untu (llama fat)
5. Two pairs of coca ruros (coca seeds); or laurel or bay seeds
6. Misa galleta (Mass cracker/Catholic symbol of the Eucharist)
7. One pallar (big lima bean)

8. One chuwi (small lima bean)
9. A small piece of kuntur phuru (condor feather or plume)
10. Two inchis (peanuts)
11. One pair of qori vara (gold foil sticks), representing the Sun
12. One pair of qolqe vara (silver foil sticks), representing the moon
13. Two wayruros (tropical seeds)
14. Two pieces of estrella kuti (star fish)
15. Two pieces of saqsakuti (big black wrinkled seed or fruit)
16. A sprinkling of arroz (rice)
17. Two pieces of kancha (corn kernals)
18. A sprinkling of azucar (white sugar)

19. Three pairs of garbanzos (chick peas)

20. Sara paraqu (large white corn)

21. Two colors of gravil t'ika (carnations), preferably red and white for Pachamama and the Aupukuna respectively

22. Qhaqha chunta (micaceous sand)

23. A selection of kubyertus or chuichis (small lead figures)

24. T'anta anise (bread anise seeds)

25. Two folded pieces of qori libru (gold foil)

26. Two folded pieces of qolqe libru (silver foil)

27. Alfroka (colored sprinkles)

28. Powdered Palo Santo (type of Peruvian incense)

29. Trago or chicha (libation or clear alcohol)
30. One shell
31. One small cross, which can be cut out of paper
32. Blue cornmeal
33. Tobacco
34. Two small branches from a living tree
35. Kubyertus (cutouts) from a magazine or book depicting one's desired symbolism
36. Organic matter from pilgrimage places
37. Crystals, iron ore, pyrite, stones, etc.
38. Photos or drawings

39. Florida Water or perfumes

40. Red or white string to tie the despacho

Weekly Prayer Ceremonies

All over the world, there are people who dedicate a few minutes of their time every week to focus intention on a collective level. Although the practice of shamanism is often seen as an advocate of spontaneous ceremonial expression, it is important to note that shamanism also recognizes the wisdom of having a ceremonial practice that is disciplined and performed on a consistent basis. Expressed through the catchy phrase “practice makes perfect,” intentional repetition promotes the cultivation of growth and skillful mastery. In a ceremonial sense, structure and repetition promote spiritual growth and add depth to one’s relationship with Spirit.

Maintaining a disciplined commitment to participate in a weekly prayer ceremony is universal among the world’s spiritual traditions. The Wednesday Night Mesa Link-Up and the Pachamama Renewal Process are two examples of weekly prayer ceremonies performed in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition. The first is performed at precisely 9:45 p.m. (all time zones) every Wednesday evening. The second is often performed daily to aid in the healing of Pachamama in relation to her interdependent relationship with humankind.

The following are the prescribed ritual agendum to the above examples of weekly prayer ceremony:

Wednesday Night Mesa Link-Up

1.If possible, consecrate the ground where you will set up your Mesa in the following manner:

a.Pour a drop of clear spirits (white rum, corn or grain alcohol, Florida Water) or pure water into the center of the ground where your Mesa will be set up.

b.Starting in the south, sprinkle a clockwise circle of cornmeal (preferably blue) where your Mesa will be placed.

c.Sprinkle a cross of tobacco across the cornmeal circle – first north to south, then east to west.

d.If it is not practical to consecrate the ground as described above, consecrate it energetically with your highest intentions. If you keep your Mesa set up in the same place, you needn't repeat the consecration ritual each time, though it never hurts to give Pachamama a little offering.

2.Place your manta/unkhuña (Mesa cloth) on top of the consecrated ground and place your khuyas and other sacred objects in their appropriate positions.

3.Sit or stand in the south with your palms facing the Mesa and tone the directions – Pachamama (south), Mama Killa (west), Wiraqocha (north), Inti

(east), and K'uychi (center) – three times each.

4. Sit in the south. Open your crown, your brow, the nape of your neck, and your heart center. Receive the saywa – the shining column of light from the Hanaq Pacha, the Upper World – and direct this energy through your palms to the center of the Mesa. Open your center around your navel area, your qosqo, and feel an umbilical cord of energy connect you with the center of your Mesa. Express your deepest and purest intention for the healing of Pachamama and for peace among all her children. It should now be 9:45 p.m.

5. Beginning at 9:45 p.m., simply allow the energy to flow through you into the Mesa and deep into Pachamama. Feel your connection with the people in other parts of the world who are also in this practice. You are in the realm of the mystic – not acting, simply being.

6. From 10:00–10:15 p.m., you will probably feel a distinct energy shift. At this time you may use the heightened energy to do healing on yourself, absentee healing on others, or you may simply close the Mesa.

7. Complete the ceremony by closing your Mesa. Direct your palms toward the center of the Mesa and intone the directions one time each. Then, with your hands still facing the Mesa, take a breath and blow to the center of the Mesa (Miro-Quesada, 1998).

Pachamama Renewal Process

1. At the qosqo, or navel, hold your hands against your skin or clothing at your lower belly such that the tips of your thumbs and index fingers form a diamond around your navel. Chant the word qosqo (navel) one time while envisioning the color green. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

2. With the tips of your thumbs together, fingers spread, palms facing the Earth, and your elbows straight; draw in energy through your feet, palms, and perineum. Chant allpa (earth) one time while envisioning the color brown. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

3. Cup your hands, palms facing up at the level of your solar plexus and receive the stream of the waterfall: draw in water energy through your palms and heart (both in front and in back). Chant unu (water) one time while envisioning the color blue. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

4. Raise your hands so that they are both at shoulder height and shoulder width apart. Face your palms toward the heavens. Harness the wind through your palms and throat center. Chant wayra (wind) one time while envisioning the colors silver and white. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

5. Raise your arms so that they are parallel to the Earth. Bend your elbows at a 90-degree angle, palms facing forward, and allow the light and fire energy to be received through your palms and brow. Chant nina (fire) one time while envisioning the color red. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

6. Touch the tips of your thumbs and index fingers together, forming a triangle. Place your thumbs against the bridge of your nose, and place the back of your hands against your forehead, palms spread. Arch back and integrate the rainbow into your brow and crown. Chant K'uychi (rainbow) one time while envisioning the color violet or purple. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

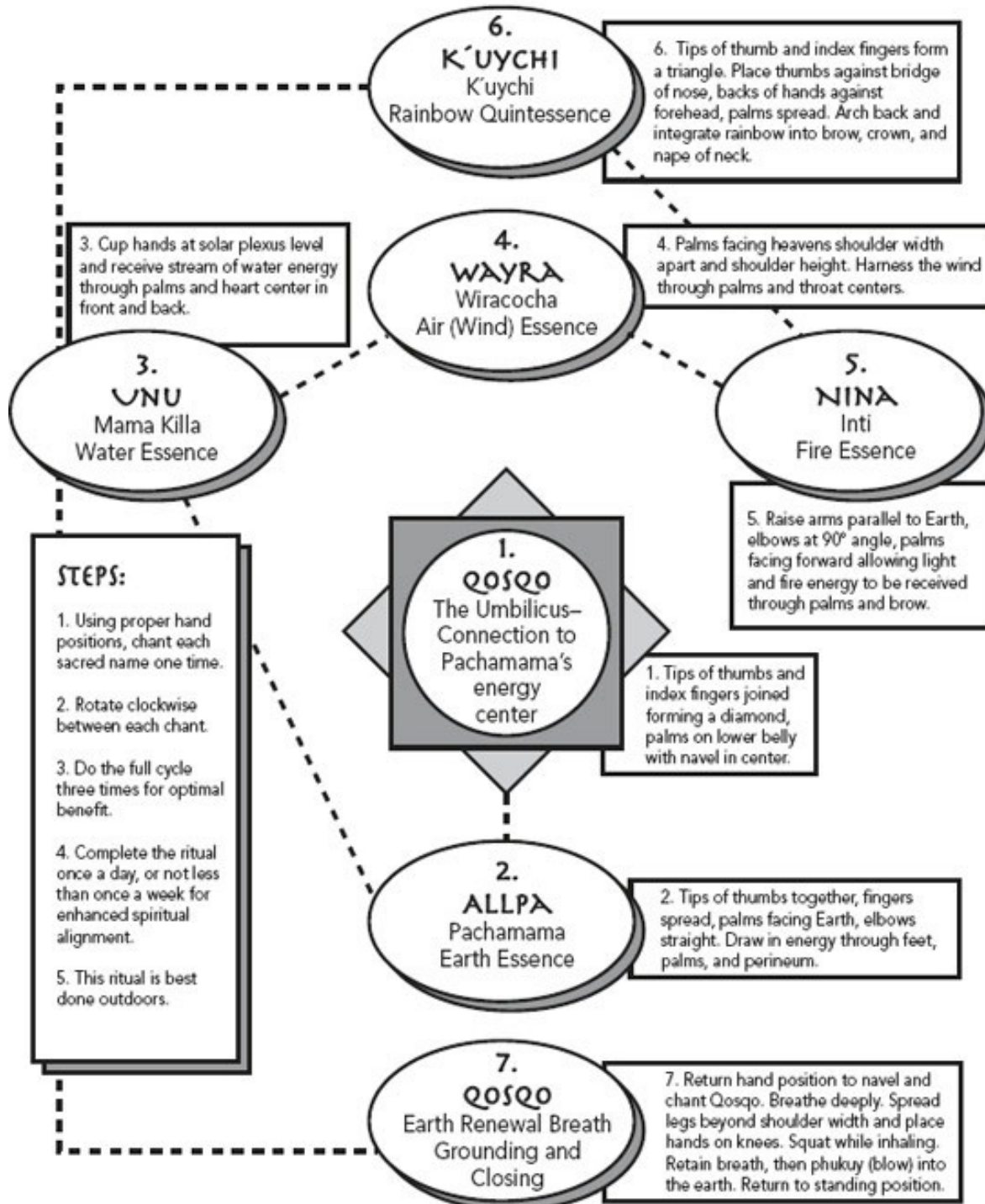
7. Keep your hands in this same position, but move them so that the triangle covers the navel and chant qosqo while again envisioning the color green. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

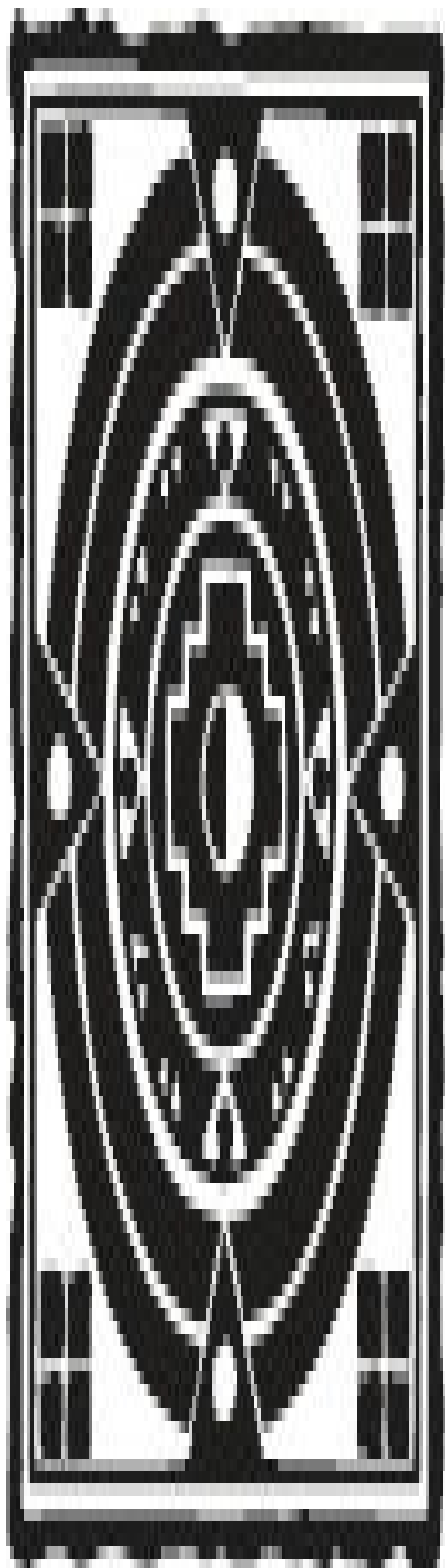
8. Breathe deeply. Now spread your legs beyond shoulder width, and place your hands on your knees. Squat while inhaling, hold your breath, and then softly blow into the Earth. Return to standing position. Rotate 360 degrees clockwise.

Optional: Repeat steps 1–8 three times for ideal benefit. Complete the ritual once a day, or no less than once a week, for enhanced spiritual alignment in your life (Miro-Quesada, 1998).

Pachakuti Mesa rituals, despacho ceremonies, the Wednesday Night Mesa Link-Up, and the Pachamama Renewal Process are examples of basic forms of ceremonial practice found in this specific shamanic tradition. It is important to remember these forms of prayer are simply examples. You are encouraged to be playful with these ceremonies, allowing them to be living teachers, which requires allowing room for change. As Joseph Campbell points out, “if a mythology does not continue to evolve, it dies.” The same is so for ritual and ceremony.

PACHAMAMA RENEWAL PROCESS





Chapter Seven

Leading the Ceremony

Sourcing Medicine in Daily Life

Those who are enlightened never stop forging themselves. The realizations of such masters cannot be expressed well in words or by theories. The most perfect actions echo the patterns found in nature. – Morihei Ueshiba

There is an inherent human urge to explore and understand the mysteries of the universe and to discover the role we play within it. There is also a consistent inner calling to dive into the depths of our hearts, to explore our human potential, and to live as examples of authenticity and truth. At the heart of this journey exists a direct connection with the source of life.

The pages of this book are an invitation to explore an ancient culture's version of how to cultivate and live a ceremonial lifestyle. The Mesa is a spiritual tool, yet its use is the real teacher. Martin Prechtel, a Mayan shaman from Guatemala said it well: "I can give you the blueprint to the space shuttle, but are you going to fly it?" Knowledge alone cannot heal us or restore us to balance. It must be put into practice in order to bring about transformation.

As individual concepts, the teachings of this lineage are simple to understand and remember; yet, holding all of the innumerable pieces of the tradition together in awareness can be quite daunting and difficult. For this reason, every piece on the Mesa is like a placeholder to catalyze memory and visionary insight into how each piece works together within a larger system. As a Mesa is constructed and used in ceremony, it illuminates the synergistic relationship of the cardinal directions, the tutelary spirit guides and animal allies, and the sacred mountains. It invites an awareness of the healing energies of k'anchay, kawsay, and sami; the attributes of llank'ay, yachay, and munay; and the teachings of the three worlds (Ukhu Pacha, Kay Pacha, and Hanaq Pacha). It holds the wisdom of the three fields (Campo Ganadero, Campo Justiciero, and Campo Medio) as well as the four elements, the four directions (suyus), the four winds, and the four paths, etc., and it connects us to the luminous energy system of the planet known

as the ceque system.

Just as scaffolding is used to build a temple and is then dismantled when the structure is sound, the Pachakuti Mesa functions in much the same way training wheels do to help a small child learn how to ride a bicycle. The tradition and its teachings hold us upright until we have internalized its wisdom. Like learning to ride a bicycle, learning to work the Mesa requires an abundance of practice before it becomes second nature – repetition promotes internalization of wisdom.

Make ceremony an integral part of your daily life to the point where ceremony and life become indistinguishable. Sit at your Mesa regularly and become intimately aware of each individual piece, as well as how each piece works with the others as a living system. Spend time in nature learning the wisdom it has to teach and become familiar with the cycles and forces of Pachamama. Create and conduct ceremonies that express intentions for healing, celebrations, and manifesting positive changes. Design and perform despachos for whatever intention you wish to let go of or manifest. Be creative and intuitive in these ceremonies. Participate in the Wednesday Night Mesa Link-Up in order to spiritually connect with others who are also practicing this medicine path. Perform the Pachamama Renewal Process to aid in bringing light and transformation to our planet. Cultivating the use of the Mesa will produce personal growth and positive changes in your life and transformation in the world.

Let this book be a resource and guide in creating your medicine path, but allow Spirit to instruct you as well. This book is meant to be an introduction to the wisdom of this tradition, and I encourage people to continue educating themselves with other sources of information about this tradition. Be open to new experiences beyond the scope of this book. It is through the journey that insights are discovered, not by finding answers to these mysteries, but by living the mystery in each and every moment along the way.

Traditions themselves are the proverbial breadcrumbs of human ancestry left on the trail of life to clearly mark the return path home. Ceremonies, healing techniques, postures of alignment, meditative practices, cosmological understandings, parables, and legends are the morsels of nutrition that have been thoughtfully placed to keep us fed and moving on the path. They reveal where the medicine lives along the journey. And through their exploration, one eventually recognizes that the medicine lives everywhere, and the experience of

life is the truest form of apprenticeship. When this is discovered, one realizes that there is no way to be off of the path, no way to become lost, and no direction that does not return to Source.

That being said, a shamanic tradition is like a thousand fingers pointing at the sun. Its deep practice is being offered as a lifestyle that repeatedly brings one's attention to the source of illumination itself. Each element of traditional wisdom is an attempt to describe a portion of the light that is often too intense to look upon directly. Yet through the exploration of its core and periphery, we discover that we live indivisibly within its body, and somehow it lives within us as well. In the words of German philosopher and theologian, Nicolaus Cusanus "God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and circumference nowhere." This limitless path of discovery instructs us in the art of forging deep relationships with the life we have been offered, and meaningful ways of engaging it.

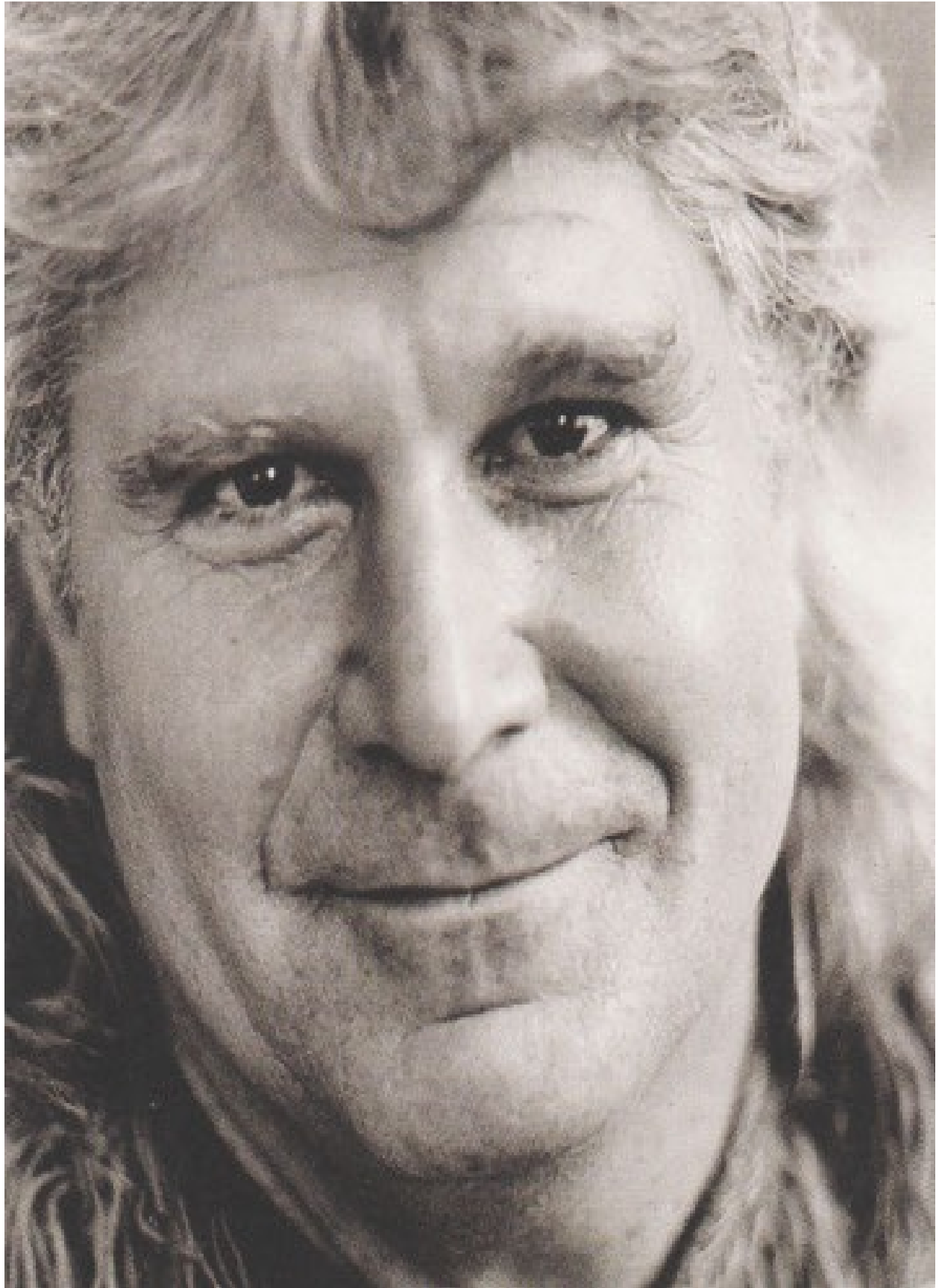
The practice of shamanism, despite its apparent complexity, is ultimately an invitation to return to simplicity. It offers a thousand versions of simple truth, in hope that the investigation of these truths will reveal something deeper than all of them. This journey ultimately strips away limiting conceptions of personal identity, and in their absence, the shaman discovers what it means to live as an empty vessel, and merges directly with the ever-unfolding essence of life itself. Selfless service is a natural byproduct of this discovery. When there is nothing left to grip to, and all stories of identity fall away, life itself becomes as an unending expression of the unfathomable mystery of love revealing itself within and around a soul, through the present moment of time.

Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of Love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, we will have discovered fire. – Teilhard de Chardin

As the character of our souls is forged through the fire of life, there exists an ever-deepening invitation to live as examples of fearless love, authentic belonging, engaged curiosity, and empowered vulnerability. Through this exploration, the shamanic path becomes an invitation to live the ceremony, and to engage in a full, vibrant experience of the unfolding mystery with our every

breath. Every inhalation becomes an invitation to fully embrace the totality of life being offered through the present moment, and every exhalation exists as an opportunity to release it completely, and offer it all back to Source. This is a dance as old as time, and its essence exists as an unending relationship with the living ceremony that is unfolding everywhere and in every moment of this life.





Don Oscar Miro-Quesada

As mentioned earlier, the information contained within this book comes directly from the teachings I have internalized through my apprenticeship with don Oscar Miro-Quesada. While writing this book I received a number of requests to include, in addition to the teachings themselves, some information about don Oscar, his background, apprenticeships, and life experiences. For the readers who are seeking a deeper account of this man's extraordinary life, it has been rendered more extensively through a book titled, *Lessons In Courage: Peruvian Shamanic Wisdom for Everyday Life*, which was coauthored by Dr. Bonnie Glass-Coffin and don Oscar Miro-Quesada.

Don Oscar Miro-Quesada originated the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition of cross-cultural shamanism and was the visionary founder of the Heart of the Healer (THOTH) Foundation. He is also an invited United Nations (UN) Observer for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. He is a respected kamasqa curandero and altomisayoq adept from Peru and a Fellow in Ethnopsychology with the Organization of American States (OAS). Don Oscar has also been guiding cross-cultural ethnospiritual apprenticeship expeditions to sacred sites of the world since 1986, with special emphasis on Peru and Bolivia. Aside from his currently established international Pachakuti Mesa apprenticeship programs, he has been a popular teacher at numerous US educational centers. His work and programs have been featured on CNN, Univision, A&E, and the Discovery Channel.

Don Oscar's formal apprenticeship took place during the summer months of 1969 through 1982 as an asistente de mesada to the famed huachumero don Celso Rojas Palomino from Salas, an area located near the city of Chiclayo in Peru's Northern Coast. Don Celso was known throughout the Northern Coastal region of Peru as a san pedrito mestizo healer of the Huachuma Curandero tradition for his expertise in diagnostic vista, or spiritual sight. The foundation of don Oscar's ritual use of the Mesa comes from countless hours of observation and exposure to don Celso's shamanic mastery.

The year 1982 proved to be one of endings and new beginnings for don Oscar.

Just after revealing to don Oscar that he was now ready to bring Mesa curanderismo to the northern regions of Pachamama, specifically to Turtle Island (North America) medicine circles, don Celso unexpectedly made his physical transition. At this time, don Oscar had also just completed an OAS (Organization of American States) fellowship in Ethnopsychology at Emory University in Atlanta. Don Oscar elaborates:

I developed a satellite program in mental health sponsored by the Organization of American States that was intended to mainstream selected native folk healers into Peru's public healthcare system. With heart-centered intuition, I combined my knowledge of Peruvian curanderismo with Jungian and other Depth Psychology traditions. The fusion of these disparate practices I termed Ethnospiritual Therapy, which became the basis of my current apprenticeship work and shamanic teaching. It weaves rich connections between cross-cultural shamanism, gnosticism, alchemy, and transpersonal psychotherapy. When artfully combined, these elements result in an effective paradigm that integrates holistic healing with personal and planetary spiritual awakening. (Miro-Quesada, 1995)

Following the completion of this fellowship with the OAS, don Oscar returned to Peru to do ethnopsychological fieldwork in the sacred valley region of Wasau. While in Wasau, don Oscar met the famed Hampiqamayoq (carrier of strong medicine) don Benito Corihuaman Vargas. Don Oscar explains, “the ‘remembering’ was instant, and within a month I found myself being initiated into the classical southern Andean Paqokuna shaman/priesthood under don Benito’s uncompromising tutelage” (Miro-Quesada, 1998).

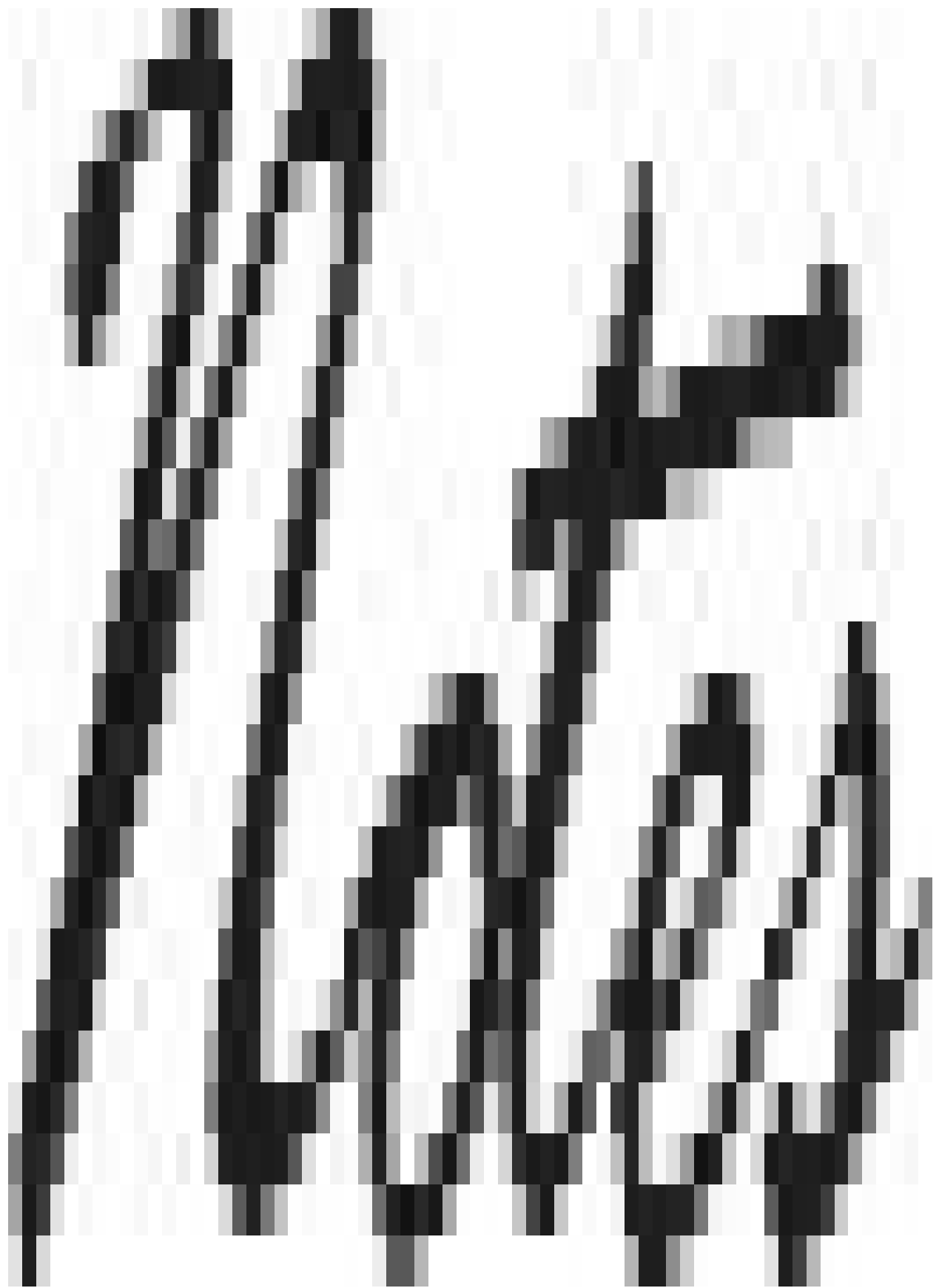
Don Oscar’s apprenticeship with don Benito was less formal than with don Celso. Much of this training consisted of attending don Benito’s communal gatherings as an assistant and observing his despacho ceremonies. Don Benito’s method of training was such that he would not allow his apprentices to merely emulate his style of medicine work. Much of his training involved developing a unique and individual style of shamanism. Don Oscar was initiated into the Paqokuna shamanic priesthood in 1985, receiving his mosoq qallariy initiation as an altomisayoq from don Benito. Although don Benito passed away in 1986,

he continues to be a powerful guiding presence in don Oscar's life.

Though don Oscar was born and raised in Peru, his education is not limited to the indigenous wisdom teachings and healing arts of his homeland. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in the United States. This academic trajectory includes an A.S. in microbiology from Mitchell College, a B.A. in psychology and a minor in comparative religions from Duke University, a M.A. in humanistic clinical psychology from the State University of West Georgia, and a post-graduate specialization degree in ethnopsychology (Psy. Et.) awarded by the Organization of American States (OAS) upon completion of a two-year fellowship in interdisciplinary studies at Emory University.

Don Oscar has been a professor of transpersonal psychology at the State University of West Georgia, an organizational member of the American Holistic Medical Foundation (AHMF), a clinical director of the Institute for Transformative Medicine in West Palm Beach; and together with Raymond Moody, Mike Arons, and William Roll, he was a founder and director of educational projects of the Parapsychological Services Institute in Atlanta. His extensive involvement with experimental parapsychology and consciousness studies led don Oscar to create and author PSI*KICK, an internationally distributed family game with audio program and psi-interactive items that allow players to access, develop, and apply the untapped potential of the human mind. Don Oscar's OAS sponsored research in ethnopsychology at Emory was eventually integrated into a form of public health-care delivery, which subsequently led to the development of a satellite program in rural mental health. This program conjoined carefully screened native folk-healers with mainstream allopathic psychiatrists in Peru's national public health system.

Don Oscar is passionately dedicated to what he calls Ethnospiritual Therapy and Third Millennial Shamanism through his work as a transpersonal psychotherapist and teacher of cross-cultural shamanism. He has been sharing these teachings through apprenticeship trainings focusing on the indigenous healing practices of Peru. He has taught at the Omega, Rowe, Naropa, and Esalen institutes as well as apprenticeship programs on the Shift Network. He also has been leading ethno-spiritual journeys to Peru and Bolivia since 1986 in order for people the world over to meet local shamanic practitioners and learn about these traditions directly. More impressive than his many credentials, however, is the love with which he shares this work and the authentic desire he has to be of service to others.



Chapter One

1. See Berthold Laufer, “Origin of the Word Shaman,” *American Anthropologist* 19, New Series no. 3 (Jul–Sep 1917): 361–71; and J. Bremmer, “Travelling Souls? Greek Shamanism Reconsidered”, in *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*, ed. Bremmer J. N. (London: Routledge, 2002), 7–40. Both refer to Adam Brand’s 1698 translation of Everard Isbrand’s *Driejaarige Reize naar China* within *A Journal of the Embassy from Their Majesties John and Peter Alexievitz, Emperors of Muscovy, etc., Over Land into China*.

Chapter Two

1. A psychopomp is one who has the ability to achieve multidimensional journeying for the purpose of assisting a distressed or lost soul through its transition to another realm – most often to a more elevated dimension of consciousness or to a higher vibratory rate of existence.
2. The word “synchronistic” is a variation of the term “synchronicity” coined by Carl G. Jung meaning “an acausal connecting principle” that links seemingly unrelated and unconnected events. It states that there is a unifying principle behind meaningful coincidences (Guiley 1991, 595).
3. The term akashic comes from the Sanskrit word akasha, defined as either the fundamental etheric substance in the universe or the all-pervasive space. Much like Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious, the akasha is an eternal record of the vibrations of every action, thought, emotion, light, and sound that has ever, and will ever, take place (Guiley 1991, 4).
4. Magical flight refers to the shaman’s ability to leave the body through an induced ecstatic trance, which enables him or her to transcend the limitations of ordinary consciousness, travel through time and space, and return unhindered from these realms.
5. The Tawantinsuyu refers to both the four corners of the world and a smaller geographic region of the four corners located in the Andes of Peru. The word tawa in Quechua means “four” and the word suyú means “region.”

6. The Quechua word t'eqsi means "source," "origin," "root," or "seed". The Quechua word muyu means "round" or "spherical." Amaru means "the great serpent." Artistic renditions of this concept can be observed in many of the woven patterns of ceremonial drop cloths (mantas or unkhuñas) used by Mesa carriers.

Chapter Three

1. The Eye of Horus is a highly stylized eye of the falcon-headed solar and sky god Horus (the Latin version of Hor) and is associated with regeneration, health, and prosperity. It is also one of the most common amulets of ancient Egypt (Guiley 1991, 197).

Chapter Four

1. The term paqo in the Quechua language means healer. When kuna is added to a word it makes that word plural; therefore, paqokuna means, simply, “healers.”

2. Huachuma curanderismo is a form of shamanic practice, primarily found along the Northern Coast of Peru, which is founded upon, and revolves around, the ritual use of a consecrated, healing altar and the entheogenic use of plant spirit medicine.

3. “Powerful places may favor certain individuals with a personal power object called istrilla (a convenient linguistic convergence of Quechua illa and Spanish estrella, star.” Catherine J. Allen, “Stones Who Love Me: Dimensionality, Enclosure and Petrification in Andean Culture.” *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 174 (Avril–Juin 2016): 327–364.

4. The Gaia Hypothesis refers to the Earth as a self-regulating organism. James E. Lovelock, a British biologist, first expressed this theory in the early 1970s.

5. The term yanantin is the Quechua term used to describe sacred duality or the bringing together of dualities in a sacred union.

Chapter Six

1. Although this section specifically refers to khuyas as stones, they can be any sacred object or medicine piece that has been charged with the specific energy needed to potentiate the healing process in ritual or ceremony.



Pronunciation Guide:

Vowels:

A – pronounced “ah” as in “jaw” or “car” (like an A in Spanish)

E – pronounced similar to “eh” or “ay” as in “says” or “case” (like an E in Spanish)

I – pronounced “ee” as in “see” or “key” (like an I in Spanish)

O – pronounced “oh” as in “grow” or “boat” (like an O in Spanish)

U – pronounced “oo” as in “soothe” or “food” (like U in Spanish)

Y – only used when placed after another vowel, making an “ee” sound just like the I (so “ay” in Quechua sounds like an A then an I, “ey” sounds like an E then and I (etc.); also used as a consonant.

Consonants:

Certain consonants in Quechua (CH, K, P, Q, T) have altered hard forms (represented by an apostrophe) and soft forms (represented by an H). The hard forms (apostrophe) are always produced by making the sound of the base letter without any air passing from the throat through the mouth. The soft forms (H) are made by passing extra air from the throat through the mouth, like sighing slightly while pronouncing the letter. See each specific letter for more details.

B – is not a traditional Quechua sound (this is a Spanish mistake, and would be a W or a P in Quechua depending on the context).

C – is not used in Quechua except in CH

CH – is treated as a single letter, pronounced like “cheese” in English.

CH’ – hard form of CH, pronounced using the same part of the mouth as CH, but made harder by “clicking” the tongue and the roof of the mouth; imagine pronouncing a CH sound on its own, separate from a word, and then adding the end of the word on “ch’eeese” or “ch-eeese,” try practicing by making a CH sound without allowing any air to pass through the mouth.

CHH – sort form of CH, pronounced like a skidding sound, something close to the SH sound in English, but using the same part of the mouth as CH (this is a rare letter); pronounced by pushing extra air through the mouth while making a CH sound.

D – is not a traditionally used letter or sound.

F - is not a traditionally used letter or sound

G – is traditionally not used in Quechua and is often used in the place of Q (e.g., Ausangate is actually Awsonqate) or K (e.g., Otorongo is actually Uturunku).

H – pronounced as in English (not silent as in Spanish); sometimes in poor transliterations you might see a J in an H's place (due to Spanish influence), but this is incorrect; e.g., the word is Hucha, not Jucha.

J – is not used in Quechua

K – is the hard form of K, pronounced by making a clicking sound in the mouth (as opposed to in the throat with Q, see below); practice by making a K sound without any air passing through the mouth.

L – Normal

LL – is considered a single letter and is pronounced like a Y in English (e.g., Yet, Yellow); in some pronunciations it is best described as an “LY” sound – imagine pronouncing Llama as LYama with a slight suggestion of an L that quickly transitions into a Y by rolling off the tongue.

Ñ – pronounced like NY, as in Spanish.

P – as in English

P' – the hard form of P, pronounced essentially as a sort of pop of the lips (you should not need any air passing through to pronounce this); making the “psst” noise is the closest equivalent I can think of.

PH – the soft form of P is not an F sound as in English, instead it is essentially like the sound of blowing through shaped lips; imagine blowing while pronouncing a P.

Q – this one is going to be hard to describe; it is like the CH in Hebrew (“chutzpah” for example) – it comes from the throat but is not overstated, neither in its click nor in its roll – it should not sound like you are gargling or scraping your throat, nor should it sound like you are clicking your epiglottis (that will come later); imagine that its duration is just as long as any other consonant – don't make the mistake of saying Qqqqqoy to say Qoy – no rolling, except when the Q is at the end of a syllable (e.g., the suffix “yoq” is pronounced “yoqqq” but not overdone).

Q' – now is the time to click your epiglottis, the “door” between your mouth and throat; you should not need any air to pronounce this sound.

QH – now you can go ahead and roll the Q sound; imagine the sound of clearing your throat.

QU – there is never ever a QU in Quechua (except in the name of the language, which is the Spanish version of Qheswa); you may see a Q'U though.

R – as in Spanish, you must roll that R to the point where it almost sounds like an L

S – traditionally pronounced like SH in English, nowadays you hear both SH and S sound

T – just like a T, but, you guessed it... there's more

T' – clicking T; try pronouncing a T without any air passing through the mouth

TH – breathy T, not like the TH sound in English “the,” but like the TH sound in “breath”

V – is not used in Quechua, traditionally (usually the Spanish used a V for what should have been a W; e.g., they wrote Vilcabamba when they should have written Willkapampa).

W – just like in English (and replaces some Spanish U's; e.g., Awsonquate instead of Ausongate)

X – not used in Quechua

Y – only used as a consonant when at the beginning of a word or syllable; see

vowels

Z – not used in Quechua

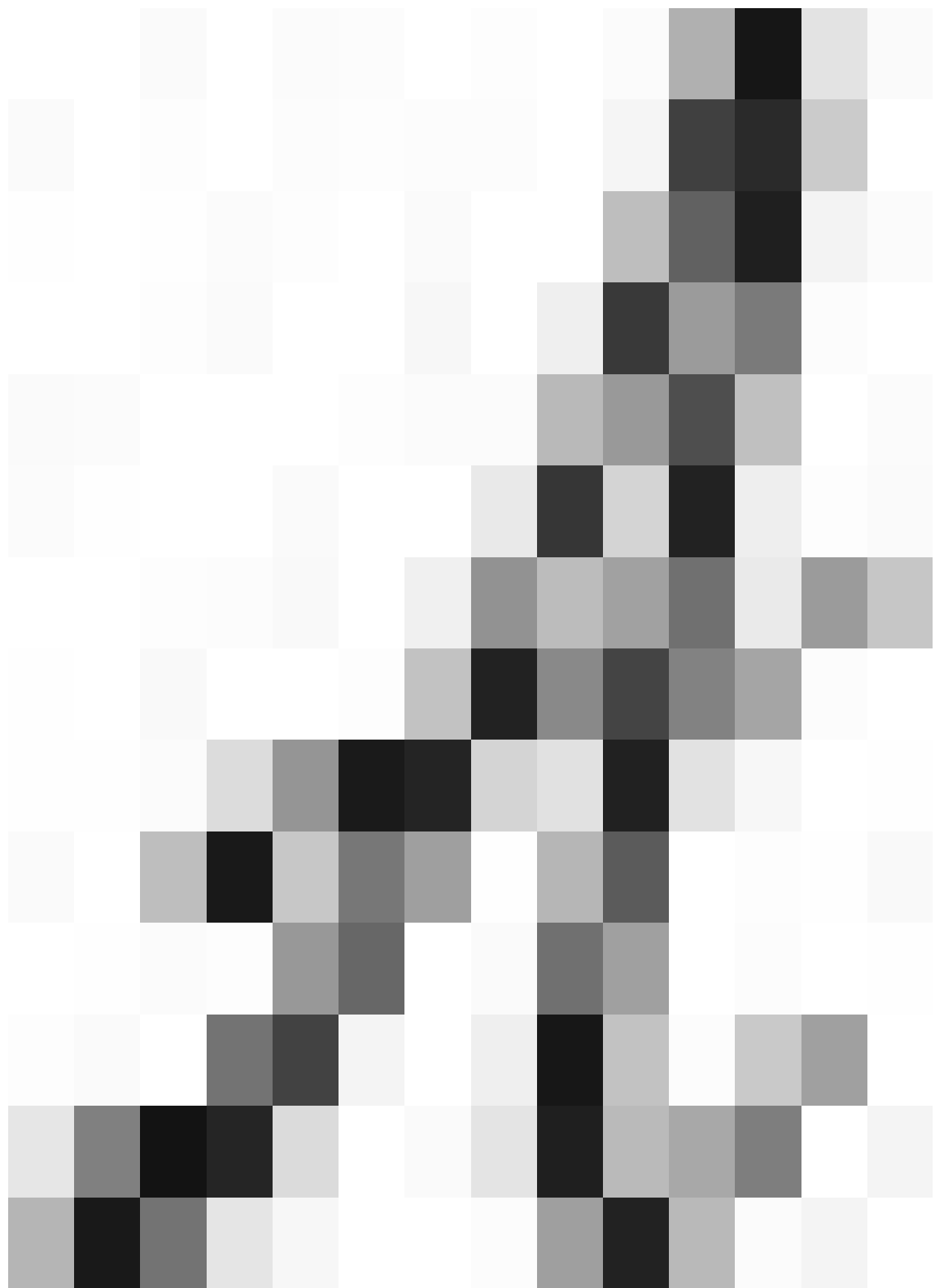
Pronunciation Guide:

One other important note on pronunciation – all Quechua words have the second-to-last syllable stressed, except when the word ends in Y. For example, Pacha has the stress on PA, and apukuna has the stress on KU. It never fails... even sonqoykumanta has its stress on “man” and wayqenchiskunata has the stress on NA. But, when the word ends in Y, the stress is on the last syllable. In munay, the stress is on NAY, and in kawsay the stress is on SAY (not on KAW as is commonly done). It is best in those cases to imagine the A and Y sounds as two separate syllables, so the stress becomes munAY or kawsAY – still, technically, on the second-to-last syllable (sorry if that is confusing). There are some words in which the stress is on the final syllable, but usually this is noted by an accent mark. The most common example is the word for yes, ARI. Rest assured, there are few of these words.

Spelling Discrepancies:

In Quechua, it is not uncommon to see the same word spelled in several different ways. Historically, there has never been an official written counterpart, so the spelling has always been phonetically based, which has led to numerous discrepancies. This is for several reasons. The most common reason is that a word is coming from the 3-vowel version of Quechua (which only uses U's, I's, and A's), which can result in NUQA instead of NOQA, for example. A second reason is that Quechua varies a great deal from place to place, often times with

great dispute as to which is the “real” version. For example, some will argue vehemently that the word is NOQA, not ÑOQA. A third reason is the regional differences in pronunciation (not to mention the Spanish influences). All that being said, the above set of guidelines adheres primarily to the Cusco dialect of Quechua, which is based on and mostly identical to the Quechua from Q’eros.



Ajallo- To the spirit of; to the soul of.

Allpa- 1. Soil, arable ground. 2. Stone-like foundation. 3. Stable; grounded.

Amaru- 1. Large, subterranean, dragon-like serpent that incorporates many feline characteristics at times. 2. Spiritual being commonly associated with the Milky Way, rainbows, rivers, ceques, etc., which are considered forms of amarus. 3. Amaru is often represented by the animal totems Boa and Anaconda.

Anka- Eagle.

Antisuyu- 1. East. 2. Quadrant of the Tawantinsuyu located north and east of the city of Cusco.

Apacheta- Stone cairn used to designate or “link-up” to a place of power that is infused with refined energy. The top of the apacheta (called the ushnu) is built to be flat in order to accommodate offerings made by passing journeyers.

Apu- 1. Sacred mountain. 2. Supreme spirit – term is reserved mostly for the largely powerful sacred mountain peaks of the Andes. 3. Deity.

Apukuna- Sacred mountains (plural of Apu).

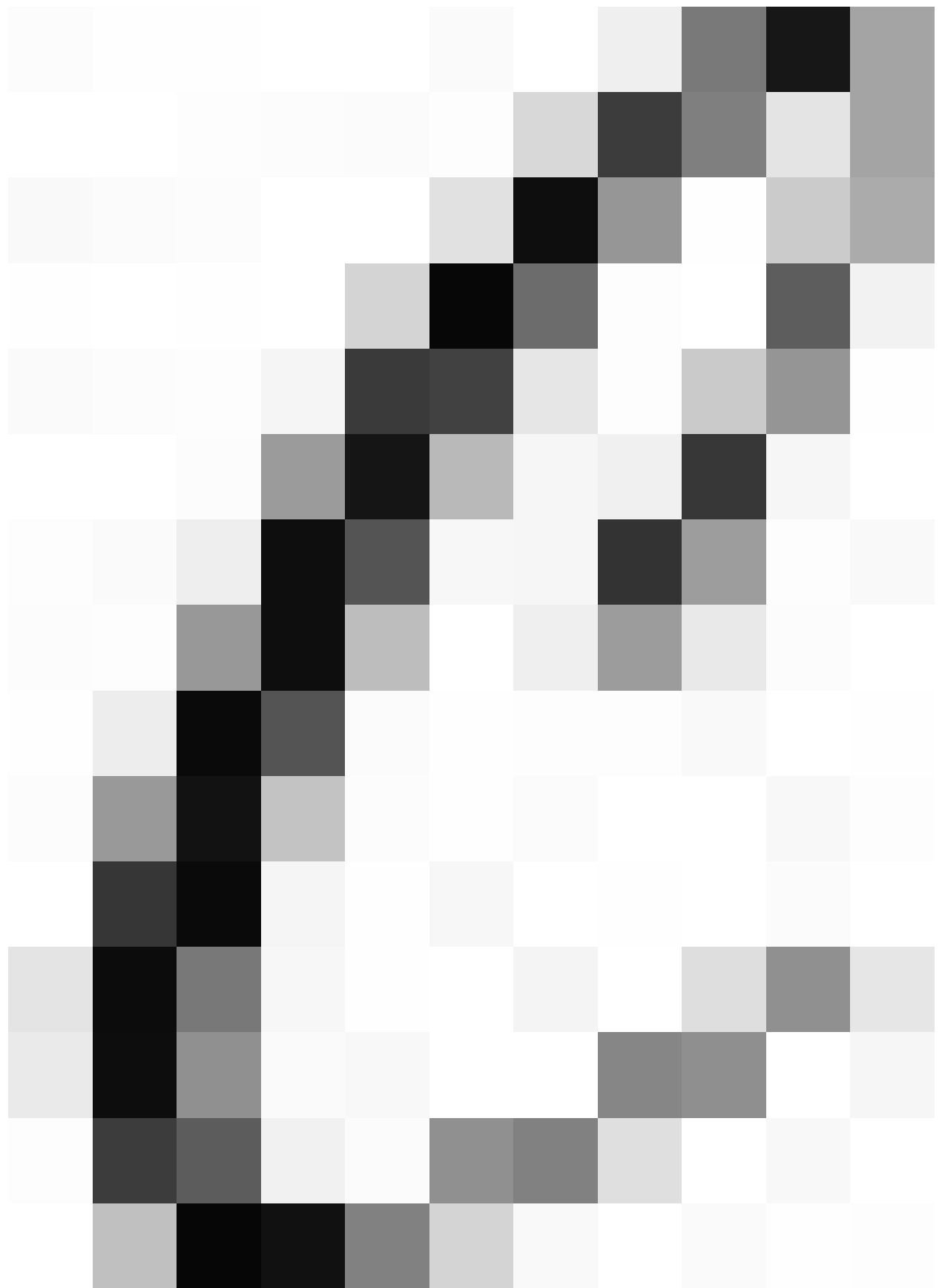
Aqha- Fermented beverage made from maize.

Asi- (Sp.) Literally “that way,” or “right on,” this word is used in curanderismo to signify that hampi, or spirit medicine, has been ceremonially felt, received, and acknowledged.

Auquis- Nature spirits.

Ayllu- Relations, kindred, clan; indigenous community composed of group members sharing a common focus and usually brought together as a social, political, and religious unit by their common connection with the sacred places where they live and commune through their relationship with surrounding Apukuna (sacred mountains). This space not only exists for the living ayllu members, but it also includes deceased runakuna, spiritual ancestors, and the Machula Aulanchis (Benevolent Old Ones) regarded as protectors and repositories of vitality and well-being for the human community.

Ayni- 1. The core guiding principle of the Andean peoples, which promotes a lifestyle of sacred reciprocal giving, “today for you, tomorrow for me.” 2. Neighborly aid to be reciprocated in kind. 3. Interchange.



Campo Ganadero- (Sp.) Literally, “the field of the rancher or livestock herder,” Campo Ganadero is used to refer to the left side, or lloq’*e*, of the Mesa. Researchers Donald Joralemon and Douglas Sharon speculate that the meaning of the term, as applied to curanderismo, may stem from the Spanish verb *ganar*, meaning “to win or dominate,” rather than the noun or adjective *ganadero*, which would render the definition of Campo Ganadero “the field of one who dominates.” Also commonly called *banco ganadero*, Campo Ganadero is referred to as the field (or bank) of personal gain, the field of domination, the field of the magician. The curandero’s use of Campo Ganadero, or left side of the Mesa, affects change by governing the power of the unseen world through his or her intent.

Campo Justiciero- (Sp.) The “field of justice,” also known as the “field of the mystic,” is associated with the right side, or paña, of the Mesa. It serves to restore a sense of righteous purpose in the lives of those experiencing personal or communal tragedy. It is the place where things are already in alignment with one’s highest good, and a realm in which the curandero trusts the evolutionary process of life itself. Like the mystic and sage, the curandero simply surrenders his or her will to divine wisdom.

Campo Medio- (Sp.) The Campo Medio, or “middle field” of the Mesa, represents the path of the master curandero. Having worked the Campo Ganadero, one has learned to invoke and command distinct spirit helpers and universal forces, and through the Campo Justiciero, one has learned to trust the will of God – the force which orchestrates the entire living universe. For this reason, the Campo Medio is the place of safety, balance of power, and protection also called a *seguro*.

Ceque- Invisible energetic ley lines that connect locations of spiritual or magical importance in the form of energetic vortex points, which reside in certain geomagnetic spaces along a grid-like pattern on the Earth’s surface.

Chakana- Andean Cross (also spelled chakata).

Ch'aska- Star.

Chaski- Post boy, messenger on foot, runner.

Chawpinsuyu- Middle, center, central.

Chinchaysuyu- 1. North. 2. Quadrant of the Tawantinsuyu located north and west of the city of Cusco.

Choqe Chinchay- (Astronomy) Sirius.

Choqechinka- Leopard-like feline.

Churi- Son.

Coca- Coca leaves; the sacred plant of Peru – its leaves are chewed as a mild stimulant and used as a source of divination and diagnosis (coca leaf divination) and in despachos. In a ceremonial context, coca is often grouped into a k'intu, or fan of three coca leaves, which is used to carry prayers and to embody specific forces and energies.

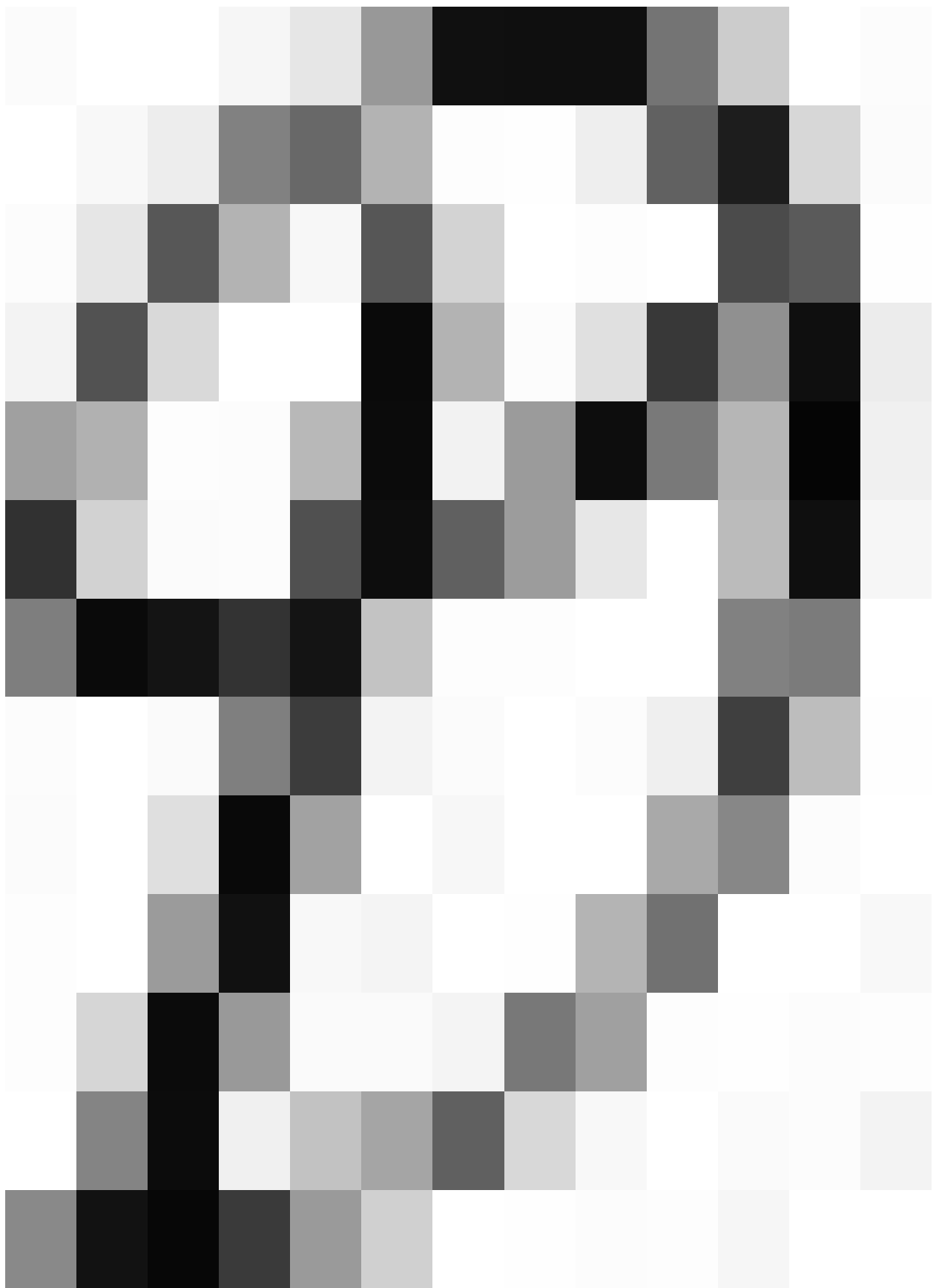
Contar- (Sp.) The act of “accounting” the encantos held within the medicine pieces of a Mesa.

Cruz- (Sp.) Cross

Cruz chonta- Crucifix or cross made of hard, dark wood used to symbolize the masculine principle and the integration of the curandero’s biography and spiritual ascension. It is usually placed upon its female counterpart, which in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, is a large scallop shell, a symbol of the container of life.

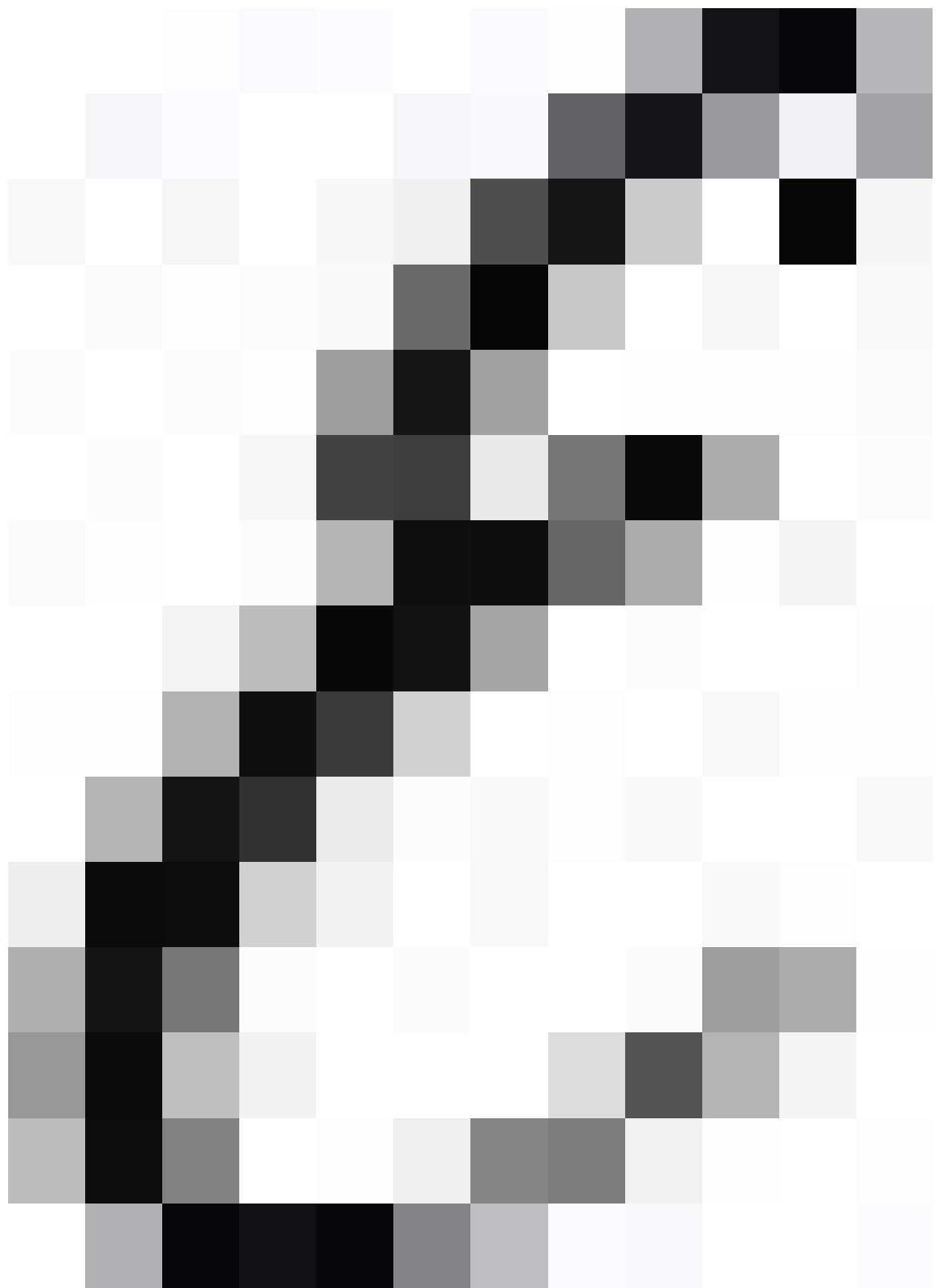
Cuenta- (Sp.) 1. The “count” or history/story of a sacred object that is contained within the Mesa and is brought to life through a process of ceremonial activation or a medicine song.

Curandero- (Sp.) Shaman; Indigenous South American folk healer.



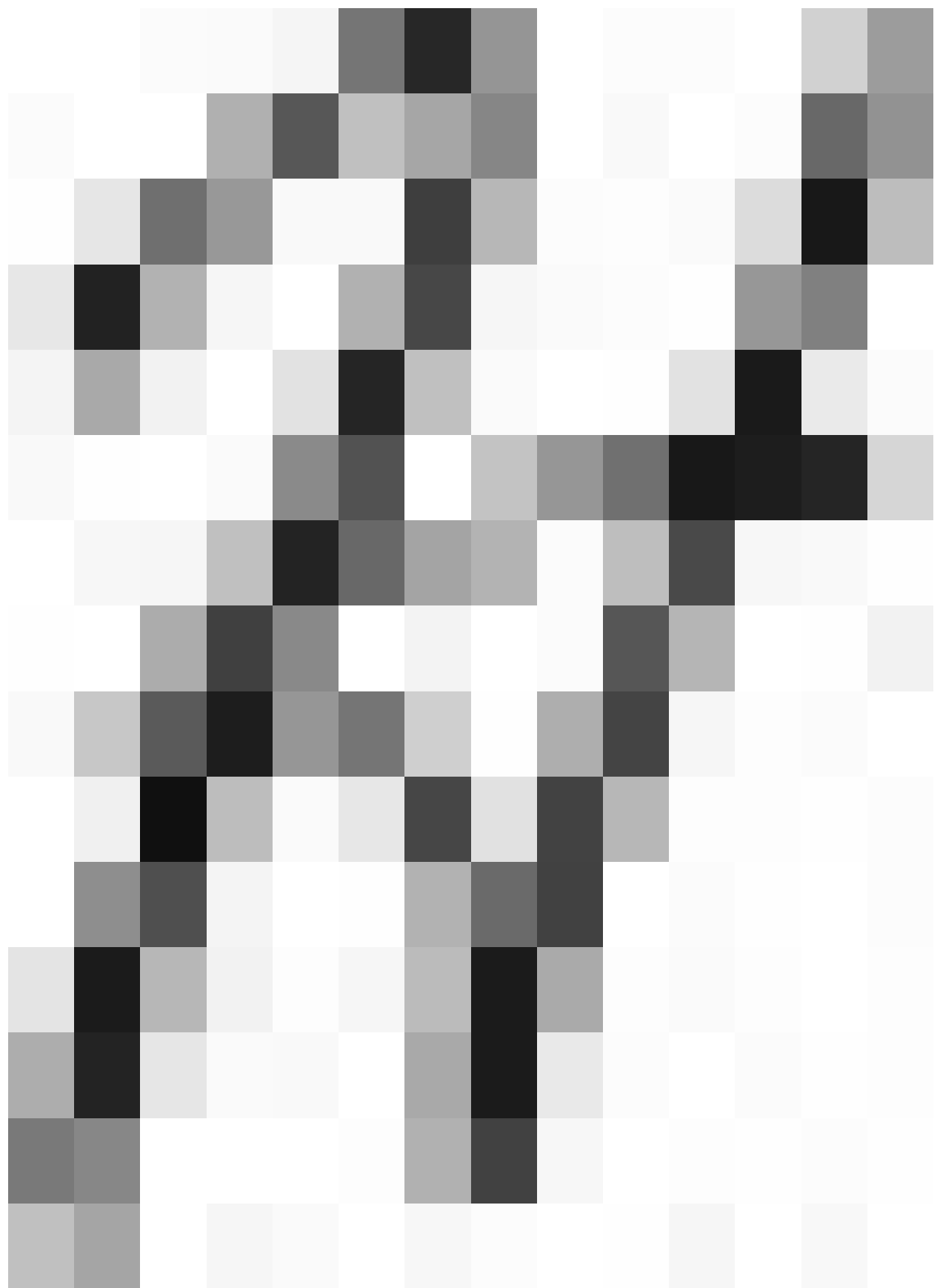
Despacho- (Sp.) A ritual or ceremonial offering (offrendo), which is used to ceremonially provide reciprocal exchange of thanks between humans, the Apukuna, Pachamama, and the Hanaq Pacha. These offerings are quite diverse and are comprised of various plant, animal, mineral, and human-made products. They are arranged on a square sheet of white paper and after, the bundle is usually burned (sometimes buried) as a way to maintain a reciprocal relationship of give and take between ourselves and the living universe.

Don (el don)- (Sp.) One with the gift for healing.



Enqa- 1. Talisman, a magical character; a form of inqaychu. Origin of the word “Inca” (Child of the Sun). 2. A sacred item used as the container of health, abundance, and safety.

Estrella- (Sp.) (Also known as Apu-Guia) Repository of well-being; the manifestation of an Apu containing star medicine or influence.



Hampi- 1. Medicament, remedy, cure, potion. 2. Anything with animating, revitalizing, and healing properties.

Hampicamayoq- Carrier of strong medicine; a healing specialist of the Andes commonly called a kuraq akulleq.

Hanan- On high, over head.

Hanan Uma- Higher mind; the appropriate use of the human attribute yachay (wisdom and knowledge).

Hanaq- Above, over.

Hanaq Pacha- The Upper World; the highest heaven, paradise; the super-conscious realm of Spirit and divine purpose; the domain of kuntur or condor.

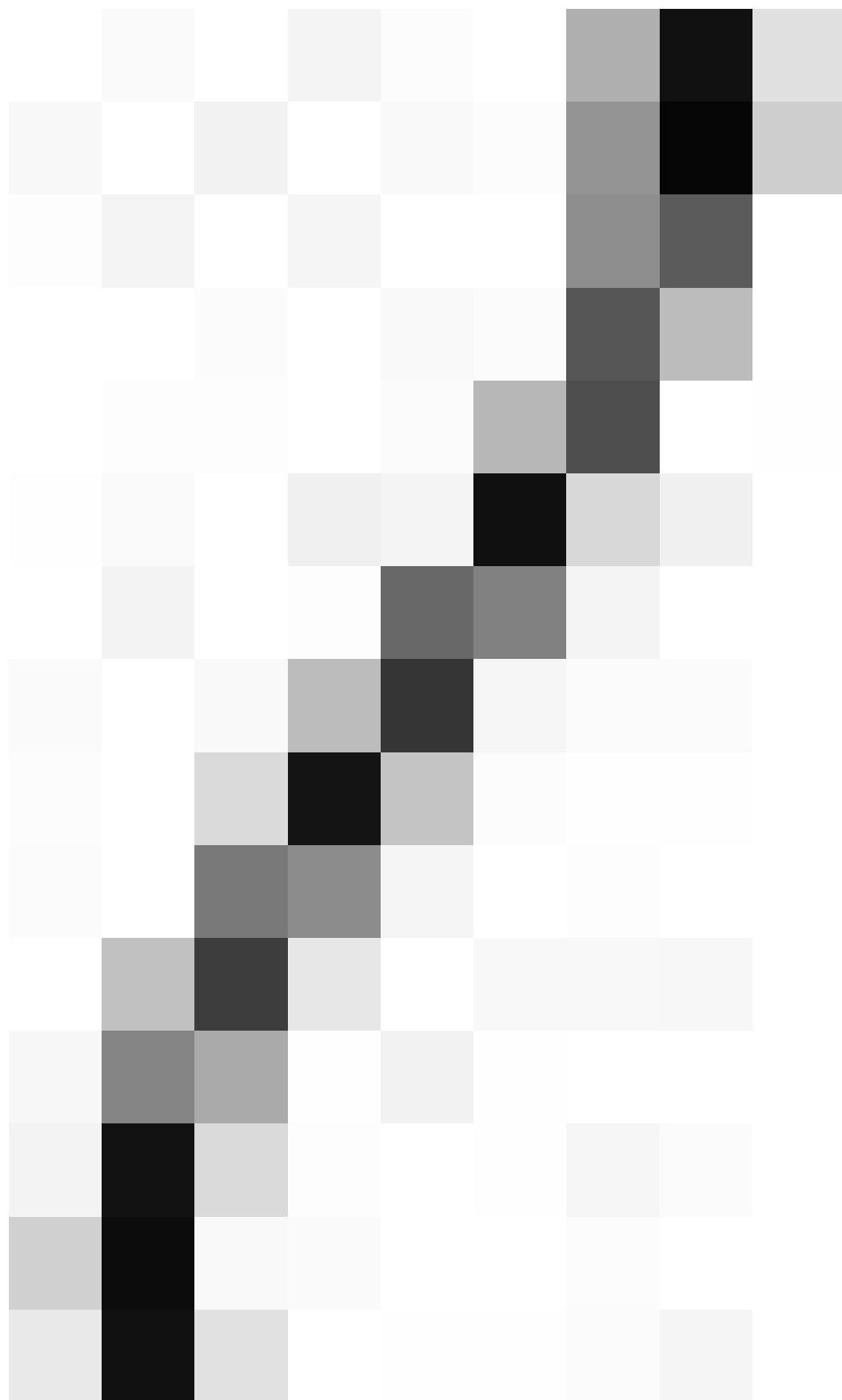
Hatun- Great, large in bulk; solemn.

Hatun-sonqo- 1. Great heart; higher heart. 2. The dwelling space of the universal love vibration. 3. Big-hearted; free-hearted.

Huacas- 1. Ancestral tombs and burial sites. 2. Certain religious icons, crosses,

sacred trees, poles and ladders, and sacred shrines.

Hucha- 1. Dense unseen energy generated through discordant human interaction.
2. Food for Pachamama. 3. Fault, delinquency, guilt.



Icaro- Amazonian healing/medicine song. Common to both tarjos and icaros, there is an opening chorus that is used to set the healing ground. Once sacred space is created, the curandero must then allow the medicine song to “sing itself.” It could be said that when this occurs, the curandero no longer sings the song, the song begins to sing the curandero, ultimately delivering the medicine that Spirit deems appropriate for the given occasion.

Illapa- The god of thunder. In pre-Columbian cosmology, Illapa was a god depicted as a man holding a club and a sling.

Illariy- 1. The first dawn of day. 2. To bring light into the world, which, in turn, allows the awakening of the ceque system (meridian/ley line system). 3. Harnessing energy of the three suns (Hatun Ukhu Pacha, Kay Pacha, and Hanaq Pacha Inti Tayta) within our runa kurku k'anchay (luminous body).

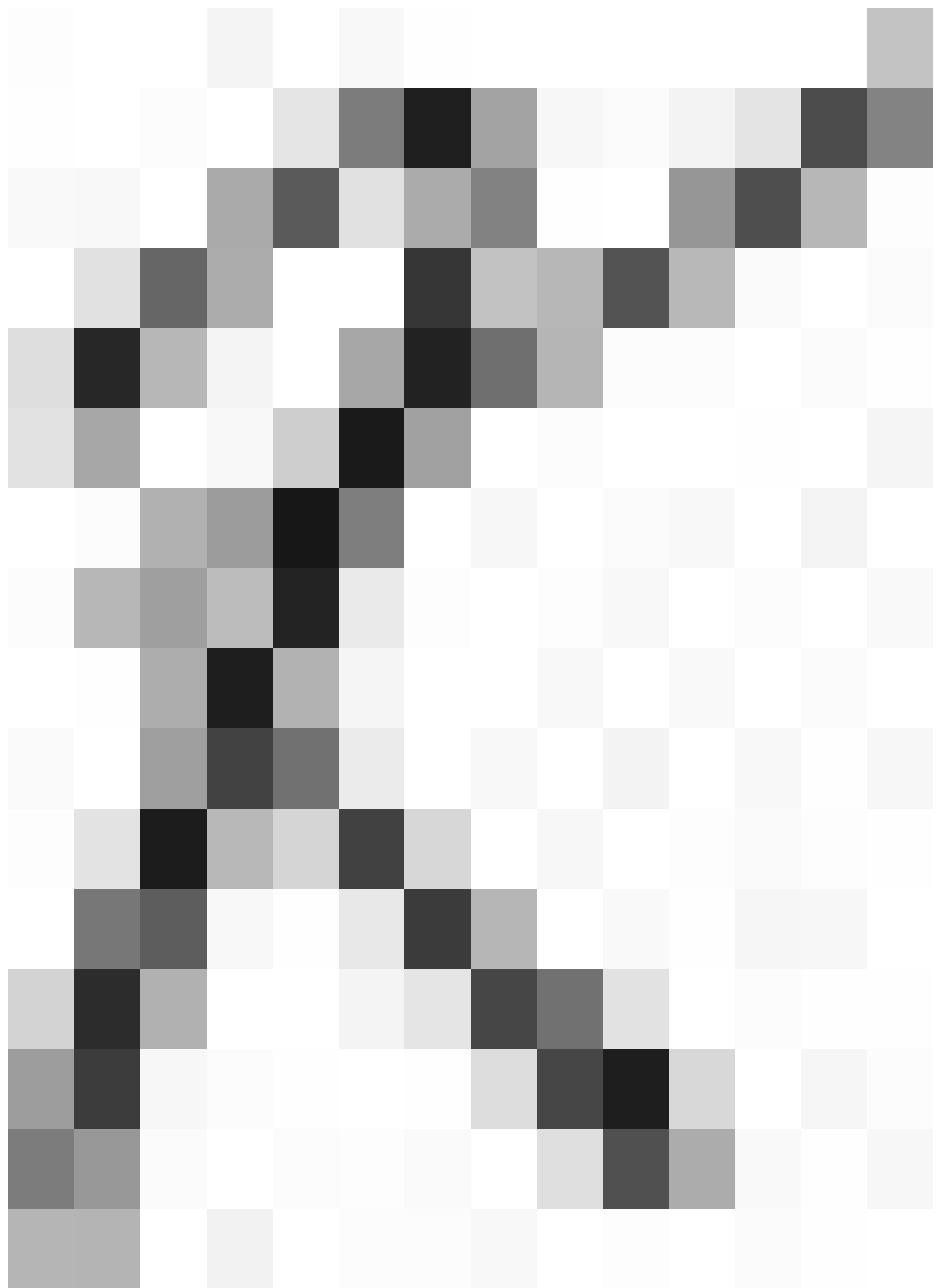
Inqaychu- 1. Miniature items or figurines that represent the spirit of places, things, animals, etc., of personal or cultural import. 2. The essence of a spiritual force (encanto) revealing and presenting itself to be seen, experienced, and witnessed by an individual – usually embodying itself through (or in) some recognizable form or object.

Inca or Inka- 1. Emperor of ancient Peruvians. 2. Son of the Sun.

Inti- 1. The Sun. 2. A symbol of divine masculinity.

Inti Tayta- Father Sun.

Inti Raymi- Festival of the Sun at Sacsayhuaman, Cusco, celebrated initially on June 21st; however, following the Spanish conquest and extirpation of idolatries, it has been celebrated annually on June 24th to coincide with the feast day of John the Baptist.



Kallpa- Force; strength; vigor; potency.

Kamaq- 1. The creator. 2. To create or bring order; the supreme creative principle in Andean cosmology.

Kamay- A method of “modeling” and “capturing” the essence of something, through a process of mirroring, reflection, and alignment.

K’anchay- 1. Luminosity; light; illumination. 2. Clarity; clearness.

Karpay- Rite of passage.

Kawsay- Life; vital life force.

Kay- This; to be; to exist.

Kay Pacha- Literally, “this” worldly realm or experience, also commonly understood as the Middle World in the Andean tripartite understanding of the universe. It is the realm of humans, animals, plants, minerals, as well as a host of unseen forces and energies that interact with the material world.

Killa- Moon.

K'intu- A three leaf ritual offering of coca leaves commonly offered to the sacred mountains (Apukuna) or to various sacred sites (huacas) and places of energetic import.

Khuya- A stone of caring.

Khuyay- 1. To love. 2. The embodiment of love.

Kuntisuyu- 1. West. 2. Quadrant of the Tawantinsuyu located south and west of the city of Cusco.

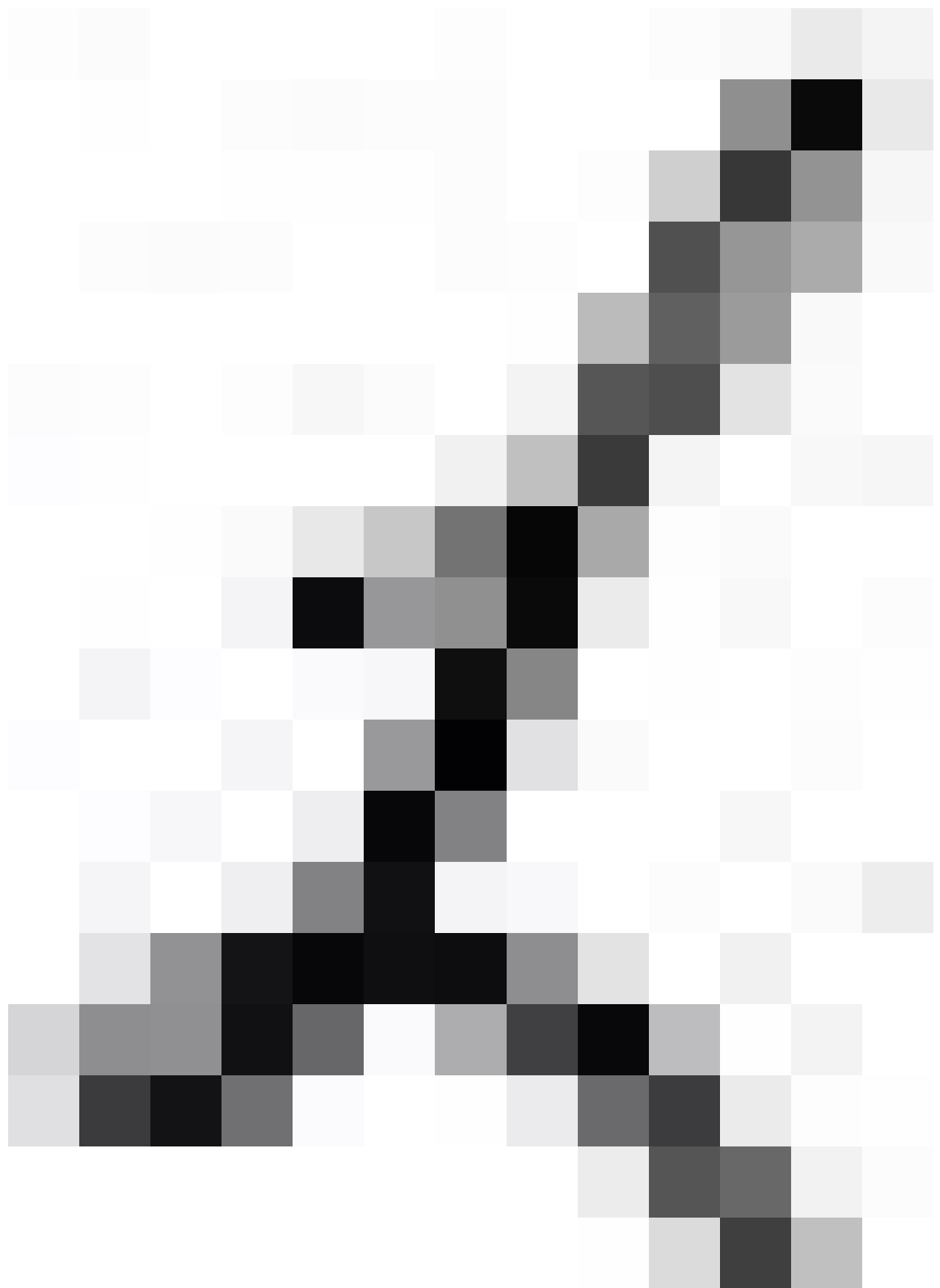
Kuntur- Condor.

Kuraq Akulleq- Literally, “Master Masticator of Coca,” this term refers to the curandero, who, through the development of deep intimacy with both Campo Ganadero and Campo Justiciero, has attained the highest level of shamanic mastery currently attainable in the Paqokuna tradition.

Kurku- Physical body.

Kuti- Turn; movement.

K'uychi- Rainbow; spectrum of color.



Llamar- (Sp.) To call.

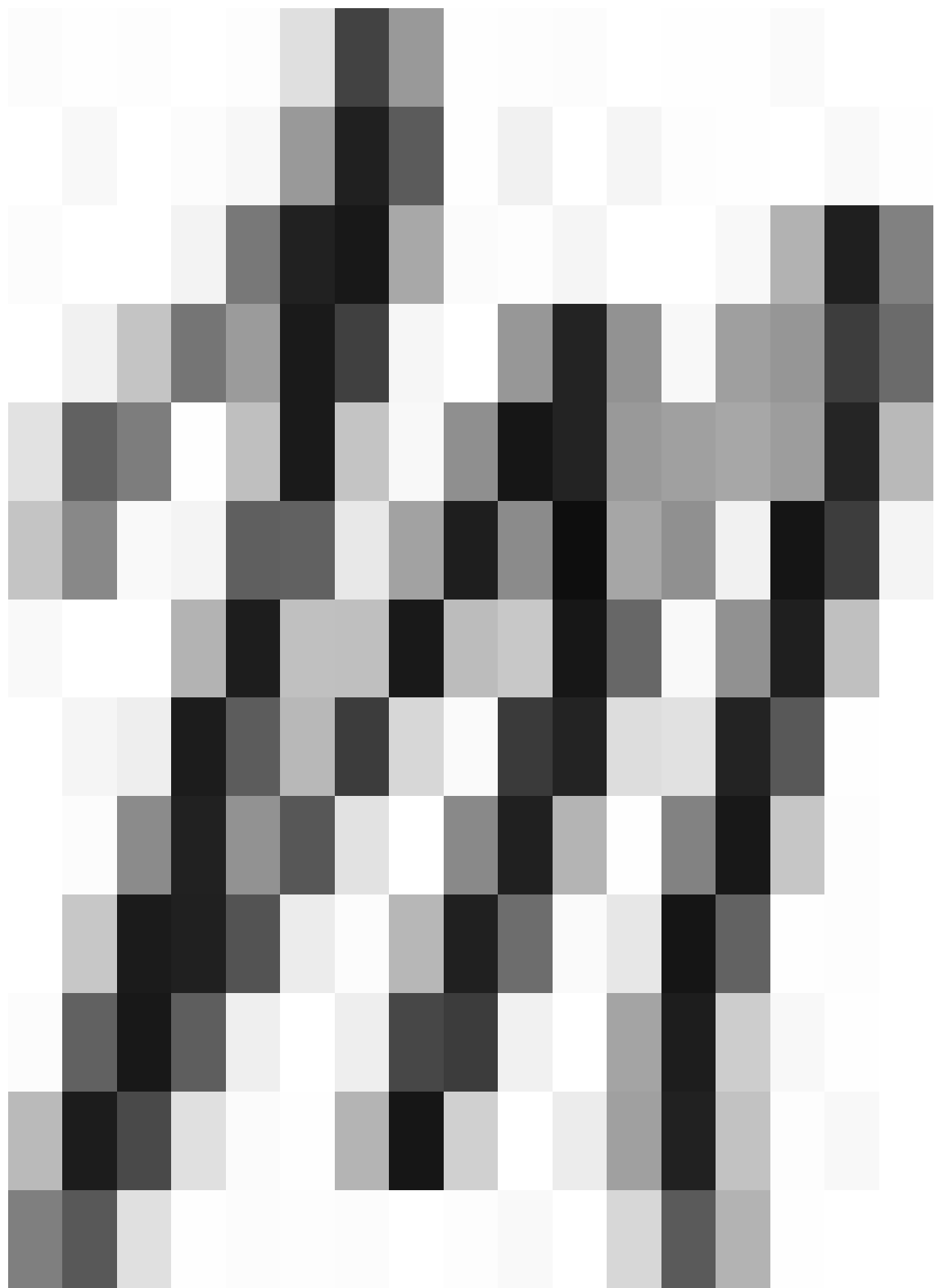
Llamando- (Sp.) The act of calling in, invoking, or asking for visitation.

Llank'ay- 1. To work; labor. 2. Physical mastery. 3. One of three attributes (llank'ay, yachay, and munay) utilized to assist humankind in the restoration of peace, balance, and harmony in the Kay Pacha.

Llaqta- 1. Village; city; town. 2. Fatherland; birthplace.

Llevantando- (Sp.) 1. To rise up, or raise. 2. Bringing the dormant energy of the Mesa, or a khuya, sepka, etc., to an animated state.

Lloq'e- 1. Left; left handed person. 2. The term lloq'e can also mean relatively sinister or powerfully lunar. Intrinsicly, in relation to the Mesa, the left side is not evil or bad, it simply contains the energy that is used to neutralize acts of daño (sorcery or evil), or negative events that have already taken place in the life of the person seeking healing assistance. In this way, the left field of the Mesa is not only used to discern the source of the problem, it can be used in defense to counteract the problem or to return it to its place of origin.



Machukuna- Ancient beings; ancestors; departed loved ones; also commonly referred to as Machula Aulanchis, or Benevolent Old Ones.

Machula Aulanchis- Benevolent Old Ones; passed ascended masters; ancient beings, ancestors; deceased loved ones (also spelt Machula Aulanchikuna).

Mallku- Divinity, deity.

Malqui- Tree Spirit.

Mama Killa- 1. Grandmother Moon. 2. A manifestation and expression of divine femininity.

Mama Qocha- The sea, ocean; also commonly used in reference to the spirit of Lake Titicaca.

Mesa- (Sp.) The sacred healing altar of a curandero, which works in mediation with spiritual and cosmic forces for ritual healing, both on individual and collective levels; a powerful spiritual technology in the form of a collection of sacred objects imbued with unseen forces and energies which, when used by a skillful curandero, can be the catalyst for healing and harmonious advancement of human consciousness on our planet.

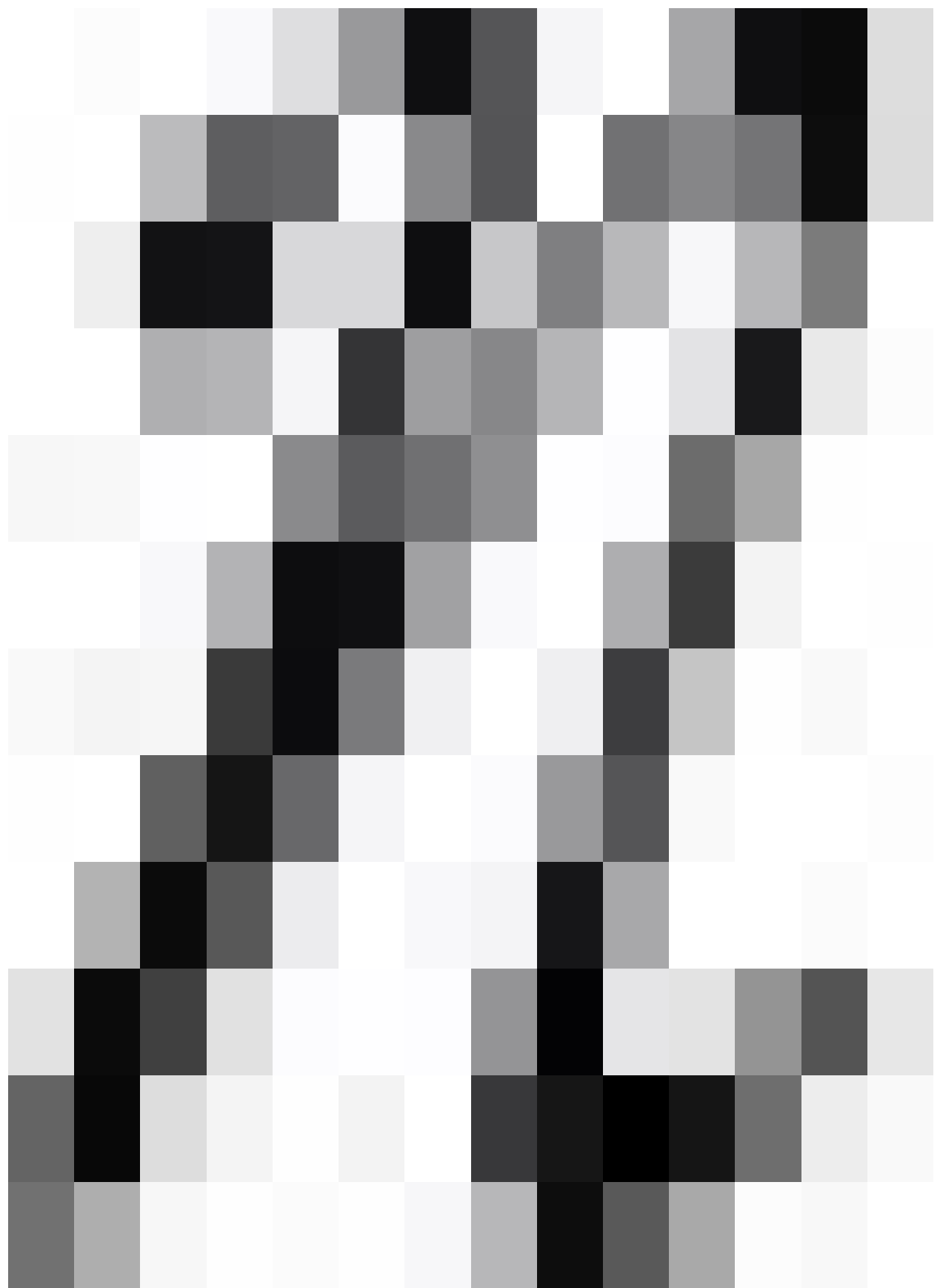
Mikhuy- Meaning literally “to eat,” this Quechua word is used to describe the

ritual or ceremonial process of feeding on, or absorbing, unseen energy of both a refined and dense nature.

Misarumi- 1. Literal translation “Mesa Stone.” 2. Tradition Specific Meaning: The “centerpiece” of a Mesa (e.g., don Oscar’s Misarumi consists of a large scallop shell (qocha) under a marble-like square stone with etchings (Chaqra or Sepka) topped with a colonial crucifix, or cross, made of hard wood (Cruz de Chonta), placed in the center of his Pachakuti Mesa

Munay- 1. To love, to desire, to wish; compassion and feeling. 2. One of three attributes (llank’ay, yachay, and munay) utilized to assist humankind in the restoration of peace, balance, and harmony in the Kay Pacha.

Muyu- Circle; round; sphere, spherical.



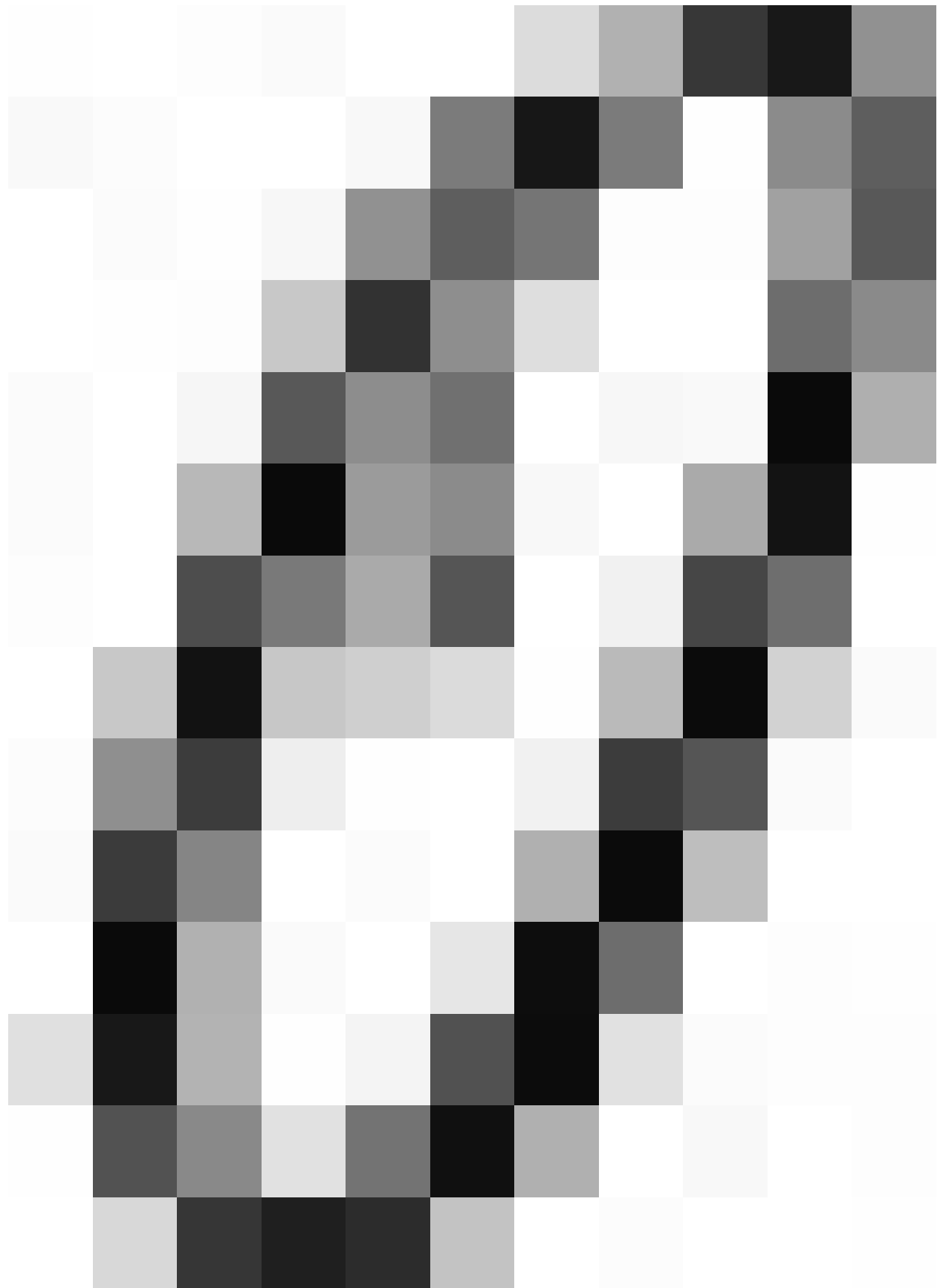
Nina- Fire; red hot wood.

Nuna- Soul.

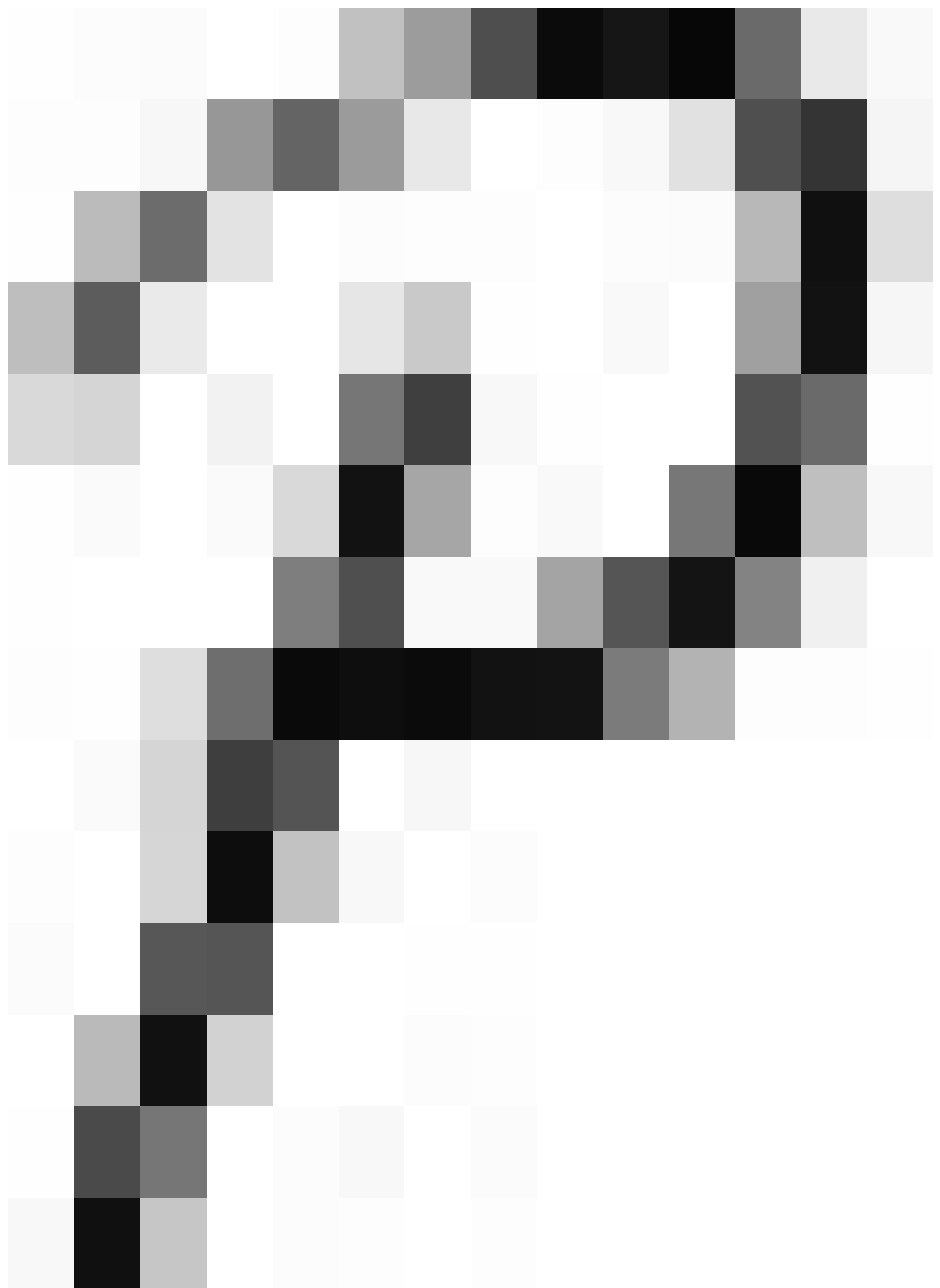
Ñoqa- I.

Ñoqanchis- We (including the person with whom we are speaking).

Ñoqayku- We (exclusive).



Otorongo Achachi - Jaguar.



Pacha- World; realm; space; earth.

Pachakamaq- Creator of the universe.

Pachakuteq- 1. Reformer of the world. 2. The ninth Inca emperor.

Pachakuti- Centuple (a hundred times as great).

Pachakuti - 1. Cosmic transformation or world reversal in the form of a “critical mass” experience in the complexity of consciousness (specifically human) that ultimately avails a new, distinct, more encompassing paradigm of one’s relation to the self and the living universe. 2. An era of turning time.

Pachamama- 1. Mother Earth. 2. Physical body/matter permeated by the etheric and vital stress systems, which hold the world together.

Palo Santo- (Sp.) Type of incense used in curanderismo for purification and to bring in refined energies; incense used to counteract daño in the form of mal aire or “evil-wind.”

Paña- 1. Right, right hand. 2. That which is “correct” and in alignment with good. 3. In relation to the Pachakuti Mesa, paña is associated with Campo Justiciero, or the field of the mystic.

Panaca- The twelve royal families of pre-Inca and Inca times.

Paqarina- 1. Place of origin. 2. An opening in space-time.

Paqo- General name for Andean ritual specialist.

Paqokuna- The Andean Shaman, or Priesthood, Mystical Path (plural of Paqo).

Paqo wachu- Vision quest; sacred pilgrimage; path of payment.

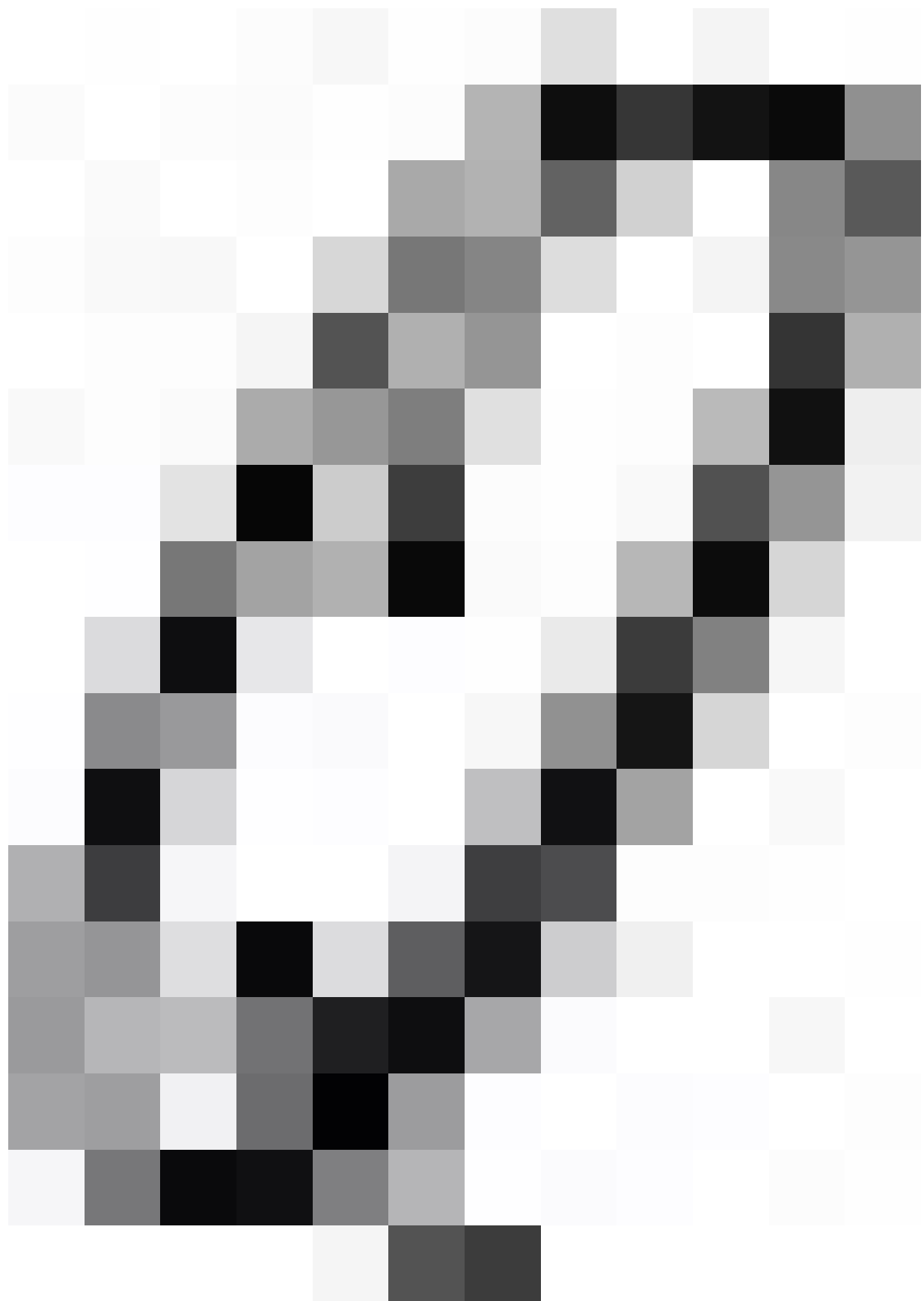
Phukuy- 1. A breath that embodies both energy and intention and is used as a delivery system to establish connections and create reciprocal synapses between the physical and spiritual realms. 2. A prayerful breath. 3. To blow.

Poq'po- Bubble; also spelt pukpu, this term means “a bubble of living energy,” and although not limited to, it commonly refers to the electromagnetic energy field surrounding the human body.

Pukllay- Game.

Pukllay kawsay- The game of life.

Pututu- Trumpet-shell.



Q'enti- Hummingbird.

Qaqya- Thunderclap.

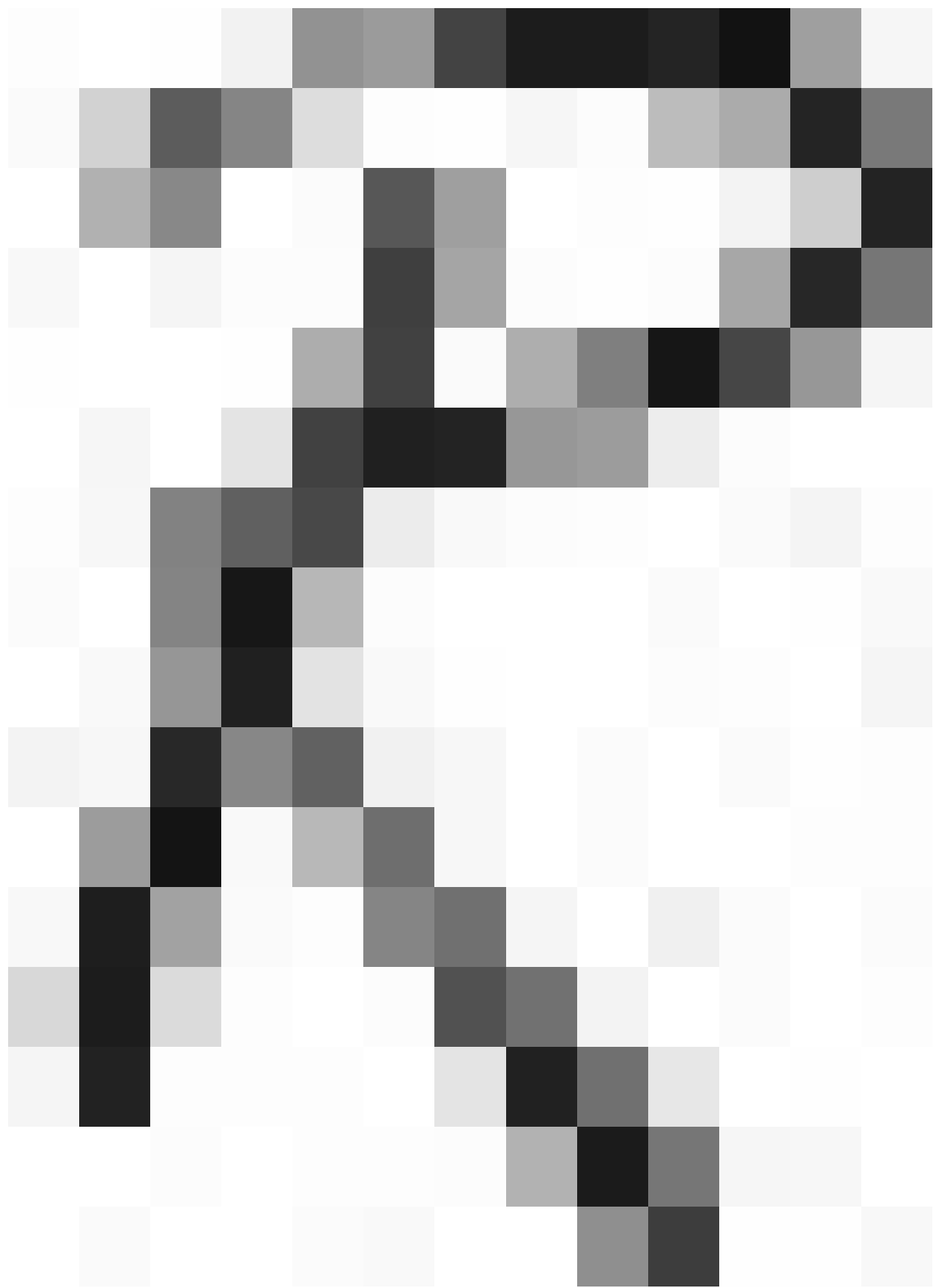
Qocha- Lake; lagoon; the ocean; the sea; waterfalls; deep streams.

Qollasuyu- 1. South. 2. Quadrant of the Tawantinsuyu located south and east of the city of Cusco.

Qori- Gold.

Qorikancha- Enclosure of gold; the principle Inca temple located in Cusco, which acted not only as the dwelling place of the Inca (Enqha), but as the center of the city, and some believe, the universe itself. It remains the hub (taq'e) of the ceque system in Cusco and connects to the geomagnetic energy grid of the planet.

Qosqo- 1. The official name of Cusco, capital of the Inca Empire. 2. Navel; stomach. 3. Spiritual stomach and place where unseen forces and energies are absorbed and digested through a process known as mikhushanqu or ritual feeding.



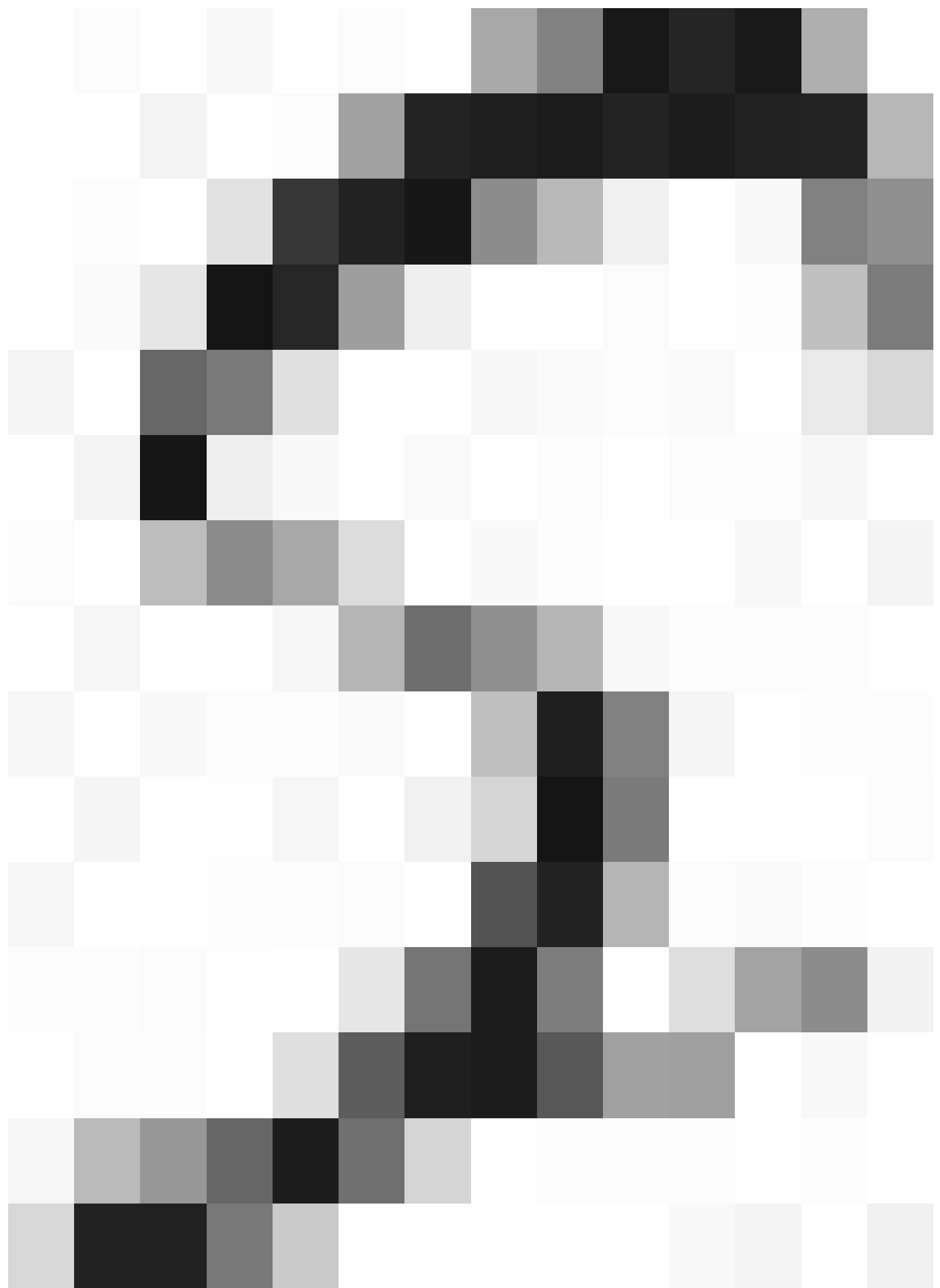
Raymi- Great festivity in ancient Peru, to honor the return of the sun.

Rayo- (Sp.) Thunderbolt. Lightning.

Rumi- Stone.

Runa- Person; human being.

Runa kurku k'anchay- The luminous body.



Sami- 1. The animating essence, refined subtle energy, and animating power generated when there is a change in form. 2. Happiness. 3. Good fortune; blessedness. 4. Bliss. 5. Chance; destiny.

Saywa- Pillar; shaft of light; a column of energy mediated by Siwar Q'enti, that descends from the Upper World (Hanaq Pacha) to create a bridge between the spiritual and physical realms.

Seguro- (Sp.) Glass bottles containing healing herbs and sacred remedies often used in ritual and ceremony.

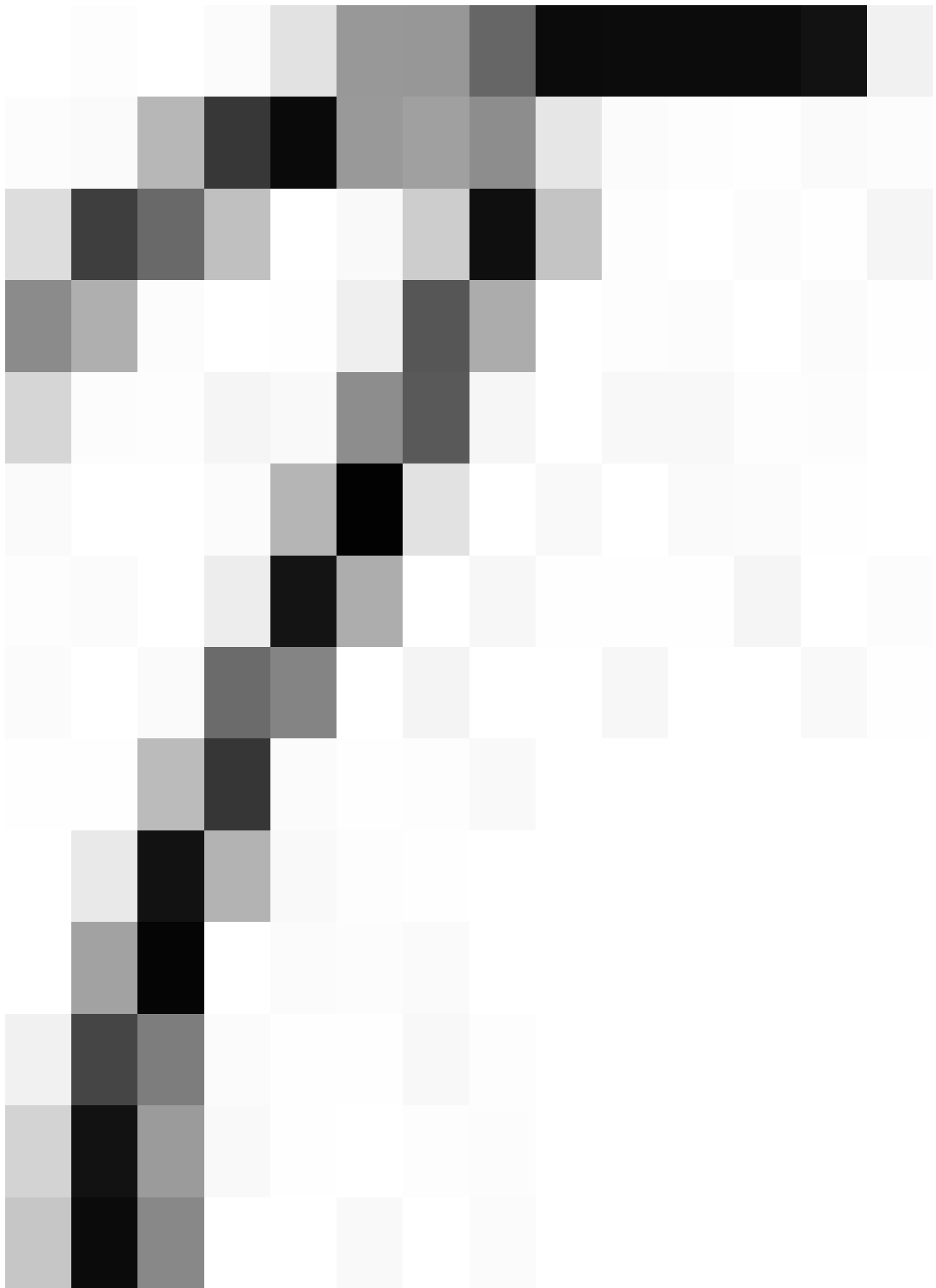
Siwar Q'enti- The royal hummingbird.

Sombra- (Sp.) Etheric double. One's spiritual shadow.

Sonqo- Heart.

Soplado- (Sp.) Ritual spraying of perfumes through the mouth, such as Agua de Florida, Agua de Kananga, etc.

Suyu- Region; circumscription.



T'akay- To scatter seed.

Taq'e- The center or hub. 2. Main vortex point of the geomagnetic energy grid known as the ceque system.

Taripay pacha- Prophetic era of human re-encounter relating to consciousness.

Tarjo- (Sp.) Healing/medicine song from the Northern Coastal region of Peru. See also icaro.

Tawantinsuyo- 1. The united four parts. 2. Four regions of the Inca empire. 3. The four corners of the world.

Tayta- Father.

Taytacha- Also spelt Taytanchiy, or combined with Wiraqocha (Taytacha/Taytanchiy Wiraqocha), meaning a supreme divine being, often seen as masculine, but exists as the embodiment of sacred androgyny equivalent to the Christ. 2. In the Andes, the Lord of Q'ollorit'i and the Earthquake Lord are examples of Taytachas.

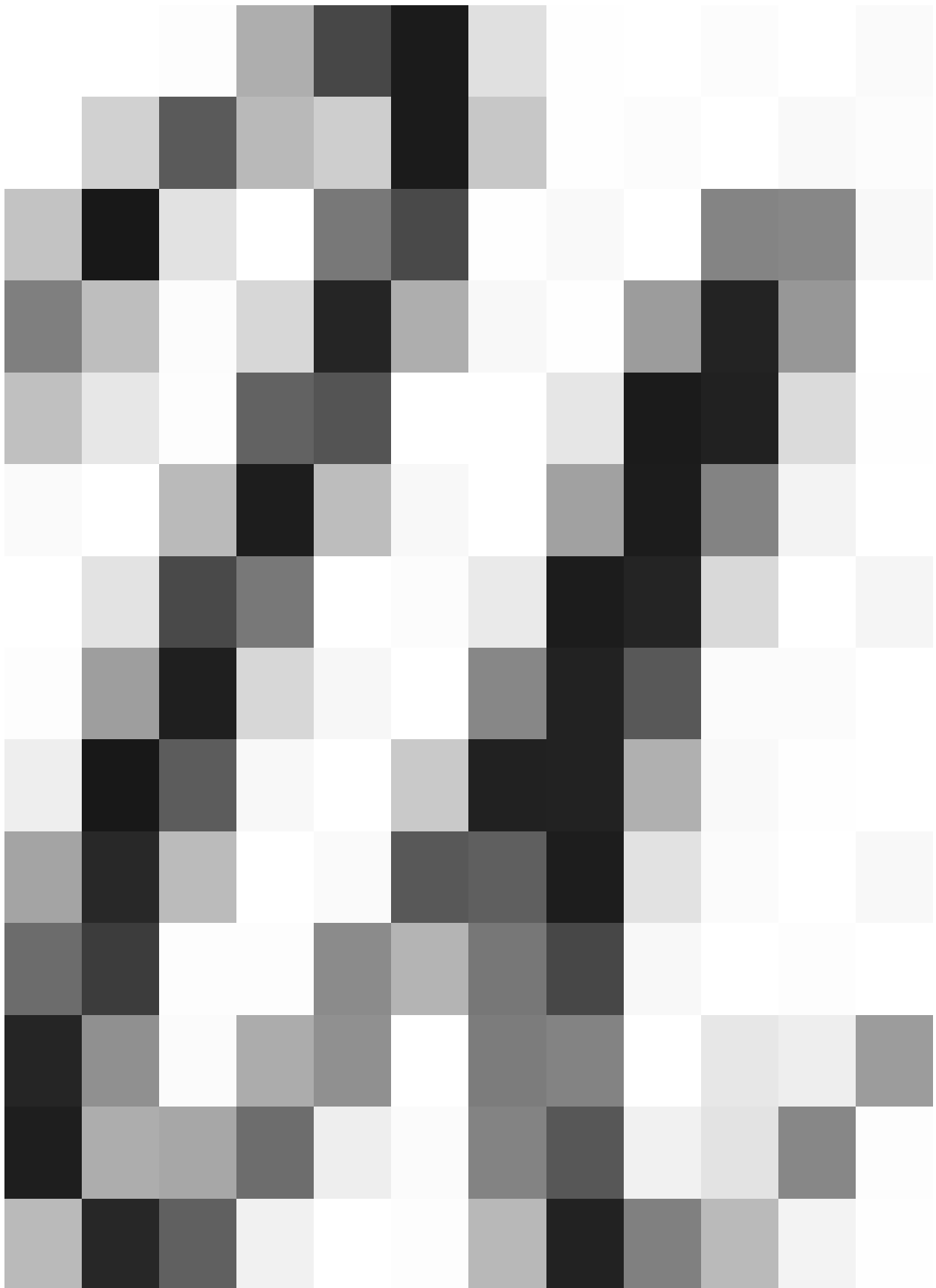
Tayacha Churi- Christ Child.

T'eqsi- Source; origin; root; seed.

T'eqsimuyu- A highly animated Cosmos; the living universe of creative light and love.

T'eqsimuyu Amaru- Much like the archetypal symbol of the serpent eating its own tail, the vision of the T'eqsimuyu Amaru exists in circular or even spiral form, in that it embodies the autonomous seed that continuously gives birth to our living universe.

Tirakuna- Living spirits (“the Watchers”) of nature who inhabit rock outcroppings and sacred ceremonial sites and attend to the human obligation to maintain a lifestyle of ayni, or sacred reciprocal giving.



Ukhu- Interior, inner; deep, deepness.

Ukhu Pacha- Literally, inner or interior realm; also called the Lower World, which refers to the subconscious; identified by C.G. Jung's and R. M. Buck as the cosmic consciousness or the "collective unconscious."

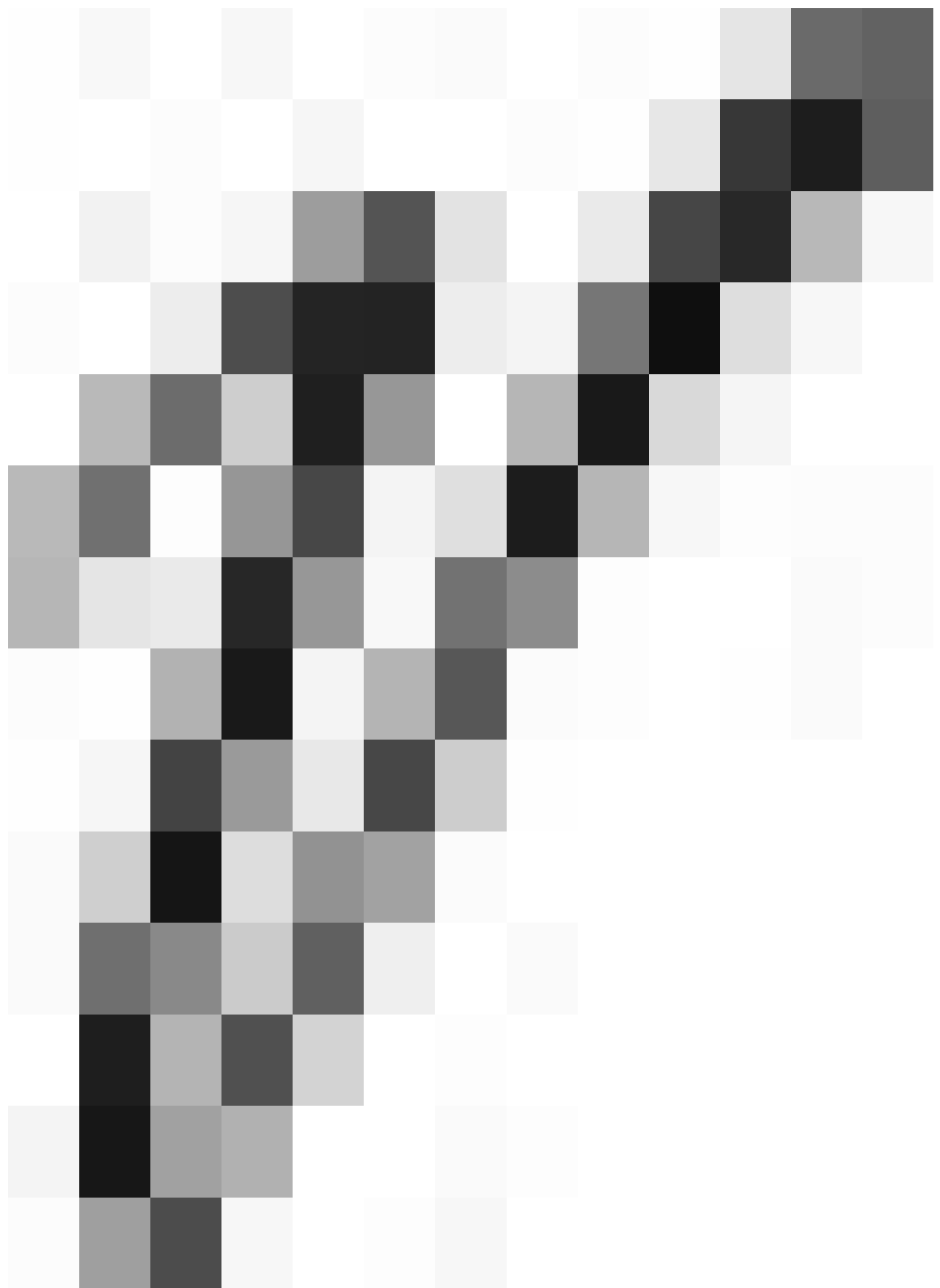
Uma- head

Unkhuña- Ceremonial cloth; the sacred ground upon which Pachakuti Mesa items are placed.

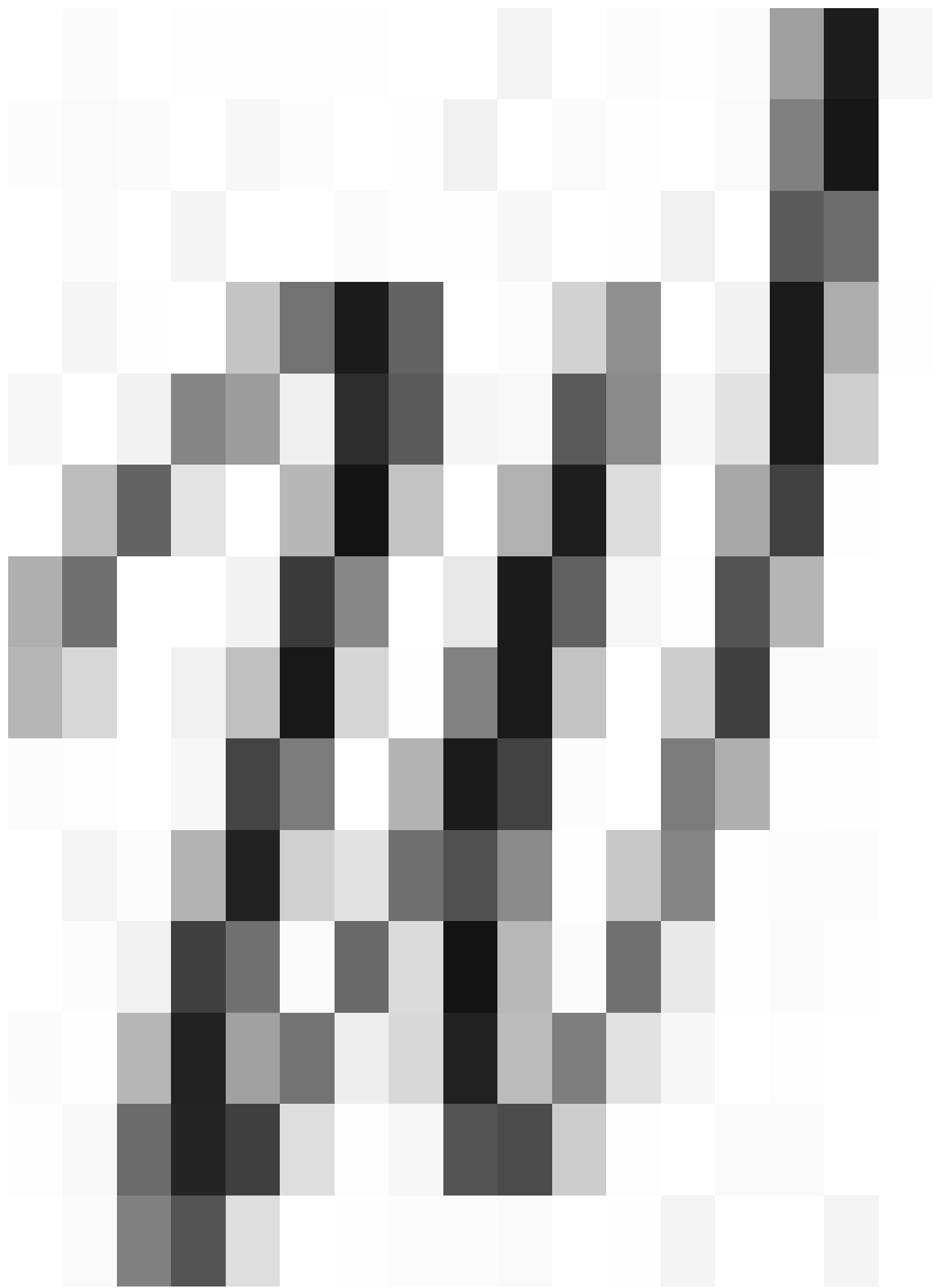
Unu- Water.

Untu- Fat of llama or alpaca.

Ushnu- (also spelt usnu) 1. Tribune or throne; throne of the Inca. 2. Sacred center; solar axis.



Viaje con sombra- (Sp.) The shamanic journey of one's etheric double, or shadow, to other realms of non-ordinary consciousness.



Waman- Hawk; Sparrow-hawk.

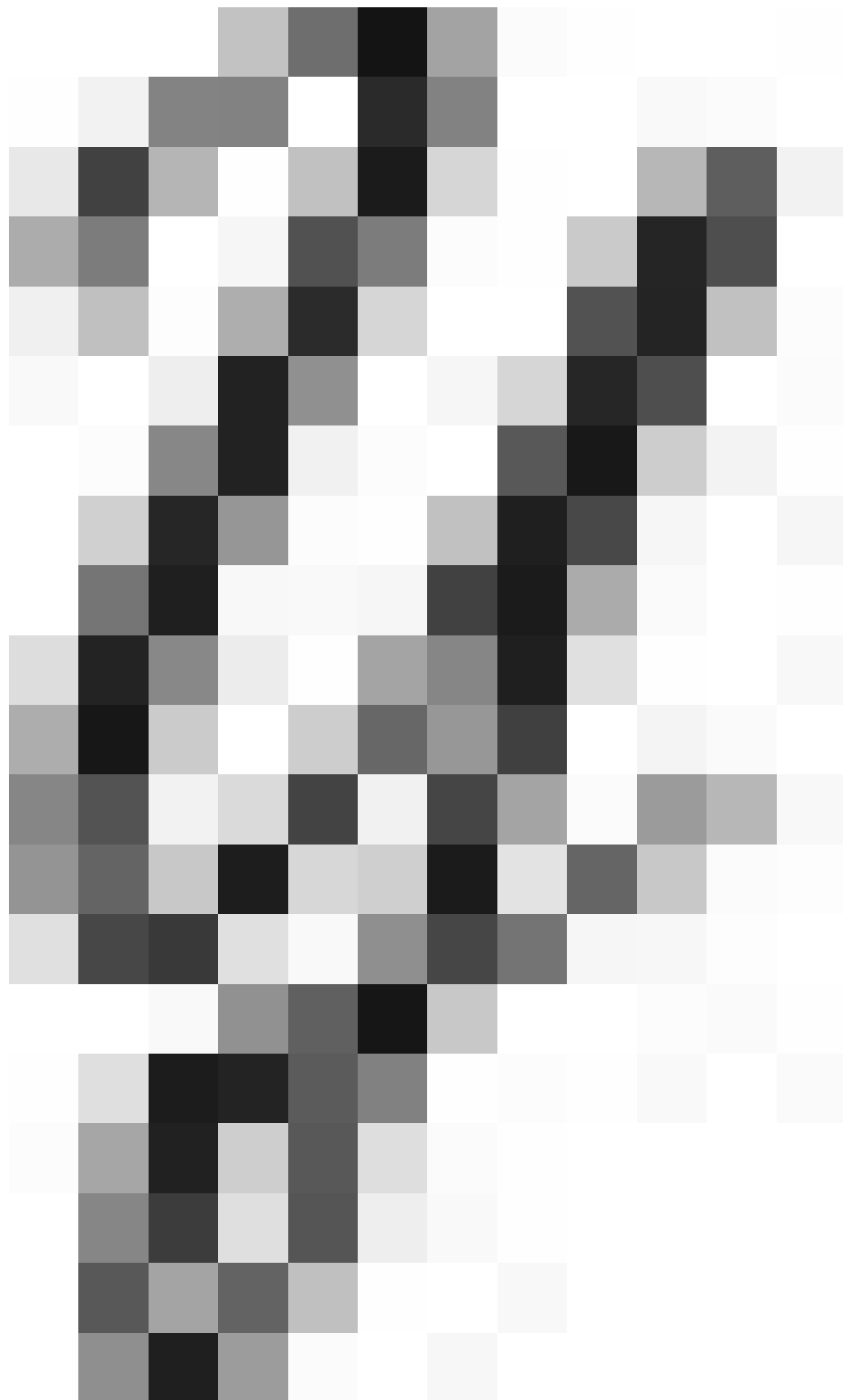
Warmi- Woman.

Wasi- House, dwelling.

Wayra- Wind.

Willka- Sacred, holy.

Wiraqocha- Ancient Peruvian's divinity; Supreme Deity; Creator/Creatress; God/Goddess.



Yachay- 1. To learn. 2. Wisdom; beyond intellect. One of three attributes (llank'ay, yachay, and munay) utilized to assist humankind in the restoration of peace, balance, and harmony in the Kay Pacha. 3. Knowledge, to know, to have knowledge of. 4. Brain; learning capacity. 5. Cleverness, genius.

Yanantin- 1. A sacred duality; the bringing together of dualities as a sacred union. 2. A pair of helpmates; a matched pair.

Yukamama- Anaconda.

Note: Spanish words indicated with (Sp.); words not found within the text are included to enhance the reader's understanding.



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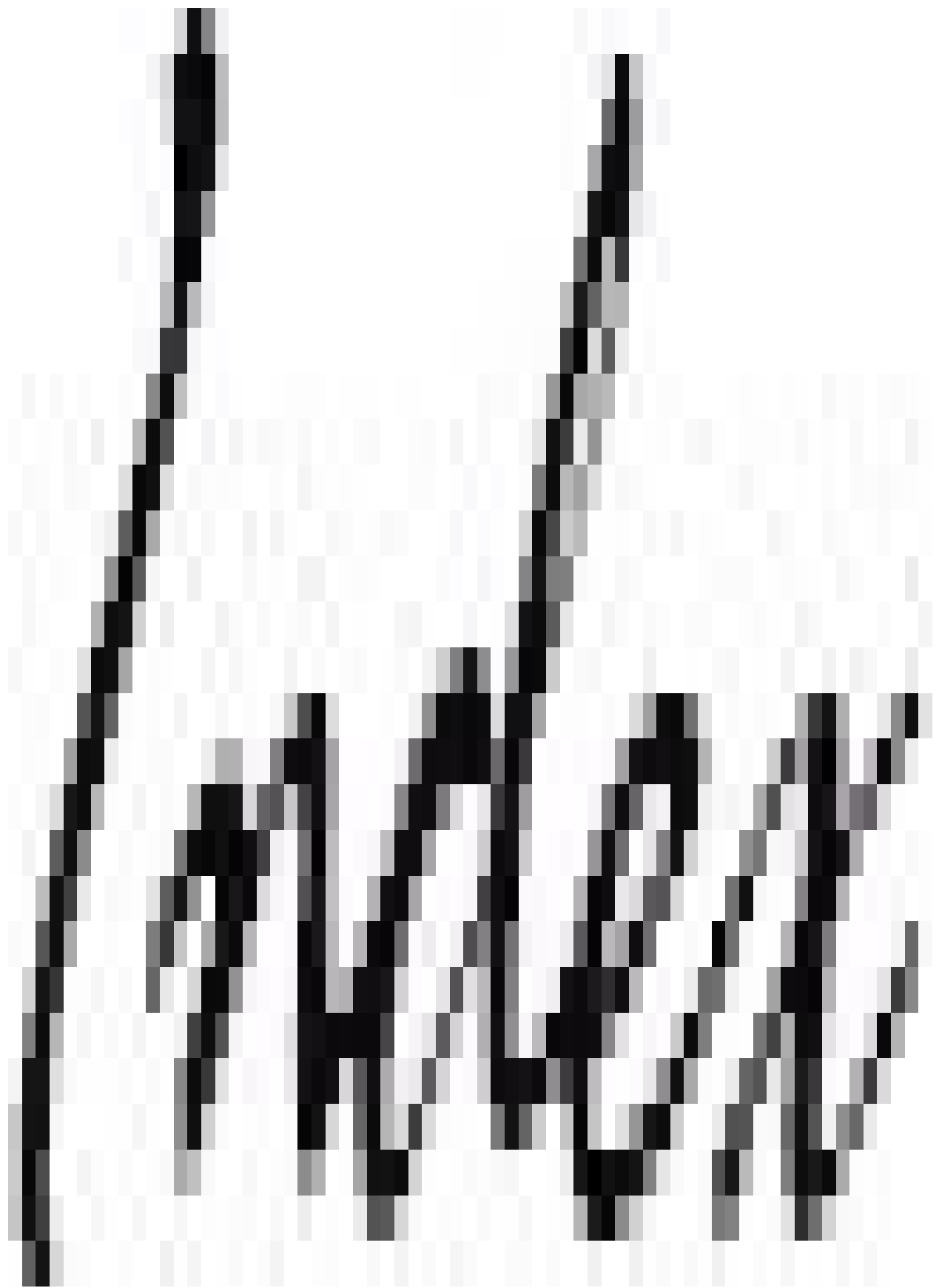
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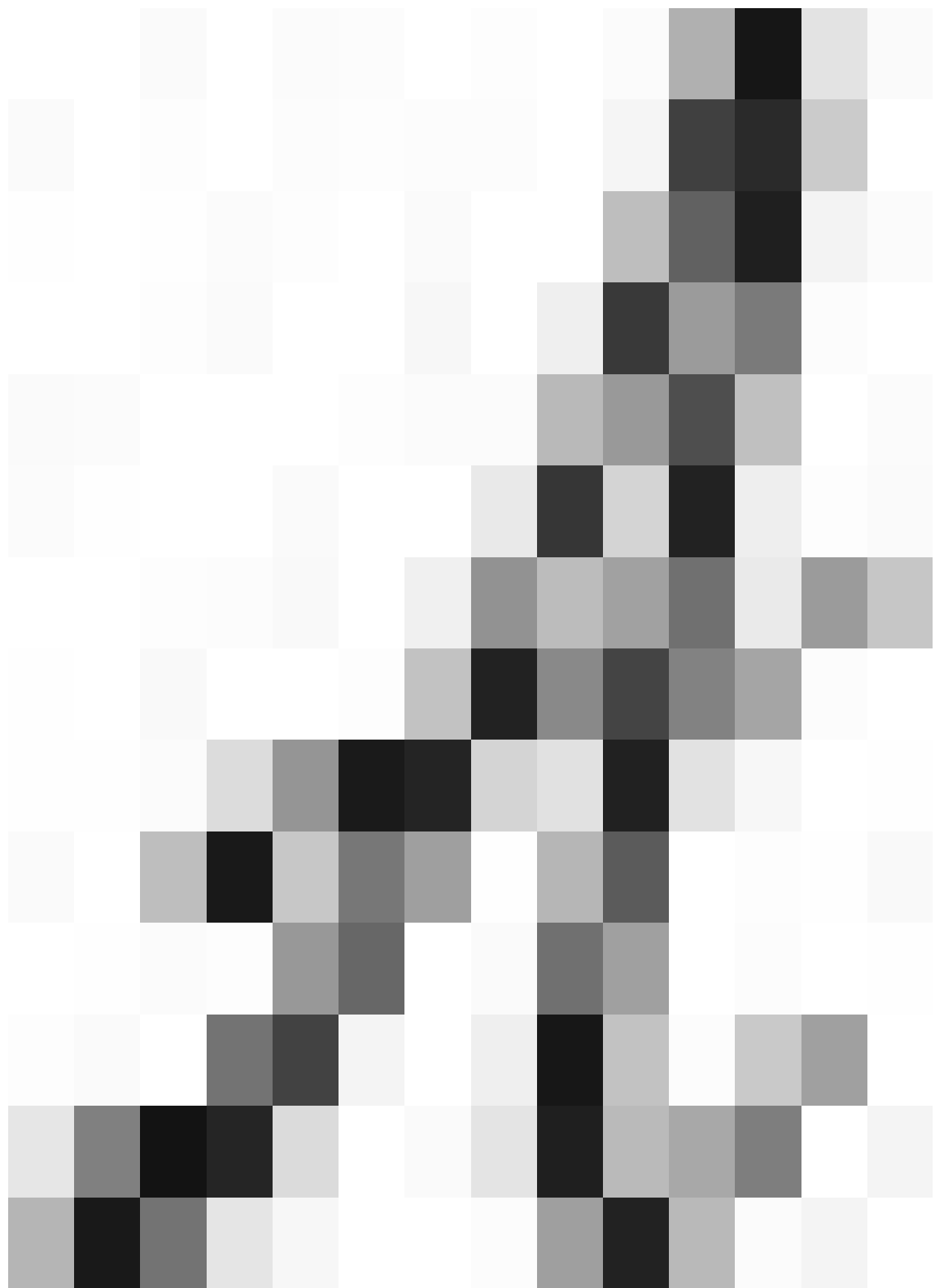
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Achterberg, Jean

Acoustics

Activation

Agua de Florida

Alchemy

Allen, Catherine

Allpa

Altiplano

Altomisayoq

Amaru

and the hanaq pacha qaqya rayo

Andean cross

Animating essence. See Sami

Antisuyu

Apachetas

Apukuna

and despachos

and estrellas

and invocations

Ausangate

ayllu apukuna

Chimbolla

Colquepunku

Huacawillka

Huanacauri

llaqta apukuna

Machu Picchu iii

Pachatusan

Pikol

Pumasillo

Puquín

Salcantay

Sawasiray/Pitusiray

suyu apukuna

Viracochan

Auquis

and despachos

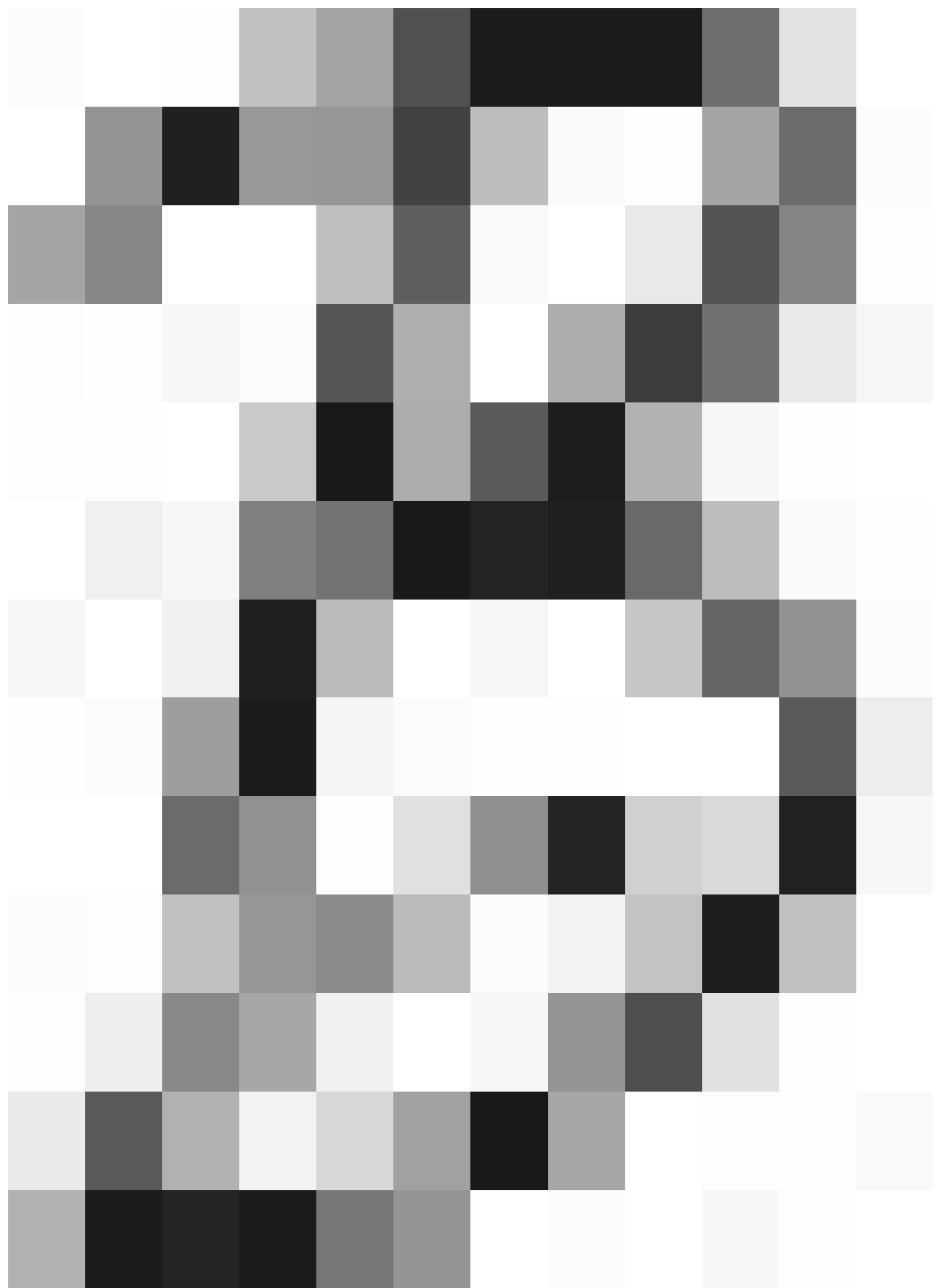
Aura. See Poq'po

Axis mundi

Ayllu

ayllu apukuna

Ayni

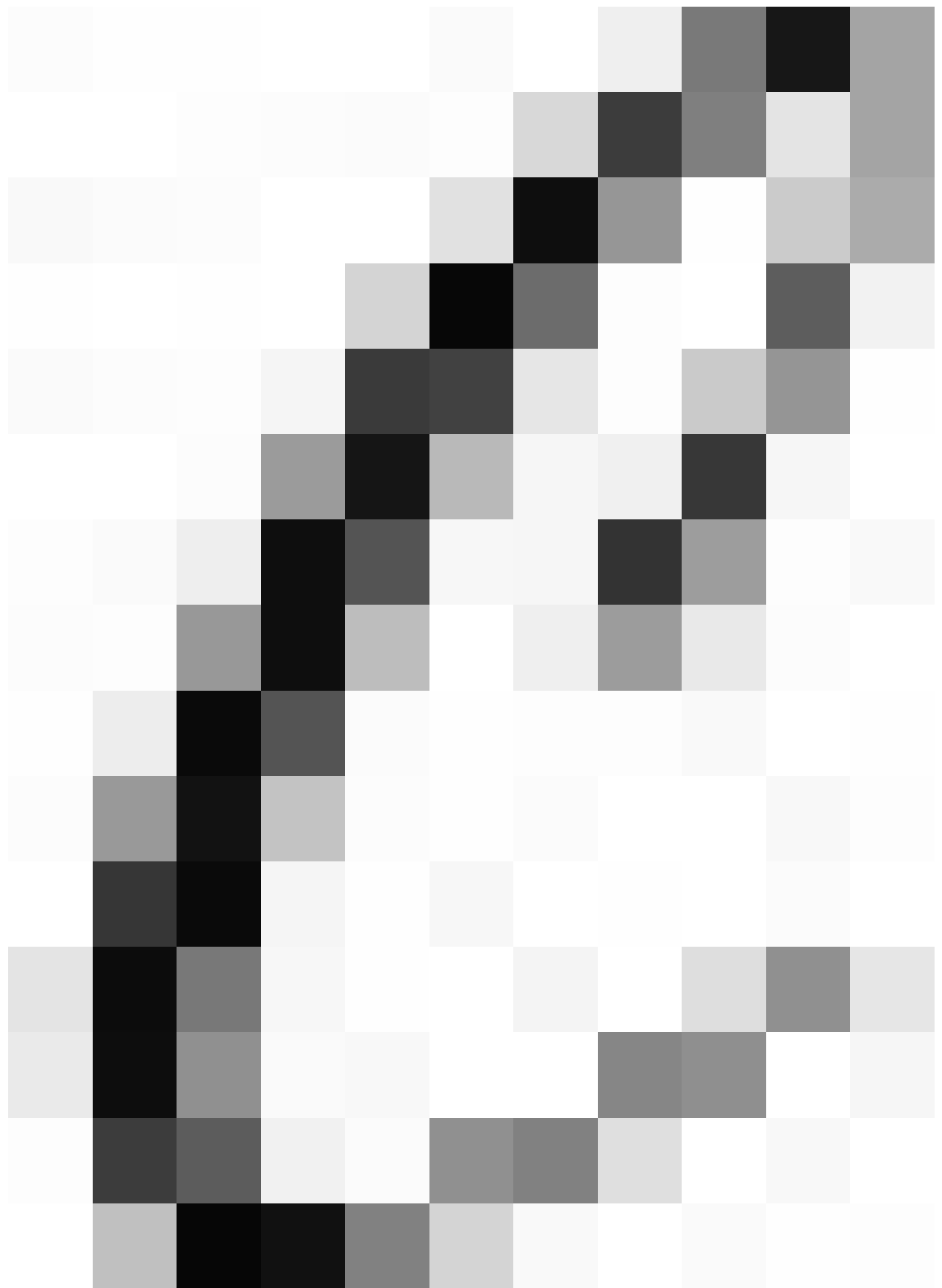


Basic directional components

Bastien, Joseph

Benor, Daniel J.

Buck, R. M.



Calicanto

Campbell, Joseph

and the hero's quest

Campesino

Campo Ganadero

Campo Justiciero

Campo Medio

Canis Major

Catholicism

folk Catholicism

iconography

Roman Catholicism

Ceque system

and the chaskikuna

and the four quadrants

and the Qorikancha

and the vortex

definition of the term

Chanting

and brain wave patterns

and closing the circle

and hampi

and the body

and the directions

and the Pachamama Renewal Process

Inti

K'uychi

Mama Killa

Pachamama

Wiraqocha

Chaska

Chaska Mayu

Chaski

Chawpinsuyu

Chi. See Kawsay

Chinchaysuyu

Chladni, Ernst

Choqe chinchay

Closing the Sacred Circle

Coca

and divination

and the k'intu

Compacto

Completion

Consciousness

and altered states

and group dynamics

and music

and non-ordinary realities

and the Hanaq Pacha

and the hanaq pacha qaqya rayo

and the Pachakuti

collective unconscious

theories of consciousness

Consecration

Contar

Cordillera Blanca

Corihuaman Vargas, don Benito

Cornmeal

Cosmovision

Cowen, Tom

Cuenta

Cumes, Carol

Curanderismo

adaptation to Roman Catholicism

and chanting

and diagnosis

and lower world journeying

and patron saints

and perspectives on illness

and shamanism

Cusco

and cosmology

and emperor Pachakútec

and geographic relationship to mesa

and the Apukuna

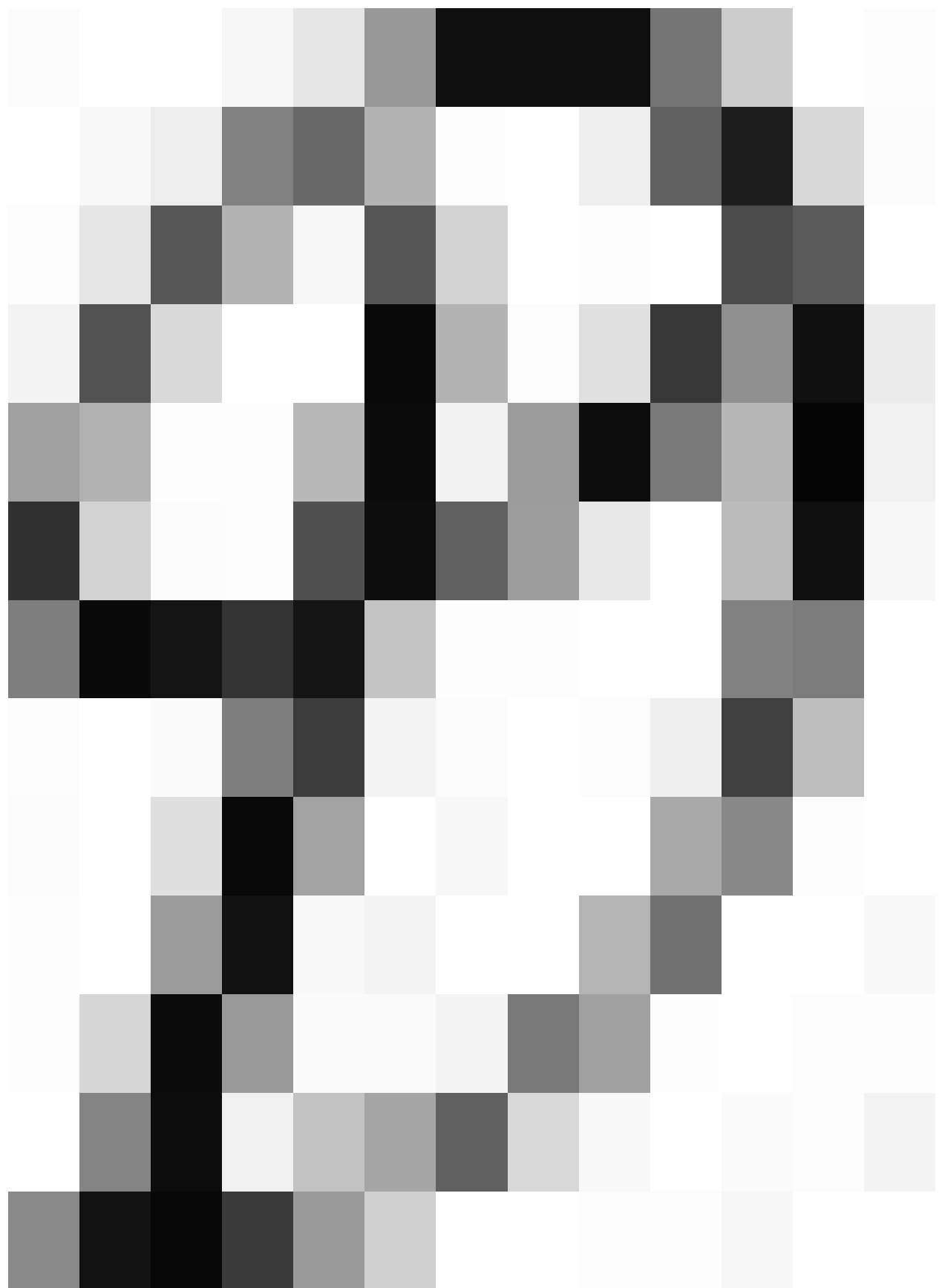
and the center of the universe

and the ceque system

and the four quadrants

and the tawantinsuyu

Cymatics



Daño

Declaration

Dense energy. See Hucha

Despacho

and preparation

and the despacho kit

and the pampa misayoq

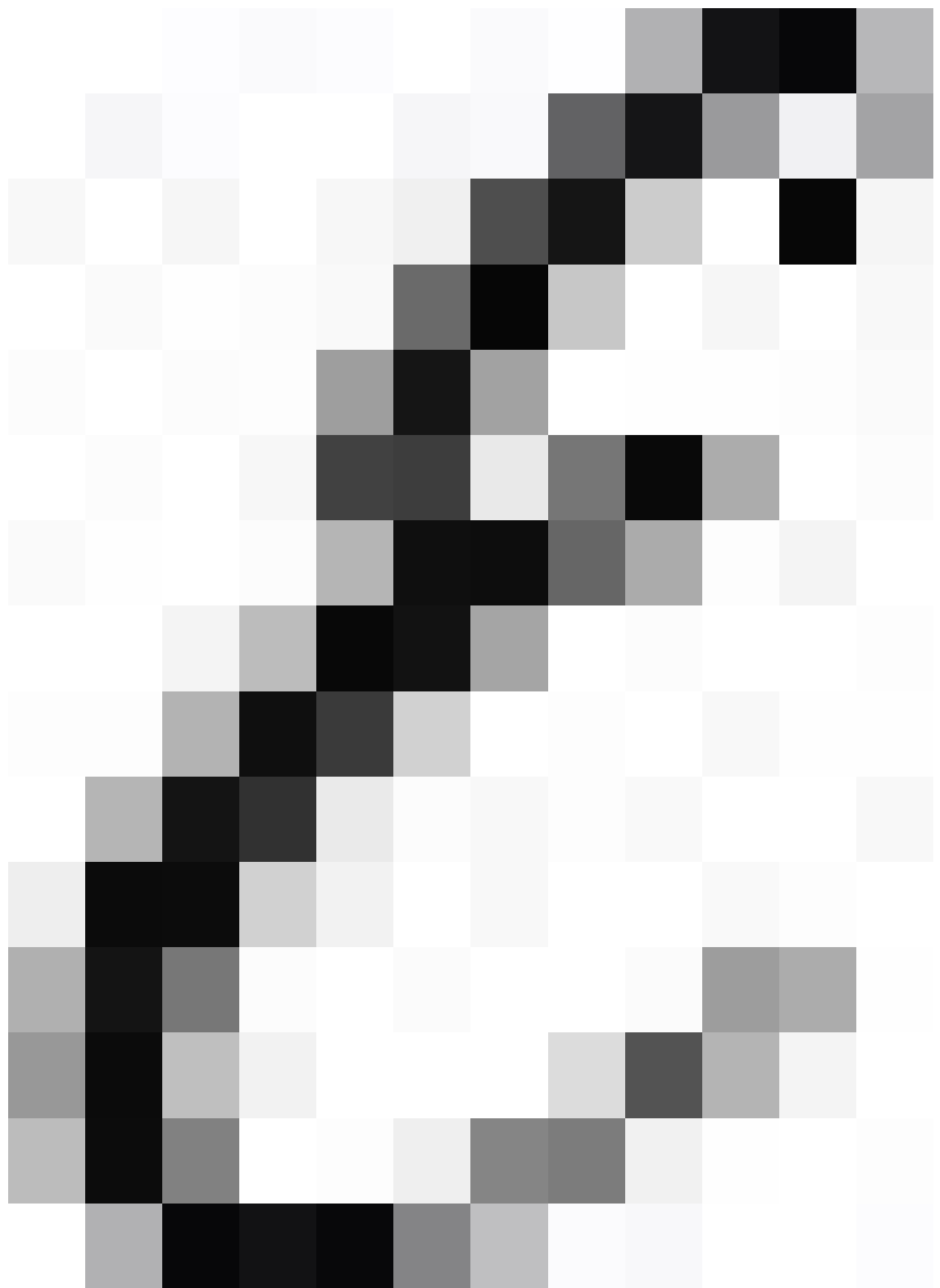
and placement of offerings

despacho prayer

definition of the term

ingredients

Dossey, Larry



Early Archaic Period

electromagnetism

and fire

and the human energy field

Eleven Steps of Ceremony

Eliade, Mircea

Encanto

Enqa

Entrainment

Estrella

Eucharist

Extraction

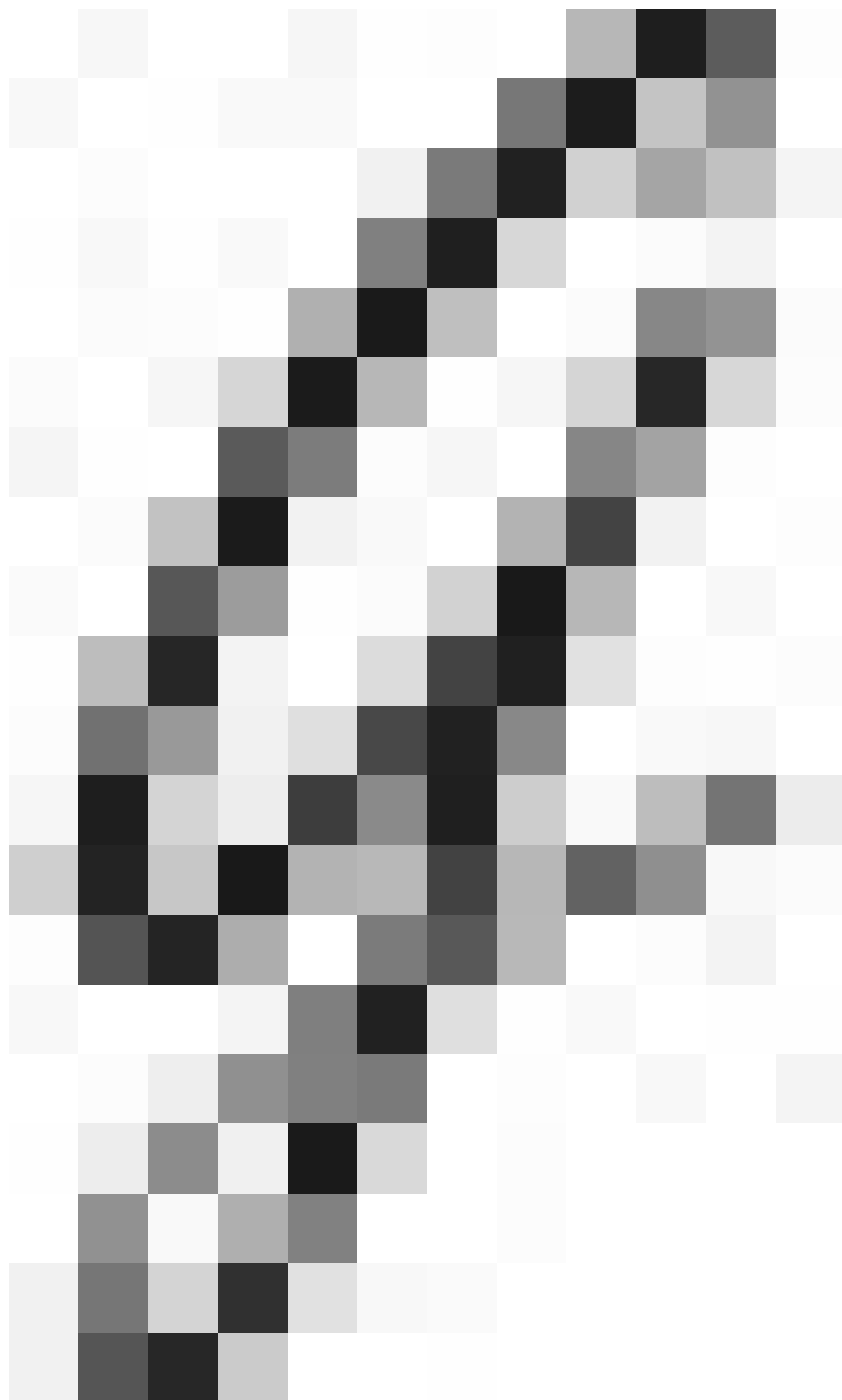


Florida Water. See Agua de Florida

Formative Period

Fray Martin de Porres

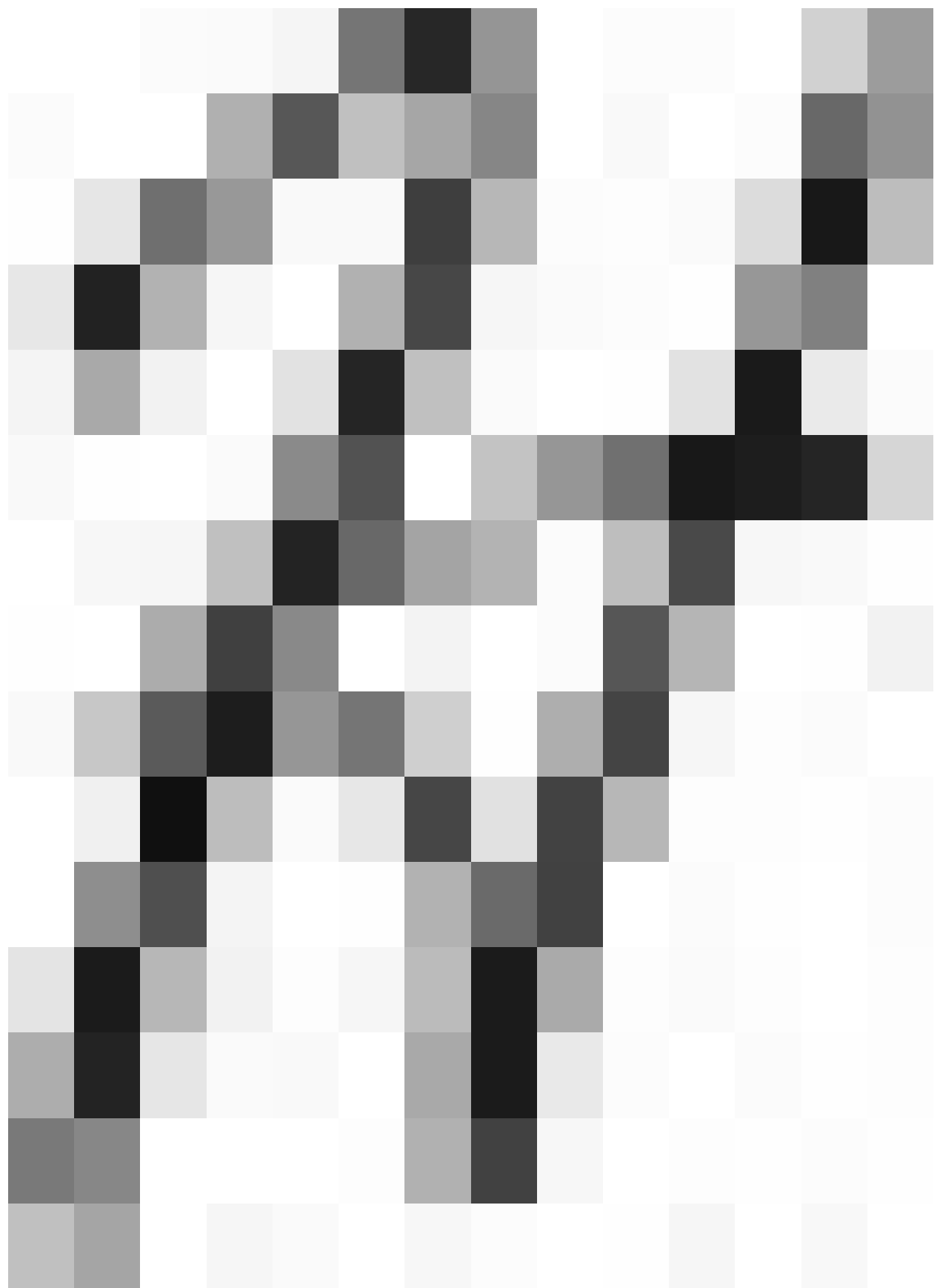
Furst, Peter



Gaia hypothesis

Gandhi, Mahatma iii

Gass, Robert



Hampi

Hanaq Pacha

and k'anchay

and Siwar Q'enti

Quechua translation

Hanaq Pacha Qaqya Rayo

Hatun Chakana

Hatun Malqui

Hatun misarumi sepka

Haywarikuy. See Despacho

Healing

and emotional conditions

and khuya stones

and mental conditions

and physical and material conditions

and positioning the client around the mesa

and spiritual conditions

Hell

Huacaypata

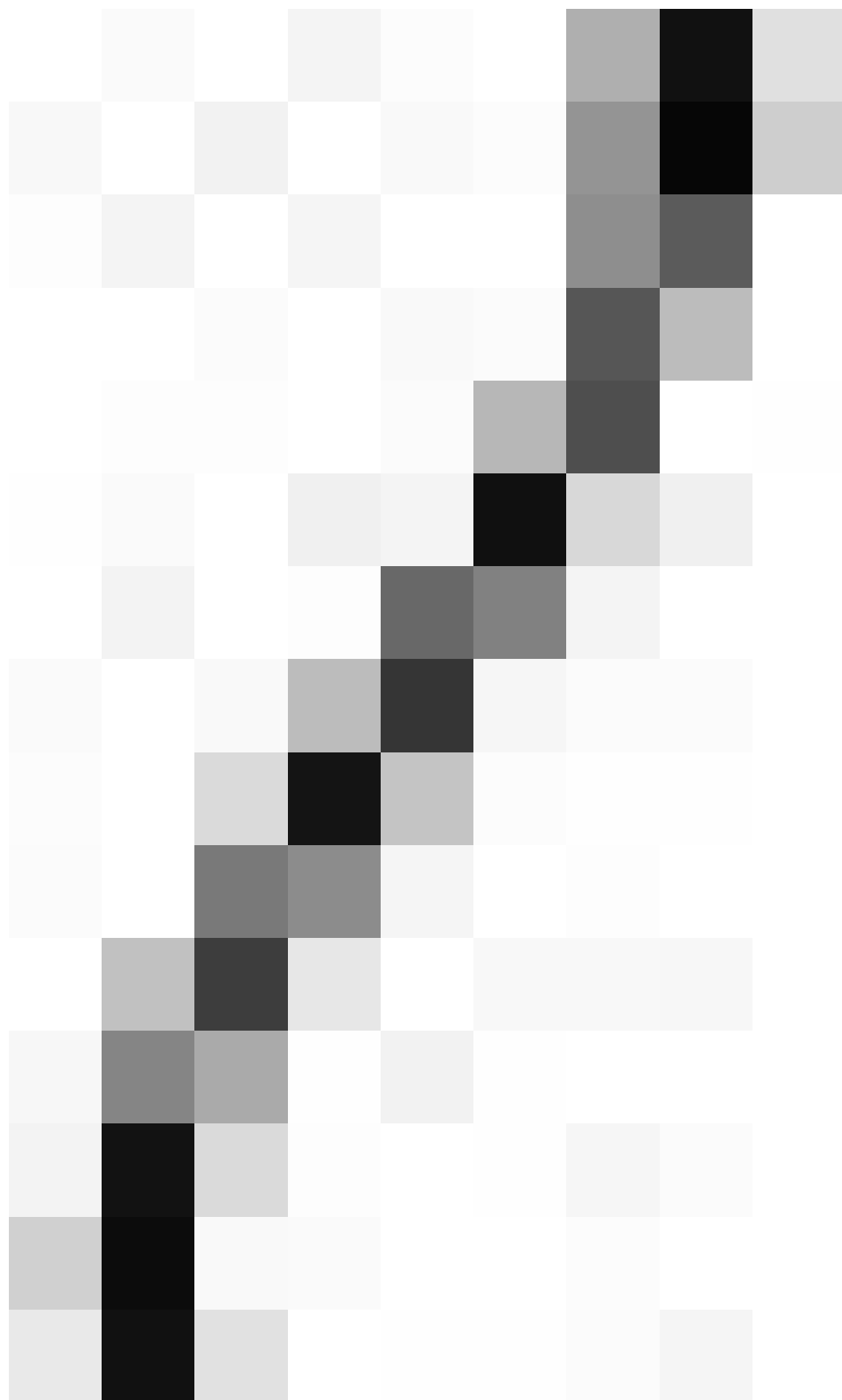
Huachuma

Hucha

and mikhushanqu

Quechua translation

Huchuy Cruz. See Andean Cross and Hatun Chakana



Icaros

Illa

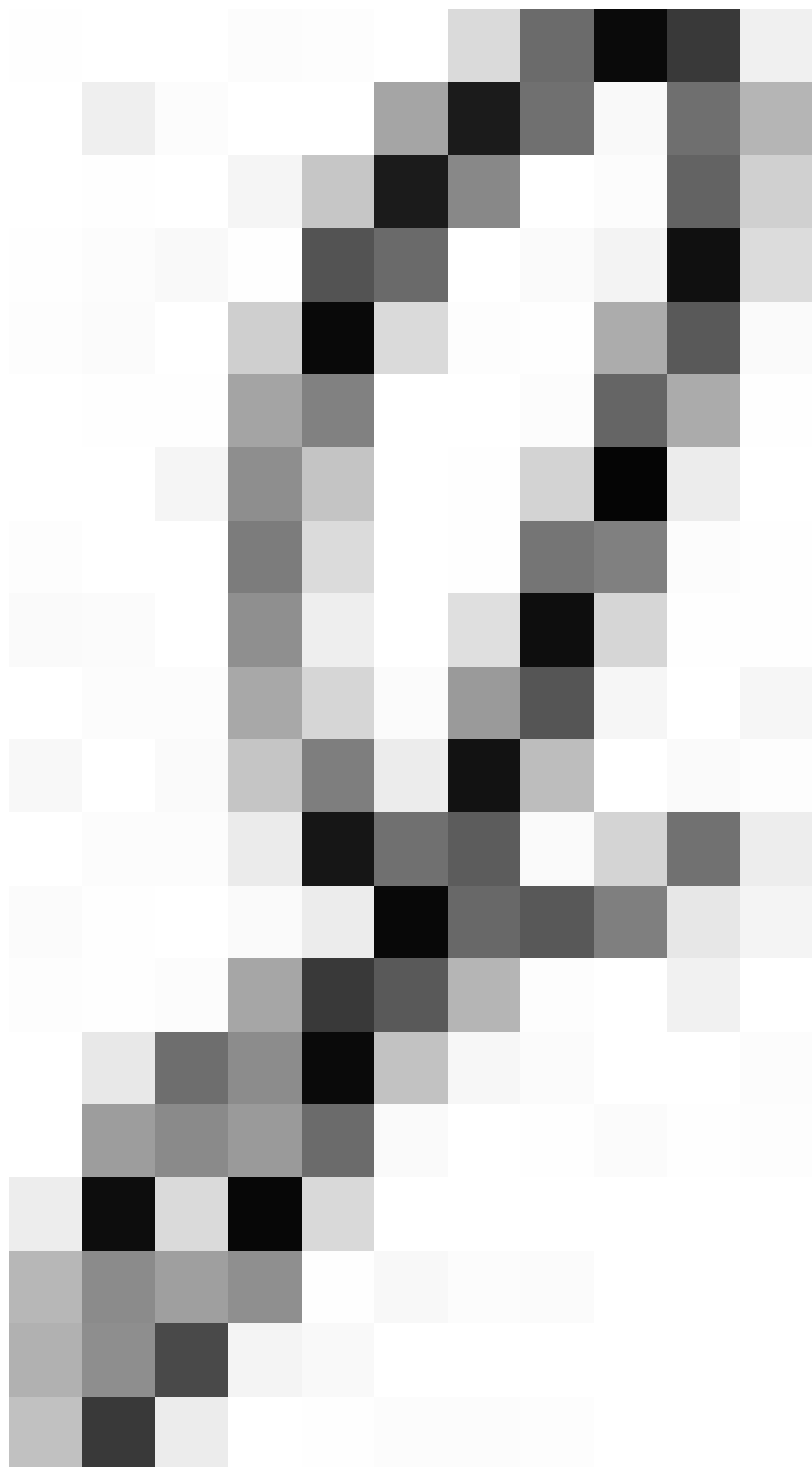
Integration

Inti

Inti Raymi

Intiq Churikuna

Inqaychu

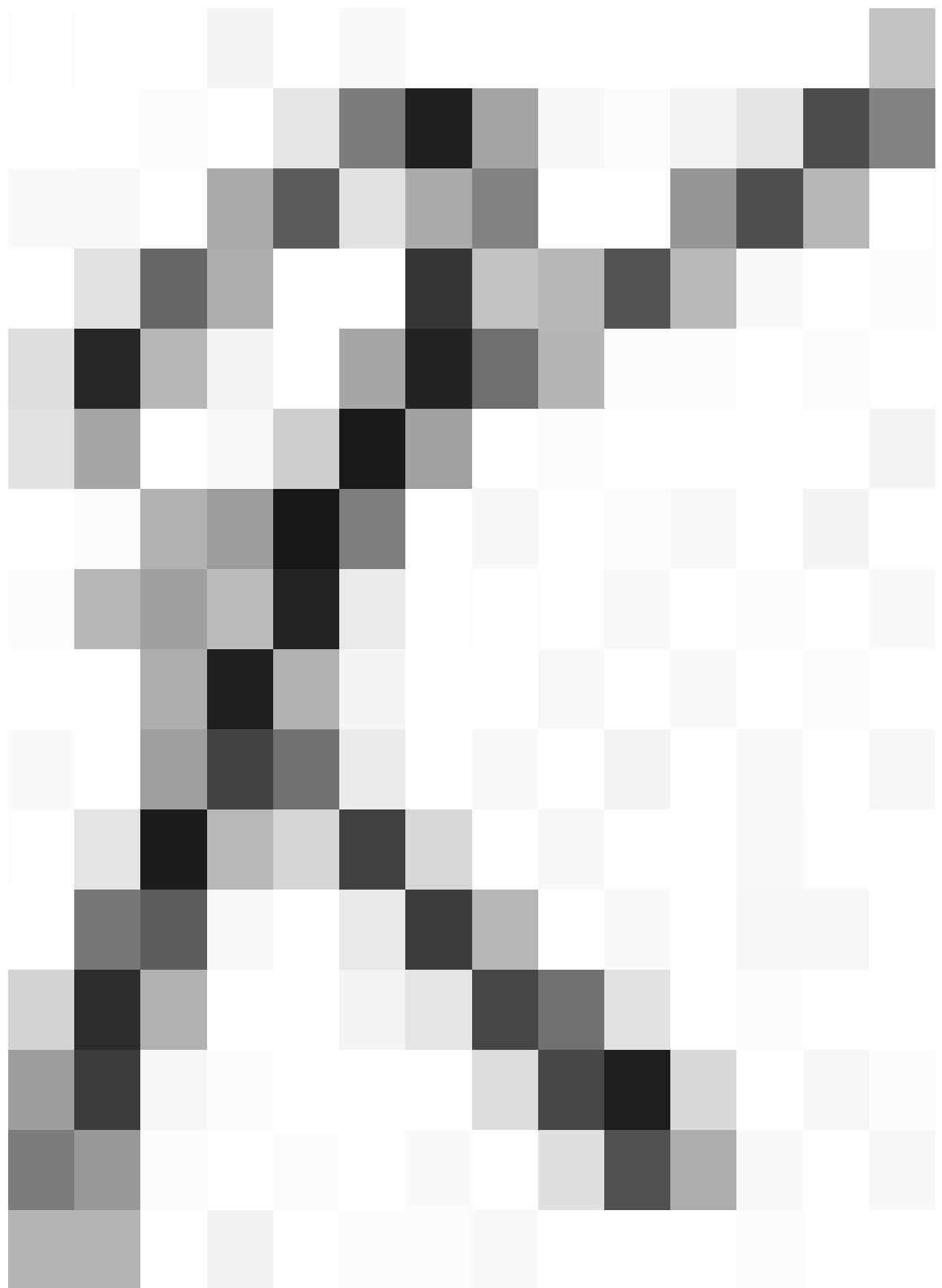


Jenny, Hans

Jesus Christ

Joralemon, Donald

Jung, Carl



K'anchay

and spiritual healing

description of the term

K'intu

K'uychi

Kamasqa

Kamay

Karpaykuna

Kawsay

description of the term

Kay Pacha

Quechua translation

Khuya

definition of the term

Khuya stones

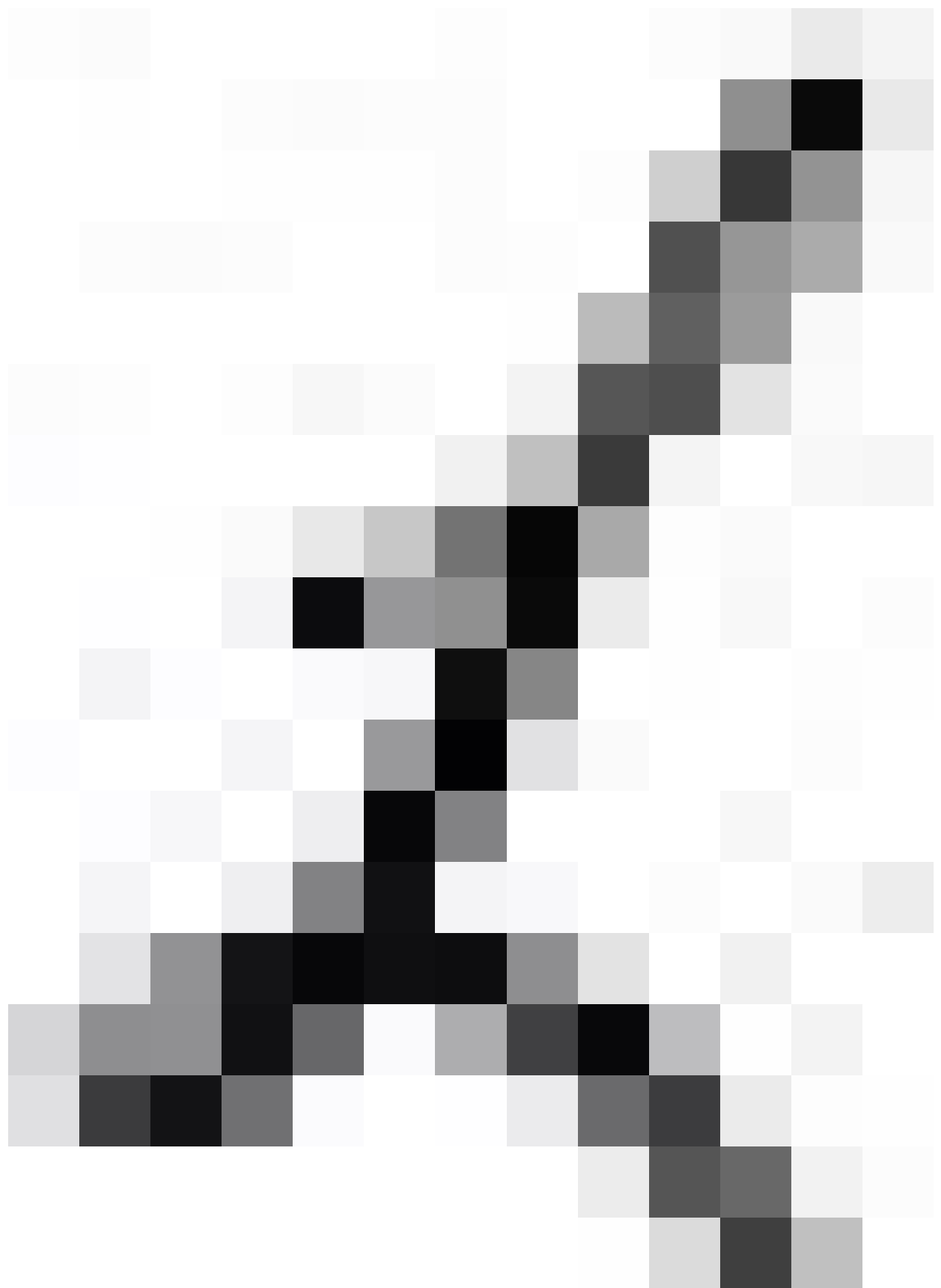
and finding a stone

charging a new stone

Kilner, Walter J

Kuntisuyu

Kuntur



Las Huaringas

Lao Tzu

Ley line theory. See Ceque System

Lightning

and shamanic initiation

Limpia

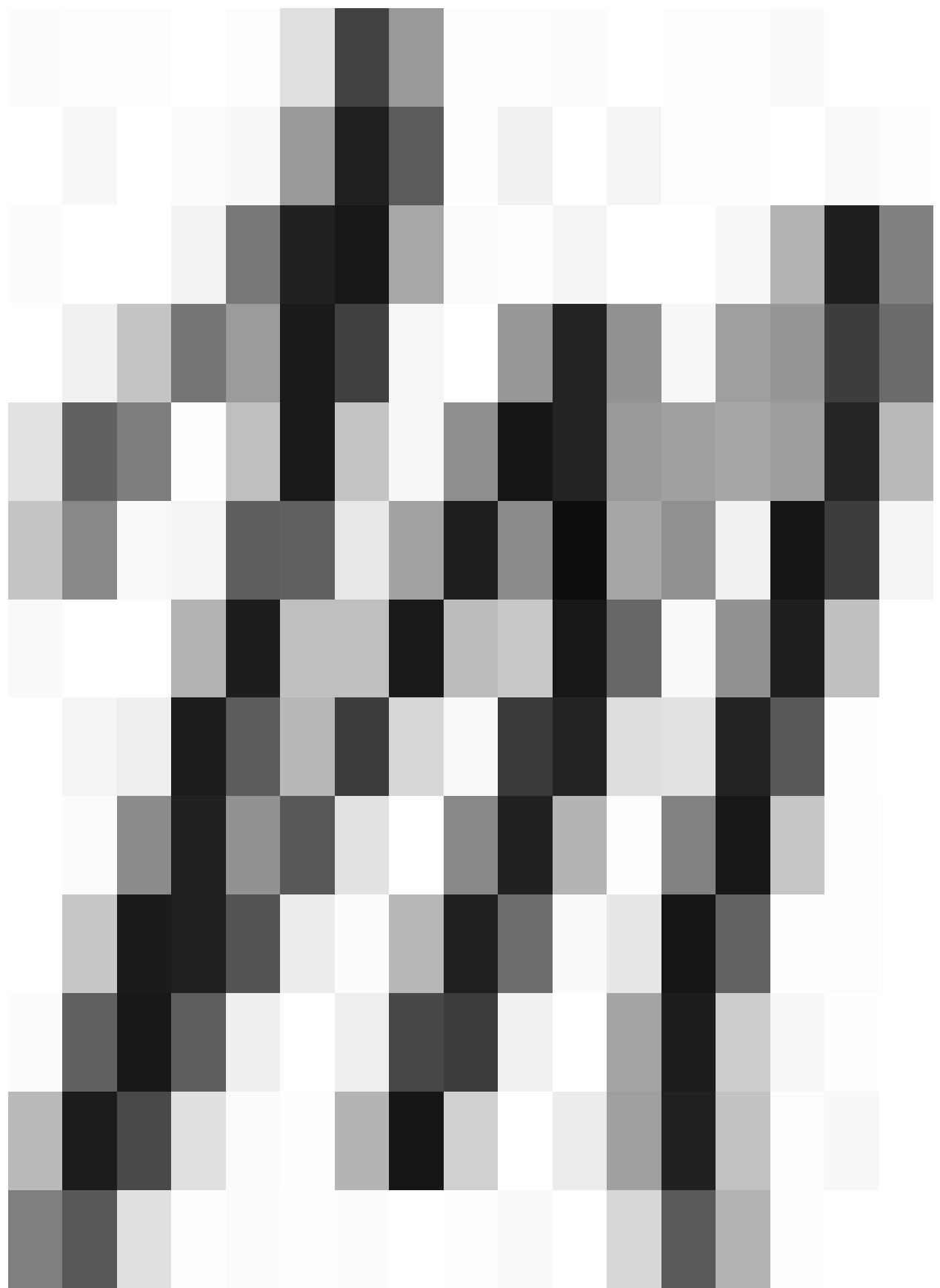
Llank'ay

Quechua translation

Llaqta

Lloq'e

Lower World. See Ukhu Pacha



Machukuna

and despachos

Machula Aulanchis

Magician

Mal aire

Malquis

and despachos

Mama Killa

Mama Qocha

Mana

Maslow, Abraham

Mensa

Middle World. See Kay Pacha

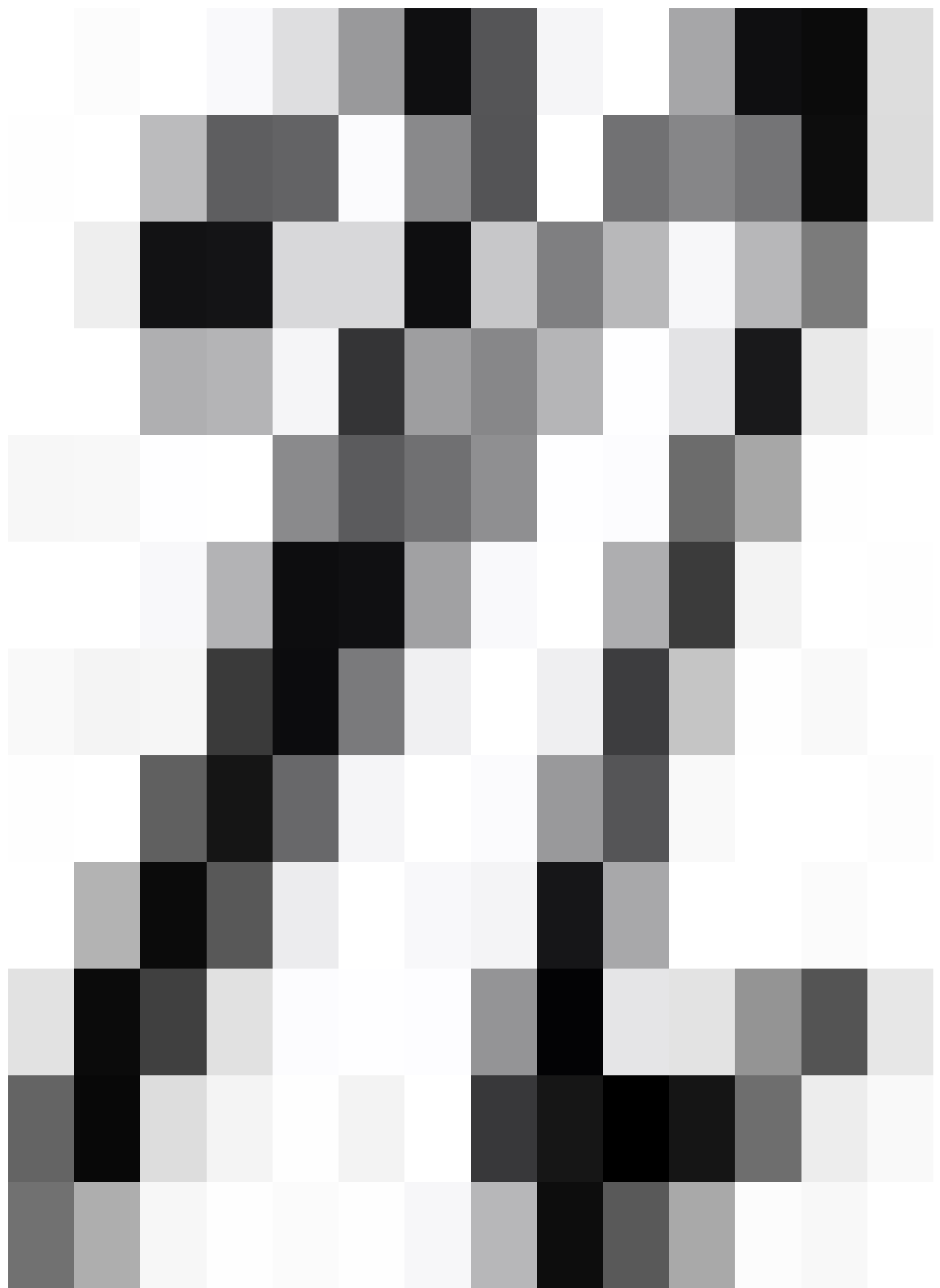
Miro-Quesada, Oscar

Mother Earth. See Pachamama

Munay

Quechua translation

Music

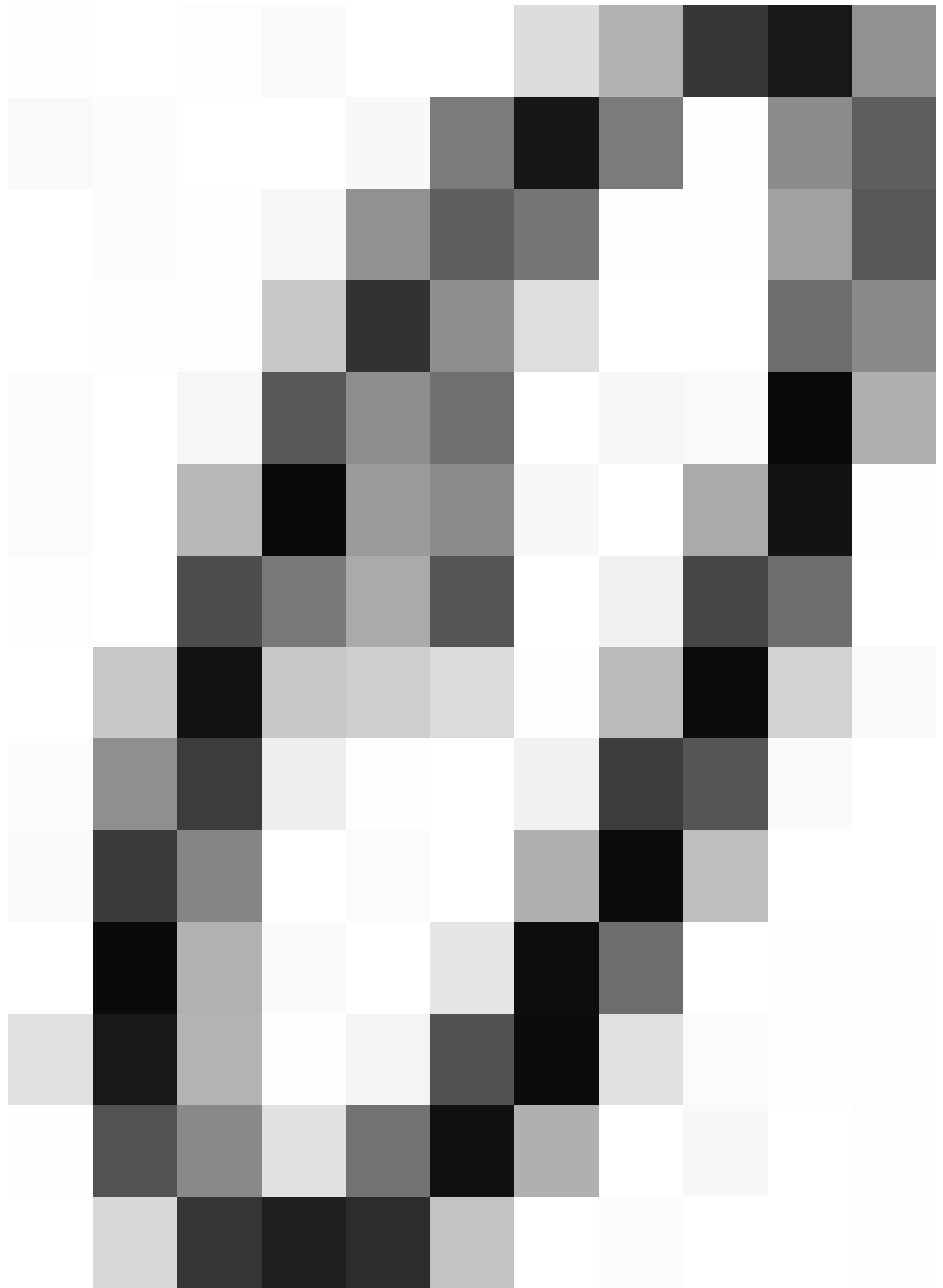


Nature Spirits. See Auquis

Nez Percé Indian, Chief Joseph

Nina

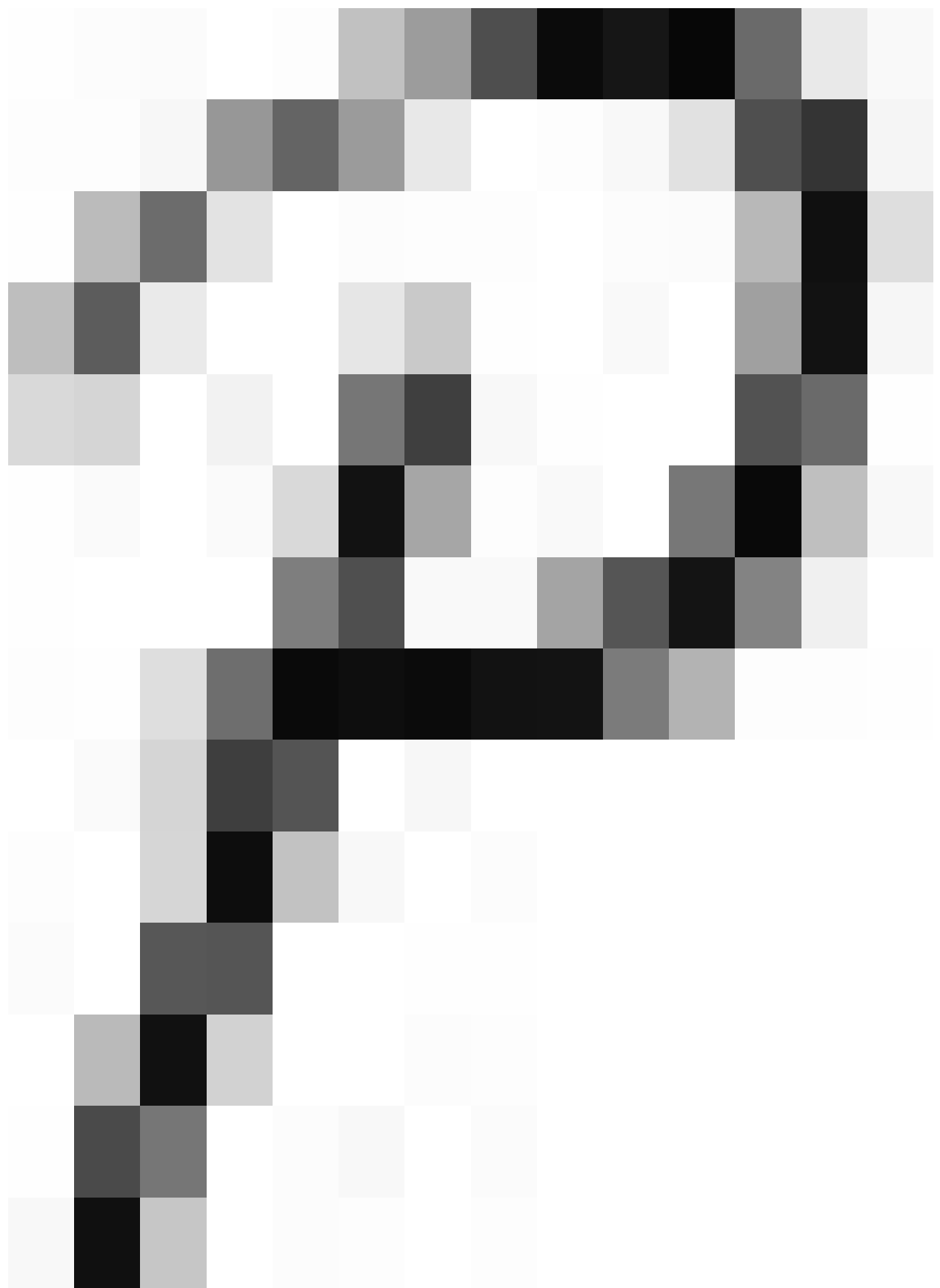
Ñustas



Ofrenda

Otorongo Achachi

Our Lady of Guadalupe



Pacha

Pachakúteq

Pachakuti Mesa

and khuya stones

and musical instruments

and the three worlds

and the basic directional components

and the ceque system

and the five directions

and the ritual activation

and the three fields

description of

origins of the word Mesa

Pachamama

and despachos

and physical healing

definition of the term

Pachamama Renewal Process

Palo Santo

Pampa misayoq

Paña

Paqarina

Paqo wachu

Paqokuna

Pause (The)

Peru

Chiclayo

Wasau

Peruvian shamanism. See Curanderismo

Phukuy

Pizarro, Francisco

Poq'po

Prana

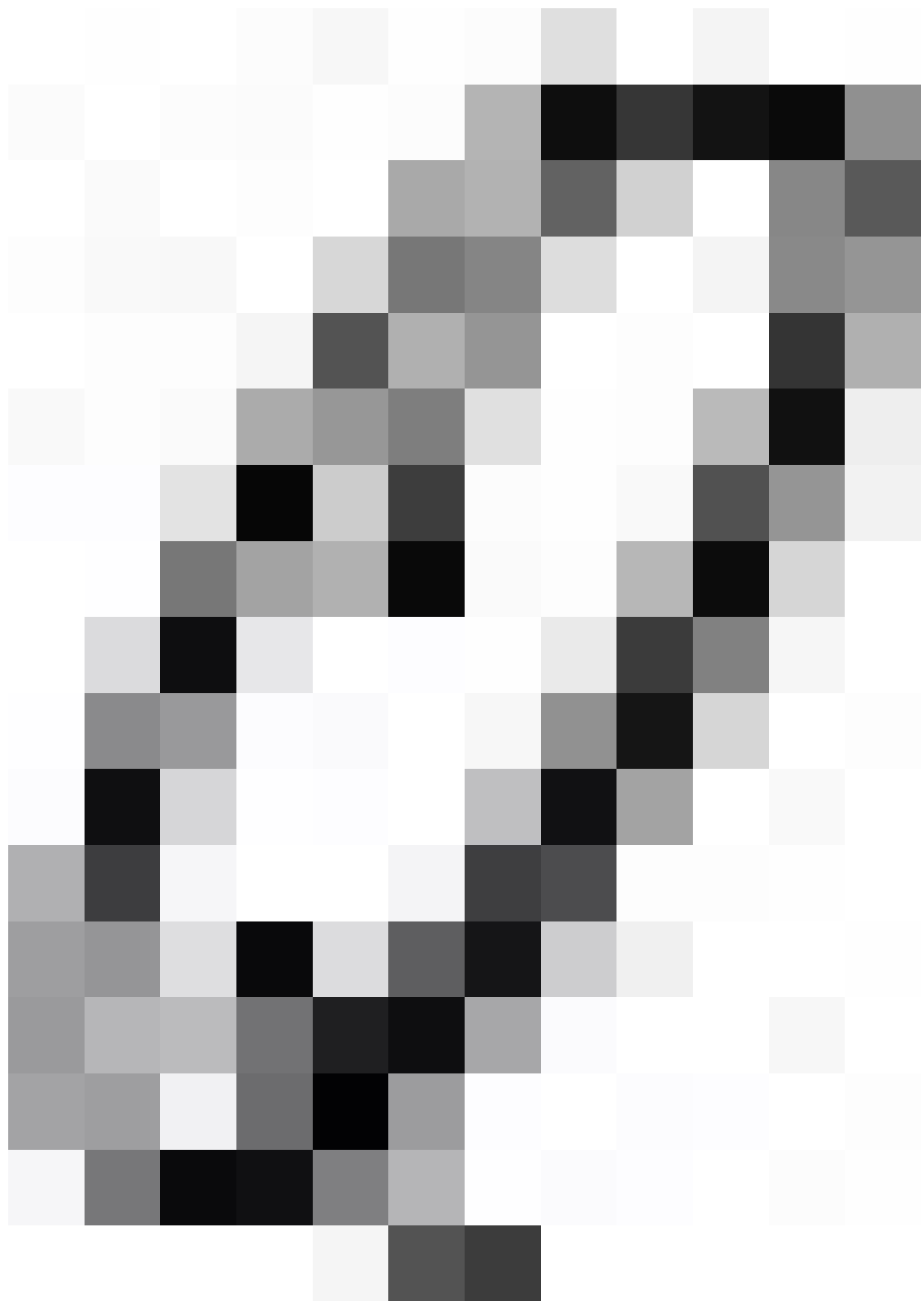
Prechtel, Martin

Preparation

Psychopomp

Puma

Purification



Q'ero

Qi

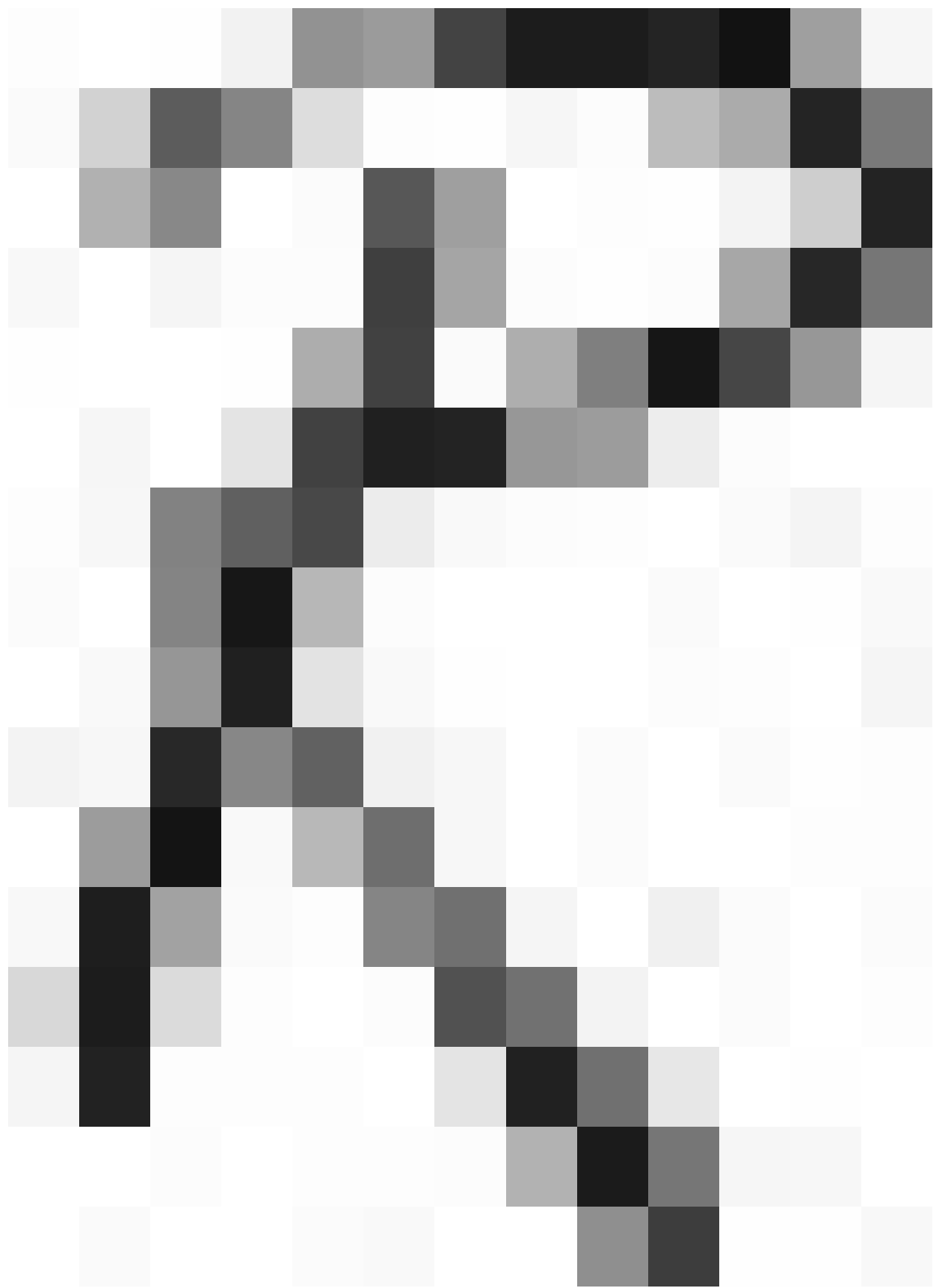
Qollasuyu

Qonopa

Qorikancha

and the ceque system

Qosqo



Rites of passage

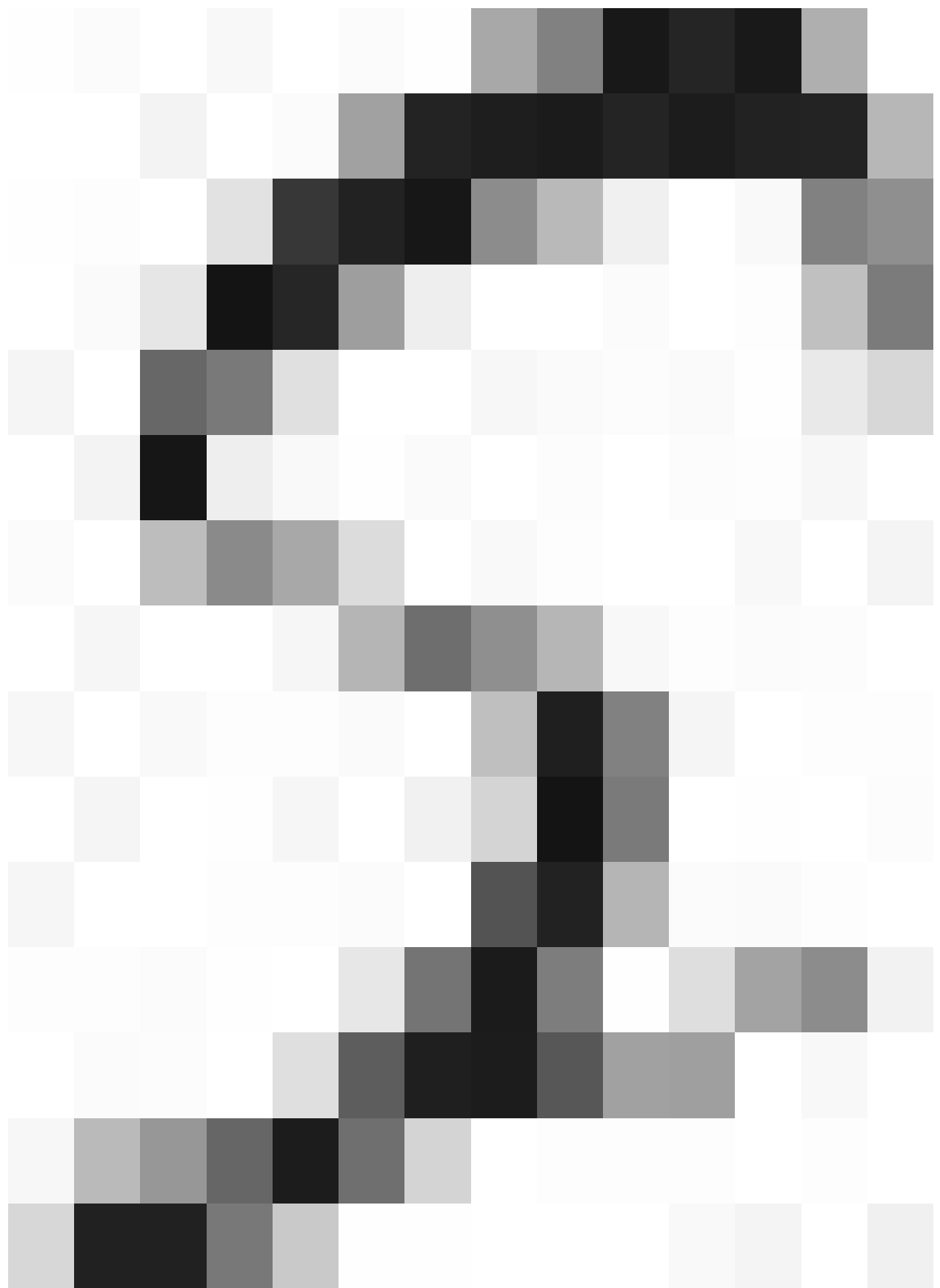
Remedio

Rojas Palomino, don Celso

Royal Hummingbird. See Siwar Q'enti

Runa kurku k'anchay

Runasimi



Sacsayhuaman

Saint Anthony

Saint Ciprian

Saint Francis

Saint James

Sami

description of the term

Santa Rosa de Lima

Saywa

Seguro

Sepka

Seventh thoracic vertebra

Shamanism

and anthropology

and biomedicine

and dismemberment

and global perspectives

characteristics of a shaman

origins of the word

the shaman & the psychotic

Sharon, Douglas

Silverblatt, Irene

Siwar Q'enti

Sonqo

Soplando

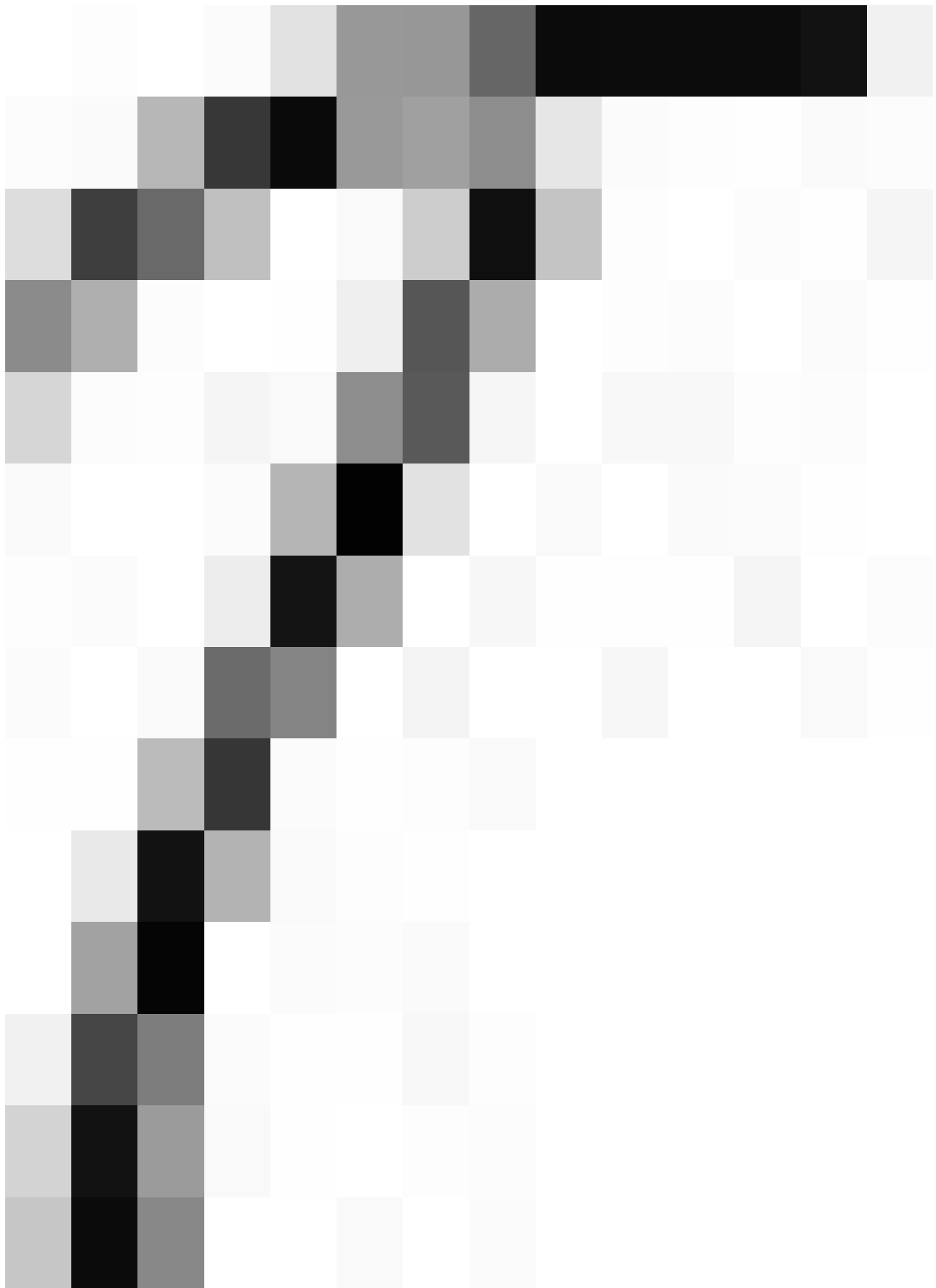
Sound

and higher harmonics

Spanish conquest

Staff. See Vara

Sun. See Inti



T'eqsimuyu

T'eqsimuyu Amaru

and the hanaq pacha qaqya rayo

Tambos

Tao Te Ching

Taoism

Taq'e

Tarjo

Tawantinsuyu

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre

The Watchers. See Tirakuna

Three worlds

and coca

and Siwar Q'enti

and the axis mundi

and the hanaq pacha qaqya rayo

Tinku

Tipon

Tirakuna

and despachos

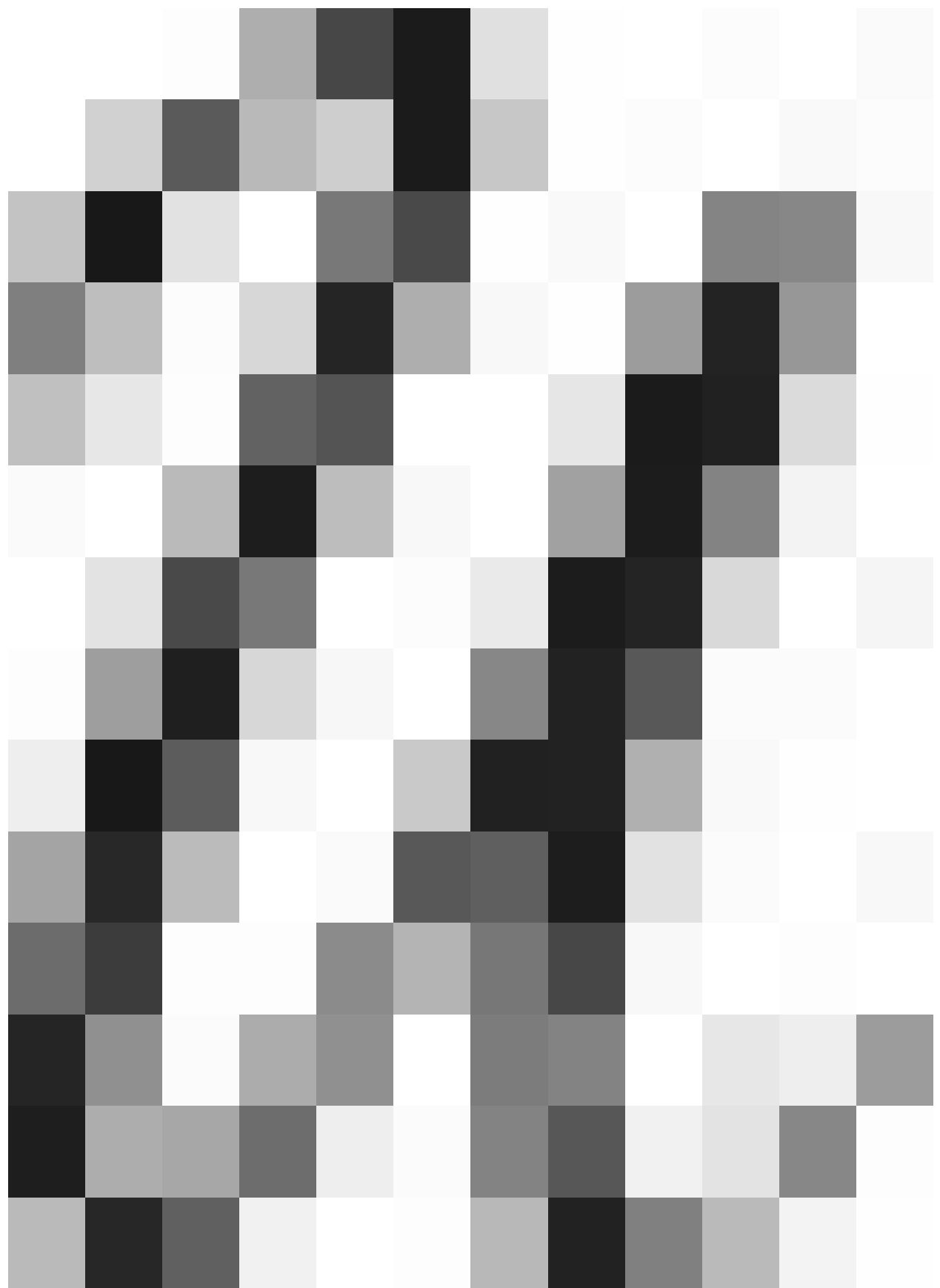
Tobacco

Toning. See Chanting

Transmission

Tree of life

Tungusic



Ukhu Pacha

and animal allies

and shamanic dismemberment

Quechua translation

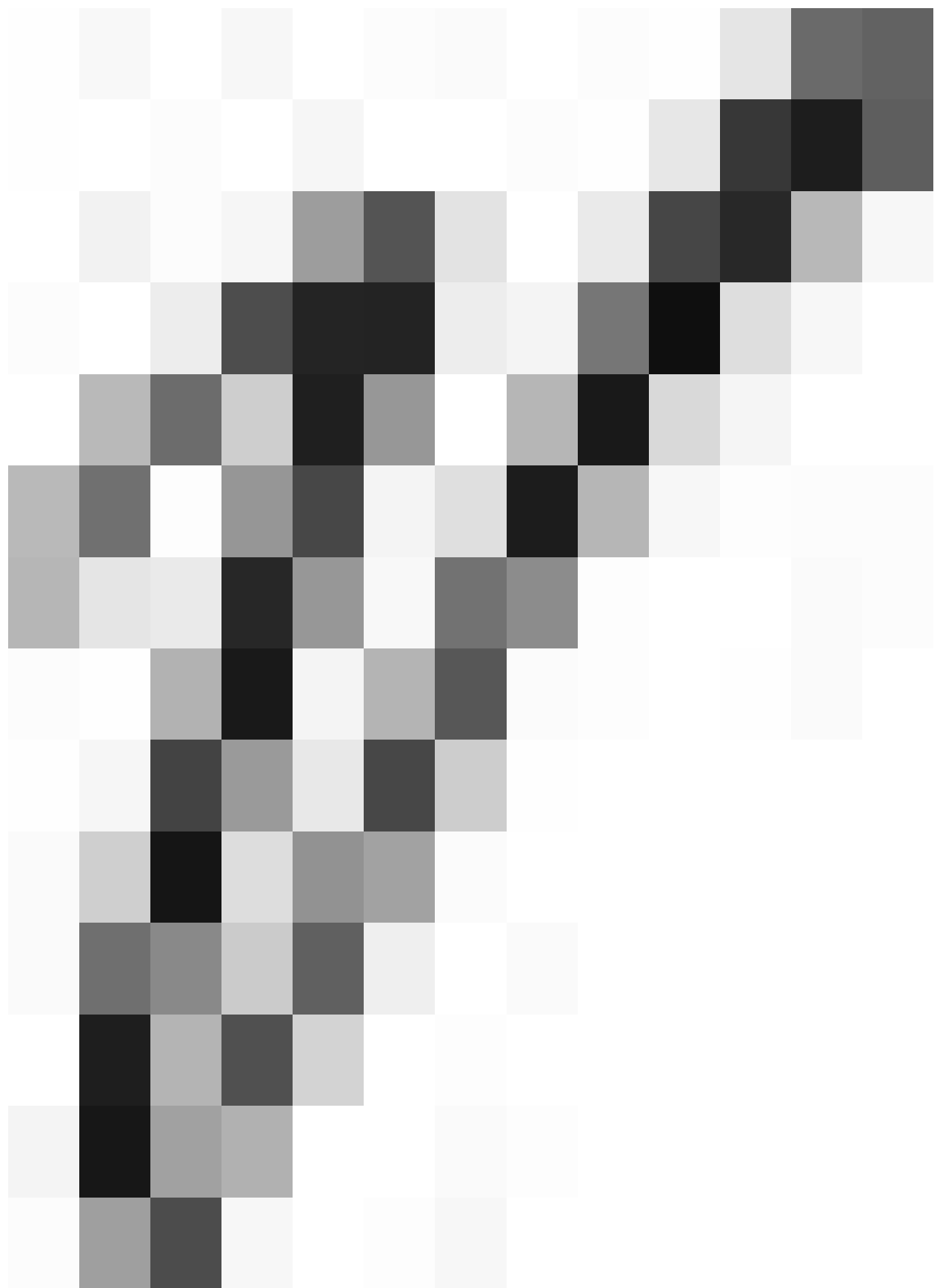
Unkhuña

Untu

Unu

Upper World. See Hanaq Pacha

Ushnu



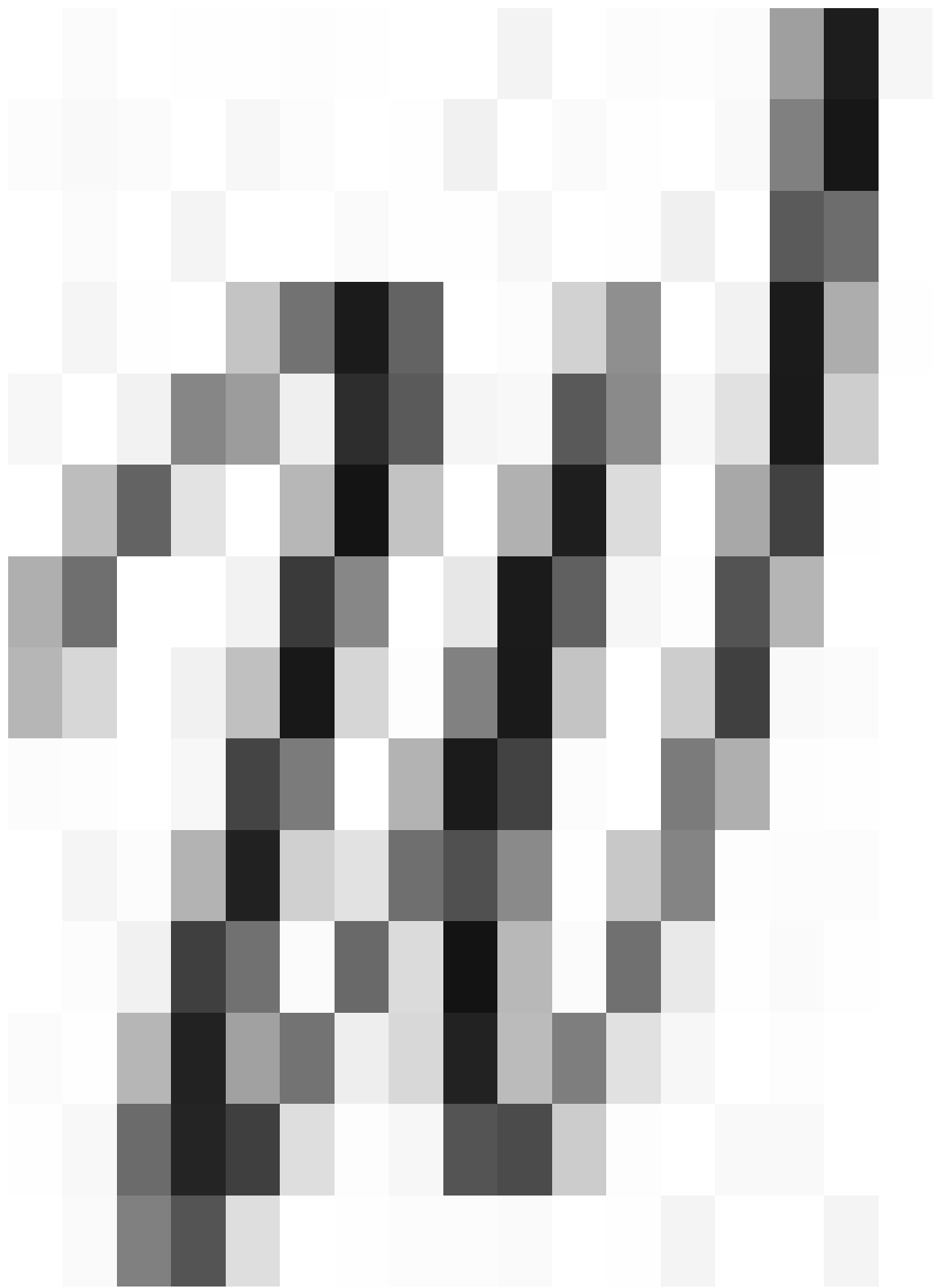
Vara

Viaje con Sombra

Vibration

Virgin Mary

Vital life-force. See Kawsay



Wave patterns

Wayra

Wednesday Night Mesa Link-Up

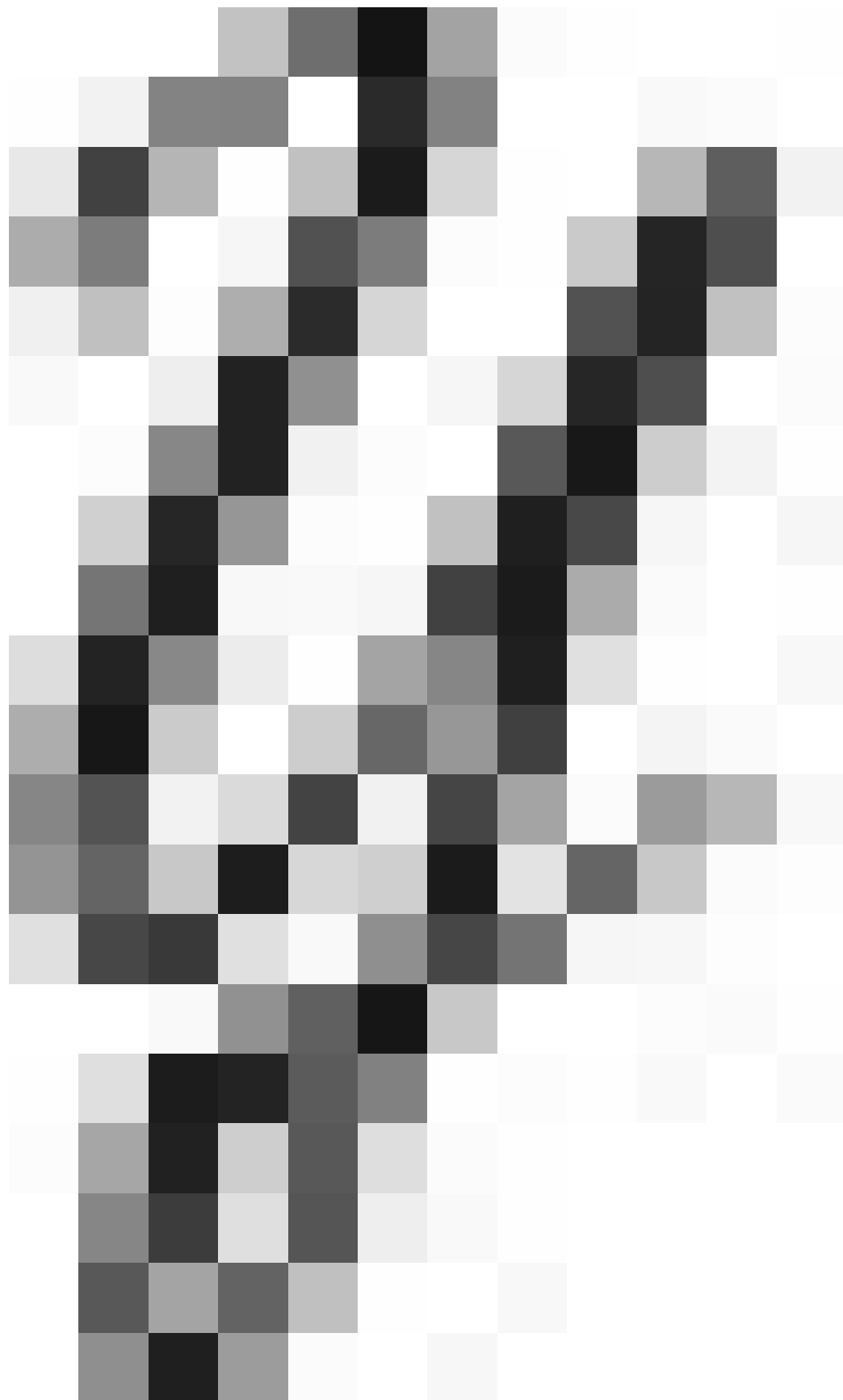
Weekly Prayer Ceremonies

Willka Mayu

Willka qosqo

Wiraqocha

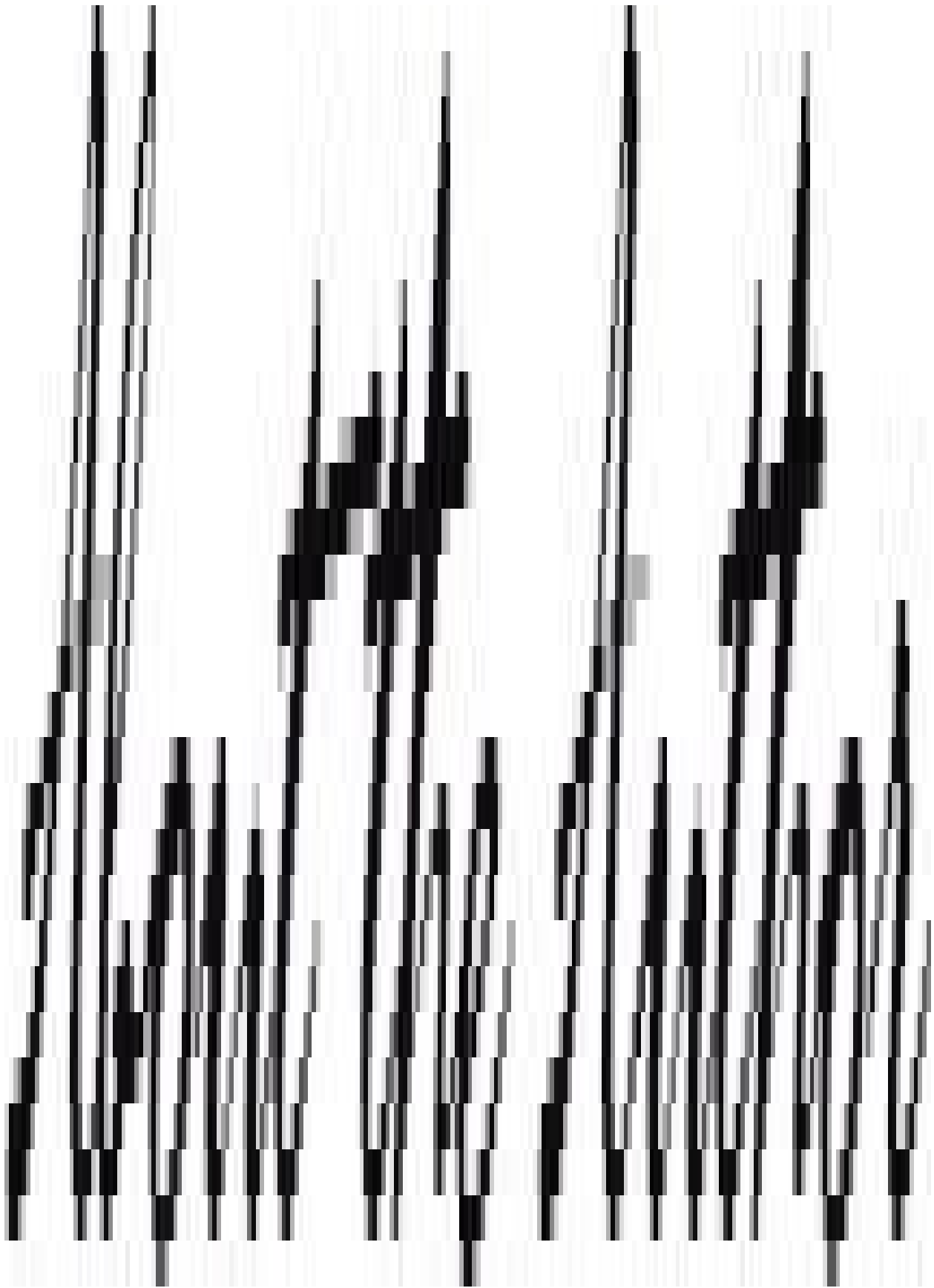
Wiraqoya

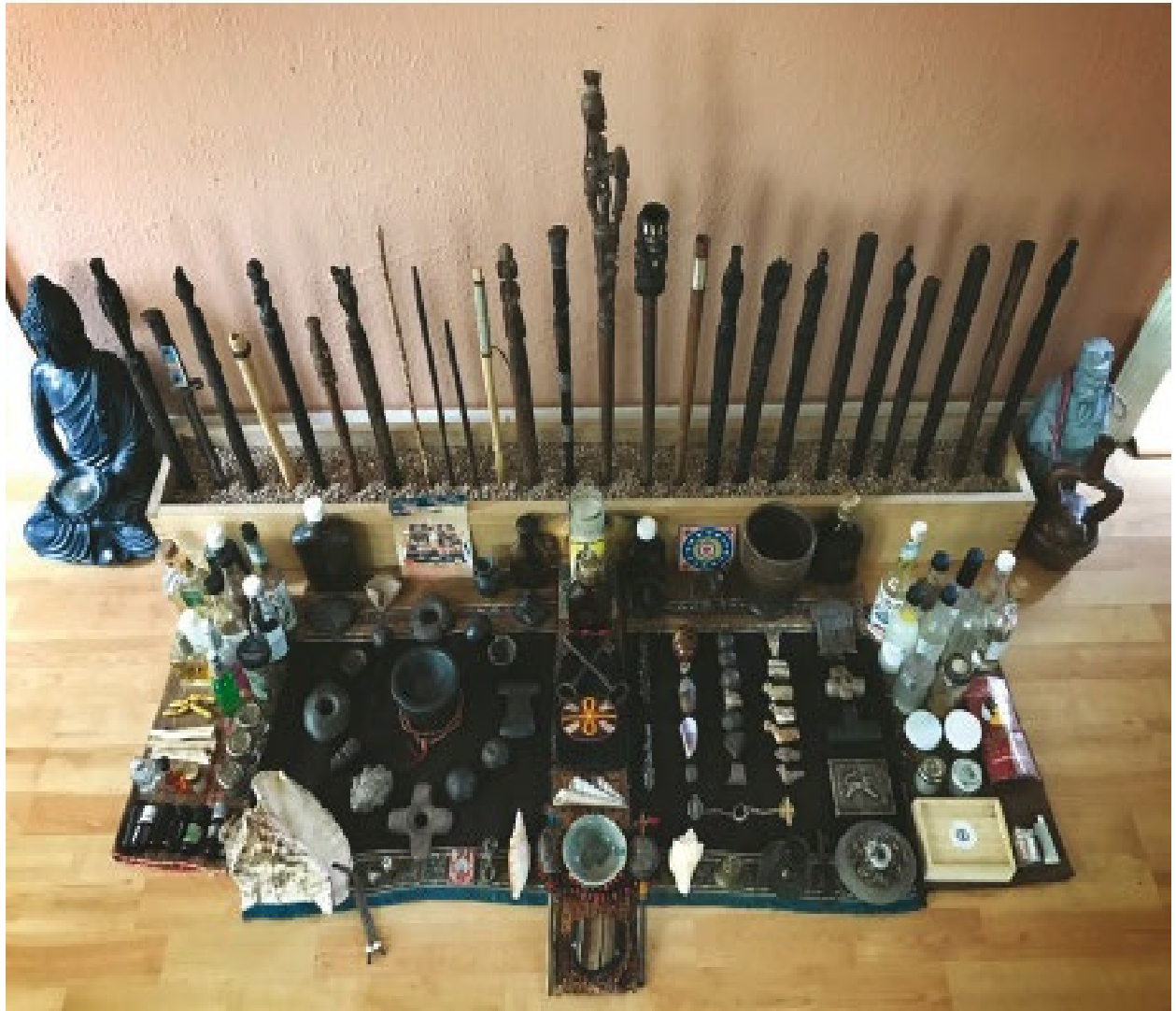
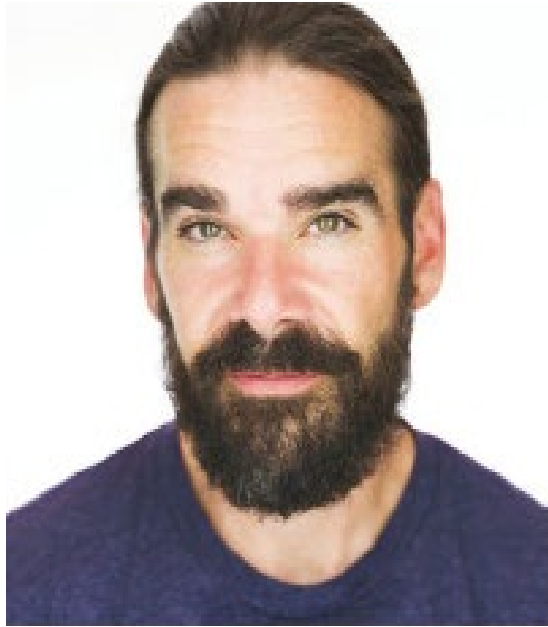


Yabar, Americo

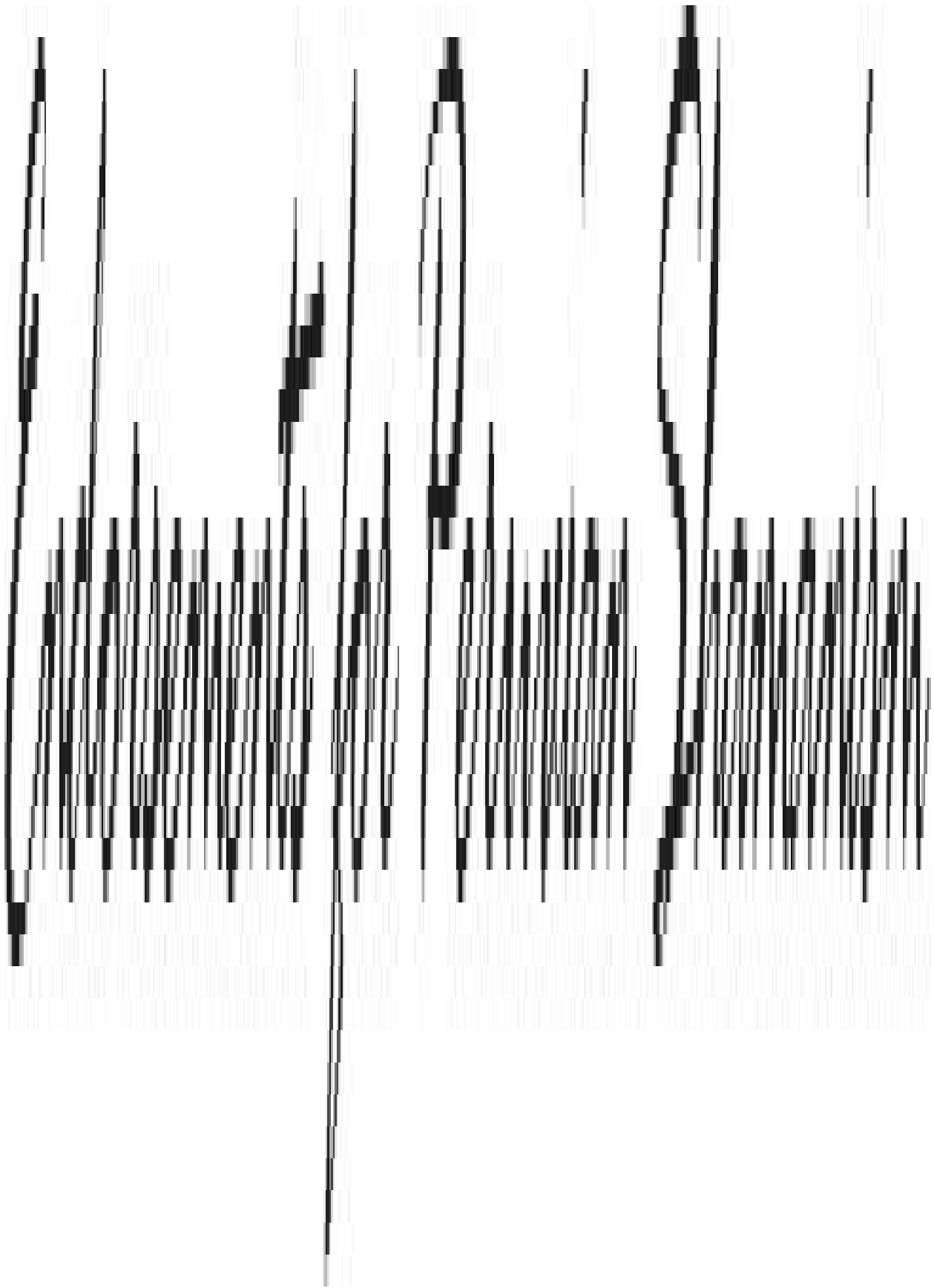
Yachay

Quechua translation





Teacher, Ceremonialist, and Author, Mateo has been sharing the teachings he received through his shamanic apprenticeships in both the Huachuma and Paqokuna traditions of Peru since 1998. His passion to preserve tribal indigenous wisdom extends to Native North American traditions, as well as, the realms of primitive survival skills and nature awareness. Despite having several college degrees, Mateo feels his true education was derived from the years he spent living with the Mi'kmaq First Nation Peoples of the Elsipogtog reservation in Canada, his aforementioned shamanic apprenticeships in the Peruvian traditions, and the deep process of “unlearning” they both inspired.



“Mateo Magee’s revision of Peruvian Shamanism is especially relevant at a time when this venerable tradition is in the midst of a renaissance in Peru and abroad. The first edition was truly ground-breaking in that, for the first time, it documented the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition of cross-cultural shamanism pioneered by his teacher, don Oscar Miro-Quesada. In addition to updating his efforts to bring these ancient teachings to a wider audience, Mateo also brings his own personal experience with renowned Peruvian shamans and indigenous First Nation practitioners to bear on his subject matter. In this regard, he is a highly qualified ‘translator’ and eminently gifted teacher with a lifetime of dedicated service to the work of human spiritual growth and development.”

–Douglas Sharon, Ph.D., former director of the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the San Diego Museum of Man. He is the author of *Wizard of the Four Winds: A Shaman’s Story* and other books and films.

“Peruvian mesa shamanism spans several traditions and countless centuries. In this remarkable book, Matthew Magee has distilled the essence of its oral traditions, its disciplined practices, and its ritual performances. The result is an accessible narrative that provides his readers with a treasured gift, one that will move them and, in some cases, change the way they live their lives.”

–Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., professor of psychology, Saybrook Graduate School, and coauthor of *Extraordinary Dreams*, *The Mythic Path*, *Healing States*, and other books.

“Since first encountering the powerful, magical universe of the Peruvian mesa tradition through the shaman don Eduardo Calderon, I have been waiting for this book. It is a clear, scholarly account of mesa practice; [it explains] its place in the larger shamanic tradition, the metaphysical geography, the archetypal powers and beings, and how to construct successful ceremonies for healing purposes.

Matthew Magee has done an excellent job both of researching and writing this core study on Peruvian shamanism. Here on the magician-healer's small table of symbols hovers the entire universe of accessible powers. The book discusses these spiritually charged matters in a readable, clear, and ethical presentation of how the shaman can prepare and work with these spiritual powers."

–Dr. Stephen Larsen, author of *The Shaman's Doorway* and other books.

"While I have studied and written about Peruvian mesa traditions for almost 20 years, in this text Matthew Magee makes the mesa understandable, accessible, and useful. He is a very gifted healer and teacher and his talents are apparent in this text. His book is the definitive work about the Pachakuti Mesa tradition."

–Bonnie Glass-Coffin, Ph.D., professor of anthropology, Utah State University; managing editor, *Anthropology of Consciousness*; and author of *The Gift of Life: Female Spirituality and Healing in Northern Peru* and other books.

"Everyone interested in shamanism and ritual practices must read this book. The Pachakuti Mesa is an ancient, yet vital tradition with much to teach us about sacred reciprocity and healing, and Matthew Magee demonstrates a rare gift for teaching its principles."

–Stephanie Gunning, coauthor of *Exploring Feng Shui* and other books.

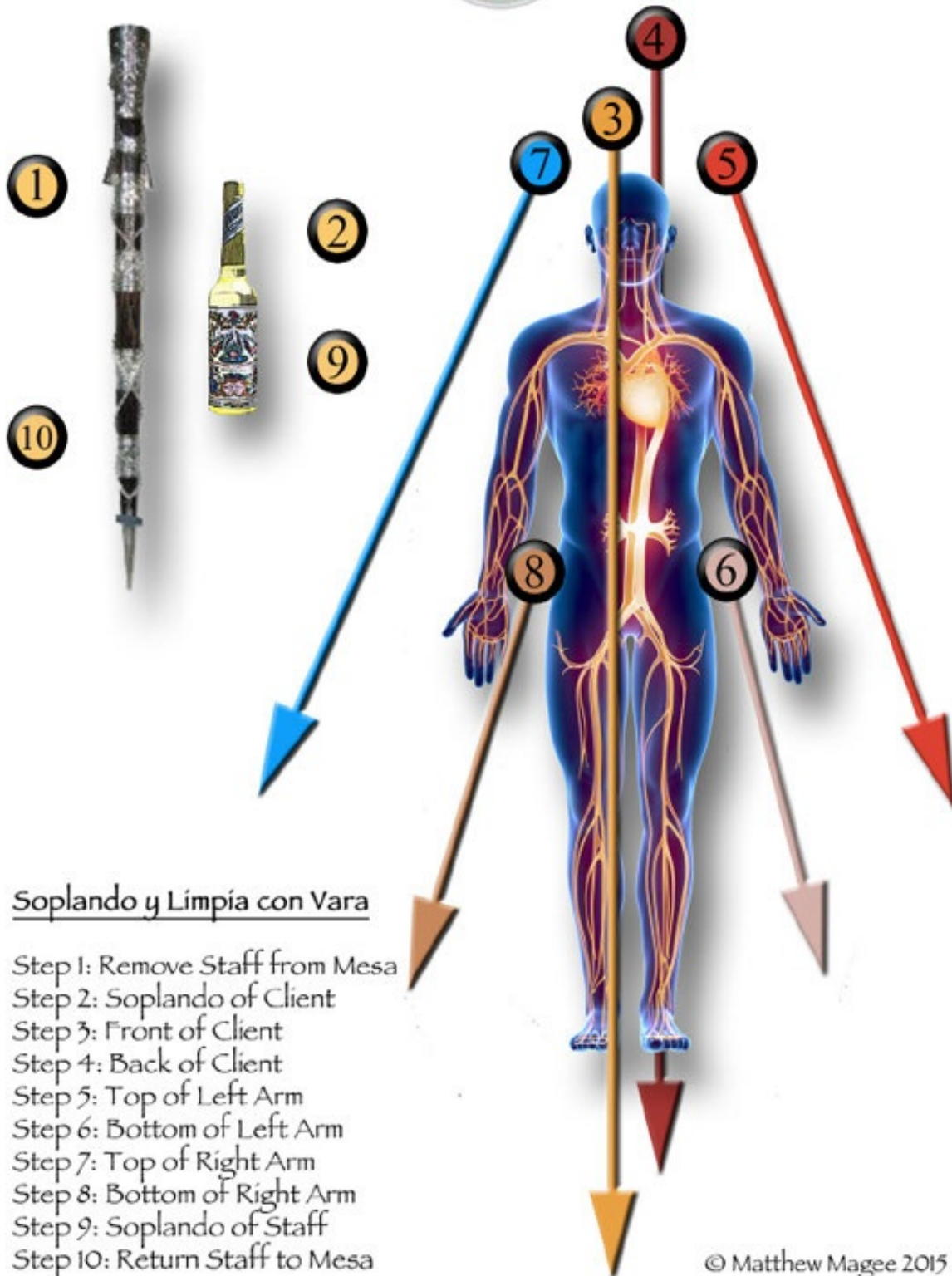
"If you haven't yet encountered the richness and diversity of Inkan wisdom, read this book—it will open your eyes and your heart. Matthew Magee generously shares the teachings he received through apprenticeship with Oscar Miro-Quesada. The beautiful message of the book speaks directly to the heart of

conscious evolution and collective vision.”

–Maria Yraceburu, author of *Legends and Prophecies of the Quero Apache: Tales for Healing and Renewal*.

Teaching Aids, Diagrams, Posters, and Artwork can be purchased at
www.MateoMagee.com

Limpia Process Ritual Cleansing with Staff/Vara



Soplando y Limpia con Vara

- Step 1: Remove Staff from Mesa
- Step 2: Soplando of Client
- Step 3: Front of Client
- Step 4: Back of Client
- Step 5: Top of Left Arm
- Step 6: Bottom of Left Arm
- Step 7: Top of Right Arm
- Step 8: Bottom of Right Arm
- Step 9: Soplando of Staff
- Step 10: Return Staff to Mesa

Pachakuti Mesa Hand Positions for Healing



Kawsay – Vital Life Force

Healing: Physical/Material

Client Placement: South of Mesa with Head Pointing East. Kawsay Khuya also Placed in Client's Left Hand.

Energy Received Through: Perineum, Soles of Feet, and Left Hand

Hand Position: Open Palm

Hand Placement: Navel (Qosqo), or Physical Location of Injury, Ailment, Disease, or Energetic Depletion



Sami – Animating Essence

Healing: Mental and Emotional

Client Placement: East of Mesa with Head Pointing North (Mental), and West of Mesa with Head Pointing South (Emotional). Sami Khuya also Placed in Client's Left Hand

Energy Received Through: Crown and Left Palm

Hand Position: Thumb, Index, and Middle Fingers Together

Hand Placement: Brow or Seventh Thoracic Vertebra (Mental), or Heart (Emotional)



K'anchay – Light Energy

Healing: Spiritual

Client Placement: North of Mesa with Head Pointing West. K'anchay Khuya also Placed in Client's Left Hand

Energy Received Through: Crown, Nape of the Neck, and Left Palm

Hand Position: Index Finger Extended with Other Fingers Curled Back and Locked by the Thumb

Hand Placement: Top of the Client's Crown



11 Steps To Creating Ceremony



1. Preparation – Physically create an environment that is free from distraction. Step back from the mind and let go of expectations, ego, and attachments to a desired outcome. Drop into your heart and operate from a deep place of intuitive, present-moment awareness.

2. Purification – Energetically release anything within you and around you that is not serving a higher purpose. Common purification practices involve the use of smudge, incense, floral waters, staffs (varas), feathers, etc., to create a clear field to operate within.

3. Consecration – Make some form of offering to the ceremonial ground you have created, honoring the interdependence and the sacred reciprocal exchange of ayni.

4. Pause – Move into astute observation of the silence and stillness – both within and around you. Deepen your sensitivity to all forms of sensorial awareness (sound, light, smell, temperature, etc.) found within the present moment.

5. Declaration – Present your intentions for the ceremonial space you are creating (i.e., healing, transformation, gratitude, alignment, etc.).

6. Invocation – Call in support from the unseen world, or rather, call yourself into deeper awareness of the support already in your midst. Move into a conscious recognition of Spirit's grace and abundance.

7. Activation – Use a form of ritual expression (spoken prayer, medicine song, artistic creation, etc.) signifying that the medicine prayed for through the invocation is awakening and being made available, and can be used to bring this sacred space to life.

8. Pause – Once again, deeply observe the silence and stillness. Give yourself fully to present-moment awareness. Allow yourself to drink in what your senses perceive.

9. Transmission – Channel and send the medicine and guidance you received during the Pause out into the ceremonial space or into the person(s) you are working with. This can be expressed in any number of ways, including spoken word, feather or staff work, or through a creative ritual act like blowing into the top of a person's head or into their heart, etc.

10. Completion – Close the sacred circle using a form of ritual expression, such as toning the directions three times each.

11. Integration – Remember that you are now carrying the medicine from this ceremony out into the world. Be conscious of living the ceremony, and the medicine you have experienced and received, in your everyday life.