



Centre for Personal Growth & Practice of Traditional Amazonian Medicine

Introduction

HAMPICHICUY (pronounced Hampi-chee-*coo-ee*) is a centre for healing through the practice of traditional medicine, indigenous to the Amazon. The Centre, whose name in Quechua means “the place that heals”, is situated on the outskirts of the small city of Tarapoto in the northeastern province of San Martin, a one-hour flight from Lima, Peru’s capital. Bathed by the Shilcayo River and surrounded by green mountains, with a climate that oscillates between 28°C and 30°C (80°F and 85°F), the area offers a pleasant environment for inner exploration and healing.

Hampichicuy puts into practice indigenous knowledge connected to medicinal plants as a way of understanding that human well-being is closely linked to nature and transcends the rational state.

Objective

Hampichicuy offers an integrated healing experience by means of indigenous medicinal practices enriched with modern therapeutic elements. Thus, by endeavoring to preserve traditional knowledge, the Center promotes the use of medicinal plants and offers a modern-day health alternative, quite different from that provided by conventional medicine.

Left: The malocca at Hampichicuy, a traditional Amazonian structure where ceremonies are held



Hampichicuy's Three-Pronged Strategy

The Center assumes that human beings need a better understanding of themselves, and through self-examination can come to realize that physical ills are not separated from the psychological, and that the emotional state forms an important part of their well-being. To that end, the Center offers a three-pronged strategy of healing, therapy, and research.

HEALING

In the indigenous world the ingestion of medicinal plants provides an approach to the spiritual dimension that all living beings possess, thus permitting the establishment of a delicate equilibrium in relationships with others and a better understanding of one's self. It also produces an exceptional sharpening of the perceptions relating to one's natural and social environment that generates communication between the rational and intuitive fields.

Once the medicinal plants' bark or leaves are ingested, through their properties the *curandero* (healer) and patient achieve an extraordinary connection, in which the *curandero* is changed into an interlocutor and in a heightened state of consciousness visualizes the origin of the illness or affliction. In this state the *curandero* initiates a process of physical or emotional healing in the patient.

These days, people from the West have started to become acquainted with the experience of taking medicinal plants in the Amazonian context. This permits them, in a symbolic manner, to discover the whys and wherefores of their diseases and dissatisfactions, and helps them understand that ailments are not just limited to the physical plane and that healing includes other intrinsic levels, particularly the emotions.

This unique dimension of treatment is offered at **Hampichicuy** with an understanding that to achieve well-being it is necessary to take into account three levels—body, mind, and spirit—and by establishing unity between them, the medicinal plants effect healing.



Above: Leaves & bark from jungle plants are prepared by the *curandero* and ingested during ceremonies in the malucca under his supervision.



THERAPY

Indigenous medical practice at the Center is further enriched with a therapeutic approach. When medicinal plants are taken, psychological exploration begins under the watchful eye of the *curandero*, who is also a psychologist. He evaluates the emotional state of the person before, during, and after the treatment and establishes individual communication with participants about their emotional situation.

During this special therapeutic process, the *curandero*/psychologist interprets the symbolic language of the dreams, visions, and sensations produced by the plants in participants and, through that language, identifies the blockages, traumas, and anguish that are stored in the subconscious—this provides an opportunity for these to be confronted and overcome.

The indisputable therapeutic properties possessed by various Amazonian medicinal plants enable participants to free themselves from unresolved emotional problems that represent an impediment to internal growth. At **Hampichicuy** psychological support is provided, so that once a problem's origin is discovered, the *curandero*/therapist can help participants restore their inner balance.



RESEARCH

The Center frequently promotes ex-changes of knowledge and experience between local and foreign healers who use medicinal plants to therapeutic ends. The ancient and extensive stock of knowledge that the indigenous people of the Amazon possess has enabled them to decipher the active components of thousand species of plants that today are the object of scientific investigation.

More than three thousand years ago, these indigenous people discovered the curative properties of plants that they called "masters." To these, they attributed the spirit and understanding that is transmitted through the *curandero*. This understanding is generated in an intuitive and ecological way, an ability acquired through narrow coexistence with nature and a delicate handling of ecosystems.

The transmission of this ancient knowledge, kept alive through oral tradition, transmitted most of the time from father to son, but also from mother to daughter, permits the preservation of indigenous knowledge, in which plants and animals together with man form part of a great mythical universe intimately connected to nature. **Hampichicuy** has revived this essential knowledge and put it into practice through healing and therapy, enriching it further with research. To this end, the Center also maintains a garden of medicinal plants.

Above: A participant consulting with Javier Zavla during a diet in one of the Center's cabins.

Left: Participants in a group discussion in the Center's grounds.



Guillermo Ojanama



Javier Zavala & Eda Zavala

Who Are We?

Javier Zavala, descended from a lineage of Wari curanderos, was initiated as a curandero in traditional Amazonian medicine 14 years ago, following his studies in psychology at the Universidad San Martín de Porras. Javier has organized international seminars in Chile and Argentina and participated in international gatherings of native-American shamans from the United States..

Eda Zavala, a sociologist with a degree from the Universidad Católica del Perú, specializes in indigenous Amazonian cultures and is currently researching the role of women in Amazonian shamanism. Eda has participated in international conferences for the conservation of traditional knowledge and preservation of sacred lands.

Guillermo Ojanama is a master *curandero* who specializes in the treatment of chronic diseases and is well known for his expertise as a traditional doctor in the Peruvian jungle. His practice is based in the village of Chazuta, a bastion of ancestral knowledge, situated close to the Cordillera Azul National Park. Native-American masters invited Guillermo to the U.S. where he participated in Navajo and Lakota ceremonies and rituals.

What the Center Offers

Hampichicuy is equipped with a suitable infrastructure to offer treatments and seminars in its center. Its activities are directed to people on a deep emotional and spiritual quest and to those who live under stress, worry or constant depression and want to learn how to adequately channel their emotions. The Center also offers treatment for those with organic illness.

The seminars are offered in a woodland setting with a program that consists of vegetal purges, ceremonies, and baths with aromatic herbs. The ceremonies and diets with medicinal plants are directed by the *curandero* and induce an intimate union with nature, connecting participants with the emotional aspects of their life experience.

The **purges** represent the initial stage of treatment and consist of a process of organic and energetic cleansing as a preparation for diets and ceremonies with medicinal plants that are to follow. Prior to the purges, a change should have been made in eating habits, particularly related to general nutrition and use of medications (see *Recommendations* below).

The **diets** are periods of meditation in the forest, during which the participant is interned in a rustic cabin for a predetermined number of days under the supervision of the healer. The diet itself includes medicinal plants, carefully selected by the healer, to help the individual participant obtain optimal spiritual and physical health, and foods rich in fiber and liquids.

The **ceremonies** constitute a stage of intimate and intense self-exploration that each participant experiences on a personal level. These take place at night and last between five or six hours, during which period all manner of deep or blocked feelings are revealed through the action of the plants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that participants start preparing themselves a minimum of eight days before workshops or seminars begin and maintain these recommendations for eight days after the sessions close:

Participants must not eat pork, and should avoid red meat, as well as fatty and processed foods of all kinds. It is beneficial to follow a healthy, light diet of chicken, fish, vegetables, and fruit

Antibiotics and antidepressants must be totally avoided. Recreational drugs and alcoholic drinks should not be consumed

Participants must abstain from sexual relations before, during, and after treatment

It should be noted that persons who have recently had surgery or are suffering from terminal illnesses, as well as those under psychiatric treatment, may not participate in diets or ceremonies.

LODGING & FOOD

Hampichicuy offers accommodation only during supervised diets and treatments; otherwise participants will be accommodated in one of Tarapoto's attractive, quiet, inexpensive hotels or inns that offer basic amenities. The center will make all necessary reservations for travel and accommodation and also recommend restaurants in the city.

The cost of hotels, food, airport transfers, and roundtrip airfare from Lima-Tarapoto is not included in the Center's tariffs.

MAKING RESERVATIONS

Participants may make reservations at any time, but must confirm their attendance 30 days in advance with a 50 percent, non-refundable deposit. The balance due is then payable on arrival at the Center, before the seminar begins.

For more information, please contact us by e-mail at hampichicuy@terra.com.pe



Extracts from Amazonian plants form the basis of the diets and ceremonies at the Hampichicuy Center.