

ENCOUNTERS WITH NATIVE KNOWLEDGE

AN INTERACTION WITH SHAMAN ROGER LÓPEZ SUIPINO FROM THE SHIPIBO TRADITION

In the XXI century, Amazonian shamans have been gaining a certain status among Western people that is in some ways remindful of that of Indian gurus in the XX century: they bring something that seems to be lacking in Western culture, a mode of being-in-the-world that is not characterized by absurdity, anguish, meaninglessness, or the blind search for material power.

In the case of Hinduism, it was the direct contact with the supernatural and divine as well as the possibility of attaining a type of freedom going beyond mundane limitations that rendered the message so attractive. In the case of Amazonian shamans, it is rather the reconnection with Nature as the deepest source of Life and inexhaustible mystery, a field of forces where plants, animals and spirits can interact with humans and guide them.

As it happened with India last century, fascination has taken the upper hand, and a rash appropriation of indigenous traditions in the hands of Europeans has made a spiritual business out of shamanism and the traditions related to Amazonian tribes. Shamanic ceremonies proliferate everywhere, self-proclaimed healers reproduce themselves in a structure typical of globalized market economy, whereas indigenous traditions in their local settings remain for the most part unknown or forgotten.

This encounter with Roger López Suipino enables us to become acquainted with the Shipibo tradition of upper Amazonas and learn about it beyond certain widespread commonplaces. Roger López Suipino is shaman and teacher. He has competences of a traditional healer, mythical knowledge of tribal transmission. He works diligently to preserve his culture and make it known in other many parts of the world. He has decided to share part of his knowledge with FIND Intellectual Dialogue – this time through a virtual medium – because he thinks the present global situation demands it.

Our conversation with Roger López Suipino took two weeks of preparatory work and lasted three hours, in which many subjects were treated: Shipibo culture, the shaman's function, Roger López' own education and vocation and the situation of indigenous peoples today in the face of the destruction of Amazonas. FIND Intellectual Dialogue is preparing a dossier about Shipibo tradition which will appear in one of the 2021 issues of FIND's online review *Transcultural Dialogues*.



Roger López at the Ani Nii Shobo Center in Peru,
photo by José Fuentes

