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No. 144

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# THE CODE OF THE ANDES

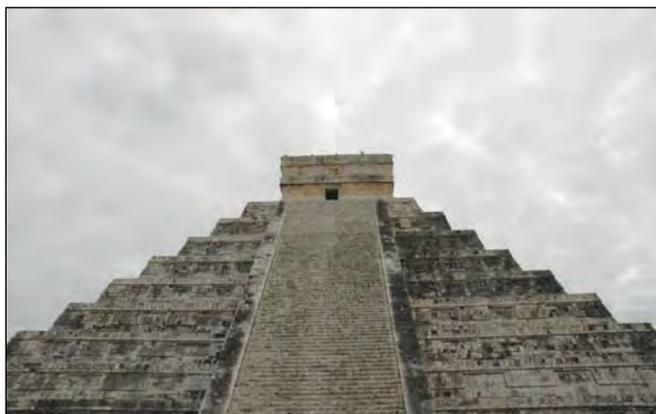
## Ancient Technologies, Sacred Medicine, & the Teachings of the Q'ero

By J.E. WILLIAMS

**P**eru is a rapidly developing nation, but it is more than a country. Peru is an enigma. The birthplace of some of the world's most ancient civilisations, and if one believes in ancient astronaut theory, it is far older than we have imagined. It is also home to one of Earth's greatest concentration of psychoactive plants, and some of the last indigenous tribes.

Megalithic structures are a common architectural characteristic of many advanced ancient cultures. Though archaeologists are learning more about who built these structures in the Andes, how they were constructed remains a secret. No plausible scientific explanation has been found for the precision stonework of Andean construction. The architecture of the Mayans and Aztecs has many similarities but also fundamental differences from Peru. Were advanced aliens or people working together responsible for the unparalleled achievements of Pre-Columbian civilisations?

Ancient astronaut theory suggests that highly advanced extraterrestrial beings established bases across our planet thousands of years ago. Some suggest an even more ancient history of alien contact, one intimately linked to the very biological origins of life on Earth. But proof is slim and countless questions remain.



El Castillo, also known as the Temple of Kukulkan, is a step-pyramid that dominates the centre of the Chichen Itza archaeological site in the Mexican state of Yucatán.



The Pyramid of the Magician, a step pyramid located in the ancient, Pre-Columbian city of Uxmal, Mexico.

Did the lost continents of Atlantis and Lemuria really exist, and if so, were they immense island cities inhabited by advanced extraterrestrials, and did they transfer this knowledge to Pre-Incan people? Did ancient astronauts teach and help our distant ancestors make the leap to civilisation? Did they share advanced technology that created the stone architectural wonders of the world? Did they terraform the Earth and seed the biosphere, interbreed and reproduce offspring with human females, and genetically assist the evolution of human life?

If ancient astronaut theory is true, it's difficult enough to puzzle out who they were, where they came from, and how they built these megalithic structures. But it's an even greater mystery to consider how these ancient ones thought, what was their worldview and cosmovision, and perhaps most importantly, did they have a central ethic, a prime directive? Did they teach early humans a way to connect to the gods? Did they bioengineer plants to deliver powerful chemicals that altered normal consciousness in ways that allowed humans to access information hidden in nature and the heavens? It's not likely that we'll solve these mysteries soon, but clues may be found in the oral history and indigenous wisdom of traditional Andean people.

Ancient alien theorists rely on two types of evidence to support their theories. The first is ancient religious texts, including the Bible, in which humans witness and interact with gods or other heavenly beings that descended from the sky in spaceships, and possessed remarkable technology including tools and weaponry. The second type includes artwork like cave paintings, reliefs, and carvings depicting alien-like figures, as well as megalithic architecture like the pyramids of Egypt and stone structures in Peru.

I suggest there are at least two other ways to collect evidence. The first is by anthropological and ethnographical fieldwork among traditional indigenous tribes who retain myths of beings other than humans having built these structures. The second is to explore the possibility that humans have found inner paths, based on plant chemicals, to access higher states of consciousness and even contact alien worlds, ascending to spiritual dimensions not available to normal consciousness or even dreaming.

Was Peru and northern Bolivia one of the regions of the world where ancient aliens transferred advanced technologies? And if so, why weren't they involved when the Spaniards invaded? And, are they still there?

Teasing out these clues has been a central part of my fieldwork over two decades among the Q'ero people in the Andes, as well as tribal groups in the upper Amazon.

### 1491 to 1532

At the time Christopher Columbus was getting ships outfitted by funding from Isabella and Ferdinand from Spain, the New World knew nothing of Europe, and Europeans had no idea two great continents existed that divided the Far East from Europe and Africa. Nor did they know great civilisations existed in Mexico and Peru that were in many ways more advanced than those in Europe.

By military might or skilled negotiation, within a little over one hundred years the Incan Empire grew exponentially to attain extraordinary dimensions. At its height, it encompassed six modern nations from Colombia and Ecuador in the north, Peru as its centre, and Bolivia, Chile, and northern Argentina at its southern extreme. Its success is attributed to an advanced sociopolitical structure and a comprehensive cosmology, irrigation and sophisticated agricultural methods. Besides

technology, this success was based on a profound organising principle anchored in the institution of large-scale communal labour and a superior capability to plan in advance.

By 1493, when Columbus returned to Spain after discovering the Caribbean islands, the Spanish age of conquest of the Americas had begun. For the next hundred years, Conquistadores attacked South America in successive waves with weapons and infections.

Spanish conquistadors under Francisco Pizarro landed in Tumbes in northern Peru in 1532. Shortly afterwards, his band made first contact with the mighty Incan Empire in Cajamarca and captured, then murdered Atahualpa, the last 'king' of the Inca. Within 20 years, the Incan Empire lay in ruins and the Spanish were in undisputed possession of Incan cities, temples, and wealth. How did this happen? Pizarro and his band of conquistadores rode their horses and hauled cannons along the impressive highway system of the Incas. Disease for which Native Americans had no immunity preceded them, and their warhorses, savage dogs, cannons and muskets, and Spanish steel, did the rest. In a few more years, approximately four million people, two thirds of the Incan population, was dead.

In Peru, the Incas and their ancestors built the largest network of roads anywhere in the world. The true extent of the road network is not completely known, since the Spaniards, post conquest, either dug up the road completely in some areas, or allowed them to deteriorate and fall into ruin under iron-clad horses hooves or the metal wheels of ox-carts. Today, only 25 percent of this network is still visible, but in ruins, the rest having been destroyed by time, looters, and the building of modern infrastructure.

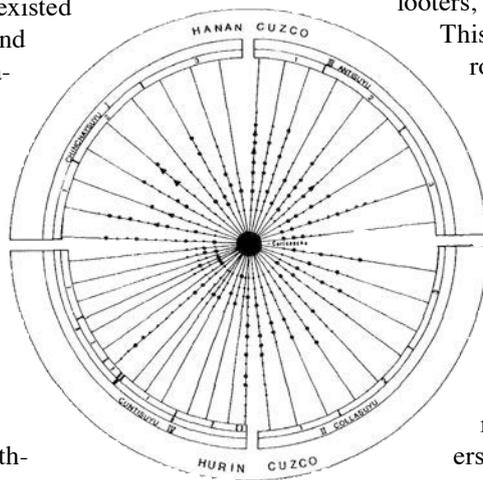
This is the known archaeology of the Incan road system, but there was another sacred system that the Spanish never uncovered.

### Qhapaq Ñan

Beautifully photographed by Ricardo Espinosa Reyes in *La Gran Ruta Inca* (The Great Inca Route), the *Qhapaq Ñan*, or royal highway system of the Incas, extended from Quito, Ecuador to northern Chile and Argentina. Started in pre-Incan times, roads were expanded by the Incas to traverse the entire empire connecting mountains and ocean, lakes and valleys, and one city to the other, as well as a well-developed system called *ceques* that interconnected spiritual centres and shrines.



Main Incan roads. Map courtesy of Ministerio de Cultura, Peru.



Schematic of the Ceque system, upper and lower Cuzco, and the four regions.

Ceques formed a series of pathways radiating outward from *Qorikancha*, the Temple of the Sun, in Cusco that extended in 42 directions connecting 328 shrines, or *huacas*. The Ceque system was grouped into 4 quadrants called *suyus*, thus the name of the Incan Empire was *Tihuantinsuyu*,

“realm of the four regions,” with Cusco, the “navel of the world,” at its centre.

However, there was another esoteric Qhapaq Ñan, called the route of *Wiraqocha* or the way of Andean wisdom. Considered a reflection of the heavenly pathway, it formed a perfectly straight line at a 45-degree angle from Cajamarca in the north to Potosi in the south.



In Quechua (a Native South American language family spoken primarily in the Andes), the word *Qhapaq* signifies justice or nobility, and Qhapaq Ñan has been interpreted by Andean authors like Javier Lajo as “the way of wisdom,” the royal road of shamanic knowledge. It is considered a reflection on Earth of the Southern Cross, which is the metric used to form the Andean cross, providing balance to Tihuantinsuyu.<sup>1</sup>

To the Quechuan community of the Q'ero, the Qhapaq Ñan is at once a measure of the mathematical and astronomical genius of the Incas, and also the route that Wiraqocha

(Viracocha in hispanicised spelling), the creator god, took from Tiahuanaco, through Cusco, and into the Pacific Ocean after passing through Cajamarca.

Is this all coincidence? Did ancient astronauts choose the locations of cities and ceremonial centres to guide their approach patterns? Do we moderns read more into it than was actually there, or are we missing something?

Could the royal road of the Incas, Qhapaq Ñan, have been even more ancient? Perhaps a star map represented on Earth used for navigation by ancient astronauts? Might it also imbed a deeper understanding of the Universe as exists on Earth? If any clues remain, they are buried in antiquity, in a time long before the Incas.

### Pre-Incan Civilisations

The Incan Empire existed from 1400 to 1535. But, there were many other, far older civilisations in the Americas before the last great empire of the New World existed. In Peru and Bolivia, these included Tiwanaku (300 CE), Chavín de Huántar (1200 BCE), and Caral (2600 BCE).

Caral is the earliest of the sophisticated civilisations in the Americas, and one of the oldest in the world. Excavations at the ancient Peruvian coastal civilisation of Caral recovered a *q'ipu* – a woven form of writing – that may represent one of the earliest forms of communication in the world, roughly equivalent in age to the cuneiform of Mesopotamia. Some archaeologists refer to Caral as the “mother city” of the world.

Tiwanaku was a spiritual and cosmological centre south of Lake Titicaca. Incan mythology associates their cultural



The main pyramid at Caral covers an area nearly the size of four football fields and is 18 metres tall. Caral is the largest recorded site in the Andean region with dates older than 2000 BCE and appears to be the model for the urban design adopted by Andean civilisations that rose and fell over the span of four millennia.

## **UFOs & Ancient Astronaut Theory**

According to ancient astronaut theory, palaeocontact occurred at critical junctures of human evolution when cultures required guidance or a new technology in order to advance as happened in Egypt, China, India, Mesopotamia, as well as in Mexico and Peru.

Bestselling author Erich Von Däniken is the father of ancient astronaut theory. He developed the idea that advanced forms of life exist on other planets, and that humans and extraterrestrials have regularly crossed paths. Däniken asserts that the history we are taught is filtered and incomplete, leaving out entire aspects of human evolution, particularly as pertains to alien influence on human evolution, religion and thought.

Other authors, notably David Hatcher Childress, have written extensively and produced video and television programs on ancient technology in Peru and Bolivia. In his research, Childress partnered with engineers and scientists to tease out clues on how ancient Stone Age people may have desired precision stonework and moved thousands of huge blocks into place to create numerous megalithic architectural feats like those at Ollantaytambo, Sacsayhuaman, and the Qorikancha.

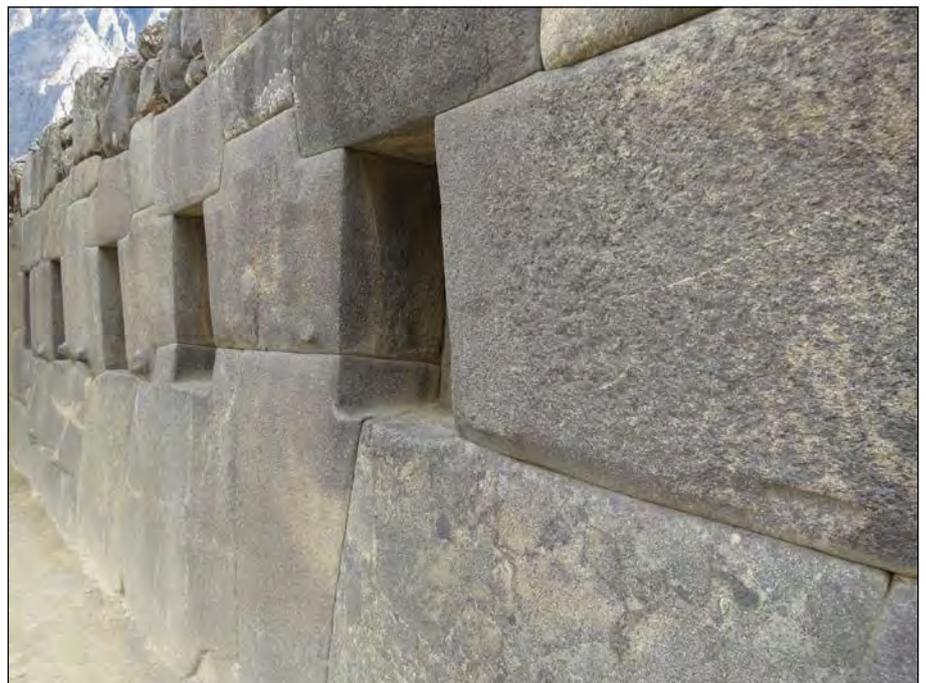
During my fieldwork in Peru I've met numerous Cusco residents who claim to have seen UFOs on many occasions. They take it matter-of-factly because it is such a common event in the Andes, and discuss their experience with ease.



Restored architectural features of sacred women's residence at the temple complex at Pachacamac.

beginnings in Cusco as have originated from Tiwanaku. Built at 13,000 feet above sea level, it is the highest urban centre ever constructed. Its size, unique construction, and the remains of precision cut blocks of stone with large, perfectly straight holes drilled in them has captured the attention of ancient astronaut theorists. Despite the efforts of knowledgeable independent researchers, Tiwanaku remains one of the many enigmas of the Andes [for more on this, see Brien Foerster's article 'The Enduring Enigma of Tiwanaku & Puma Punku' in *New Dawn* Special Issue Vol 8 No 1].

Pachacamac (800 CE), a temple complex 40 kilometres on the Pacific Coast south of Lima, was the seat of the greatest oracle of the Incas. Considered the "earth-maker" god of earthquakes of the pre-Incan coastal cultures, this deity maintained the balance of the world. In less than a hundred years after the Incas took over Pachacamac, the great ceremonial centre collapsed under invasion by the Spanish. After Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru in 1532, he soon heard about the riches at Pachacamac and in 1533 sent an expedition led by his brother, Hernando, to sack the site and the surrounding area. The Spanish conquerors made off with large amounts of silver and gold, and destroyed the idol that served as main deity for the complex. A carved wooden image, considered the oracle of Pachacamac, was recovered in recent times.



Precision stonework at Ollantaytambo, a town and an Inca archaeological site in southern Peru some 60 kilometres northwest of the city of Cusco.

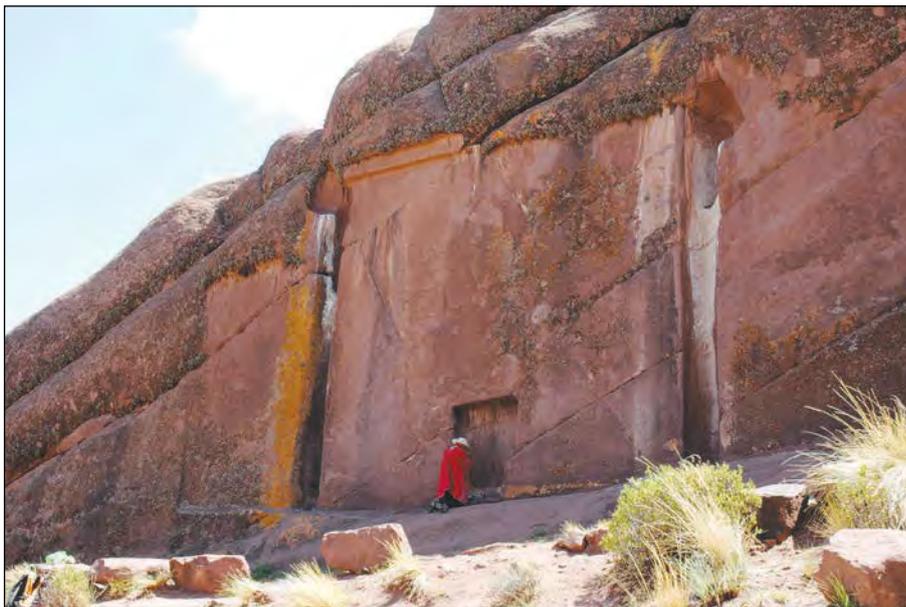
The typical viewing is of torpedo shaped spaceships soundlessly hovering or slowly moving over Sachsayhuaman or in the Sacred Valley, and then accelerating at unbelievable speed disappearing into the sky or mountains.

I've also interviewed several Cusco residents, including many educated people, who state they had direct contact with extraterrestrials. Most of these informants claim to have been transported to remote, hidden sanctuaries inside the surrounding mountains, principally in the range behind Urubamba and Pisac.

Cusco is just one of many places in Peru where UFO sightings and extraterrestrial contact are common. Marcahuasi, Chilca, Nazca, Lake Titicaca, and areas of the upper Amazon all report contact and sightings.

Peruvian author Sixto Paz Wells asserts the presence of different extraterrestrial races and the possibility of contact with them that can be physical, mental, or spiritual.

Several groups, some with large numbers of members like Misión Rahma,<sup>2</sup> believe in extraterrestrial contact and the transmission of spiritual wisdom so people can live peaceably, while developing advanced technologies. Such information is documented in a number of books written in Spanish including *Encuentro con la Ciencia de Luz* by Néstor Cáceres, a Peruvian writer from the Lake Titicaca region. He recounts having received detailed information that can facilitate the next stage of human evolution.



Aymara Shaman prays at the portal of Altarani on the shores of Lake Titicaca, located in the Andes on the border of Peru and Bolivia.

In the mountains surrounding Urubamba in the Sacred Valley, not far from Cusco, several Peruvian authors write about their experiences and contact with beings of high ethical and moral character, great insight, and ageless wisdom. The most well known of these writers is Antón Ponce de León Pavia who documents his experiences over several decades with traditional Andean spiritual masters possessing powers suggestive of extraterrestrials in a series of books.

The journalist Oscar Medina writes about hidden crystal cities in the mountains behind Urubamba and Pisac, and provides keys to understanding the cryptic land of Paititi, the lost city of the Incas. Some claim that Paititi is a terrestrial base for advanced alien technology – and not hidden gold and other riches of the Incas which is the popular theory for Paititi. Modern Paititi explorers like Fernando Aparicio Bueno report sightings of elongated egg-shaped spacecraft resembling luminous fluid in remote areas east of Quillabamba.

### **DMT – Spirit Molecule Theory**

Is the human brain capable of grasping the deeper meaning of the cosmos? The ancient spiritual teachers of India, China, and the Middle East didn't think so. Nor did shamanic masters of Pre-Incan and Incan times. They believed that to fathom the essence of the universe required years of intensive training, reshaping the brain



Q'ero apprentice Shaman in front of a *chullpa*, a tower-like tomb of the Aymara people. Location is Sillustani, on the shores of Lake Umayo near Puno in Peru.



The Q'ero Filipa and Sebastian, along with Dr. Williams (right) work with a neophyte Shaman in the Temple of the Moon, outside Cusco, Peru.

## What The Q'ero Have to Say

Though Peruvian anthropologists believe the Q'ero are the last living ancestors of the Incas, the Q'ero claim they were not related to the Incas but predate Incan ascendancy. They also claim they are among but a few remaining indigenous communities to retain traditional knowledge and spiritual teachings, including about ancient history.<sup>3</sup>

What do the Q'ero have to say about the megalithic architecture of the Andes?

Traditional Q'ero speak only Quechua. Most do not speak Spanish, and have little to no exposure to Cusco or modern Peru. They are circumspect with outsiders and hold tightly to their own way of life. I was fortunate to have conducted fieldwork and then

lived among them since 2000. As an adopted member of a traditional Q'ero family group, I have been privileged to listen to myths and legends from the time of the gods.<sup>4</sup>

When questioned about Incan technological achievements, Q'ero elders express disdain. The Incas, they say, were a warrior race that usurped existing cultures and made the technology of the ancients their own. However, they acknowledge the Incas were privy to spiritual traditions and esoteric teachings, and had a great understanding of astronomy.

They assert that an advanced civilisation before the Incas built the precision stone structures in the Andes. These beings were a race of giants who had advanced technologies including laser-like machines to cut, drill, and polish stone. They effortlessly raised and moved immense stones by their "mind," which I conjecture was likely anti-gravity technology.

The Q'ero assert that hidden below the deep waters of the Amazon River and beneath dark blue Lake Titicaca lie crystal cities maintained by beings with advanced technologies, including silvery craft that both fly and dive. Some of this is pure folklore, and most of the sources I questioned agree they are merely repeating oral teachings without direct knowledge or proof. But I have also interviewed individuals who claim to have seen spacecraft going in and out of the waters.

Gateways of the gods are another common theme among the Peruvian shamans. The Q'ero speak of portals that open to other dimensions. These gateways require stone "keys" to unlock them. These keys are no ordinary stones. They are highly crafted and intricately carved. I was told that shamans of previous generations had access to these keys and could pass through these star gates when necessary. My sources acknowledge that such high level shamans no longer live among the Q'ero, but assure me that such things are real and separated by merely half a generation.

and nervous system to be capable of superconscious states. Only then, they teach, and sometimes with help from natural mind-expanding substances, can we grasp the meaning of existence.

As hypothesised by Rick Strassman, a medical doctor and researcher, DMT is naturally present in the human brain and is released in massive amounts at the time of death, or during a near-death experience. DMT is a powerful psychedelic producing vivid, intense visual experiences. In *Inner Paths to Outer Space*, Dr. Strassman reports that 50 percent of his subjects participating in clinical research utilising intramuscular injections of DMT claimed to have had lucid experiences involving orbital structures, unknown planets, and interactions with alien beings.

Ayahuasca is a mixture used in shamanic plant medicine for traditional healing in the upper Amazon. It is composed of the *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine and leaves from *Psychotria viridis*, *Psychotria carthagenensis*, or *Diplopterys cabrerana*, which contain monoamine DMT (dimethyletryptamine).

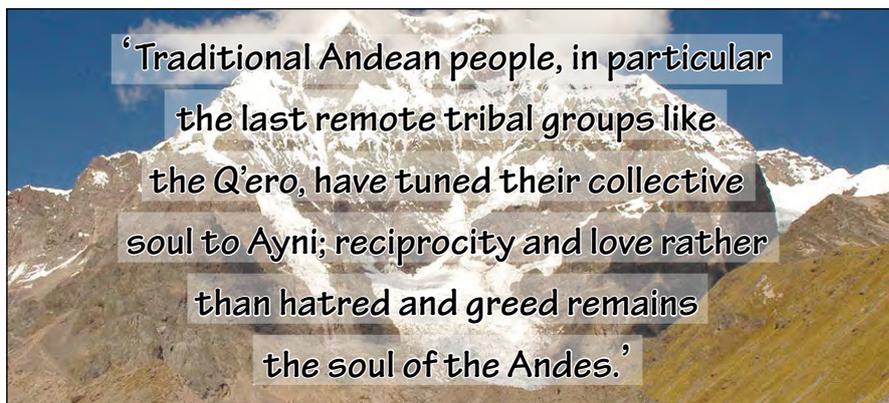
Traditional Amazonian and Q'ero healers insist that the authentic shaman is one who "has died while alive." The Quechua word *ayahuasca* means "vine of the soul," or "vine of the dead." The Q'ero assert that sacred plants like coca leaves serve as "bridges" between humans and the *Apus* (intelligent spiritual beings), and Ayahuasca facilitates "seeing" the spirits and gods.

Many of my own experiences in states of non-ordinary reality with sacred plant medicines confirm what I have been taught by Shipibo and Q'ero shamans: there is another, inner world where the interconnected web of life is revealed. Interlinked with all living things through a subtle energy system, as well as other dimensions of reality including the extraterrestrial, life is as limitless as the universe is vast.

The Q'ero describe the world as a seamless interconnection between *Pachamama* and our body, and between the intelligence of the Apus and our mind. In Quechua, *pacha* is best translated as "the whole conformed by space-time." Pacha is place and time simultaneously, the multiverse.

In the Q'ero cosmovision, pachamama refers to all natural forces that make life on Earth possible. There are also hidden forces that lie beneath our immediate perception. An interpenetrating web of being and profusion of life that defies reason runs in hidden currents of multilayered lace-work. Matter and energy interconnect, time and space fold. For the Q'ero, pachamama is being and becoming, known and unknown, the cosmic multiverse. The legendary Time Being – Pachamama is every thing and nothing, simultaneously.

The Q'ero call themselves children of the Apus. Often translated as mountain spirits, Apus are unfathomable spiritual intelligent beings that guide the destiny of humans. The Apus take on various forms including human. The Q'ero warn that Apus have intensely powerful energy and employ technologies that can transform or kill those who approach them unprepared. My sources state that an Apu is not a spirit, but a real entity.



### ***Spiritual Teachings & The Original Instructions***

The earliest legends say that Wiraqocha, the creator god, came to Earth to teach people how to live in cooperation with each other and in harmony with nature. William Sullivan, author of *The Secret of the Incas*, describes the unifying principle of all Andean tribal groups, including the Q'ero, as directly taught by Wiraqocha. According to the myth, Wiraqocha admonished the people to do only good, never harm or injure another, and be loving and charitable to all.

The teaching of reciprocity is called *Ayni* in Quechua. The Q'ero hold *Ayni* as the original instructions imbedded



## **WORLD 'HARMONIC UNIFICATION' OF GAIA DAY**

**26th July 2014**

**'Seawinds' Gardens, Arthurs Seat Dromana Victoria [Mel.159 D12]**

**Meet at 10.30am – start at 11:11**



Celebrate with us or link-in at your own sacred site with friends and other like-minded individuals.

**YOU** can make a difference!



This special astronomical Alignment (The Sun, Moon and Jupiter) all meet in the same quadrant as the Tishya constellation (which is part of Cancer) and was prophesied by many visionaries/wisdom-keepers to be the start of 'The Golden Age'. This is also to celebrate the return of the "Star Nations" and the precipitation of Fifth Dimensional frequencies to be re-ignited, re-absorbed and flow into all planetary gridlines, vortex/nodes enabling Divine cosmic rays from Photon Belt (Ascension Ring) and surrounding GAIA to entrain mass consciousness toward a higher vibration and unified consciousness of 'oneness', love, Peace and Harmony to prevail.

First we had the Harmonic Convergence of 16-17th August 1987, followed by the Grand Cross Alignment of 11th August 1999, then 'Harmonic Concordance' of November 8-9th 2003, and now we have 'Harmonic Unification' of GAIA DAY.

### **'THE FEW CAN AFFECT THE MANY'**

*The Seven Trumpets Have Sounded  
The Seven Seals Have Opened*

For more info, email Emma:

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**Elistra: Dreamseeder/Whaledreamer**



### **WORKSHOP – Byron Bay – Sept 2014 with Elistra – 'CONTACT HAS BEGUN'**

The 'Galactic Federation' and 'The Intergalactic Federation of Free Worlds' as well as the 'Main Players' from Sirius, Lyra, Orion, Pleiades, Venus, Arcturus and the 'Inner Earth Civilizations' – all of whom have been interacting with certain individuals (since Lemuria, Atlantis and Ancient Egypt, up until present time!) wish for renewed contact with **ALL** those **'WHO COME IN PEACE'**

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in nature and taught to humans by the ancestor god, Wiraqocha, to help people survive and thrive. Ayni is the essential cultural tool for mastering the complexity of the intense physical environment of the Andes.

Ayni is the touchstone of the Q'ero worldview who hold it as the code of life, an innate imprint discoverable in nature and ever present in the universe where it forms the content of every thing – the matrix of all being. Ayni is best thought of as reciprocity, but it also implies reverence and universal responsibility. On Earth, it is embedded in nature's design. In the human sphere, it acts as a golden compass that always points true. Neither a religion nor a philosophy, Ayni is the guiding principle for a way of life embodying ethical behaviour and spiritual practice that promotes reverence for the Earth and the heavens, family and culture; it fosters social harmony and engenders a common sensibility for all life – the sustainability principle.

Traditional Andean people, in particular the last remote tribal groups like the Q'ero, have tuned their collective soul to Ayni; reciprocity and love rather than hatred and greed remains the soul of the Andes.

Despite all the efforts of professional and amateur researchers, we have yet to come up with a single tangible piece of evidence for extraterrestrials. Perhaps we have been looking in the wrong direction? It's possible that within human consciousness are archetypal memories and images of the ancient past, parallel universes, and overlapping elements of time where the distant past tumbles into the every day present. Maybe we should listen more to our living ancestors like the Q'ero, who transmit the knowledge of an ethical code they attest was taught to humans by the Apus.

Consciousness is a mystery, and so is extraterrestrial life. Are they different, parallel, or the same? Perhaps our inner self is part alien, as if God – or the gods – created us on the sixth day, and tempted us with a spirit molecule, a dual gift and challenge, that if mastered might help us on the perilous path of evolution.

*All photos courtesy of J. E. Williams except where noted otherwise.*



**J.E. WILLIAMS**, OMD first went to the Andes in 1970 and has focused his research in Peru since 1996. Since then he's travelled to the Amazon and Andes more than twenty times, published *The Andean Codex* and *Light of the Andes*, and wrote several articles on indigenous wisdom appearing in *Shaman's Drum* and *Sacred Hoop*, as well as in other New Thought publications. He is also author of several books on health and medicine, including *Viral Immunity*, as well as many e-books and self-help programs. His work with the Q'ero began in 2000 and continues through his non-profit organisation, Ayniglobal. Relevant contact info: [www.ayniglobal.org](http://www.ayniglobal.org); [www.drjewilliams.com](http://www.drjewilliams.com); [twitter.com/drjewilliams](https://twitter.com/drjewilliams); [www.facebook.com/james.e.williams.792](https://www.facebook.com/james.e.williams.792) / Email [jewilliams@ayniglobal.org](mailto:jewilliams@ayniglobal.org)

► Dr. J.E. Williams is the author of the book *Light of the Andes: In Search of Shamanic Wisdom in Peru* which is reviewed in this issue of *New Dawn* (see page 76). Dr. Williams' work with the Q'ero began in 2000 and continues through his non-profit organisation, Ayniglobal ([www.ayniglobal.org](http://www.ayniglobal.org)).

### Footnotes

1. There is an excellent online overview of Lajo's research by Maria Luisa Rivara de Tuesta: <https://sites.google.com/site/machaqmara/presentation>
2. More information on Misión Rahma: [www.misionrahmaperu.org.pe](http://www.misionrahmaperu.org.pe)
3. The Q'ero are a Quechua speaking indigenous people living in a remote region of the southern Peruvian Andes bordering on the Madre Dios and Qonapata rainforest wilderness. They are about 2,000 individuals distributed in five main communities and twenty-three villages composed of small family groups scattered over a vast area and high altitude between 2,800 to 5,500 metres (6,500-16,500 feet).
4. I am fluent in Spanish and have a good working knowledge of Quechua, which has greatly facilitated my fieldwork.

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