



DIETA PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPATING IN ANCESTRAL RAINFOREST MEDICINE CEREMONIES

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The following protocol has three principal intentions:

1. To facilitating an understanding of how to prepare the body (heart and mind).
2. To allow you to be more receptive in receiving the full therapeutic effects.
3. To avoid contrary effects and setbacks.

A sincere student asked the old maestro, "What is the purpose of drinking *yagé*?" The elder, whose wisdom runs deep, from the farthest most distant past through the present and into the future, and whose heart stretches wide, across all superficial variations or race or place, kindly responded. "To embody the truthful way of the always new ones, the celestial divine immortals and like this prove their eternal existence."

This *dieta* protocol is according to the tradition of "Our Creator's Multicolored People," who taught the methods of preparing and drinking *yagé* to the remote ancestors of the current-day Siekopai people of the Upper Amazon as a method for spiritual self-development and as a spiritual medical science. The ceremonial drinking of *yagé* was transmitted from celestial immortals as a sacred spiritual gift to assist the people in achieving renewal. In its most practical sense it is an indigenous healing science for wellness, strength, and renewal. Among the Siekopai also known as the Secoya, the few remaining elders who know the tradition attest that this plant medicine has far-reaching implications for ameliorating human suffering the world over, and that it was taught to them not to keep to themselves, but to teach to others. To teach people of many walks of life who are called to receive the energy of the medicine, who are in need of healing, who wish to arise over our lowly human conditions, to those who see the need to rectify their imbalances, and to those who are searching for alignment with the higher energy realities of the spiritual realms.

While there are many types of rainforest plant medicine traditions passing over to the developed countries now, we ask you to kindly adhere to the method described here. This protocol is specific for the ceremony you will be participating in, which is a ceremony of *yagé*, conducted according to ancient guidelines. Following these guidelines will help ensure the experience is one of successful transformation, improved wellness, spiritual alignment, healing, happiness and universal integration.

Dieta is a Spanish term for the preparation of the body, mind, and soul to participate in a ceremonial experience of any type. The essence of the *dieta* is to learn to channel and focus one's energy into the grove of unlimited life.

Yagé is made from two woody vines both pertaining to the same plant family. The brew is prepared accordingly from the inner woody stem of the *yagé* (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) vine, and the young leaves of the *yagé'ocó* (*Diplopterys cabrerana*). It is important to mention this is not just alkaloid soup. The method of preparation follows a specific protocol, holding the intention of allowing the *pinta* the essence of divine spirits, to impregnate the brew. The intentions of the ceremony are to see and meet the divine celestial

spirits, to gather their *pinta* onto the body. This in turns gives on an enhanced sense of wellbeing and more energy to live out with joy each moment of your daily life.

For more information on *dieta* protocol, different indigenous communities' approaches, and the purpose of these approaches, as well as how to prepare a proper brew, see *Rainforest Medicine* pp. 118–136, "La Dieta: For Purification and Spiritual Mastery."

Please follow the following fasting protocol

- Guidelines for sexual activity before and after participating in the ceremony.

The ancient rainforest plant medicine traditions of the Siekopai people stem from a remote and distant past. Today we live in such a different world than that which gave birth to these ways. Much of the tradition is an oral tradition that takes a considerable amount of time to learn, much of the tradition is a silent transmission that occurs only when all the stars and planets align accordingly to the occasion. Also, this school is highly based on a practical application of the way rather than an intellectual pursuit. For all these reasons and more, to learn the way of yagé takes a considerable amount of time, and while on the one hand there is no rush, on the other, time is of the essence! There is a lot to learn in a short amount of time!

From the opposite side of the globe, what is today known as China gave birth to the timeless spiritual tradition of the "Union of Tao and Humanity." The tremendous cannon of spiritual literature available in the tradition of Tao, in particular the elucidations of Taoist Master Hua Ching Ni, are an unending guiding light to better understanding the essence of all true ancient spiritual traditions. Spiritual energy is immortal, what all humans want at their core is happiness. True happiness comes from striving to unite with this immortal essence of the multi-universe. These traditions aim themselves at assisting the students, adepts, disciples and masters alike, who are all students and teachers of each other, to pursue their disciplined personal voyage on the path of universal integration. From reading the Tao, sacred scriptures written thousands of years ago, before humanity fell into our current state of confusion, we can understand deeper realities of how to take these ceremonies further. The intention of which is to merge with the energy of the divine immortals.

From the Traditions of Tao, the importance of understanding sexual energy can be clearly understood. Ancient spiritual instructions relate the following: Sexual energy, physical vitality, and spiritual energy are one and the same energies; they are the immortal essence of the universe found within our bodies. The body is separated into three basic regions known as "Immortal Medicine Gardens." Sexual energy is located in the lower region (the sacral region), physical vitality in the center region (the thymus gland or heart region), and spiritual energy in the upper region (the pituitary and hypothalamus glands in the center of the head). The purpose of spiritual development is to integrate these energies, so they may be one energy, as in truth they are, one and the same. Sexual energy, physical vitality and spiritual energy are the same, one divine energy! With this understanding we can see how vital it is to use them accordingly.

The ancient instructions are that the sexual energy must rise into the heart, and the spiritual energy must also descend into the heart, they meet at the level of the heart. This means may all our actions be aligned with the mind of our heart. Another way of putting it is the following: Sexual energy must be transformed

into physical vitality, and physical vitality into spirituality. Then the level of spiritual energy we have been able to develop is united with the corresponding spiritual energy of the universe. The goal is to unite with the divine immortals, the always new ones, the Shiens the Wiñapai, who are supernal, angelic, celestial beings. To them, ever moment is a new life, they are in a constant state of renewal. By maintaining the sexual energy calm, it will build up. If one is ejaculating the sexual energy is weakened and cannot rise into the body. Under the influence of the yagé this energy will rise like an inner vapor and vitalize the body, allowing one to invigorate the body, opening energy blockages, helping to heal illness, and allowing one to awaken to a higher level of spiritual awareness.

Most importantly, especially during the *dieta*, let all one's relationships, in whatever form they take, be kind, mutual, sincere and harmonious. Let them all be part of a higher harmonious purpose. In the old school initiations of the Siekopai at the onset of the training celibacy was always required, later among couples they are not as strict. The elders say not to engage in sexual intimacy until one feels the effects of the yagé have fully past. For each person this is different. The elders say that if you have powerful and clear visions, especially in matters pertaining to the celestial realms, as well as profound breakthroughs in healing and understanding, in order for the *pinta* (the spiritual energy of the medicine, the aura of the divine immortals, to stay on you, it is imperative to abstain for a minimum of a week after the effects of the medicine have past. If you are weak and healing from illness, a month or even longer. If you are undergoing graduation level ceremonies as a disciple, the recommendation is even longer, a year or years! Of course, it goes along with an entire self-delivery program, all with the fundamental intentions of meeting and uniting with the divine immortals. Of cultivating this energy and uniting with the wondrous universal law.

- Refrain from any food or water the day of the ceremony.

It is imperative that the body be dry in order to more easily absorb the medicine. If need be, have only some water or light tea before noon. Avoid direct sun, and avoid engaging in physical work, socializing, or too many activities. Stay home or go into nature and avoid visiting people who may offer you food. Refrain from telling anyone who will not be sitting with you what you are preparing for. If one visits a home and they offer you food you may be obliged to accept it and eat, for this reason it is best not to visit any people's homes they day of fasting. Look at pretty flowers, beautiful landscapes, do arts and crafts rest, meditate, pray, on fasting day to do less is to do more.

- Keep a calm, centered disposition.

Practice being non-reactionary, non-impulsive, and patient. Refrain from emotional outbursts, casting judgment, being too opinionated, or jumping to conclusions. Refraining from aggravated emotional states allows the body, mind, and spirit to begin to integrate. This also goes for the morning after ceremony, refrain from making commitments, until the medicine has good and past. People get animated and feel supernatural and can commit to all kinds of things that at the moment seem they would be easy, then later it dawns on them that it's not that easy and they can't come though breaking their word. For this reason, it is always said to not make commitments the day after ceremony. Wait until you have digested it a bunch and you're sure it's the direction you want to focus your energy, then commit.

Additional Regulatory Guidelines

Women who are menstruating and men who have experienced a wet dream or have ejaculated sperm.

Women who may be receiving their menstrual period during the ceremony and men who have experienced a wet dream or have ejaculated sperm in the day's prior will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony or assist in any of the breakfast preparations on the following day.

The reasons for this are as follows:

- As a method of detoxifying and aligning the body and its energy centers, the medicine can build a large amount of pressure inside the body. Although rare, menstruating women who drink yagé can experience prolific hemorrhaging.
- The energy related to menstruation and ejaculation (including wet dreams) is related to the physical dimension of life on earth. It is believed that the presence of this occurrence on participants bodies can keep the celestial spirits from entering the lodge.
- The energy related to menstruation and ejaculation can also keep the ceremonial facilitator from being able to see the visions necessary to guide a successful ceremony for all the participants. Secoya elders attest that the facilitator sees blood dripping from the roof edges and the celestial spirits see the ceremonial lodge as an area of blurred red, they can't see the trail into the lodge and refrain from entering.

Men whose partners are pregnant:

If you are man whose wife is pregnant, please bring your own cup to drink from. Also, please ask for help in tying up your hammock. This is important because if you drink from the same cup as others, it is believed that too much energy will pass to the fetus. If you tie up your hammock the fetus can get caught tangled in the umbilical cord and present complications at birth. The development of a child is a mysterious and powerful thing, and it must be respected. These traditions are very ancient and every aspect of them has been brought forth through ancient transmission from celestial spirits, for the sole purpose of allowing the sacred medicine to fulfill its true auspicious purpose.

In this tradition, women who are pregnant do not drink the yagé, nor do children under the age of nine years. Pregnant women and children can come to the ceremony lodge at dawn to receive healing from the facilitators.

Information on contraindicatory substances and foods to avoid with MAOI's (Monoamine oxidase inhibitors)

Herbs to avoid taking (9 days beforehand):

St. John's wort, Passionflower, Valerian root, Lemon balm, Ginseng, Nutmeg, Kratom, Kava

About Marijuana: While to some marijuana is an ally, most people overuse it. While marijuana use is not strictly prohibited, abstention is recommended in order to more fully experience the medicine of the yagé. This is a personal choice that only you can make.

Foods to avoid eating (14 days beforehand):

Alcoholic beverages of all kinds, wine and beer included, aged cheeses, refined white sugar, fried/heavy foods, fermented foods, processed foods, all canned foods, spicy foods, hot chili, garlic, onions, pork and all processed meats, all dairy products.

Drugs and medications that can be dangerous when combined with yagé:

If you are taking any the substances listed below, you must be off them for at least 2 months prior to drinking the yagé. It is extremely dangerous and not permissible to drink yagé if you are using any of these medications; risks include what is known medically as Serotonin Syndrome, a poorly understood mental health condition that can take years to recover from. No one wants this to happen to them! For this reason, the following drugs are ABSOLUTELY prohibited and completely contraindicative:

- Antidepressants (Such as Zoloft, Prozac, Celexa, Lexapro, Paxil, Luvox, Oleptro)
- Any other type of Antidepressant not mentioned here
- Antipsychotics
- Antihypertensives (high blood pressure medications)
- Antihistamines
- Appetite suppressants (diet pills)
- Asthma inhalers
- Barbiturates
- CNS, or Central Nervous System depressants (Such as: Xanax, Ativan, etc.)
- MAOI's (Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors)
- Medication and inhalers for asthma, bronchitis, or other breathing problems
- Medication for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, or allergies (Such as: Actifed DM, Benadryl, Benylin, Chlor-Trimeton, Compoz, Bromarest-DM or -DX, Dimetane-DX cough syrup, Dristan Cold & Flu, Phenergan with Dextromethorphan, Robitussin-DM, Vicks Formula 44-D, several Tylenol cold and any drugs containing "Tuss" in its name.)
- SSRI's (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)
- Vasodilators

In addition, the following drugs are VERY dangerous and can be fatal when combined with yagé. If you are taking ANY of these, you will not be eligible for participation in these plant medicine ceremonies.

Amphetamines (meth-amphetamine or dex-amphetamine), Cocaine, Dextromethorphan (DXM), Ephedrine, MDMA (Ecstasy), MDA, MDEA, PMA - Opiates (heroin, morphine, codeine and opium).

Please refrain from using these for at least two months before participating in a ceremony of yagé. Search out holistic methods to assist you in refraining and overcoming the craving. Try to practice being OK with feeling empty. Everyone has the innate power to overcome the addictive nature of the mind, or at least to channel those cravings into a less harmful outlet. Seek out professional help. Health and dietary assistance, acupuncture, homeopathy, yoga, sports, auspicious peer groups, creative expression, and meditation will all be helpful.

Other Medical Conditions:

Asthma

If you have asthma and use inhalers please research which medications you are using as some are contraindicative with MAOI's.

Diabetes

People with diabetes have extra risk involved with the consumption of yagé. The use of the MAOI's (Monoamine oxidase inhibitors) present in yagé can alter blood sugar levels through hypoglycemic effects. MAOI's may change the amount of insulin or oral anti-diabetic medication that you need. People with severe and unstable diabetes should not take yagé because of this risk. People with less severe diabetes should contact us prior to drinking to discuss the particulars of the case, including the possibility of a modified *dieta*.

Epilepsy/Seizures

If you or an immediate family member has a history of epilepsy and/or seizures, please inform us prior to drinking. Use of yagé, if not properly managed and monitored, can induce a seizure if you have a prior family history of epilepsy.

Heart/Cardiovascular Conditions

If you have any chronic heart condition or high blood pressure, it is not advisable to participate in the drinking of yagé. The use of yagé can elevate the blood pressure and can pose serious and/or fatal risk to those with serious heart conditions or high blood pressure. Having such serious conditions would exclude you from participation in one of our ceremonies. This includes people who use a pacemaker. Those with minor heart conditions are welcome to discuss the matter further.

Hypothyroidism

If you have a hypothyroidism condition, it is generally safe to partake in the use of yagé; however, you MUST inform us of your condition, so that we can closely monitor your dosage. You may continue using your hypothyroid medication (synthetic hormones, such as synthroid) during your ceremony without complication.

Liver and Kidney Conditions

The use of yagé can be stressful for the liver and kidneys. The liver and the kidneys play essential roles in the metabolism of exogenous and endogenous chemicals. yagé contains harmine and related alkaloids, which act as inhibitors of monoamine oxidase. MAOI's elevate the levels of norepinephrine, serotonin, and dopamine by inhibiting an enzyme called monoamine oxidase. This inhibition activity occurs in the liver and gastrointestinal tract. If a participant has various monoamines still present in their system from diet, environmental exposure, medical condition, or use of pharmaceutical or illicit drugs, these would accumulate in the presence of an MAOI and would add further stress for the liver and kidneys.

Important guidelines to adhere to during the actual ceremony

Please do your best to uphold the following Five Golden Guidelines for a successful ceremony. These guidelines are an integral part of this ancient spiritual tradition and adhering to them is part of the terms and conditions for participating. The ceremony facilitators have full discretion to cancel your participation in further ceremonies if you choose to disregard any of these instructions.

1. Make sure you feel comfortable in your spot and leave all technological gadgets behind.

Before the ceremony begins, make sure you feel comfortable in your spot. If you don't feel comfortable, request another location that feels right. Please do not move your location once the ceremony begins. Please no recording, or photography during the ceremony or the morning after. This goes back to an ancient guideline that each moment is a new life, and recording freezes a very dynamic moment. Strive to live the experience so it becomes part of you, then no photos or recordings will be needed to bring it back. Please also refrain from listening to music with headphones during the ceremony.

2. Do not leave the ceremony area

Please do not leave the ceremony area until the ceremony has fully concluded the following day. The mind can play tricks on you, making you feel like you need to leave, but it is imperative that all participants stay in their spots until dawn. Sometimes people feel like the experience of the medicine has passed and they want to get up and leave, but then it comes back again when they are out of the protection of the ceremonial space, and they feel vulnerable and frightened. Many other things can occur as well, so for these reasons and other reasons that will be discussed on site, please do not leave the area. The ceremony concludes when the ceremonial scepter and the leafy broom rattle are placed back on the alter.

3. Be still and quiet

It is imperative to remain very still and quiet for the duration of the ceremony. This is the way to make the most of the medicine, to receive visions and spiritual transmissions, and to let the sacred medicine do its divine work. Practice focusing on and slowing the breath. The ceremony of yagé is a very serious thing, and in order to have spiritual communion of the magnitude that can occur during these ceremonies one must remain stern, quiet, calm, and centered. Please refrain from emotional outbursts (unless they are totally uncontrollable, which can occur at times). Please also refrain from interacting with other people. If

you must go to the bathroom, walk slowly and cover your flashlight to keep it from shining onto other participants. Be cautious not to bump into other people's hammocks. Do not smoke inside the ceremonial area. If you need to vomit, by all means let it out, right there if need be--this is just part of the healing process and is perfectly fine. Then again quietude and meditation.

Remember

When and if negative thoughts arise, refrain from blaming the medicine, the facilitators or anyone else. Rather strive to see that the medicine is showing us the parts of ourselves we have difficulty seeing. Stay still and quiet and let the medicine to its work. How do we let the medicine do the work, by cultivating an unattached perspective, just be present with the medicine, and surrender to its magical and mysterious way of helping each person reestablish their personal balance and to accomplish inner wholeness.

Remember the medicine is clear, it has been prepared according to ancient guidelines and passed along through generations of wholehearted masters since the time of its original celestial transmission. We are unclear and have been contaminated by worldly life, we carry karma and baggage from past and present experiences. We are here to cleanse ourselves from self-created illusions and worldly contamination, and to open the way to finding our higher self and the true work we are meant to accomplish.

4. Please do not drink or eat anything during the ceremonial experience

Do not drink water during the ceremony unless you are very dry, and then only drink at most a few sips. Drinking water interacts with the time it takes for the medicine to take effect and interrupts the body's process of absorbing and making sense of the yagé. It dilutes the medicine and can cause the body to absorb it too quickly, enabling it to go straight to the brain, which can be maddening and highly uncomfortable, to the point where people scream and disrupt the ceremony.

5. Refrain from casting judgments and holding antagonism and expectations

If you have already made the decision to come this far, trust the process completely. Judgments of any type regarding oneself, others in the group, or the facilitators hold back the energy of the ceremony and complicate things for everyone. Be like a leaf in the wind--try not to resist anything. Come with beginner's eyes and a calm, awake presence. Remind yourself that you are participating in a ceremonial experience, in a safe and protected environment among wholehearted people who care for you. By not resisting any aspect of the experience, the medicine will be much more effective in accomplishing its supernatural abilities to assist you in living a full and wholesome life, cleansing you of what is holding you back, and allowing you to be made new again. Attachments are spiritual entrapments, be prepared to see this, and understand how on the deepest level, this is a vital breakthrough for our health and happiness. Come ready to sit, free of attachments.

Please keep in mind

It is important for you to understand in broad strokes what you can expect. But keep in mind that this tradition is a learning process. Try to suspend expectations. Expect to have your expectations challenged. Most importantly, come to this experience with a beginner's mind. It is common for people to be their own biggest obstacle to achieving what they most desire. In order to not deceive yourself, attempt to see greatness in the small day-to-day occurrences. Experience the process. Keeping your expectations low is the key to allowing great experiences to occur.

- You are participating in a self-challenge program.

The drinking of yagé is part of a very old self challenge program. The self-challenge is an internal process whose end is self-discovery. Self-discovery can be challenging. It is much easier to look outside than to look within. We can see in others their problems, but it's harder to see when they might be our own. Through the self-challenge program of the traditional drinking of yagé, expect to receive an opportunity to get a better sense of who you are. Despite the challenge, it is always most rewarding! After the work is done, the compliments are the amazing feeling of satisfaction, one sees how necessary the entire process was!

The Ceremony of yagé and the *dieta* protocol is a type of Kung Fu. Kung Fu means a skill obtained over time, that takes time to learn. It is a life school that seeks to balance body, mind, and spirit. Today we are overdeveloped either in the body or the mind, and more and more confused as to the truth of spirit. We have undergone deep cultural conditioning. We have let matter govern spirit, rather than, as it should be, letting spirit govern matter. We have chosen the path of fear rather than the path of love. Expect to begin a process of deconditioning. This deconditioning leads to a reconditioning. The very reason you are searching to drink yagé is because you are searching; you are wanting to learn! What we all search for is happiness and understanding. Union with the higher forces of creation brings the true happiness we seek. To know what it means to be goodness, think goodness and speak goodness. It brings understanding of how to proceed in life to obtain happiness. To undergo this is the mystical pearl of all sacred traditions and all religions. It is a serious joke, and great adventure.

- Post integration

If you were blessed with visions, or if you received something else, allow the experience in, let it unfold, be curious, let it in. Be still with it. This also means stay quiet about it, keep it to oneself, and suspend attaching meaning to them, let them unfold, let them reveal their true meaning to you, over time. Avoid getting caught into a barrier of form and symbolism. When it has worked to your core, you'll know. If you need help interpreting experiences, or making sense of things, seek a person who you can speak with in confidence. The visions are energetic transmission, to give you energy, this energy is shown through upholding a universal culture of service and doing whatever one does in an absolute way. Not necessarily through raving to other about the details of your specific visionary experience. Show it through being absolute in all you do.

The precious teaching of “Our Creator’s Multicolored People”

The Ceremony of yagé is a precious gift of “Our Creator’s Multicolored People” who taught this tradition in order to help people obtain a proper understanding and auspicious energetic and spiritual alignment with the energy of a heavenly way. The perspective it grants becomes a most precious vantage point, one that guides each individual from within, without fail, and for the rest of one’s life. It is like the rudder on a boat crossing turbulent waters an un failing guide to the golden shores. This tradition offers the well-earned perspective that sees everything as energy. The rudder of understanding and the fresh new perspective obtained through this tradition won’t allow one to go astray any longer. Even though it might be radically different than the way you once saw the world, once this view is obtained it becomes the sweetest celestial nectar. Despite the difficulties of daily life, we see how blessed we are; we live with gratitude and in service. We live in an absolute manner. We move forward now in a new way, with an ever-fresh perspective that sees everything as always new, sees the illusory divisions of separation as the obstacle, and shows us how to navigate in this new perspective too! The shattered fragments of one’s past are flung away as one sees they were merely simple energy filaments--scratches on the record, so to speak--their purpose now fulfilled. They are no longer part of one’s newly restored being. This and so much more the ancestral rainforest plant medicines can do. It is imperative to adhere to this *dieta* to prepare oneself to become a vessel to awaken this unified perspective inherent within. Through this one’s focus becomes concentrated and true, piercing like a magnified ray of light, captured by the precise angle of the sunlight passing through the magnifying glass. This ray of light becomes so piercing that it is capable of igniting a fire. Which fire are we igniting? We are igniting the true flame of spiritual development.



“Hóhó” ~ Emilio Lucitante

Kofán elder living among the Siekopai
Ecuadorian Amazon, village of San Pablo de Kantesiaya
(Photo: JSMW ~ 1996)