The Q’ero

Who are the Q’ero?

High in the Andean mountains of Peru lives a tiny nation of around 600 farmers, weavers and medicine people known as the Q’ero. The Q’ero sought refuge in “villages in the clouds” following the invasion of Peru by the Spanish Conquistadors almost five hundred years ago and they remain there to this day. The Q'eros believe they are the direct bloodline descendants of the Inka. They were “discovered” in 1949 by the anthropologist Oscar Nunez del Prado, who later led the first expedition to the Q’ero villages in 1955.

Many of the Q'eros live at altitudes that exceed 14,000 feet (this is an altitude similar to the highest ashrams in Tibet). Their homes are primitive stone huts with dirt floors and grass thatched roofs. They understand the balance of nature and its power, otherwise they could not live in such a harsh and difficult environment.

The Q’ero Cosmology

The Q’ero believe in two great ages that replace each other by big turning points in history (Pachakuti) while a new age is still approaching. During the first age, the time of the first men, only the moon existed. Within the first big turning point of history the sun appeared and dried out the first people. The king, named Inkarrí was the son of the sun and father of the Inka and therefore ancestor of the Q’eros. When Inkarrí founded the city Qusqu (Cusco) by throwing a golden rod he also created Jesus Christ.

The current age (Kay Pacha) was initiated by the arrival of the Spanish and the violent death of Inkarrí who afterwards raptured to the sanctuary Paititi. The time of the Inkas is often referred to as the Kay Pacha which is also the age of the sun (Inti). This age will end with another Pachakuti when Inkarrí returns converting everything into gold and silver. The sun will burn the world with bad people while good people will ascend to heaven (Hanaq Pacha). The return of the Inkarrí is expected soon. However, there is no organized religion of the Q’ero. Their spiritual practices reflect a mixture of European Christianity and respect for Mother Nature (Pachamama). They honor the spirit of life and respect all living things.

The Q’ero refer to the Sacred Medicine Wheel in terms of the four directions or "winds." It is through the Sacred Medicine Wheel that we heal our wounds, limiting beliefs and fears and we help heal the fundamental myths underlying our culture, including our relationship with the Earth and all of Her inhabitants.

The Q’ero do not see themselves as separate beings with separate identities as we do in the West. Instead they see themselves as one with each other, one with nature, and - as with most indigenous cultures - also one with God. In fact, they are so ego-less and focused on the collective spirit that they do not have a word in their language meaning “I.”
Ayni: The Most Fundamental Principle of Andean Cosmology

Ayni is the organizing principle for the flow of energy in the expanded view of reality of the Andes. “Ayni” translates as “reciprocity” and “right relationship.” Ayni works on the basis of first giving before taking and is part of honoring and living in balance and harmony with all things - with each other and most importantly with nature and the Earth. Ayni does not fall easily into Western thought, for it’s essentially about relationship while we in the West tend to focus on outcomes.

The Q’ero Shamanic Way

The word ‘shaman’ does not exist in the medicine traditions of the Andes. The medicine people within the Q’ero are known as “paqos,” which means “priest or mystic” in Quechua, the language of the Inka. There are very few true medicine people still existing in the Q'ero villages and they are highly respected. Of all the indigenous populations of the Andes, the Q’ero are credited with preserving the spiritual and healing tradition of the Inka in its purest form.

The Q’ero paqos claim their shamanic ways are derived from the same practices the Inka used to tap into universal energy. This energy is said to heal sickness, predict the future and manipulate the environment. Since the 1970s they have freely shared their oral tradition knowledge and their practices with the world for the benefit of mankind and the Earth. Many thousands of people all over the world have already benefitted from the healing methods that the Q’ero have preserved.

The Q’ero medicine path follows two main routes - that of the “Pampamesayok” and the “Altomesayok,” both of which are arduous and require many years of training. Pampamesayoks source their power and information from the land and are highly knowledgeable about plant medicine. Altomesayoks can summon and receive direct communication, wisdom and healing guidance from the “Apus”- the spirits of the Holy Mountains. Dona Maria, who is now in her eighties, is the last remaining Altomesayok within the entire Q’ero nation.

Is the Medicine Tradition at Risk of Dying Out?

Living conditions are very harsh in the high Andes. The Q’eros ancient traditions are being lost through lack of interest by the young and there are only a handful of Q’ero medicine people left. For example, Dona Maria is in her eighties and she is the last Altomesayok in the Q’ero nation. She has two sons but they are choosing the relative comfort of the cities instead of the many years of hard study to follow their mother’s path.

What Can You Do to Help?

There are three organizations I know of that help sustain life in the village so that more of the young people can choose to stay and follow their spiritual tradition. (See the Resources below.) You can contribute a lump sum or share at intervals. You can tell your friends about the Q’ero and ask them to donate. You can do fundraising for the Q'ero or sell something you no longer need and donate your earnings to the the Q’ero.
More Information on the Q'ero

www.qero.org The Q'ero Ayni Fund assists the Q'ero community so their beautiful medicine way can be preserved, for the benefit and healing of mankind and for Pachamama / Mother Earth.

www.thepathofthesun.com and www.facebook.com/thepathofthesun attend this documentary film to be released soon

http://qerofoundation.wordpress.com/ The mission of the International Q’ero Foundation is to sustain the longevity of the Q’eros Indigenous Peoples of Peru, its native identity, culture and heritage for the next seven generations and to promote the Andean Cosmovision.