

BERND BRABEC DE MORI:

“INKAN MAI MASENEN – ON THE INCA’S LAND: REFERENCES ON MYTHICAL PAST AND PRESENT IN SHIPIBO-KONIBO SONGS. (EASTERN PERU)“

**ABSTRACT**

The Shipibo-Konibo native indians (nowadays usually called „Shipibo“) live on the Ucayali River in Eastern Peru. Their art in general is greatly appreciated by tourists as well as ethnologists, and therefore a lot of research has been done, but not on the quite elaborate musical practices themselves.

The Shipibo know three forms of songs and in all of them we encounter references on a mythical past which in their language is marked by the suffix *-paonike*. Usually they refer to their ancestors or to the inca, who they regard as their culture-bringers. These references are relatively simple in their detection, more difficult is an appropriate translation, because in Shipibo language many metaphoric codes are used. The scientific discourse about these references is clear, helped by the vast ethnologic literature available. An example will be given with a lascive love song.

The references on mythical present in the healing songs is much more complicated. Though the detection of those references is also easily done by someone who understands the language, the healer’s codes are much more elaborate and usually the singers do not speak about them. The ‘metaphysical’ aspect of these songs is their use and function in healing ceremonies: the songs are addressed to mythical beings in an parallel ‘spirit’s world’ who should cure the patient with their magic arts and often sing their own song ‘through the healers mouth’. These mythical beings are often similar to the mythical incas in Shipibo endemic history.

Sometimes the curing of an patient is accompanied by plant pharmaca or magic rituals, but in many cases only the ceremonial performance of the correct healing song results in marvellous curing successes (though sometimes it does not).

However, the matter if the songs do „work“ or not shall not be discussed here. The relevant question is which terms might be applied in a scientific description of the mentioned magical processes.

**AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHY**

Bernd Brabec de Mori (Austria/Perú) is Master of Philosophy in ethnomusicology at the University of Vienna and currently works on his doctorate thesis “Sex, Drugs and Mashá iti. Documentation of indigenous music and aspects of identity regarding musical practice on the Ucayali River in Eastern Perú“ with the help of a scholarship (‘DOC’ program) provided by the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Having studied musicology, philosophy and history of arts at the Universities of Salzburg, Graz and Vienna, he now lives in Pucallpa/Perú doing fieldwork, partly in cooperation with the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, The Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú/Centre of Andean Ethnomusicology and local institutes in Pucallpa.

Most important publications on the present topic are **Ikaro. Medizinische Gesänge der Ayawaska-Zeremonie im peruanischen Regenwald**. (Master’s thesis, University of Vienna, 2002), “*Sinbiruna miriko. Un canto medicinal en la Amazonia Peruana*“, **Amazonia Peruana**, N° 28-29 (Lima 2004), pp147-188 and “*Cantando el mundo. Una exploración acerca de las funciones de la música en las sesiones del Ayawaska en la etnia Shipibo-Konibo*“, **Takiwasi**, Tarapoto (in print).

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# 1. Introduction

The Shipibo-Konibo native indians dwell on the shores of the Ucayali river and its main tributaries within the Peruvian central rainforest lowlands. The relatively large group is famous throughout tourists and ethnologists because of their unique geometric artwork and their knowledge in plant medicine and traditional healing techniques, usually referred to with the inappropriate term ‘shamanism’.<sup>1</sup>

They retain their art and ethnic identity, living mainly in native communities, voluntarily separated from Peruvian mestizos (DE BOER and LATHRAP 1979, GEBHART-SAYER 1985). In the villages many women (but usually never men) can be seen wearing traditional clothing and the Shipibo-Konibo tongue is used in all everyday-conversations, even in school, because bilingual teaching is common.

Music, especially a capella songs performed in groups from two up to about twenty individuals, play an important role in Shipibo auto-identification. Musical phenomena are quite accurately described in endemic terminology, first categorizing vocal music into three formal terms, then describing the semantic content of any song by a general title or topic marker.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Mythical past in ‘saecular’ songs

References on mythical past in Shipibo language are grammatically defined by modification suffixes and conjunctions. Especially the temporal conjunction *moatian*<sup>3</sup> and the verb modifier and temporal suffix *-paonike* define the contents as mythical. However, those indicators are most likely being used orally in tales or myths and in the discourse about traditions, but usually do not appear in song texts. Sung verses, on the other hand, often expose the suffixes *-ki* and *-ri* that can not be translated and probably execute a merely aesthetic function.

The lyrics applied by an experienced singer are very often quite elaborate: there are many orally traded songs with relatively predefined lyrics, but they may be enhanced or decorated by spontaneously improvised passages. However, the improvised lines must form a continuous stream of metaphors similar to traded passages to be perceived as ‘beautiful’ (*metsá*) in Shipibo aesthetics.

### Introductory lines:

<i>neska-neskaranike</i>	‘this way it has been’, applicable in all songs, temporally defining.
<i>inkan mai masenen</i>	‘On the Inca’s land’, often applicable, geographically/identity defining.
<i>nenoshonbiresibi</i>	‘From here/now on’, often applicable, semantically defining.

### Animal (‘totemic’) metaphors for people:

<i>shino, noma, bava roa</i>	‘monkey, dove, adult parrot’, standing for girls and women.
<i>shave, shawan, wari</i>	‘tortoise, ara, heron’, standing for boys and men.
<i>manshambo, shawan kaibo</i>	‘white tortoise, ara family’, definitions of social groups.

### Things and activities:

<i>ronin yakata</i>	‘sitting anaconda’, means the huge brew-containing vessel <i>chomo</i> .
<i>inkan pino shetá</i>	‘Inca’s colibri’s beak’, pointer for the ritual knife <i>weshati</i> .
<i>tori nawa ninive</i>	‘tower stranger pull!’, exhortative to tear apart the dancers’ line.
<i>inkan tori mashketan</i>	‘on top of the Inca’s tower’, symbolizing the <i>kikin</i> Shipibo traditions in general.

**fig.1b: A selection of traditional metaphors (Shipibo song texts).**

The metaphors often refer to mythological topics and draw connections between people and ‘totemic’ animals, or circumscribe activities with picturesque associations, most surprisingly in improvised passages. In funny songs, the introduction of most surprising metaphors often guarantees the listener’s laughter and so the singer’s success.

We can observe many ‘mythologizers’:<sup>4</sup> for the Inca is considered the Shipibo’s culture-bringer and sometimes creative half-god. The anaconda *ronin* is a powerful *yoshin* (‘spirit’)<sup>5</sup> encircling the world and being the ‘mother’ of all aquatic life. The colobri *pino* is one of a few ‘communicative *yoshin*’, bringing news from non-common (spirit’s) worlds.

In some song categories like the ‘songs from ancient past’,<sup>6</sup> the mythical references are obviously intended and easily interpreted, but in everyday songs like drinking or welcoming songs, these terms are used literally as ‘mythologizers’, as pointers towards items that are or should be *kikin*, ethically correct<sup>7</sup>. Alien cultural items that are not considered dangerous might get included as shown in fig.1. Actions get metaphorized to put an emphasis on the correct, *kikin* tradition. An example<sup>8</sup> for improvising ‘serving and drinking maniok brew’:

[...]	[about inviting the drink to his companions and vice versa:]
<i>inkan mai masenen je</i>	‘standing on the Inca’s land’
<i>ronin mishki-mishkiki je</i>	‘fishing and fishing (with a line into) the anaconda’
<i>jawen porokameash je</i>	‘out of its (the anaconda’s) belly’
<i>nive bianananki je (2x)</i>	‘we reciprocally receive its vapor ( <i>nive!</i> )’
[...]	

One must comprehend the code. Many young Shipibo hardly understand such encrypted lyrics: the fishing refers to lifting the maniok brew out of the *chomo* vessel by drooping a small mug on a line into its opening. The anaconda’s belly symbolizes the *chomo* vessel, its content – the brew itself. Two drinkers invite each other, and the received vapor<sup>9</sup> stands symbolically for the yellowish foam that is left on the drinker’s lips after gulping down the whole mug in one draw.

A humorous song<sup>10</sup> *shiroi*, dedicated to a young man who has to enter military service (*apo siri kaitian iká* – ‘sung when going to obey the president’):

[...]	[the female singer imagines:]
<i>inkan main matokan</i>	‘(upon) a small hill on the inca’s land’
<i>raka ake kawanshon</i>	‘stepping up (the hill) after laying down’
<i>joniasshonri</i>	‘engendering’
<i>tsiri joniasshonri</i>	‘engendering a handsome man’
<i>nokon tae rebonko</i>	‘with the tips of my feet’
<i>nive ama amakin</i>	‘I make you (feel fresh) air ( <i>nive!</i> )’
<i>mia joni asshonri</i>	‘engendering for you a man’
<i>joni asshonribinon</i>	‘(i.e.): If you could, you might impregnate me’
[...]	

This example is unusual for Shipibo literature in its directness (‘engendering’). It is very delicate that the (married!)<sup>11</sup> woman sings about making love to a younger man and offering him to grow up his child (letting her husband believe that it was his!) – in Shipibo society many married women have love affairs quite openly, but it is not legal, not *kikin*. Applying the ‘mythologizer’ “(upon) a small hill on the inca’s land”, does not refer to mythical past: the song is *shiroi*, a joke, performed by a *shiroi* expert: she even jokes about the Inca himself – the little hill refers to her own vulva which is ‘in the Inca’s possession’, the mythical half-god being her legitimate husband!

## 2. Mythical present in magic songs

Within Shipibo society the hallucinogenic beverage *nishi* (commonly known by its Kechua denomination *ayawaska*) plays an important role regarding music, because the healer-witch always uses songs as his symbolic vehicle for any magic actions like summoning spirits, fighting enemy spirits or healer-witches and manipulating the patient's ill mind-body-complex.<sup>12</sup>

The method of singing differs from one practitioner to the next, but a few parameters are constant:

- a) Formal characteristics are usually similar to 'saecular' songs, though repeated significantly more often, thus producing longer songs.
- b) Some songs (called *ikara*) show similarity to Kukama singing style.
- c) The lyrics are improvised on an more individual set of formulas compared to 'saecular' lyric improvisation.
- d) Sometimes, especially in *ikara*, Kechua terms are applied, also other native languages, even unidentified, maybe invented tongues.

The applied metaphors can be similar to 'saecular' singing, but there is one more necessity: healer-witches have to communicate with spiritual entities, or at least must let the patient believe that they communicate with spirits, resulting in more excessive use of encryption.

Level and methods of coding differ individually. For example an often recorded healer-witch sings very directly, mentioning all the dark and evil things that he extrudes from the patients body. However, his elder brother sings in difficult metaphors and sometimes in unintelligible tongues. The important thing for all competent healer-witches is the reference to above stated mythical spheres, but not in remote past or places, but present by all means.

Beside the already mentioned metaphors we hear things like shown in fig.1b.

Modernisms:	
<i>yoshin sheta</i>	'demon's tooth', ball-pen.
<i>yami ewa yeshketai</i>	'mighty spinning metal', tape recorder.
<i>roonai nasenen kai</i>	'going inside the booming sound', travelling by airplane.
Metaphors in magical (healing) songs:	
<i>nete shama meraya</i>	'master healer from the top of the world'
<i>akoronin titaya</i>	'with the mother of the deepest demon-home'
<i>koni ewa pisiki</i>	'the stink of the mighty fish (small species)'
<i>nive nete kanobi</i>	'the framework of the world of winds'
Spanish loan words and neologisms in magical (healing) songs:	
<i>rios rokotorobo</i>	'dios doctores': 'divine doctors'
<i>nokon poder imanki</i>	'...poderoso iman': 'my power magnet (for love magic)'
<i>asironin sira tsitimai</i>	'acero sierra...': 'surrounding us (for protection) with steel sawblades'
<b>fig.1b: A selection of poetic neologisms (Shipibo song texts).</b>	

The decrypting of such phrases is difficult, although many known symbols are mentioned, in a way the patient usually understands.

The difficulty lies in their different interpretation and very abstract combinations, in the interactions the spiritual entities are involved in or affecting each other, the patient or the healer-witch. Worse it gets with descriptions of synaesthetic experience.

An example of excellent encrypting we can find in a magic song which has been sung to produce small plant seeds (very precious in Shipibo artwork) raining down on the audience<sup>13</sup>, in Shipibo terms *moro pakemati*. It is a *meraya*'s song, not necessarily connected to the *ayawaska* complex, because the master-healer *meraya* (ILLIUS 1987:120ff) is believed to convert into *yoshin* only by the power of his song.

[...]	[the singer repeats twice similar content as in the first four lines]
<i>kanoai metsakan</i>	‘putting (the world) into (mythical) frames in beautiful ways’
<i>maton jeman manke</i>	‘(we) came down upon your village’
<i>noa ninka-ninkeawe</i>	‘listen to us’
<i>nokon kaibobo</i>	‘my family’
<i>santo bawa <u>kampana</u></i>	‘(to the) holy parrot bell’
<i>manetai <u>kampana</u></i>	‘the constantly sounding bell’
<i>riros jakon shaati</i>	‘clock-like precious sound (of the falling <i>moro</i> )’
<i>mocha joi nakewe</i>	‘powerful ( <i>mocha!</i> ) words that are covered with designs inside’
<i>inin naonyomeya</i>	‘with perfume odour (like a spotlight) inside’
<i>mannira beai</i>	‘coming down (we) arrive’
[...]	

*Kano* is an important concept used in Shipibo cosmovision for the world’s framework and equally for the ‘way’ or ‘path’ the *meraya* walks in his visionary world. *Kanoai* is the unusual verb translatable with ‘putting into form’ (or, more consequently: ‘creating the world”).

The *meraya* then draws a familiar image: they (he and his fellow *yoshin*) have arrived in his family’s village (all Shipibo are regarded as family) and invite them to listen to their song, which is more than that, some heavenly motivated sound:

*Santo bawa kampana* explains that the song is not made up by the singer (the parrot) in his own purpose but by a saint instance that sounds inevitably like the bell – regularly (*manetai*) and ordered by the heaven. The clock (*riros*) represents the ticking sound of the falling plant seeds *moro* that – by the way – are never mentioned by their name in the whole song.

The singer mentions words that are ‘covered with design patterns and odour on their interior’, a highly miraculous description of synaesthetics experienced by the experts of extraordinary states of consciousness; and the words are *mocha*, an intranslatable term that refers to the power of song able to heal the sun itself when being harmed in times of solar eclipse<sup>14</sup>.

The entities (the *meraya* and his *yoshin*) singing *mocha* words arrive, coming down on the listeners like a vision of power, its symbolic counterpart in the *moro paketai*, the small plant seeds raining down on them.

### 3. Conclusion on the empiric examples

We have encountered many references on metaphysical items in both ‘saecular’ and ‘magic’ Shipibo songs. As mentioned before, the Shipibo cosmovision is highly influenced by their believe that there do exist *kikin* Shipibo and Inca people in remote situations and thereabout salvation beliefs.

In Shipibo discourse the power of word and song is described by a vast endemic terminology, its quintessence being the terms *boman* and *mocha*:

*orashyon* – *boman kosbi* the Spanish word ‘oración’ – spoken prayer and the endemic counterpart *boman* refer to the mainly destructive or dangerous power of words, spoken ritually or even in everyday conversation.

*mocha* the power of the sung word. Many Shipibo do not know the enigmatic meaning of the term and will not use it because of the danger of summoning *boman*.

*ikara* – *bewá kosbi* the Kechua/Kukama term *ikara* designates the category of magically active songs, its Shipibo counterpart simply being ‘song power’.

*maketi, mepiti* verbs referring to ‘making (something) sound’ and ‘putting (something) into its place’ extensively used in healing songs to restore distorted physio-psychological situations.

*kano, kené, tsana, inin* ‘framework’, ‘design patterns’, ‘bell-like sound’, ‘aroma/odour’: some of the many highly significant terms of Shipibo culture often used to express synaesthetic experiences.

In general, the verb *bevati* (‘to sing’) is seldomly used and substituted by the modal verb *iti* (‘to be’). The ‘being’ of a song is its performance which automatically evokes a closing in on the ideal, *kikin* way of life.

#### 4. Effects of Shipibo songs

The functional context of ‘saecular’ songs in correct *kikin* metaphoric encryption is the approach to the mythical Shipibo ideal way of life. It is a merely social function. The ‘effect’ is the raising of ethnic identity by the means of music performance.

The effect of love songs, in fact a relationship to the loved person, is similarly described and categorized with the effect of poetry, of formalized semantics as reference to some backing or support of the performer by whatever higher forces.

Houmoristic songs may scoff even the ‘mythologizer’ terminology, as shown in an example.

The possibility of perceiving a musical peak experience in average Shipibo performance setting (as described by GABRIELSON 1999:24) seems not to be lower or higher than in any other social music performance.

Thus leads to the effect of magical or healing songs. We can see in the many studies and research activities done on the subject that most magic ways of healing are successful in a degree higher than random curations.<sup>15</sup> In my observations on Shipibo healing sessions I noticed some astonishing successes, while there were also quite as much defeats, around 50%. I could neither verify that success was connected to the patient being ‘enculturated’ nor to the patient believing in the curing power of the songs or its singers, as for instance LEVI-STRAUSS (1958) supposes.

There are four possible indicators for healing success: a), the use of the beverage *ayawaska*, b) the semantic content of sung lyrics (conditioning associations), c) the acoustic phenomenon per se or d) the cultural set/setting of believe or faith, the last already being discarded.

The use of *ayawaska* as indicator for success can also be discarded, because of two facts: the master-healer *meraya* never uses it and many healer-witches I interviewed confirmed that the ingestion of the brew is not necessary for healing by song, being but a vehicle that makes diagnosis and visualisation easier accessible to healers that do not have the abilities of the *meraya*.

The associative power of the lyrics may play an important role but can not be the key. In some successful healing situations the patient (e.g. Spanish speaking mestizo) could not understand anything the Shipibo healer-witch sang. By the way, many songs regarded as especially powerful (songs for love magic, protection songs, etc.) are sung in unintelligible, even invented languages.

The last possibility, to find the key in the acoustic phenomenon or in its measureable parameters (e.g. pulse frequency, harmonics density, pitch, dynamic range) also lead to nothing.<sup>16</sup> The Shipibo insist that extremely high-pitched singing is most effective, while Ashéninka hardly raise their voice over their normal pitch of spoken words.

By the way, I participated an *ayawaska* session when the directing healer-witch sang a *ikara* for direct manipulation of another participant’s body-soul. While all five participants<sup>17</sup> perceived the same acoustic phenomenon, only the adressed person felt a significant alteration in her hallucination quality.

Discarding those conjectures forces us towards the endemic expert's explanation: many healer-witches answered my questions and most of them confirmed the statements of one relatively young expert<sup>18</sup> I interviewed lately: he said, that the songs

a) do have effect without the ingestion of *ayawaska*, though with the brew it is easier to direct it to its target (!).

b) even recorded on tape the song might have effect, but in a kind of very disperse energy, because there is nobody there who directs it (!).

c) the quality (power) of a healer can be easily judged by the quality (*kikin*) of his songs.

d) he does not make up the words and melody himself, he imitates the singing *yoshin*, thus 'translating' their power and sometimes singing in *their* (!) language.

## 5. Scientific approaches on 'directed energy'

We can see that the effect of the Shipibo magic songs in its endemic definition is based on the use of some 'directed energy' that manifests independently from *ayawaska*, the lyrics, the acoustic parameters and the patient's psychological preparation. It is (as indicated by the healer-witch) even slightly present in the healer-witch's absence when played from a recording.

From my own experience I can confirm the last statement: sometimes I felt cool shivers down my spine or some kind of excitement listening to my recordings of magic songs. Well, I also may categorize this experience in the same field that, for example, I felt my body shivering when enjoying a live performance of Schubert's string quartet D866, or got definitely exited (with supposedly measurable physiological symptoms) when listening to Wayne Horvitz' group "Ponga" at a big jazz festival.

The power of music is the same in all kinds and forms of music that is performed either in a live setting or with special dedication by the musicians. The interesting thing seems to be the healer-witch's ability to concentrate and direct this power.

Let us remember that the Shipibo *do* have a word for the power of music, *mocha*. They also have a word for the spoken word, *boman*. The *meraya* cited above describes his song as filled with *kené* and *inin*, thus synthesizing acoustical, optical and olfactorical elements.

The power of music in general may be measured statistically and in psychological experimental settings. I refer to Alf GABRIELSON's description of musical peak experiences (1999), BALKWILL and THOMPSON's study on cross-cultural recognition of emotional states in music (1999) or JAUK and other's still unpublished seminar panel about the effect of distorted sound on social behaviour of rock music recipients (2000). It is obvious and in such special situations exactly described that music, analyzed in its measurable parameters and in its cybernetic wholeness, shows some kind of emotional, physical and social effect on the audience (and also on the performers).

Shipibo healer-witches call it *mocha*, the (magical) power of music that can be directed by themselves in synaesthetic channels. Concluding a healing song, the singer most often adds a short humming passage (about 2 to 10 secs), called *bewáshaman*, 'the culmination of the song' (GEBHART-SAYER 1987:87), that is blown in the direction the song shall show its effects (on the patients body, etc.). The blowing itself has a great meaning of directing their power to a certain destination, even more if tobacco fumes are blown (LUNA 1986:92ff).

But all the terms about 'constructing the world's framework', 'filling words with designs and sounds', 'opening the wind-master-healer's world' and so on refer to the pure power of music, *mocha*.





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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Herency of early ethnographic traditions until Mircea ELIADE (1951) who declared quite all strangely behaving people as “shamans”. Today’s ethnologists still can not get rid of the confusing term, using it with definitions like “everybody who works in a social context with tecniques that implicit extraordinary states of conciousness”, obvoiously unaware of the semantic deduction from siberian specialists who use a very specific tecnique of drumming-introduced trance and the great popularisation the term suffered for its global application.

<sup>2</sup> Formal categories are 1. *mashá iti* (round-dance-songs); 2. *shiron bewá* (line-dance-songs); 3. *bewares* (literally „only songs“). Semantic topic markers are (e.g. some more popular ones) 1. *sheatiki iti* (drinking song); 2. *nokotaki/ katiki iti* (welcoming or departure song), 3. *merati ninkamati* (love song); 4. *ishori* (women’s animal sacrifice song), etc. An extra category are *ayawaska* ritual songs or *ikara* (a Kukama term!), in Shipibo circumscribed with *nishi paen meran bewá*.

<sup>3</sup> Transcriptions from Shipibo-Konibo oral language orientate on the generalized orthographics introduced by the native indian organization AIDSESEP, as indicated in CORTEZ M. 2000. Shipibo terms appear in *italics*, those being spanish loan words underlined.

<sup>4</sup> I choose this artificial term in the purpose of underlining the typical Shipibo process of generating a whole myth with all its ‘ancient’ context out of a present idea, therefore discarding common terms like ‘mythification’. The Shipibo transform and create whole mythologies with their current ideas. There is *no* common Shipibo mythology, though many ethnographers suppose to describe it: the individual ‘mythologization’ of things, activities, people or animals is only limited by a special ‘mythologization grammar’, slightly touched in this paper where many common metaphors are analyzed. For a brief but precious analysis of Shipibo grammar in oral myths see ILLIUS 1994b:126ff.

<sup>5</sup> “Spirit” as rather appropriate translation of the Shipibo term *yoshin* (ILLIUS 1987:128ff). *Yoshin* are both benevolent and disturbing beings that have their ontologic origin outside the ordinary world (*non nete*), although they might appear physically (!) within this world and outside. Some *yoshin* are connected to flora and fauna, others are considered independent spiritual entities, but all are attributed with self-conciousness (CÁRDENAS T. 1989).

<sup>6</sup> *Moatian ipaonike*, ‘it was sung in (mythical) past’: mainly the topics *nawarin* (ritual dance song), *mochati* (solar eclipse song) or *ai iká* (women’s passage rite song). Sometimes also songs like *ishori* (women’s animal sacrifice song) and *yoina ati* (men’s animal sacrifice song) are considered *moatian ipaonike*. The term does not necessarily mean that the songs were performed in similar interpretation in ancient past, but indicates today’s Shipibo ‘mythologization’.

<sup>7</sup> *Kikin* is a highly significant adjective in Shipibo language, that, together with the suffix *-kon* (Illius 1994b), identifies quite everything that is considered beautiful, ‘real’ Shipibo tradition, different from alien customs, briefly: ethically correct. For example very fine clothes with elaborate designs may be *kikin*, or a close relative, *kikin epa* (the ‘real’ uncle as the father’s brother, not a cousin). Also a good song is *kikin* or a correctly told story. Things like traditional houses, well-forged canoes, etc. are *kikin*.

Today’s Shipibo can often be heard muttering about the ‘inadequate’ lifestyle of their kinsmen, stamping them *jatora nawakasai*, ‘They want to be (like) mestizos’: The consequent use of the geometric designs, the Shipibo language and expertise in metaphoric singing, in general *kikin* Shipibo life, is regarded endangered, apt to disappear (not a very realistic fear). Many Shipibo believe that Incas have survived in remote areas and will help them one day to beat back the invaders (peruvian mestizos) to restore the disappearing *kikin* (and *moatian ipaonike*) ‘Shipibo way of life’.

<sup>8</sup> Spontaneously performed by Benjamin MAHUA OCHAVANO/Chonon Nitá at a drinking feast (*ani sheati*) in Puerto Callao de Yarinacocha, on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004, about 3:20pm (record signature BRABEC DOC YARI-V09-01/05, Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences). All translations and interpretations dealt with in this paper were carried out by Laida MORI SILVANO, a *meraya*’s daughter and by the singer Benjamin, who is a highly instructed healer-witch himself, and myself.

<sup>9</sup> The anaconda also is the ‘mother’ of *kené*, the specific geometric designs that are so important in Shipibo culture; a *chomo* is painted on the outside in a very specific manner (ROE 1980, ILLIUS 1994a).

The concept of *nive* is complex: *nive* (air, vapor, wind) may also be the individual essence of a being, a kind of ‘aura’, which might affect any other being getting ‘in touch’ with it, a very common cause for diverse illnesses (ILLIUS 1987). This explains the respect or even fear before the ‘individual essence of the anaconda’ that could affect the drinker! Drinking excessively, one might get thrown off his feet by drunkenness – victim of the anaconda’s *nive*. Hence in Shipibo drinking songs we almost always hear *waron rakeyamai*, ‘not fearing to fall in weakness (on the floor unconsciously)’.

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<sup>10</sup> Performed by Antonia AHUANARI MEDINA/Senen Jisbe, a female healer-witch in her house in the native community of Pahococha, on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2004, 2:50pm (record signature BRABEC DOC PAHO-D01-03/06).

<sup>11</sup> There are no specific marriage rites in Shipibo culture, but the terms *amin* ('wife') and *bene* ('husband') are applied to people who live together in a declared and lasting partnership, bringing up their children. Some traditional households are organized in polygamy, which is allowed for socially powerful men, but the majority in monogamy.

<sup>12</sup> The term 'healer-witch' I have introduced as a reflection of the spanish terms *curandero* and *brujo* or the quite similarly applied shipibo words *benshoamis joni* and *yobé* which denominate the generally serving healer and the antisocial witch respectively. In most cases, any 'professional' *ayawaska* drinker incorporates both personalities, thus called here healer-witch.

The functions and processes of traditional *ayawaska* sessions are tremendously complex and can not be described here. There is vast literature available on the object (see references/note<sup>15</sup>).

<sup>13</sup> Performed by Pascual „Pashko“ MAHUA OCHAVANO/Šhawan Bari, an ex-healer-witch regarded as *meraya*, master-healer, in his house in the native community of Pahococha, on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2004, 10:15am (record signature BRABEC DOC PAHO-02-01/02). This song is the only available on this topic and the mastery of encryption is without concurrence. By the way, during actual performance no plant seeds fell down from anywhere.

<sup>14</sup> *Mochai* is also a "name" for the song topic (ILLIUS 1994b:258) of the performance held during (GEBHART-SAYER 1987:109) solar eclipse *bari manatai* ('the sun is dying'), thus defining the term as 'the most powerful medicine'.

In ILLIUS' glossaries on Shipibo-Konibo the term is only mentioned as "eine Liedart", a song-form (ibid.). The dictionary of the SIL Perú presents us the miraculous entry "**móchati** *v. i.* **móchaa** : cantar para obtener", 'to sing (in purpose of) obtaining' (WISE 1993:272). As already stated above, the term is never used in common conversation and carries some qualities of secret knowledge, a very rare structure in Shipibo culture.

<sup>15</sup> In the case of *ayawaska* sessions in different settings of the peruvian Amazon vast anthropological literature is available, see ARÉVALO V. 1986, BRABEC 2002, CÁRDENAS T. 1989, GEBHART-SAYER 1986, 1987, ILLIUS 1987, KARSTEN 1955, MORIN 1998, TOURNON 2002 (about Shipibo-Konibo), and studies by BAER, BERGMANS, CHAUMEIL, DOBKIN DE RIOS, GOW, LUNA, REICHEL-DOLMATOFF, TAUSSIG, and many more on varios groups.

<sup>16</sup> During fieldwork and evaluation for my master's thesis (2001-2002) I tried to find such paramenters, especially in harmonics density. Of course there are known effects of some parameters (harmonic, pulse acceleration, dynamics, etc) that provided loading of a dependent variable "activity" (JAUK and others 2000), intensifying receptive qualities like dramatization and so on. Nonetheless I found many occasions on which highly dramatic and dense singing (with high 'activity') was in vain, while in others some 'silently sung little melodies' (low "activity") resulted in successful healing, and vice versa, so to say – no significance for magical healing.

<sup>17</sup> Participants in the sessions were the Shipibo healer-witch, one male peruvian mestizo, one male Shipibo, two swedish girls and me. The adressed person in the example was a swedish girl who did not understand the lyrics. A third swedish girl and my wife were also present, but did not drink *ayawaska*. A more detailed documentation on the whole session see BRABEC 2002:101-109.

<sup>18</sup> Interview directed by the author with Francisco "Pancho" MAHUA AHUANARI/Pekon Jismá, on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2004, 8:00pm, (record signature BRABEC DOC YARI-D01-01/08).