

An Overview of the Andean Ñust'akuna

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My 73 year-old Q'ero elder don Mariano Quispe Flores brings his wisdom to the United States regularly, traveling thousands of miles from his home in Peru in the "iron condor" (his term for airplanes.) He endures separation from his beloved wife and loved ones to share with his North American community because of a dream in which his ancestors urged him to share what he knows. Current conflicts in the world and the climate change crisis we're enduring with regard to Mother Earth, or *Pachamama*, in his cosmology, make this work more important than ever.

Like so many other indigenous elders around the world, don Mariano believes that our survival as the human children of Pachamama depends upon restoring sacred reciprocity or *ayni*. This is a balance of the forces of masculine and feminine in our world. More importantly true *ayni* on this planet can only really bloom when there is a balanced and intimate relationship between Pachamama (and the other forces of nature) and her human children.

For the most part the human race has evolved fairly ignoring the Divine Mother in recent centuries - *Pachamama* to the natives of the Andes or *Unci Maka* to the Lakota in North America. The time for healing this is now.

Engaging with the ñust'akuna can help us to correct this imbalance in our own lives. The practice fosters a connection with energetic aspects of Pachamama representing the divine feminine. This is why these rites and practices are being shared with non-Q'ero. And also why they appear somewhat syncretized with familiar concepts like chakras and metaphors that we're familiar with.

Ñust'a is a multilayered Quechua word. It can mean virgin, princess, or goddess. In this case, it refers to an actual energetic being associated with a particular place, mountain, or element in nature. Ñust'akuna is the plural of the word. The suffix -kuna is used in Quechua the way that we use an "s" on the end of a noun.

There are 144 ñust'akuna in the Andean cosmology. The following are the most important and primary seven. In what we that practice this path understand as a hologram or tapestry, the seven primary Inka ñust'akuna are also representative of the 7 stars, 7 Sisters of the Pleiades.

The Pleiades play an important part in the Q'ero cosmology and are honored with a massive festival in Peru each year attended by thousands of people. The event honors a site that has been in use by native peoples for millennia.

You'll note in these descriptions that the Eastern and Western worlds and their healing traditions - very much like the case of Christianity - have become naturally syncretized with the Andean

indigenous wisdom that has been safeguarded for many generations. This has happened over many decades, even centuries and is no longer an issue for many people in the region. Don Mariano, in fact, identifies strongly as a Catholic like most Q'ero do, in spite of the fact that they've never seen a priest or attended a mass.

Don Mariano says this is inevitable and is part of the bridging of the paths.

This syncretization, like the syncretization of Christianity with the native cosmology all over the Andes, is not good or bad. It just is.

"We are evolving for Pachamama," he says.

By bringing earth-honoring wisdom into your own spiritual practices, you help build ayni with the forces of the Divine Feminine for for all of us.

The Seven Ñust'akuna

1. Mama Occllo

- *The Root*, connected to the root chakra
- The color red
- Element of earth
- The first Nusta to come to Earth
- Daughter of Inti Tayta (sun) and Mama Killa (moon).
- A creator goddess; mother and fertility goddess.
- She and her brother/husband Manco Capac founded the city of Cuzco, the cradle of the Tawantinsuyu or Inka civilization
- A golden staff was pulled from the center of the planet, the axis mundi and thrown into the ground at the site of Cusco, therefore determining the location of the Inka empire.
- Came to earth in a ball of fire and arose from Lake Titicaca. After founding Tawantinsuyu she returned to Titicaca to live in a labyrinth beneath it.
- She taught the *Inka* women the art of spinning thread. Gave them the sacred symbols to put into their cloths. Weaving is one of the primary ways of life for Q'ero women.
- She brings in the seeds of light to enable connection with the other ñust'akuna
- She helps us remember who we are, and she opens the chakras to receive and connect with the other ñust'akuna.

Benefits she brings: Increase in vitality, passion and physical security. Will help overcome hostility, anxiety, depression and lack of confidence, especially in one's future.

2. Doña Mujia

- Works with the emotions, tied to the sacral chakra
- The color orange
- Element of water
- The nature being of all waterways
- The goddess of the water spirits and is found in the lakes, rivers, and oceans.
- In Peru, she is like a siren, men who ignore her can find themselves in accidents. When driving along in the highlands you'll notice flowers and offerings along the road near lakes or waterfalls for this reason. They honor her and give gratitude to her for all the waterways as they travel in order to stay in sacred reciprocity with her.
- She dissolves hucha and heavy emotions like jealousy, envy...stuff of the small mind.
- Simple water rituals with flowers help with the connection to Doña Mujia.

Benefits she brings: Clears emotions & feelings, trusting, faith. Helps release jealousy, resentfulness, loneliness, and shyness.

3. Mama Simona

- An apu, or mountain divinity, The Priestess
- Tied to the solar plexus
- The color yellow
- Element of fire
- She is an apu or sacred nature being that is the oldest feminine mountain in Peru, northwest of Cusco, in the pre-colonial Inka heartland.
- The land around her was often used as a burial ground
- She is somewhat a magician, clouds around her always mean rain
- She connects us to the feminine ancestors
- She helps us find the home within ourselves, your connection to your own "land you call home," says don Mariano
- Relationship with her can be nurtured by sacred work with a lineage stone, a piece of a mountain that is sacred to you.
- Connecting with her honors the Great Mother.

Benefits she brings: Self-esteem, positive self-image, personal power, independence, happiness, in touch with one's gift, alignment with cosmic personal path. Release dependency, lack of confidence, self-condemnation, hostility, aggression.

4. Doña Theresa

- Heart chakra
- The color green

- Daughter of Apu Ausangate
- She is the goddess of a sacred mountain that has a heart shaped lake near the mountain of Ausangate, the most sacred of all apus
- Apu Ausangate, like a shepherd, follows you everywhere when you're in the Sacred Valley; always watching over. His daughter, this ñust'a, brings a connection to this powerful benevolent energy.
- Doña Teresa opens the heart, can be reached through a sonqo (heart) despacho
- To connect with her, listen with your heart, see with your heart
- Her energy contains the fire of love, forgiveness, and joy

Benefits she brings: Loving, caring, generosity, selflessness, healing, nurturing, balanced, discerning. release indecision, paranoid, overly critical, manic depressive, moody, co-dependency.

5. Maria Saq'apana

- Connected to the throat area/chakra
- The color light blue
- Element of air
- Strong connection to Condor
- Goddess of Wayri, the winds, the wind spiral "Remolina" or "Swirl"
- Goddess of communication
- She honors the wind and its cleansing power and uses the tool of sound to heal
- Feathers are used to connect with her
- Falcon, Hawk, Eagle, Owl and Condor are also close to her with their ability to navigate the winds
- She is associated with two physical locations in Peru: the Bolivian and Peruvian altiplano (highlands), near Lake Titicaca and another location between the Q'ero villages and Apu Ausangate.
- These are the places where the paqos and others go to open up or clear their throats before an important times of speaking
- She sometimes can bring a vocal release, this makes it possible to speak freely and with your truth.

Benefits she brings: Good communication & expression, creativity, inspiration, contented, lives in the present. release poor communication, can't express thoughts, scared, timid, harmonious, intuitive, vision,

6. Juana Waman Tik'lla

- Connected to the 3rd eye
- The color indigo
- Goddess of vision and seeing, like all the birds who see from afar.

- Like Maria Saq'apana, connected to the spirits of the Falcon, Hawk, Eagle, Owl and Condor - but with their eyes...seeing with the eyes of the grand birds, from a higher perspective (as opposed to their navigating the winds)
- "Waman" means protector spirit of the upper world.
- Opens your vision to the seen and unseen, acts as a portal to the hanaq pacha (heavens, upperworld)

Benefits she brings: Integrated life, light energy, higher consciousness knowledge, connect to source, grounded in life's purpose, release confusion and "fogginess", reconnect / lessen feelings of disconnection.

7. Tomasa Waman Tiklla

- Crown chakra
- The color purple
- Apu of a mountain next to Apu Salkantay
- Transformational and integrational force
- Sister of Juana Waman Tiklla.
- She is the goddess of the Temple of Freedom.
- Helps to free yourself in order to dream the dream of your life
- Repels outside influences
- Direct connection to Spirit, and to your True Self
- She brings integration with all of the other ñust'akuna and helps to manifest their blessings

Benefit she brings: Transformation