





# **MANIFESTO OF LIVING WELL**

**‘Our world is possible’**

**Choquehuanca**

**PACHAKUTI  
PACHAMAMA**

**Manifesto of Living Well**  
'Our world is possible'

Choquehuanca

First edition

© Choquehuanca

Edited by Diego Pacheco Balanza

Design and layout by Gabriel Sánchez

Legal deposit: 4-1-4111-17

All rights reserved.

Printed in La Paz, Bolivia.

2017

*Jallalla* to the brothers of the  
*panaka pachakuti*, to my family,  
and to Diego Pacheco Balanza,  
who supported me in putting together this  
Manifesto of Living Well.



# Contents

Introduction .....	9
1. Capitalism and the culture of death.....	11
2. The return to the path of life.....	19
3. The path of Living Well: the legacy of millenary cultures .....	25
4. Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth.....	39
5. Living Well locally: the Andean ayllu.....	45
6. Living Well: a new horizon of life that fights capitalism and goes beyond socialism.....	51
7. Living Well in different areas of communal life .....	59
8. The political agenda for Living Well and strengthening the culture of life in the world .....	69
ANNEXE: Messages nourishing the Living Well vision .....	77
Sources .....	91





# Introduction

With the permission of our *achachilas*, our elders, our *pachamama* and our father sun. From the resistance, from ancient cultures, from our '*pensasiento*', I share this manifesto of Living Well, as a contribution to finding our way back towards balance, our *qhapaq ñan*, our *tape*, our *sarawi*.

To rebuild in community and collectively our system of organization and our system of life, which is the *ayllu*.

To live in complementarity, in harmony with nature and restore, respect and love toward our Mother Earth.

To restore our *amuyu*, our *yuyay*, our ideology, to feel proud of our identity and be again, to go back to being *iyambae* or a person without master.

To find our way back to our *aruskipasipxañanakasakipunirakispawa*, to our path of constant dialogue and communication.

To awaken our *larama* and creativity.

To find our way back to brotherhood, unity, hope, happiness, harmony, peace and love, and to LIVING WELL.



## Capitalism and the culture of death

For centuries the peoples of the world lived in harmony and balance, in indivisible, organic, and systemic unity with Mother Earth. Over time darkness stifled the light, and chaos and disorder prevailed over balance and harmony. The rationalist, egocentric, anthropocentric and commodified Western world slowly absorbed the peoples of the South and their age-old cultures.

The West gave birth to a monster of ferocious appetite, which has devoured and continues to devour all life forms across the world. It's the monster of capitalism. This monster has brought and continues to bring hunger, sadness, sorrow and death to humanity. It has no ethics, no feelings, no qualms and no principles of life. We the "*indioistas*" people call this monster *q'ara* or *karayana* (he who has nothing, lacks thought, feelings, ideology, and the all-lacking; in other words a despicable being).

In the West, human beings separated from their unity with nature, creating a civilisation model which views nature as a mere object, as if it were a machine controlled by human beings. In the West, man has become the Supreme Being, taking on the divine mission of subduing and controlling Mother Nature. In the anthropocentric view, which originated in the West and then spread across the world, the human being has declared himself king of creation and has placed himself at the centre of the universe, taking on the divine

mission of dominating and exploiting nature. Human beings have become denaturalized and lost their earthly and cosmic condition, viewing nature as an object or as a good, which they can dispose of as they please.

The West has tried to lay down laws governing how society and nature work, promoting the separation between reason and matter, mind and body, the spiritual and the material, society and individuals. The capitalism monster has worked to dominate nature and also control human beings through limitless consumption, with the idea that consumption leads to happiness. Western science, technology and industry have been and continue to be capitalism's most powerful weapons to enslave human beings and nature.

Not only have the peoples of the West considered themselves superior to the other living creatures on Mother Earth, but they have also seen themselves as superior to other peoples in the world, and as masters of the universe. Thus, the peoples of the South were invaded, looted, subjected and colonised by the peoples of the North. Along came the separation between peoples of the North and of the South, the class struggle between the rich and the poor, between the first, second and third world, between developed and developing countries.

The West imposed the concept of time from a northern perspective, with the clock hands turning towards the right, as well as a view of space from the North, with a world map where northern continents are large and powerful and southern continents are smaller and insignificant. The western monster advanced in the world, reshaping diverse men and women to the image and likeness of the Western world.

The capitalism monster has built a world divorced from nature, denaturalized and dehumanised. This is how humanity, which is growing at a disproportionate pace with an insatiable appetite for consumption, has already exceeded nature's ability to regenerate in

the planet Earth. It has been said that we actually need a planet and a half to maintain humanity's current consumption levels.

Through the centuries, the Western machine and the culture of death have attacked the culture of life, created unbalance of Mother Earth and challenged the organic vision of the universe of millenary peoples, according to which Mother Earth is a living being. In the history of humankind, death has imposed over life, darkness over light, selfishness over harmony, individualism over the community. Hundreds of peoples of the world and their cultures have disappeared, and others continue to disappear.

Millions of people across the world have died due to colonial and neo-colonial wars, or have been annihilated by plagues and diseases.

The culture of war has prevailed over the culture of peace and life. Peoples have been divided by walls and borders to favour monarchies and oligarchies. Empires have accumulated wealth by impoverishing peoples and, in the name of democracy, small elites govern for the majority because apparently they are unable to think or govern for themselves. The individualistic, selfish and consumerist lifestyle is a plague that is destroying humanity. Today imperialistic interests continue to subdue peoples in the name of democracy, civilisation and modernity.



In the world, the culture of war has prevailed over the culture of peace and life.

Drawing by chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala in *Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno* [New Chronicle and Good Government], depicting the Spanish invaders capturing the Inca.



Ancient peoples were oppressed and treated as objects, animals, slaves and goods, as ignorant and soulless beings.

Drawing by chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala in *Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno* [New Chronicle and Good Government], depicting the Spanish massacring the indigenous Quechuas.

The monster that is the capitalistic world system has created imbalance and chaos on Mother Earth and established a civilisation of death. Colonialism and neo-colonialism were the means through which the West imposed its idea or view of the world as the only truth, through religion, education and the media. For centuries, ancient cultures and peoples have been marginalised, discriminated against, exploited, subdued and annihilated. Western civilisation invaded the peoples of the South and imposed its way of thinking, based on the culture of death. Those ancient peoples were oppressed and treated as objects, animals, slaves and goods, as ignorant and soulless beings. Western clothing, religion and science were forced upon them and their minds were shaped so as to convert them into consumerist and individualistic beings. A universal barbarism was unleashed in order to impose Western culture, giving rise to the cruellest ways to exploit human beings, with brutal invasions and ruthless wars waged against the Southern peoples across the world. The technological development of the West was and continues to be used to subject nature and human beings to colonial and imperial ruling.

The capitalism monster has slowly been killing Mother Earth, deepening the divorce between human beings and nature and taking this separation to the extreme. Industrialisation, urbanisation, mechanisation and robotization have further separated humankind from nature and, worse still, human beings have started drifting apart from each other, becoming individualistic, consumerist beings with no ethics, origin, roots, values, feelings, dreams or ideals, alienated and estranged from each other. This separation is the core reason of the global crisis and of the world's problems.

The West spread its anthropocentric view across the world. However, in this process, the views of millenary and ancestral cultures were neither quashed nor vanquished. The resistance of indigenous and other peoples in the world has been a constant presence in all corners of the planet. The struggle of peoples throughout global history

has taken on many shapes, such as class struggle, caste conflict, anti-colonial struggle, indigenous resistance, liberation struggles and independence movements. We find the following examples of this: the indigenous resistance led against Spanish colonisation by Tupak Katari, Bartolina Sisa, Tupak Amaru and Micaela Bastidas in our continent; Gandhi's fight against imperial power in India; Mandela's fight against apartheid in Africa; the fight of all African peoples against colonialism; Martin Luther King's fight for the equality of Afro-Americans in the United States; Che Guevara's anti-imperialistic struggle in America; Fidel Castro's and Hugo Chavez' struggle for the integration of our peoples and Yasser Arafat's fight for peace and independence in Palestine. These are examples of the many struggles throughout human history. All the struggles in the world to build a less brutal and savage life are fights to preserve life, peace and harmony.

The global capitalist system based on market forces, liberalism and privatisation has done nothing but generate poverty and exclusion, hunger and marginalisation. Wild capitalism has disseminated horror images across the world. It has created a wasteful, consumerist, non-inclusive, clientelist civilisation, which generates opulence and misery.

This is the way of life, production and consumption model that is imperative we change. A culture of disorganisation, intolerance, thoughtless and destruction has gained a foothold in the world, under the rule of capitalism and imperial powers. The hunger for profit of capitalism and of the market has no ethics, no commitment to life or humanity. Individualism is taking over people's minds; the Western way of life enslaves human beings and causes them to become addicted to material things and to God 'money'. The Western way of life and consumerism have spread as a virus to virtually all peoples and nations of the world. Modern communication technology has helped to spread the Western way of life to almost every corner of the planet.



This world of wild capitalism has also generated a multiple global crisis that manifest itself in a financial, energy, food, ethical and spiritual crisis. These crises are signalling us that we are reaching the end of a cycle, the cycle of capitalism and rampant consumption. We are approaching the end of a world in which human beings have viewed themselves as invincible and superior to all that exists on our Mother Earth, turning nature to a mere object under their ruthless predatory domain. Humankind's production and consumption practices have also given rise to new global destructive forces, such as climate change. Today, tsunamis, tornadoes, hurricanes, droughts and so-called natural disasters are Mother Earth's cries of sorrow and death.

The world in which we are living is subject to permanent affliction due to the disastrous impact of global warming. It is plagued by energy shortages, water shortages, food shortages and a lack of life. It is dominated by mercantilist technology, where everything is artificial, virtual and synthetic. It is a world of junk food, lab-produced, transgenic, synthetic and artificial. It is dominated by the machines, robots and drones of death. A world where synthetic biology, geo-engineering, climate and genetic manipulation seriously jeopardise the stability and lives of the planet's living beings. A world of individualistic beings obsessed with competition, consumption and the market. A world with climate migrants and war migrants. A world of slums, favelas and garbage landfills. A world dominated by transnational corporations and international financial consortia. Where people cannot compete with robots and artificial intelligence. It is a world where the income of a handful is greater than the income of billions of people. Where money is a God. Where political leaders have lost touch with their people and it governs the corruption of transnationals. A world of expansionist, arrogant governments with religious fundamentalism and cultural egocentrism. A world with no ethics or morals, a world where every man fends for himself. A world with no spirit, with growing numbers of social networks but increasingly lonely. A world with no hope, no life, no harmony nor happiness.

Our Mother Earth and humanity run a serious risk of extinction in the current world. Forests are threatened, biodiversity is threatened, oceans and rivers are threatened, the Earth is threatened. The human community inhabiting Mother Earth risks becoming extinct. In this world, nature has lost all meaning, community and life have lost all meaning.

## The return to the path of life

In millenary civilisations, the culture of life is the path followed by our ancestors, which our descendants will also follow. Within these cultures, human beings and nature form one entity within the whole that is Mother Earth, propagating life in harmony and balance. Through history we, millenary cultures and peoples, have developed ways of life, thoughts, knowledge, practices and technology to live in harmony with Mother Earth. For centuries we have protected the knowledge and codes of Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth in many different ways. We, millenary peoples, are the rainbow warriors. We must lead the way back to life, brotherhood, harmony and peace in the world.

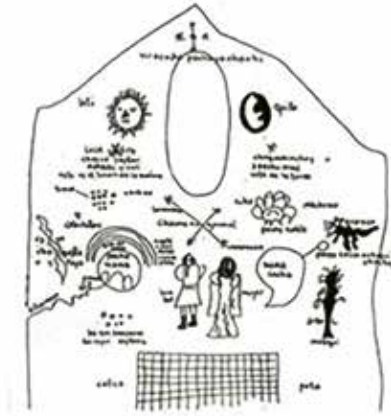
The path of life is not only the path of ancient cultures. It is the path of men and women who think and feel life, who live in unity with Mother Earth, who challenge, question and do not give up. It is the path of men and women who do not accept divisions, disorder, selfishness and individualism, who are outraged and have not let the West educate them. It is the path of men and women who do not submit to or comply with the capitalistic model. It is the path of the *larama* (wise rebels), men and women who seek to live well in order to once again be *qhapaq* (someone who lives well). It is the path of those who have taken on the challenge and believe another world is possible, that a world of Living Well is possible, that our world, based on the culture of life

is possible. The path of life is the path of the world's citizens, of indigenous and native peoples, peoples living in urban and urban areas, intellectuals, scientists, workers, miners, teachers, artists, craft people, factory workers, students and of the entire working population who rebel and rise to put an end to the '*caosmos*' (a mix of Spanish words meaning the chaos within the cosmic order) and to the long, dark night we are living in. The path of life is the path of men and women who stand up to end the culture of fear and the civilisation of death.

The path of life is the path of unity between human beings and nature, living as an earthly-cosmic family on Mother Earth in the totality of the cosmos. Nature is the primordial substance, the beginning of all beings. We human beings are an intrinsic part of nature and nature is an integral part of humanity.

The path of life is the '*cosmobiocentric*' view (having the cosmos and life at its core) of millenary societies, in opposition to the West's anthropocentric view. The peoples of the world – especially indigenous peoples – have opposed the Western anthropocentric view in many ways, some violent, some peaceful, often underground.

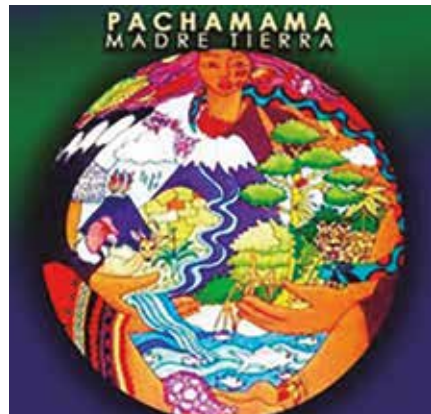
In the '*cosmobiocentric*' view of millenary and ancient cultures, human beings live in harmony and balance with the *taqpacha* (all that is), as one with nature.



The path of life is the path of unity between human beings and nature, living as an earthly-cosmic family on Mother Earth and in the totality of the cosmos.

Drawing summarising the Andean view of the cosmos, with the *chakana* (the southern cross) in the centre. Located in the Incan temple of Koricancha in Cuzco (Peru).

The peoples of the Andes have protected the concept of *pachamama* (Mother Earth in a state of balance).



Drawing depicting the pachamama (Mother Earth)



We human beings on Mother Earth are an organised community.  
We are mountains, plants, jaguars, eagles, serpents, wind, water,  
nature. We are a community of life.

Human beings embrace their unity with nature and form one entity with Mother Earth and the cosmos. The native peoples of the Andes have protected the notion of *pachamama* (Mother Earth in a state of balance), understanding that all creatures are interconnected and that in nature, birth, life and death are mere changes of state within an astral energy community. It is simply a permanent state of being and continuous transformation. We human beings on Mother Earth are part of the *tama* (great family). We are an organised community. We are mountains, plants, jaguars, eagles, *katari* (serpents), wind, water, nature. We are a community of life.

Those of us fighting for the path of life know that if we do not change as individuals and communities, if we do not change governments and the prevailing civilisation model in the world, our planet will consume itself and a catastrophic step is being taken towards disaster of Mother Earth.

To move forward, building and rebuilding the path of life, we need a new era, a new time, a revolution of thought and consciousness. This new era must awaken the world to the culture of life. It must signal the beginning of the end of unbridled capitalism, and a transition from a time of violence amongst human beings and against nature, to a new time where human beings live in unity with all living creatures on Mother Earth. Together they live in harmony and balance in the totality of the cosmos. This transition to a new era must touch and awaken the spirit of resistance at the bottom of our hearts, because from the depth we strive to live in in unity and harmony. Our fight for the path of life must be *tage chuyma* (from all heart).

In a world where the West and the capitalism monster face a crisis, rises from the South the notion of Living Well, so that humanity may begin the transition towards the culture of life on Mother Earth. We are at a crucial time in the shaping of the future of our planet. Western views must come to an end and be replaced by the concept of Living Well, in harmony with Mother Earth. The latter

is built on the wisdom, knowledge, codes and words protected by ancient peoples and cultures. Living Well must embrace the positive of Western civilisation and relegate to history, as rubbish, all of its negative, damaging aspects. Western technology in the capitalistic world system leads to unbalance and death. However, in the world of Living Well, technology will contribute to building a culture of life.



## The path of Living Well: the legacy of millenary cultures

To avoid being devoured by the West and by the capitalism monster, the millenary cultures and peoples of the South<sup>1</sup> who uphold the culture of life have chosen different ways of resisting. We have safeguarded our cultures in stones, surnames, codes and words in our original languages. For a long time, we have turned to stone, being apparently asleep, waiting the time to awaken to save life and the *pachamama* (Mother Earth in a state of balance). We have never left *Tiwanaku* (central hub of a culture preceding the Quechuas in the Andean region). We have never walked away from the Egyptian pyramids, the Mayan and Aztec pyramids, the city of Machu Picchu, the sacred temples of China, India and Iraq, and other sacred sites of the culture of life.

The West and the capitalism monster have attempted to silence, destroy and eliminate us. However, we are still alive and still fighting. Like the wind, we cannot be bent. Like fire, we cannot be subdued. Like water, we cannot be silenced. We are unbreakable stone and indestructible mountains. We are rebels, obstinate and revolutionary. We are rainbow

---

1 The Ancient Civilisation Commission comprises nine countries with ancient cultures: China, India, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Mexico and Bolivia. These countries have ancient cultures and have decided to organise themselves to take a new look at our past, positing that, 'We have a lot to learn from these ancient cultures, which have a lot in common and which seek harmony.'

warriors. We, ancestral and ancient peoples, have endured a lot of death and destruction. However, we have not been exterminated thanks to the strength of our cultures that knew how to resist.

They forced upon us foreign languages, customs and clothing, calendars and religions. They persecuted our spirits and our leaders. They tried to dominate us both physically and ideologically. They occupied our lands and territories. But they did not defeat us. They have made many of us feel ashamed of being indigenous, afraid of being the children of millenary and ancient peoples. But they did not break us.

Millions of indigenous people and children of ancient cultures remain today. We continue to speak our languages; we keep alive our celebrations, dances and rituals, music, religions and views of the cosmos. We continue to live as communities in rural and urban areas across the world.

We ancient peoples and cultures no longer feel ashamed of our ancestors, grandfathers, languages and clothing. We have started to restore our ancestral codes and knowledge. We are proud of what we are and we do not wish to be anything else. Today we have started to see value in our history, music, clothing, culture, language, natural resources, our *amuyu* or *yuyay* (knowledge, thought and ideology), our symbols and cosmic dates. As part of this awakening, we are finding our way back to being. We are recovering our ideology, our own organisational forms and community practices, and our way of being. We are returning to our *ayllu* (community), recovering our natural resources, philosophy, identity and our own economic categories, including the *sexes* (economic category for the organisation of each family and household), *pirwas* and *qulqas* (economic categories for the economic organization of the communities and cities).

Our ancestors predicted that current times would bring about a great shift of era. They said that when all hope of salvation seems lost and



Tiwanaku (Bolivia)



Gate of the Sun in Tiwanaku (Bolivia)



Egyptian pyramid



Mayan pyramid



Machu Picchu



The Parthenon

We millenary peoples and cultures of the South have safeguarded our cultures in stones, surnames, codes and words in our ancient languages.

appears that the end is near, we will witness the coming of beings and spirits who will build a new time and a new era. It is the time of *pachakuti* (the return to the path of balance) and the awakening of stone beings. This awakening will liberate from the stones the spirit, thought, knowledge, feelings and view of the cosmos of millenary cultures. It is time to awaken the sleeping giant. The millenary cultures and peoples shall awake, with all the knowledge and codes they have protected through the long years of resistance, so they may guide us back to the culture and to the path of life, of Living Well

### **The great change and the start of a new era**

***In the pachakuti view, the great change and the new era are based on the prophecy of the Lakota people and on the end-of-the-world prophecy of the Mayas***

In the Andean region, the great change in time and space is known as *pachakuti* (return to balance and order). Our communities, our countries, the entire planet need to return to order and balance. This great change must take place taking into account that human beings are part of an ancestral society and a current society, co-existing as two realities, which must be maintained in complementarity and balance. The path to this new era is based on the philosophy of *pachakuti*, *suma qamaña* or *allin kawsay* (notions of Living Well protected by the Quechua and Aymara) and *jallalla* (an Aymara term meaning 'for life').

In this new time, the prophecy of our brothers the Lakota comes to pass. For centuries the Lakota preserved their ancestors' message: 'When the world reaches the edge of the abyss, when chaos takes over humanity, in the time of crisis, the vigorous rainbow warriors will emerge from the South to restore harmony on the planet.'

It is the time of the Mayan prophecy, which predicted that the world would come to an end at midnight on 21 December 2012, after the sun received a powerful synchronising ray from the centre of the galaxy, inverting its polarity and generating a colossal blazing flare.

The world of ‘*caosmos*’ has ended. *Pachakuti* – the genesis of the world of Living Well – has begun.

In this new time, the indigenous and ancient peoples of the millenary cultures have awakened, those who have safeguarded the ancestral principles, values and codes of Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth. We awaken with our values, principles, knowledge and codes, fuelled by the fight against colonialism, capitalism and imperialism.

We millenary and ancestral cultures have preserved, safeguarded and protected the ancestral codes of Living Well. Today, we awaken and recover our knowledge, codes and words in our ancient languages, which have been preserved in our historic memory. Our duty is to build a new era of more humane, holistic, telluric and cosmic life for the benefit of the whole of humankind and Mother Earth.

By reading the wrinkles of the grandfathers and grandmothers, of the *chuymanis* (those who have heart), by decoding our ceremonial textiles and pottery, by reading the messages carved in stone by our ancestors, by dialoguing with Mother Earth in our sacred sites and rituals, we are rebuilding the knowledge and codes of Living Well and recovering the memories of all that was experienced by our grandfathers and grandmothers, so that the past guides the construction of the present and the future. We build the future by looking to the past. We look at the experience our grandfathers and grandmothers, accumulated as they resisted European and Spanish colonisation, neo-colonialism and foreign imperialism. The experiences written in our grandfathers’ and grandmothers’ wrinkles guides us back in to harmony with Mother Earth.

We are rebuilding the knowledge and codes of Living Well, by reading our grandfathers' and grandmothers' wrinkles, by decoding our ceremonial textiles and pottery, by reading the messages our ancestors carved in stone, by dialoguing with Mother Earth in our sacred sites and rituals.



## Actions to recover and reveal our millenary codes

- Read our grandfathers' and grandmothers' wrinkles.
- Awaken our knowledge of the cosmos and '*pensasiento*' (a mix of Spanish words meaning the articulation of thought with feeling).
- Recover our energetic centres and our natural 'multiverse'.
- Recover and dialogue with our *wak'as* (sacred places).
- Return to our *puma punku* (gate to be puma) and recover all lost energy.
- Cross our *chakana* (the square cross), which is the bridge to the 'multiverse' and astral energy.
- Acknowledge we are part of the whole and respect the cosmic order and nature's laws.
- Be nature again (walking tiger, jaguar, ant, plant, wind, puma, serpent and mountain that walk).
- Rediscover our mantras (prayers for life).
- Awaken our *qhawana* (looking beyond what our eyes can see).
- Awaken our *larama* (being a wise rebel).
- Return to our *qhapaq ñan* (path of life).
- Start loving life again.

This awakening leads us beyond the knowledge of laws created by men to dominate nature, as they are non-inclusive and laid down solely to serve the interests of humans. To awaken the '*cosmoser*' (a mix of Spanish words meaning the knowledge of the laws of cosmos) means knowing the laws of nature as a whole, from the deepest of Mother Earth. '*Cosmoser*' means to be and feel as a plant, jaguar, snake, wind or mountain. With the wisdom and richness of the '*cosmoser*' we begin to shape this great shift towards Living Well.

In this new era, we become aware of our future and return to our path, so that our peoples can go back to being what they were,

becoming what we once were. Our ancestral knowledge and codes allow us to the peoples of the South to start thinking with our own minds, walk on our own feet and see with our own eyes.

The knowledge and codes of millenary peoples tell us that the path of Living Well is to live in balance and complementarity between similar and different, in harmony with the *tagpacha* (the whole of Mother Earth).

## Life in balance

*The notion of life in balance is based on the reading of the Andean 'wiphala' code and on the 'llatunka' code, protected by the Aymara and Quechuas*

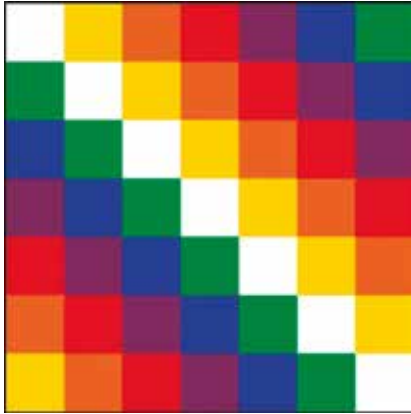
The balance of the parts means everything happens in balance.

Our grandfathers and grandmothers codified the rainbow in the *wiphala*, now raised as a symbol or flag of inclusion and integration. In the *wiphala* we have codified our identity, consensus, balance and complementarity. The *wiphala* tells us that everything must be in balance: just as it is up, it has to be down and just as it is on the left, it has to be on the right. The peoples of the South raise this flag to recover our identity and our roots, to return to the path of balance. Today, the peoples of the South are the rainbow warriors that we are going to restore the balance of Living Well throughout the world.

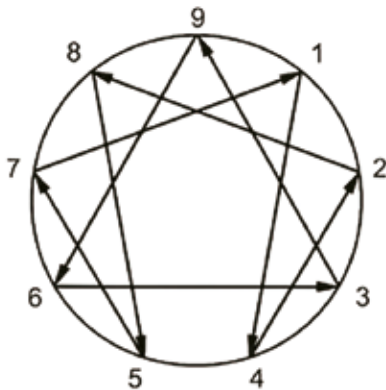
The enneagram (nine-pointed star) or *llatunka* code (the code of balance protected by the Aymara and Quechua) provides guidance on how to find balance in life. In the multiplication table for nine, the digits of all the resulting numbers also add up to nine, which shows the perfect balance of the number nine.

Balance also means striving for everything to go back where it belongs, to achieve balance at all levels: the community, Mother





The rainbow has been codified in the *wiphala*, now raised as a symbol or flag of inclusion and integration.



The enneagram (nine-pointed star) or *llatunka* code (*llatunka* meaning nine in Aymara) provides guidance on how to find balance in life.

Earth and the cosmos. Thus, a *pachakuti* (change of era) is needed to achieve balance. Through the *pachakuti* we return to balance, to *qhusqha pacha* (where everything is and must be where it belongs).

Balance means coordination, unity and integration. It entails rebuilding all that has been fragmented and separated by chaos and by the culture of death. It means restoring a whole human being, both materially and spiritually, living in balance with him/herself, with others and with nature. Balance means awakening a human being that feeds on the experience and wisdom of his/her grandfathers and grandmothers, the music of his/her ancestors, nature's laws and codes. A human being who naturally communicates and shares everything, living fully and in a transparent manner.

## **Life in complementarity between similar and different**

*The notion of life in complementarity is based on the reading of the Andean 'chakana' code and on the 'yin and yang' concept in Eastern philosophy*

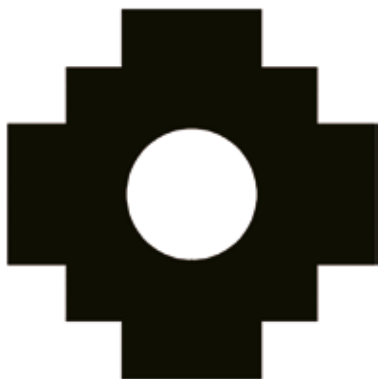
According to the *chakana* code of complementarity, living beings that are alike and different at the same time are all complementary.

Complementarity flows naturally through our lives and we all continuously complement each other and, consequently, we all depend on each other and are one within the whole. Complementarity means recognising that the human condition cannot be without unity with Mother Earth, as all living beings exist in the same space and time, generating one energy and one materiality.

The *yin* and *yang* represent duality in Eastern philosophy. They describe two apparently opposite but complementary core forces found in all things. The *yang* is the male side, representing the sky, light, action and penetration. The *yin* is the female side, representing the earth, darkness, passivity and assimilation.



The *yin* and *yang* represent duality in Eastern philosophy. They describe two apparently opposite but complementary core forces found in all things.



The *chakana* is the bridge between two complementary spaces or the nexus between two different dimensions.

The *chakana* is the bridge between two complementary spaces or, the nexus between two different dimensions. It comprises four stars in the shape of a cross, indicating the four cardinal points. The *chakana* establishes the equivalence of opposing, yet complementary pairs. It is also known as the Andean cross, forming a multidimensional cube (cube and sphere at the same time). It is a bridge to another dimension or to astral energy.

According to the principles of Living Well, no one can feel free to act as they please as individuals, because all we do is connected to the community of life. In the Living Well concept, all living creatures complement each other: children and elders, men (male) and women (female), day and night, human beings and nature.

All human beings and all living beings are similar and different at the same time. We are similar to plants in cosmic and natural terms and different only in specifically human aspects. In the spirit of complementarity, we stop thinking merely as human beings, because we are much more than this. We are also nature, plants, earth, wind, mountains, jaguars and snakes. We are the thinking cosmos. We are the cosmos made flesh and spirit<sup>2</sup>.

Within the community no one can feel free to destroy other creatures, be it plants or animals. We are all complementary, we are all brothers and sisters created by Mother Earth and we all drink water that is Mother Earth's milk. Human beings are similar to other living beings because they are part of the natural and cosmic wholeness and within cosmic life we are energy and life.

Identity is built on differences and similarities. We have an identity as individuals, families and communities, as countries and continents. We also have a telluric and cosmic identity on Mother Earth. We

---

2    Phrase by Fausto Reinaga in *Pensamiento Armaútico* (see annexe)

form a universal family, each with our identities, differences and similarities. We are the 'multiverse' in its entirety.

## **Living in harmony with the whole**

### ***Life in harmony with the whole is based on the Andean 'taqpacha' code***

Human beings are part of the wholeness of life. Consequently, each of the different aspects or components of the reality in which we live co-exists in harmony with its counterpart: big and small, micro and macro, local and universal.

In the view of millenary peoples and cultures all is connected, across all levels and categories. There is a link between the *alaxpacha* or *alaypacha* (the world of above) and the *manqhapacha* or *ukhupacha* (the world of below), the flow between our material world and the cosmos, between life and death, as death is part of life.

According to the code of *taqpacha* (all that exist), protected by the Andean people, everything is connected and comes to be in harmony with the whole, as one entity, but also as duality or tetrality and as one infinite identity.

Harmony with the wholeness also tells us that all is connected and linked to the whole. Reality is a network of relations, stemming from holistic co-existence within the cosmos. Reality is both objective and subjective, material and spiritual, matter and energy. All that we experience, feel, do and think is intertwined with a multitude of other experiences, feelings, actions and thoughts. This is why everything needs to flow harmoniously within a harmonious cosmos.



## Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth

Living Well, in accordance with the ancestral codes and wisdom of millenary peoples and cultures, sets out new ontological, gnoseological and epistemological bases to guide a civilisation and culture of life.

The path of Living Well challenges and questions Western values and principles. The principles that have shaped the Western soul to this day rest on the rationality of exclusion. The West is built on the principles of identity, non-contradiction and exclusion of others. Millenary peoples and cultures see the world in a different way, as one living entity founded on the principles of balance, complementarity and harmony with Mother Earth.

Living Well means to feel, live, do and think within the totality of Mother Earth. It means respecting all expressions of life, flowing with nature and applying natural laws. It means appreciating and cherishing diversity and plurality, similarity and difference; acting fairly and transparently. Living Well is the harmonious flow between thinking, feeling, speaking and acting.

Living Well enables us to restore unity and balance between human beings and nature; to lay the foundations of the culture of life; to restore the human and natural condition. It allows us to develop the capabilities to steer national and international policies, taking into consideration the balance between human beings and nature in the short, medium and long term.

Living Well does not equal living better. The latter leads to some of us being worse off, with some taking advantage and exploiting others seeking to stay above them. Living better means only thinking of oneself. Living better means accumulate titles, material objects, positions of power, money and property in excess. The world of living better is predatory, consumerist and individualistic. The Western thinking of the search for wellbeing is the thought of living better.

Living Well is a proposal to rediscover a feeling of belonging and unity between humanity and nature. For this reason, it has emerged from resistance, from our roots, from the *wiphala* and the *chakana*, from the deepest of *Abya Yala* (phrase protected by the Kuna people, designating the land of eternal youth in its full maturity), from our sacred coca leaves, from our *wak'as* (sacred ceremonial sites), from our fields, from our hills and mountains, from our rivers and streams, and from our forests and our genes.

Living Well means recovering our *jallalla*. It means gaining prestige, building social relations; nurturing peace, friendship, harmony with nature, cultivating spiritual wealth; fostering hope and happiness. It is to love life.

Living Well is knowing how to listen, it is knowing how to communicate, it is knowing how to govern, it is knowing how to work, it is knowing how to dance, it is knowing how to love and be loved, it is knowing how to reproduce; it is not having fear neither to darkness nor to clarity, it is knowing how to listen the jaguar roar in the green jungle, it is taking care of our sacred sites, it is knowing what to eat, it is knowing how to see beyond what our eyes can see, it is knowing how to meditate, it is knowing how to dream when we are awake, and is to exchange life and energy. Living Well means living in balance and harmony with Mother Earth.



## Know-how of Living Well

- **Know how to growth.** The ability to grow and share with faith and spirituality, respecting the freedom of religion and the spiritual beliefs based on the view of the cosmos of each people.
- **Know how to feed.** The ability to feed ourselves with quality and natural products. Knowing how to combine food with the appropriate beverages based on the seasons, respecting fasting periods and giving Mother Earth food offerings. Returning to the principle that our food is our medicine. Nourishing ourselves with clean air and melodies made into music. Rediscovering our mantras. Becoming *q'umara* (a healthy person) once again.
- **Know how to dance.** The ability to dance to express gratitude to Mother Earth, to celebrate harmony among the community of people, where the spiritual and energetic dimensions manifest themselves. Aligning ourselves with the laws of nature according to the seasons, without altering the rhythm of the cosmic order.
- **Know how to work.** The ability to see work as a celebration and as joy. Understanding the ancestral view of work as a celebration, to be performed with love and passion. Viewing work as a mutual and harmonious exchange. Taking on responsibilities as we grow. Being active participants within our family, community, society and life. Work teaches us how to grow. It does not equal exploitation.
- **Know how to communicate.** The ability to communicate and to speak. Feeling and thinking carefully before speaking, with a view to building, encouraging and contributing. All that is spoken is written in the hearts and genetic memory of Mother Earth's beings. It is

talking without offending and hurting, without lying and slandering. It is to banish the intrigue, to make oneself understood and to help others understand our reality. It means not using information to gain power. It is to democratize and share information.

- **Know how to dream.** The ability to dream of a positive future and to project life, based on the notion that everything begins in dreams. Dreams, therefore, are where reality begins. To find and awaken the ability we all have to dream when we are asleep and when we are awake, as individuals and collectively. To weave our reality from our dreams and realities, continuing to express our '*pensasiento*' and '*cosmoser*' in the woven patterns of our *aguayos* and ceremonial textiles.
- **Know how to listen.** The ability to listen to ourselves in order to know, recognise, respect and help ourselves. Listening to our elders and acknowledging the value of the wisdom of peasant, native and indigenous nations. Reading the wrinkles of our grandmothers and grandfathers to once again find our way. Recovering our *exwas* (the ability to listen to advice, recommendations, suggestions and warnings to reach balance). It is not merely about listening with one's ears, it involves perceiving, feeling and listening with the whole spirit, conscience and body. Awakening our sensitivity to hear the sounds of nature. Listening for the flight of the condor and sharing the sighs of the mountains.
- **Know how to think.** The ability to think, not only from a rational perspective, but with feeling, in order to walk the path of the heart without losing reason. Thinking of others and of the whole without being individualistic, selfish, hateful or sad. It is thinking with joy and happiness. Thinking about life.

- **Know how to meditate.** The ability to reflect merging our mind and heart. Becoming one with the energy of the earth and cosmos to steer our lives as we seek balance with others and with nature. Understanding natural laws within nature. Thinking about the past and projecting it into the future.
- **Know how to govern.** The ability to govern for all on the basis of consensus, taking into account the thoughts, feelings, wishes and words of others, of the community and all those with whom we share Mother Earth. It is to lead by obeying the people, thinking of those who no longer are and those who will come in the future. It is to govern for ourselves in an organised manner, strengthening our cultures and our own thoughts. Awakenning our communal energy. Helping our communities and organisations to recover the ability to solve our own problems, instead of waiting for others to solve them.
- **Know how to love and being loved.** The ability to love our partner and work as *chacha-warmi* (man and woman), but also to love all who live in our community. To love all living creatures in nature. To work for ourselves and for others within the community, protecting Mother Earth. Without wishing harm on anyone. Feeling love for life.
- **Know how to respect.** The ability to respect all human beings as we are all complementary. To respect all living creatures, the earth, plants and animals. To respect our grandmothers and grandfathers, our mothers and fathers, as well as our communities' leaders and rulers. To respect different views and those who do not think like us. Understanding that all who exist are brothers and sisters, part of one large family.

To live well, we need to strengthen our identity, and to empower our leaders, native authorities and wise elders. We need to strengthen our spiritual and ideological guides. We must work with our men and women of light, with those who can transcend this dimension of reality to enter other dimensions, providing us with knowledge and wisdom. We must strengthen knowledge and the '*cosmoser*'. To live well, we must devise new ways of life.

Living Well entails a new way of being, feeling, thinking and doing everything in accordance with life.

Living Well means going back to being *qhapaq* or *qamiri* (someone who lives well), or *iyambae* (a person without master). It means finding balance with oneself, with others and with nature; reaching the state of *q'umara* (someone who is physically and spiritually healthy). It is about following the ancient Andean teachings: do not be a thief, do not lie, do not be lazy. Living Well makes us *willka* (women or men of light transcending the limited dimension of what is human), *mallkus* (human being transcending this dimension), *amarus* (serpents) and *katari* (vipers). We are rainbow warriors. We become *larama* (wise rebels); men and women with our own *amuyu* (ideology) and *yuyay* (thought). We are part of *panaka pachakuti* (family of brothers and sisters of the great change). By Living Well, we return to *Abya Yala*, or great *Abya Yala*, and we return to our *qhapaq ñan* (the path of Living Well).

In this new *pachakuti* era, the peoples of the world are fostering the culture of life, enabling humanity to find its way back to respecting Mother Earth.

## Living Well locally: the Andean ayllu

The *ayllu* is one of the pillars of Living Well. It means community of life. Within it, the different codes and knowledge of Living Well are developed and applied in the Andean region of what is known as South America.

The Andean *ayllu* is not simply a community of men and women. It is not limited to the human realm. Our community includes everyone and everything living together: men and women, plants, animals, rivers, mountains, the stars, the sun and the moon, *wak'as* and *achachilas* (our elders who have become one with the mountains' energy). All human beings, nature and our sacred beings are integrated and merged in the community.

The Andean region is of great importance for the world. Agriculture has been cultivated here and half of the world's climates are found here, leading to a wide diversity of ecosystems and ecological niches. Living in a highly diversified, complex ecosystem, is a great challenge for human beings. The *ayllus* made it possible to occupy these diversified territories since ancient times, developing a highly complex social and spatial organisational system. In pre-colonial times, the *ayllus* were organised to enable the simultaneous occupation of multiple ecosystems by accessing the widest possible range of eco-regions. This made it possible to occupy not only the Andean highlands – where the core sites are located – but also territories beyond. Our ancestors' organisational system enabled

simultaneous control over different ecosystems in the highlands and other areas: valleys, tropical regions and coastlines.

Our Andean *ayllus* are segmental, hierarchical territorial structures comprising communities or *cabildos*, which in turn are aggregated into large *ayllus* (or *markas*). The *ayllus* are divided into two partialities (or halves): from above (*alasaya* or *aransaya*) and from below (*aynachasaya* or *urinsaya*). This means that all the *ayllus* and their communities belong to one of these territories: they are either *ayllus* from above or they are *ayllus* from below.

In our Andean *ayllus* we live in complementarity between similar and different. In the *ayllus* we have multiple identities at the same time: we belong to a community; we belong to a territory (above or below); we belong to a *marka*; we belong to a people (Aymara or Quechua); we belong to *Abya Yala*. In this organisational system, not only are we part of complementary communities and *ayllus*, but we are also intertwined with nature and our sacred beings, the *wak'as* and *achachilas*. In the mountain live our ancestors who protect us, look over us and teach us. Mountains are both male and female, complementary pairs.

In the *ayllu* we live in harmony with the whole and with the cosmos. In the *ayllu*-community, our ancestors are present as one with our *wak'as* and *achachilas*. Together we are one, all-encompassing energy. In the *ayllu*-community, our *yatiris* (those who dialogue with the sacred) transform into condors (*mallkus*) and serpents (*kataris*), becoming one with nature. In our rituals, community members and nature become one with Mother Earth and the cosmos.

The *ayllu* is one of the pillars of Living Well. It means community of life. In the *ayllu*, we live in harmony with the whole and with the cosmos.



In the *ayllus*, to be elected our authorities must follow the *thaki* (path to leadership). This means taking on positions of less responsibility and progressively moving on to roles of greater responsibility to serve and lead by obeying the *ayllu*-community. The first step is becoming a full member of the community by finding a partner. *Ayllu* leaders are *chacha* and *warmi* (man and woman as complementary halves of a couple). In the *ayllu*, the principle of rotation applies, so no one can stay in office longer than required and *ayllu members* are elected on a rotational basis. The power of the community is the power of all.

In the *ayllus*, we live as a community. We support each other through *ayni* (mutual sharing of work between families and *ayllu* members in the spirit of, ‘today for you, tomorrow for me’) and *mink’a* (communal work that is not compensated with the same type of work or service), as well as other forms of communal work. In the *ayllu* we work, dance and take decisions as a community. But we are also individuals and families. In the *ayllu*, our individual energy is merged with the community’s. *Ayllus* comprise parcels of land for individual and communal use.

In the *ayllu* decisions are not taken by majority, but by consensus. Members of the *ayllu* meet in assemblies to discuss community issues. In this consensus-based democracy of the community, communal discussions last as long as required to reach a decision by consensus.

The *ayllu* isn’t only a social model, it is a system to organise life.

### **Our *ayllus* are Living Well territories**

- In the *ayllu* decisions are taken by consensus.
- In the *ayllu* men and women complement each other (*chacha-warmi*).
- In the *ayllu* we are similar (as members of the same



*marka*), but different as we have multiple identities (we belong to a community, a partiality and a *marka*).

- In the *ayllu* we are complemented with other community members, with nature and with the sacred *wak'as*.
- In the *ayllu* we dialogue with our supreme beings – *wak'as* and *achachilas* – through our rituals.
- In the *ayllu* we work as a community.
- In the *ayllu* we are human beings, we are nature and we are the cosmos. We are the thinking cosmos.
- In the *ayllu* we seek to live in balance with all that exist.

This is the wisdom of our Andean ancestors, who protected the *ayllu* in the codes and traditions of Living Well. Now, we need to return to the *ayllu* and foster Living Well as a new global civilisation model, reading our grandmothers' and grandfathers' wrinkles and following the wisdom of our millenary ancestors.



## Living Well: a new horizon of life that fights capitalism and goes beyond socialism

Our struggle goes beyond the simple separation between capitalism and socialism. In capitalism, what matters the most is capital, profit and money, whilst socialism focuses on the human being and on meeting the ever-growing needs of society. Living Well fights against capitalism and goes beyond socialism, prioritising the development of a culture of life.

Living Well partly overlaps with socialism, in that it also seeks to meet human needs. However, its struggle goes beyond socialism and humans. Its core priority is life. Living Well opposes capitalism, because it has enslaved Mother Earth and all of humanity on Earth. Subduing others and nature is not Living Well. Living Well means fighting for the rights of Mother Earth and for the rights of all the beings that coexist in it. It means opposing the capitalist development model implemented by Western society, that is the 'living better' model, which has generated imbalances, crises and disasters for humanity and Mother Earth.

The Living Well horizon of life is to be built on the *ayllu* and communal life system. The *ayllu* is a true organisational system for life, extending beyond societal organisation. This is why we propose a community-based socialism for life, shaped on the *ayllu* model.

## Actions for building a Living Well civilisation

- Communicate and dialogue with ourselves, with others, with nature and the sacred.
- Guarantee the living well of individuals and of the collective.
- Ensure everything is in its place and in balance.
- Strengthen government by all and of all, based on consensus.
- Return to the *tama* (our great family).
- Recover the *tumpa* (mandatory control amongst ourselves).
- Cooperate with each other.
- Guarantee the supply of healthy food in both good and bad times.
- Reclaim our *saphi* (cultural roots).
- Respect the similar and the different.
- Restore Mother Earth's balance.
- Go back to being *jiwasa* (it's not me, it's us).

To achieve Living Well, a *pachakuti* is needed at both the individual and collective or community level. Firstly, it is essential to create change within each one of us so we can change our community. If we do not change as individuals, we will not be able to change others. We must return to our *qhapaq ñan*, our *amuyu* and *yuyay*, our *sarawi* or *tape* (path towards our horizon of life).

To live well, in accordance with the codes and traditions of our ancient peoples and cultures, we must go beyond government by the majority to a government of all and of the whole. Beyond the search for freedom to the complementarity between the similar and the different. Beyond the fight for justice to restoring balance between all living beings. Beyond the fight to recover ancestral knowledge to creating an interscientific civilisation with intercivilisational

dialogue. Beyond the fight for equality to a society that has broken free from colonisation and patriarchy.

## **Our fight goes beyond the search for democracy and moves towards the search for consensus**

Western democracy has developed an ideal of governance, democracy, based on the representative democracy, where we vote to elect our representatives and where political power has been removed from society. In democracy, the majority subdues the minority and subduing others is not Living Well. Similarly, exploiting others at work, lying and stealing are not part of Living Well. Subordinating minorities is not Living Well. In the Living Well we are not against democracy and we support it, but we believe that it not sufficient. Living Well strives for government by all, as decision-making by democracy is not sufficient; we need to work towards consensus-based decision-making.

Democracy is the rule of the majority, whilst consensus is government by all. This is why the fight for Living Well goes beyond democracy by the majority that subdues the minority. From democratic government we need to move forwards to consensus-based government, where leaders rule but obey the people, where political power is not removed from society.

Consensus takes into account what others think (both men and women), but also the *taqpacha*. It allows us to hear and express different thoughts and feelings until an agreement is found between opposing positions. In the consensus model, decision-making doesn't only take into account human beings, but all that exists. When seeking consensus, it is important to hear every voice, including sacred sites, nature, all living beings and all those who are different yet similar on Mother Earth. Consensus is the agreement reached by community members in the search for the balance or the center (*taypi*). In this model, one's thoughts, feelings, wishes and words are not imposed

on others. On the contrary, everyone's thoughts, feelings, wishes and words are pooled together and organised. Consensus does not mean unanimity; it is not what one person wants, it is what we all want.

In the Living Well model, government is a communal responsibility and our problems are not left for few to solve. Governing implies empowering organisations, neighbourhoods and communities to solve their problems. Living Well does not mean that we expect others to solve our problems. On the contrary, it enables us to solve our problems by ourselves. Living Well means the ability to govern ourselves, awakening our ability to organise ourselves and to solve our problems.

### **Our fight goes beyond the search for social justice and moves towards the search for balance**

Colonialism divided and annulled us. Individualism dehumanised us and capitalism denaturalized us. We have been torn to pieces and alienated. Continents have been dismembered, countries have been divided, communities undermined and people enslaved by consumerism and the markets.

The fight for Living Well goes beyond social justice, because when we speak of justice we only include human beings and do not take into account the whole. This is why Living Well's struggle goes beyond social justice and moves towards the search for balance between all beings on Mother Earth. This is why we speak of *pachamama*, Mother Earth in a state of balance. It is the reason why Living Well's fight goes beyond justice and seeks to restore balance to the world.

### **Our fight goes beyond the search for freedom and moves towards the search for the complementarity of similar and different**

The Western civilisation model fights for freedom, the supreme goal of all social struggles. The French Revolution established the motto of

fighting for 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights established individual and collective freedoms, stating that freedom is a sacred and inalienable right to which all human beings are entitled. Hence the freedom to act as one believes appropriate, in compliance with the law and with respect for the rights of others.

Living Well does not challenge this fight for freedom, which we share. Living Well demands respect, so that no one can make decisions and think on our behalf, because no one is entitled to feel they are the master of anyone or anything. No one can make decisions or think for others. We must all make our own decisions and we must all be taken into consideration when decisions are made.

However, the struggle for Living Well goes beyond the mere pursuit of freedom and is oriented towards the search for complementarity among all beings. Freedom only refers to the individual and collective freedom of human beings, of people and society. But the pursuit of complementarity embraces the life and freedom of all living beings raised by Mother Earth, not just humanity. In the Living Well vision, each being has its own worth, neither greater nor smaller, and must respect and live in complementarity with others.

### **Our fight goes beyond the search for human rights and moves towards the search for the rights of Mother Earth and of the cosmos**

Living Well doesn't only strive for the recognition and exercise of human rights and the rights of peasant, native and indigenous peoples and nations. It envisions an interrelated, interconnected system of rights for people, Mother Earth and the cosmos, as the full expression of the connection between humanity and nature.

Living Well recognises the rights of Mother Earth, in accordance with cosmic rights, without failing to uphold and defend human rights, as

well as the rights of indigenous peoples and nations, in their different dimensions: individual and collective, economic, cultural and political.

The rights of Mother Earth as a whole, not just human beings, must be recognised. All that exists must be taken into account, be included and involved, given full rights but also duties and obligations – requirements for life – which we all share as we move forward on the path of the culture of life.

Various international resolutions by the United Nations have recognised that many peoples and countries consider nature as a subject and that this view can no longer be ignored as we strive for sustainable development. Nature's rights have been recognised in Ecuador and rights of Mother Earth's in Bolivia. In New Zealand, the *Whanganui* River has been granted the same rights as a person. It is essential that progress be made with other initiatives and practices worldwide to promote the rights of nature and Mother Earth.

### **Our fight goes beyond the search for the recognition of the value of ancestral knowledge and moves towards the search for interscientific and intercultural dialogue**

Throughout history, Western thought has tried to present itself as superior to the ideologies of other non-Western countries. The Western thought has been classified as scientific, whilst the knowledge of ancient peoples and cultures has been seen as 'indigenous and local knowledge', as 'ancestral and traditional knowledge'. The knowledge of millenary peoples is not considered science. In this hierarchy of knowledge, Western science is at the forefront, whilst the rest of knowledge is left in the background, relegated to the level of 'local knowledge' rather than science.

The power of the West is fuelled by this colonialist view of the sciences. For the West, Western science explains and projects



a universal civilisation model, excluding local knowledge. The Western scientific principle known as the Law of Excluded Middle (or third) does not allow the integration of ancient peoples and cultures' knowledge in its civilisation model. The West sees local knowledge as being localised and specific, and is therefore unable to generalise and project it onto a universal civilisation model. However, ancient cultures and peoples – civilisations based on the principle of complementarity – have the power to transform universal scientific knowledge, because there is a third possibility other than the contradictory relationship between sciences, whereby Western science and the science of millenary cultures and peoples complement each other.

The first thing Living Well seeks is equality between modern Western science and the science of ancient cultures and peoples. We also pursue interscientific and intercultural dialogue, with a view to preserving the best of Western scientific knowledge to complement the science of millenary cultures and civilisations. This powerful science, with an interscientific outlook, forms the scientific basis of Living Well.

### **Our fight goes beyond the search for equality and moves towards the search for freedom from colonialism and patriarchy**

It is important to build fair, equitable and just societies, with no divisions into social classes, rich and the poor, and cast systems. However, this is not sufficient. If we do not eliminate the structures underlying these divisions, we will see the emergence of new classes, castes and social strata. To avoid this, we must be rid of all the historical structures built to separate and divide us in first- and second-class people. These structures are based on discrimination towards particular groups, religious systems, skin colour, financial status, cultural backgrounds and other enslaving factors. Living Well considers building equitable societies important, but not sufficient. We also need to work to free society from colonialism and patriarchy.

Decolonisation involves breaking down the mental structures that make us believe in absolute truths and superior ways of thinking, discriminating against the knowledge and ways of thinking originating from other realities. Colonisation imposed thinking patterns that discriminated against and marginalised the native and indigenous population, establishing hierarchies within societies and peoples. Decolonisation means putting everything on the same level, so that there are no superior or inferior people, societies or beings. It means looking at reality through our own eyes rather than through the eyes of the West, to think with our own minds and not with the Western mind, to reclaim our ideologies, knowledge and codes of living, to learn to act in accordance with the laws of nature and of our ancestors.

Depatriarchalising means breaking down and deconstructing the structures enabling men to dominate women within social relations, politics and the economy, to build equality and complementarity between men and women. It means feeling complete within the *chacha-warmi* duality (men and women complementing each other) and tetrality, as each male being has a feminine side and each female being has a masculine side.

## Living Well in different areas of communal life

To Live Well we must renew the political commitment to complementarity, balance and harmony with Mother Earth. This must lead to tangible progress towards the development of a new, whole and cosmic human being, which must involve different areas of communal life.

It is only possible through far-reaching decolonisation processes, fighting the current forces that alienate our cultures, which originated with re-colonisation and loss of ideology promoted by the West and continue to bury ancient philosophy, codes and technology. We need to reawaken the knowledge, codes and values of millenary peoples and cultures to recover Mother Earth's historical memory and roots.

### **The Philosophy of Living Well**

Living Well postulates that we need to approach reality's content, meaning and significance from a different cognitive perspective. We need a philosophical, ontological, gnoseological and epistemological decolonisation to lay the foundations of Living Well as a new system of life. We need to develop a society, culture and civilisation of life, building on other philosophy of life, to feel – live – do – think of reality in a different manner, with *chuymampi* (with the heart).

Our proposed philosophical foundations for Living Well are based on balance, complementarity between similar and different, and harmony with the whole, as detailed below:

### **Life in balance**

- *Everything is chaos and order.* Living beings live in chaos/disorder and order/balance at the same time.

### **Live in complementary between similar and different**

- *Everything is similar and different.* Living beings differ from each other, as what is human is different from what is natural and human beings are different among themselves; but we are also similar in the natural and cosmic dimensions.
- *All is life and death.* Living beings are mortal and immortal, because we are born, we live and we die. But we are also energy within the whole of Mother Earth beyond death.
- *All is light and darkness.* Living beings live in a constant flux of light and darkness.
- *All is male and female.* Living beings are a unit in the duality of masculine and feminine at the same time.

### **Life in harmony with the whole**

- *All is one and everything.* Living beings exist within a reality of interrelations. We are one as individuals and we are wholeness within the community of life and the cosmos.
- *All is finite and infinite.* Living beings belong to a finite world, but they are infinite in their relations with the flowing wholeness.
- *All is relative and absolute.* Living beings are relative and absolute, just as any other part of the whole.

These dimensions or realities underline that everything exists in complementary oneness with Mother Earth and the cosmos: chaos comprises order, the finite is part of the infinite, the relative is expressed in the absolute, and when something appears to die, it generates another form of energy and matter to ensure life can continue.

Living Well stems from the codes of nature, whereby one entity is the whole and the whole is one entity, where all flows in harmony, where all develops with balance, where opposites are complementary parts of the oneness, flowing between darkness and light.

## **The politics of Living Well**

We are living in times of change, of *pachakuti*. It is time to restore balance. The time of a new dawn, a new day. A time where opposites meet. A time to challenge, propose, acquire knowledge and build ideas to solve the world's fundamental problems and tensions. It is time to build a new political vision to contribute to shaping a new world order.

It is time for different world views to enable the rise of our world. It is time for a more democratic and pluralistic world.

The time of Living Well is the time of a struggle against hierarchies, oligarchies and monarchies claiming to govern for the people but actually only governing for themselves. It is the time for consensus-based democracy, where peoples govern themselves, where power is no longer separated from society, because society itself has the political power to decide on its future. It is time for nations to choose their own destiny, walk with their own legs and see with their own eyes.

The time of Living Well is the time of transition from national to multinational States, with economic, social, cultural, legal and political rights for all nations and peoples living in a territory.

In political terms, Living Well entails recognising and exercising the rights, duties and obligations of the State and of the collective. Whilst the West continues to strengthen the market and ecosystem services, Living Well strives to foster the rights of peoples, including indigenous, and to ensure recognition of Mother Earth's rights, to be exercised as interconnected and complementary.

Living Well also seeks to protect shared and collective resources, such as water, the atmosphere and the oceans, among others, in an unrelenting struggle against their commoditisation and privatisation.

## **The economy of Living Well**

The economy of Living Well is the economy of Mother Earth and of life.

Since the origin of economics, a distinction has existed between two branches: *chrematistics* is the art of generating wealth, whilst *oikonomiké* is managing the production and distribution of goods needed to sustain life in the community and in the household. The economy of Living Well uses both of those views, but eliminates the *chrematistic* pursuit and accumulation of profit. It creates the material conditions required for life to continue, without embracing the capitalist accumulation system. Living Well generates wealth which, however, is not accumulated by few, but is distributed among the members of the community of life.

The economy of life and of Mother Earth is an economy that promotes the co-existence within a community, balance between individuals and society, and between humanity and Mother Earth.

The economy of Living Well encourages the development of pluralistic and complementary economies within economic structures (whether public, private, community-based or mixed), and strives to strengthen the economy of the community of life and

the economy for life, to satisfy the basic needs of human beings and of peoples whilst dialoguing with nature.

The economy of Living Well focuses on managing life systems within economic policy. It is an economy that works on the complementarity of the rights of Mother Earth and peoples. Its aim is to eradicate all forms of poverty (material, social and spiritual), to protect the environmental functions, to ensure the development of sustainable production systems, and to strengthen cultural identities, in a framework of interdependence and complementarity.

The notion of Living Well teaches us that we need to change the world's energy sources, strengthening energy produced by renewable natural resources. However, this change must occur in parallel with a shift in the global model of social, cultural and civilisational hegemony. The shift in energy sources must take place at the same time as the shift to a Living Well civilisation model. Otherwise, it will only lead to a new form of oppression of the countries and peoples of the South.

The economy of Living Well is based on the peoples reclaiming sovereignty over strategic natural resources. Sovereignty and control over natural resources by the people will foster economic freedom, an essential condition for political freedom.

Inspired by Living Well principles we fight against global financial systems built on the economy of profit. In order to increase global profits, these systems organise, plan and wage wars against the governments and peoples of the South. It is time to organise and bolster platforms for the peoples of the South to build an economy of Living Well. We need to put an end to the rule of global financial entities and imperial countries over countries and peoples, empowering the countries of the South to internally generate wealth to be distributed to the people in a permanent and continuous cycle.

## Education of the integral and cosmic human being

Living Well is built on both a personal and collective *pachakuti*. This shift means a change in how human beings live. It is a transition from the Western way of life, based on the separation of man and nature, to another way of life based on the inseparable union of man and nature. This is the basis upon which the new, integral, cosmic human being is to be shaped and educated.

The new, integral, cosmic human beings are shaped by mental codes that foster interscientific and intercultural dialogue. They are able to use both sides of the brain (left and right) and to combine the best of Western science with ancestral and millenary science. The new, integral, cosmic human beings are familiar with the principles of balance, complementarity and harmony and work with new intercultural principles.

They develop a personal identity from the community they belong to. They walk the path to once again be *qhapaq*, *qamiri* and *q'umara*, aware that they are the sons or daughters of *pachamama* and *tata inti* (father sun). These humans fight against alienation, dehumanisation, disconnection, and the denaturation and detotalisation of the human condition. The new and integral human beings build the community of life within their '*pensasiento*'. They think and feel as *ayllu* and community.

The new, integral and holistic human being recovers the entire dimension of humanity, both telluric and cosmic. This dimension now lies dormant, quashed by the educational systems, subjected to a process of involution, which prevents humans from being one with the whole and to once again walk the path of life.

To support the development of a new, integral, cosmic human being, educational systems must promote:



- Community learning for life, to rediscover the roots of our historical memory, our philosophy, our millenary and ancestral science and technology, incorporating the best of Western science and technology in the framework of inter-scientific dialogue.
- Complementarity between educators and learners.
- Decentralised, family- and community-based education, to encourage the transfer of values, wisdom and knowledge from parents and grandparents to young people.
- A greater feeling of ancestral belonging and enhanced *qhachwas* (spaces for growth and for learning about *ayllu* administration), where communication, learning and growth are celebrated as part of the life in community.
- Training and self-training building on the social practice of the culture of life, where everyone is a teacher and a student, because education is merely another component of development and self-development within the community's wisdom about life.
- Improved natural communication between people, societies, communities and nature.

## **The ancestral culture and wisdom of Living Well**

To recover and consolidate the culture and philosophy of Living Well, we must start by reading nature's symbols, our historical monuments and relics, textiles, jewellery, pottery, rituals and music, as well as the experiences and histories handed down by our ancestors, and the wisdom passed down by our great-grandparents and our great-great-grandparents.

It is important to restore ancestral wisdom by awakening the sleeping genetic memory of our ancestral and millenary peoples and cultures, as part of a dialogue with nature, with those who are, with those who no longer are, and with those who are to come.

We must reclaim our cultural symbols, celebrate the solstices and equinoxes every year, restore our calendars – which reflect a telluric-cosmic and lunar-solar world with long and medium horizons – and rediscover our ancestral ceremonies.

## **Health for Living Well**

The new, integral, cosmic human being must develop new ethical and moral values for health, based on ancestral medicine. Balance and harmony must be established between material and spiritual forces, between matter and energy, between the body and the mind.

For this view of health for Living Well to advance we must:

- Apply ancestral medicine as a complement to Western medicine in the context of interscientific and intercultural dialogue.
- Develop and implement family- and community-based, intercultural health models.
- Restore the all-encompassing wisdom of traditional healers, which embraces various forms of knowledge (for instance, in addition to anatomy, also astronomy, astrophysics, mathematics, geometry, zoology, botany, meteorology, mineralogy, physics, chemistry, nutrition and more).
- Revive the connection between traditional healers and nature, Mother Earth and the cosmos.
- Be wary of medicines and vaccines that eliminate our defences, weaken us and make us increasingly dependent on Western medicine.
- Be *q'umara* (physically and spiritually healthy) once again.

## **Nutrition for Living Well**

Food is not a commodity, but a gift of life. It is the essence of all living creatures, ingested to sustain life. Everything we eat and drink

isn't merely food, but also medicine. Food is part of the harmonious whole, as each food is consumed based on the season, accompanied by music suited to each time of the year.

The integral and holistic human being must strive to guarantee food sovereignty and preserve feeding identity by:

- Recovering seeds from different ecological zones and preserving community seed banks.
- Safeguarding and reviving our eating identity.
- Regenerating Mother Earth, making soils fertile again and ensuring the availability of safe, quality water for production.
- Using ancestral and modern science and technology in complementary fashion, to produce and process food in wholesome ways.
- Boosting ecologic and organic production practices.
- Producing wholesome foods without the genetic manipulation of our brothers and sisters – seeds, plants and animals.
- Looking after the salinity and fertility of our lands, without poisoning them with chemicals.



## The political agenda for Living Well and strengthening the culture of life in the world

A new global horizon, a culture of life, a change of time, a change in history and civilisation, a personal, collective or community-based *pachakuti* is what is needed to wipe out the structural causes of the global capitalistic crisis. To save Mother Earth we must build a new world, lead a revolution of life and peace. We must do this on the basis of Living Well, from our mountains, our *qhawanas* – to look beyond what our eyes can see – building on our knowledge and ‘cosmoser’, our dreams, our *yuyay* and *amuyuy*.

In accordance with our codes and principles we propose to restore balance to our *pacha* by developing Living Well as a new vision for civilisation.

The 2014 Declaration adopted by the Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the G77 + China was entitled ‘*For a new world order for living well*’. It recognised that many countries are already focusing on ‘living well’, through comprehensive development aimed at meeting society’s material, cultural and spiritual needs in harmony with nature.

We brothers and sisters of the culture of life recommend that the G77 + China, social organisations and movements, and wise rebels and revolutionary individuals change the structures, functions and

politics of world governance at all levels and engage in a structural shift in world and national order to advance toward Living Well.

Our proposal for a global political fight to transition to Living Well is based on the following pillars:

1. **Replace unbridled, impoverishing capitalism with Living Well as a new matrix for culture and civilisation in the totality of Mother Earth.** The capitalistic world is stuck in a global crisis with no way out. In spite of this, it continues to expand, destroying economies and impoverishing millions of people. Faced with the crisis of capitalism, there is no other solution but to develop Living Well as the basis of a new economic, social, political, cultural, ethical and spiritual order both nationally and internationally across all countries, underpinned by consensus, balance, complementarity and respect for what is different.
2. **Recover our natural resources and restore political, economic, social and spiritual administration of States and peoples to serve life.** In many countries of the world the main source of economic wealth is the exploitation of natural resources. However, this wealth has been expropriated by private players, who have become rich whilst the people are unfairly poor. This is why the natural resources that generate wealth must be controlled by the State, to ensure the entire population of each country benefits from it. Additionally, it is important to restore the economic systems of wealth distribution of our peoples, to break away from colonial economics and continue the process of industrialisation in harmony with Mother Earth.
3. **Develop governments and communities based on consensus, balance, complementarity and harmony.** In the spirit of Living Well, we need to build a profoundly democratic, pluralistic world governed by all, not just by the majority, free from racism and

discrimination, with full recognition of the economic, social, cultural, political and legal diversity of peoples. A world where community-based democracy has taken hold, where decisions are taken collectively by consensus and where those who govern are public servants who practice the *ama suwa* (do not be a thief), *ama llulla* (do not lie) and *ama qhilla* (do not be lazy). We need to build a different world, orderly and interconnected, where all human beings raised by Mother Earth are beings of light who foster life and peace, who live in harmony with others and with nature. A world where the neighbourhoods, fields, forests, seas, islands and mountains are the backdrop for life and society, populated by peaceful people living in agreement and dialogue. A world founded on the codes and values of brotherhood and interconnectedness, moving toward a community of life. We need to build a world where cultures and peoples are complementary, strengthening intra- and inter-cultural relations.

4. **Free ourselves from colonialism and recovering the deepest roots of our identities and historical memory.** As part of our community-based learning to foster life we must be able to govern ourselves, with our own ideology, knowledge, codes and principles – such as the *aruskipasipxañanakasakipunirakisipawa* (we must always dialogue, we must always communicate); until *nairapacha* is *jichapacha* again (until the time and space of balance return).
5. **Break free from the patriarchal system to move away from structures that exclude life.** We must break down and dismantle the colonial system in which men dominated women in social, political and economic relations, building equality between men and women. To move away from the patriarchal system it is important to rediscover the *chacha-warmi* concept, as well as the notion of complementarity in the duality and tetrality of life of human beings.

6. **Shape integral and cosmic human beings who continuously pursue Living Well.** Human beings need deep social ethics based on the harmony and complementarity of beings. They should not be materialistic nor consumerist and strive for unity between humanity and our Mother/Father Earth. Living Well brings interconnectedness in the lives of the new human beings, enabling them to feel, live, do, know and build the entirety of the cosmos, acknowledging that all the peoples in the world are bound by brotherhood and form one great family, the *tama*. We must build a world where cultures dialogue, learn from each other and share their science and knowledge. A world with a cosmic conscience and outlook that bolster the society of Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth, developing rules, principles and laws for all living beings on the planet, with no distinction based on race, gender or species. We must build a world that respects and recognises the rights of all life forms and living things or *uywas* raised by Mother Earth, not just human life.
7. **Promote the integration of States and peoples to build a new global organisation of peoples.** Living Well aims to remove all divisions and fragmentation between peoples. The peoples of the world must establish global institutions to eliminate borders between countries and consolidate large regions in territories of Living Well. For our region, this means reverting to *Abya Yala*, where no borders or flags divided us, where we shared the land as the condor flying free in the skies.
8. **Defend the universal commons: oceans and seas, water, access to the atmospheric space, and learn to manage energies and technologies of life and communications.** The universal common goods are threatened by capitalism's greed and by the privatisations brought about by the prevailing economic models. Capitalistic markets are pushing for the privatisation of global commons, such as the sea, access to water, the atmospheric



space and technology. The culture of life must preserve global shared assets as belonging to Mother Earth, to be managed jointly by all the peoples of the world.

9. **Build an economy of Mother Earth breaking free from the dictatorship of capitalism and God 'money'.** We must build a world where profit and gain do not succeed in eliminating people's right to dignified work, where States distribute and redistribute income. We must build a world of fair trade, where life and happiness triumph over money; where finance and banking are tools to enable projects for the Living Well of families, communities, economic and social organisations and businesses, with accountability, a social spirit and commitment to Mother Earth. We must bridge the gap between the rich and poor. To this end, we need to concentrate more economic resources in the hands of the State and democratise production factors and means within working society. However, the most important thing is to redistribute the State's wealth amongst the needy and the vulnerable. Additionally, more funds are needed for production systems that are community-based or managed directly by organised society itself.
10. **Improve the rights of peoples and recognise the rights of Mother Earth.** We must build human beings of light who live in balance amongst themselves and with all living beings that are raised by Mother Earth. A world where Mother Earth's rights are recognised and applied as interdependent and complementary with human rights. We must build a world where people's rights to comprehensive development and indigenous rights are fully implemented. This complementarity will enable all living beings, without exception, to maintain their way of life. We must build a world where the rights of people and nations prevail – including economic, social, cultural and political, the right to an identity, to life, to complementarity and to be respected.

11. **Build communities of life through interscientific and intercultural dialogue.** We must acknowledge ancestral, current and future societies as coexisting realities requiring consensus, balance, complementarity and respect of each identity – similar and different – in addition to fostering intercultural respect for different cultures, religions, races and identities in the world as expressions of diversity. Similarly, we must boost interscientific and intercultural dialogue between modern science and the science of millenary peoples and cultures.
12. **Develop the ontological, gnoseological and epistemological foundations of millenary cultures and peoples of the South.** We must rebuild the philosophical, political, economic and cultural systems upon which we organise life, on the basis of a view of Mother Earth encompassing all life as a totality. In doing so, we must strengthen the link between humans and nature, awaken our Living Well genes, so that we may feel and understand that the Living Well vision is transversal to our entire existential condition, which translates into feeling – living – doing – thinking the whole of life. We must re-establish the culture and civilisation of global brotherhood, restoring Living Well codes based on balance, complementarity and harmony with Mother Earth. We need to rebuild society, the culture and civilisation of life, to generate a world of life that is in tune with Mother Earth's seasons, rhythms, cycles and frequencies, where everything is in balance.
13. **Build a world order for Living Well.** By reaffirming that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities to achieve Living Well. We support a reform of the world's financial system and of the world's economic governance; a stronger and refocused United Nations, attuned

to the values, principles and wisdom of Living Well, as well as the development and transfer of technology, science and innovation for life, peace and the world's brotherhood.



## **Annexe**

**Messages nourishing the Living Well vision**



# Reflections on 'Amautic' thought

## by Fausto Reinaga<sup>3</sup>

(Extract from the book *Amautic Thought*)

*Amautic* thought is the Cosmos made flesh and spirit. It is the Cosmos made conscience and freedom. In summary, *Amautic* thought is the Cosmos made man.

When *Amautic* thought enlightens and meets the Earth, the Sun, man and his Galaxy... it will spark a quest for knowledge on the origin of life, the cell and plants within the solar Galaxy and beyond. This noble deed will fill the existence of thousands of generations. Free and without hunger, man will devote himself fully and with utmost passion to cosmic knowledge. And the day will come when the *Amautic* man will say not what the wisest man alive – Socrates – said, 'I only know that I know nothing'; but rather he will say, 'I know that I am the thought of Cosmos'.

It has already happened. Man left the caves to build a society in the image and likeness of the solar Galaxy. Thanks to the *Amautic* thought, the '*featherless biped hominid*' reaches the stellar hour of human dignity. A society that breathes and lives truth and freedom.

---

3 Fausto Reinaga was a writer, philosopher and intellectual, a pioneer of *Indianismo* in Bolivia. He was born on 27 March 1906 in Colquechaca, Bolivia, and died on 19 August 1994.

For pre-American Indians the concept of time is not geological, and even less so historical. Indian time is cosmic time.

The pre-American Indian is the product of millions of years of evolution. This is the only explanation for a society that knows no hunger, oppression, war or slavery.



## Chief Seattle's letter to the President of the United States<sup>4</sup>

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer, for we know if we do not so the white man may come with guns and take our land. What Chief Seattle says you can count on as truly as our white brothers can count on the return of the seasons. My words are like the stars – they do not set.

How can you buy or sell the sky – the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

We do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every ray of light, and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

---

4 In 1854, US President Franklin Pierce sent Chief Seattle, of the Swamish tribe, an offer for the purchase of land in the north-east of the United States – today's *Washington* State. In exchange, he promised to create a 'reserve' for the indigenous people. Chief Seattle replied in 1855.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man – all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us. This shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children, and he does not care.

His father's grave, and his children's birthright, are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears.

And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the croaking of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleaned by a midday rain, or scented with the pinion pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: The white man must treat the creatures of this land as his brothers.

I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I've seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

What is man without the animals? If all the animals were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the animals, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know: The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover, our God is the same God.

You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white.

This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man.

That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires.

Where will the thick forest be? Gone!

Where will the eagle be? Gone!

It is the end of living and the beginning of survival.



## Letter by an indigenous woman<sup>5</sup>

I am an indigenous woman, daughter of the earth and sun. I belong to a race with an ancient culture, which I now cherish as precious.

I co-exist with what surrounds me: the rain, the wind, the mountains, the sky... I am happy in this loneliness...

I have time to count the stars, to refashion my dreams, to dance with the birds feeling the fresh air at dawn, and to speak in silence with the animals, plants and spirits...

I know how to sow seeds that give food with the moon, how to weave wool to make a textile, to make medicines as my grandmother taught me, to sing to the dawn of a new day. I know how to knead simply with fidelity and tenderness...

I am an indigenous woman, female like Mother Earth, a fertile, silent, strong and protector.

I do not know about economics, nor about banks, politics or subsidies. But I do know when my world is in danger and when things are bad or good. I do not understand many things, the people from the government coming with many promises, empty words in times of elections and then nothing; nor those who want to change my world, my clothing, my spirituality; or those who kidnap and

---

5 Gladys Vila Pihue has brought to life the 'Letter by an indigenous woman' by Chelita-Sudamérica, published in *Yo Indio* magazine, No. 4.

experiment with my children, harvesting their organs for the rich *winkas*; or those who lie, take my land, exploit me, trade food or alcohol for my art and textiles and pay me a pittance for months of work, which they then sell in the far cities of Europe.

I do not understand those who become my friends to obtain knowledge, who come with big machines to cut down the forest, who drill the earth to take her blood, who hide drums of rubbish in the community to contaminate us, who give vaccines, experiment with my blood; nor those who believe in good faith they have come to help me and integrate me with electric cables and have brought television to confuse me; those who put shoes on my feet, who want to change my ancestral customs, those who look at me as if I was a freak and take pictures of me, those who want me to dance for money, those who come with beautiful words to build churches on our sacred sites, those who try to enslave me with addictions foreign to my culture, those who enter our lands armed to kick us out, the foreigners who come from guerrilla vacations to fight against the military and then safely return to their far away homeland...

Sometimes things get worse for our people: they capture us, kill us...

I also do not understand those who despise me, who ignore me, who see me as worthless and take everything from me, including my dignity...

I am an indigenous woman and I know what I want... to change those things that hurt inside and keep growing, such as powerlessness, hopelessness, destruction, unfulfilled promises, lack of love and the feeling of being continuously raped.

I want to scream, 'Leave me alone!'... I want to go on living this way, simply, with the earth and with my people, who laugh, believe, enjoy life as it is, without changing things, who share, who embrace, who



are not in a hurry and love without expecting anything in return,  
who do not grow bored...

I want them to respect me. I am a woman of the earth, as strong  
as the tree against the wind, as steady as reeds in the current, as  
unyielding as the tallest of mountains, as fragile as the humming  
bird and as sweet as the sunsets.

I am an indigenous woman, daughter of the earth and sun. Although  
I do not understand much, I know what I want. I am hopeful and  
know that things will change.



## Sources

- Our grandmothers' and grandfathers' wrinkles
- Titikaka Lake
- Historical monuments and relics
- Music and dance
- The stones of Tiwanaku
- Sacred rituals and ceremonies
- Forests and jungles
- Ceremonial textiles
- The shrubs and dry grasslands of the highlands
- *Wak'as* and *achachilas*
- My *larama* brothers and sisters of the resistance
- The jaguar of the green jungle
- The flight of our birds
- Our Mother Earth

