

Questions for Yachaks, Curanderos and Parteras - Zuleta

About being a healer	
6.1. What kinds of healers do you know about?	6) Yes, they have different ways of diagnosing and treating. 7) Yes, there are different sorts; according to the equipment and treatments/diagnosis they use. 8) NA
6.2. Why did you become a healer?	6) Via a dream/vision – see below 7) From 18-20 years; by observation of other curanderos and this gave him the desire or the feeling that he could also cure. 8) Her grandmother was also a curandera/partera but lived a long way away. She wanted to be a midwife as she perceived a need for this in the community.
6.3. How did you become a healer?	6) As 6.2, through his dream. 7) 35 years old; he was ill with the pain of his leg [and]with espanto [trauma or fright] he called his shadow [sombra;] he prayed to his soul and got better. 8) She learned from a married couple who were midwives. 28-35 years old. She was encouraged to go a do a formal course to learn, but as she can barely read or write, she was too nervous to follow through.
6.4. What is the origin of your powers?	6) The Virgin of Quinche. She guides him and teaches him through his heart. 7) From the Christian God. 8) NA
6.5. Do you see other healers as if they were in competition with you?	6) NA 7) No. 8) NA
Comprehension/understanding of the causes of illness (diagnosis)	
7.1. How do you undertake a diagnosis?	6) Cuy, eggs and taking the pulse. 7) With cuyes, sometimes with candles. 8) Cuyes and sometimes the pulse.

7.2. ¿ How do you 'see' the disease? (for example, the ability to see the nature of afflictions, as clearly as the mirror, or as if the body were open to the eye?)	6) Looking at the egg or body of the cuy. 7) He 'reads' the nature of the illness through interpreting the pattern of the internal injuries in the cuy's body. 8) From the marks on/in the cuy's body.
7.3. Are there means employed, for example, such as candles, guinea pigs, egg yolks, special equipment such as stones or the use of plants that allow them to "see" a disease in a patient and its causes of illness?	6) As 7.2. Also he is guided by his spirit. 7) He sometimes uses candles, but doesn't explain how. 8) Only the cuy.
7.4. Are these intermediaries experienced or understood as spirits? (for example, as with the spirits of plants).	6) His spirit is the Virgin of Quinche. 7) He really only sees the body as a map, he doesn't work via spirits. 8) NA
7.5. Can you direct and control good and bad forces?	6) Yes. 7) You need to be careful if there are bad forces or results, but he doesn't want to say if he can control them for an end purpose. 8) NA
Healing	
8.1. What forms of healing and / or rituals do you use for diseases? (for example, magic herbs, tips / cigar, etc.	6) Depends upon the illness. Through herbs or puntas. 7) With country herbs, chilca, nettles, with flowers other than Brugmansisa. 8) With plants; the guinea pigs need to use this several times to check progress of cure. Sometimes you have a tea, other times a cleansing. She sometimes uses agua bendita (holy water) and she blows it over the patient[like yachaks do with puntas].
8.2. Are your rituals / therapies carried out by an assistant / spiritual guide?	6) Yes, via his spirit guide, Virgin of Quiche 7) Only God as his guide 8) No, but she is clearly a practising Christian believer.
8.3. Do you have an altar or a 'mesa'?	6) Yes 7) No 8) Yes

8.4. What special artifacts or equipment do you use for your healing rituals?	6) Stones, together with his spiritual guide. 7) Only cuyes, flowers, herbs and eggs, he doesn't use stones or other artifacts. 8) Images of both male and female saints, and also stones.
8.5. Do you use story telling for any part of this therapy?	6) Yes, he starts with a story of his own experience. 7) No. 8) NA

Respondents

6-1) (#55) Male yachak. He was auto-initiated via a vision (not a sleeping dream) when he was returning from Cocha to Zuleta after 11pm; he had a vision of being accompanied by a large black dog, which then disappeared when a strong white light appeared before him on the road, like a lantern, that contained an image of sorts. He interpreted this as a vision of the Virgin of Quinche. No suggestion of there being actual words spoken to him, but he felt that he was communicated to via his heart that he should become a healer. She has been his spiritual guide and teacher ever since. He is largely self-taught, through observation, through reading leaflets (first one on medicinal plants from Colombia) the observing other shamans, other books, contacts etc.

7-2) (#49) Male curandero.

8-3) (#58) Female curandera and partera. She now mainly works as a curandera as many women now give birth in hospitals. However, her expertise is employed in post-partum services, particularly in the process of binding the abdomen tightly (*amarar*), which helps the uterus to return to its proper place and enables the woman to be able to carry heavy loads afterwards without suffering a prolapse. This process was also used with the young female employee of Zuleta for excessive and irregular periods (and it worked). Also herbal teas given. She has a good reputation locally as a curandera and local taxi drivers recommend her.

9-4) (#53) Male curandero. Very little helpful information, so excluded from the more detailed tabulated information. He uses guinea pigs. God is his spiritual guide and a curandero advised him [ie I assume he means was responsible for him becoming a curandero]

10-5) (#72) Ugsha. Female partera. No more information available.