

**To His Excellency,
Sir Gilberto Passos Gil Moreira
Minister of Culture of the Federative Republic of Brazil (*)**

Ayahuasca is a term of Quechuan origin that means “wine of the souls,” and refers to the tea made from the decoction of two plants native to the Amazon forest: the vine Jagube or Mariri (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and the Rainha or Chacrona leaves (*Psychotria viridis*). This tea is the basis for the establishment of various spiritual traditions of indigenous peoples in a vast region that includes several Amazonian countries (Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, etc.), magico-cultural traditions that were formed in the great Amazon forest over the last two thousand years, at least, and which influenced even the complex societies of the Andean region, such as the Inca civilization.

More recently, in the first years of the 20th century in the Western Amazon (the present-day states of Acre and Rondônia on the borders of Peru and Bolivia), the formation of a society based on the extraction of rubber (which, following the example of the Amazon’s indigenous people, had as a fundamental characteristic an enormous ethnic and cultural diversity) established the necessary conditions for the ancient indigenous tradition of Ayahuasca to be assimilated by Brazilians and to give birth to a new religious, cultural, and social configuration. In this way, Raimundo Irineu Serra and Daniel Pereira Mattos (both Afro-Brazilians from Maranhão descended from slaves) founded, between 1910 and 1945, a religious doctrine that re-baptized Ayahuasca with the name “Daime.” Some time later, in the 1960s, the Bahiano José Gabriel da Costa formulated another doctrine that came to call Ayahuasca “Vegetal.” More important than their designation of new names, however, was the action of these three founding masters – Irineu, Daniel, and Gabriel – in establishing the doctrinal basis of a new religious tradition, syncretically Brazilian and typically Amazonian, which made possible the formation of communities organized around the ritual use of Ayahuasca, and which came to play an important role (politically, socially, and culturally) in the very formation of Brazilian society in the Western Amazon.

The spiritual knowledge of these doctrines has been handed down from generation to generation and maintained by diverse cultural traditions through a characteristically Amazonian religious syncretism, which entails an essentially harmonious relationship with nature and which establishes a sentiment of identity and of continuity, thereby guaranteeing respect for ethnic and cultural diversity and for human creativity.

In this way the Doctrines of Daime/Vegetal, as established by their founding masters, became inseparable parts of Brazilian society, thus enabling their recognition as cultural patrimony of our nation.

Based on the information presented above we can affirm that the ritual use of Ayahuasca in religious doctrines fulfills the requirements for characterization as immaterial patrimony, considered as “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques that communities or groups recognize as an integral part of their cultural patrimony.”

In accordance with the specifications of Resolution No. 1 of August 3rd, 2006, issued by the President of the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Patrimony (IPHAN), the designated representatives of Cultural Foundations of the State of Acre and of the Municipality of Rio Branco, through dialogue with the religious centers that make up the three foundational trunks of the contemporary Ayahuasca doctrines, hereby solicit of the Minister of Culture that he, through IPHAN, begin the process of recognition of the use of Ayahuasca in religious rituals as Immaterial Patrimony of the Brazilian Culture.
Rio Branco, April 30, 2008.

Daniel (Zen) Santana de Queiroz
President of the Elias Mansour Foundation
State of Acre

Marcos Vinicius Neves
Director-president of the Garibaldi Brasil Foundation
Municipality of Rio Branco

Peregrina Gomes Serra
Universal Light Christian Illumination Center-CICLU-Alto Santo

Francisco Hipólito de Araújo Neto
“House of Jesus – Fount of Light” Spiritist Center and Cult of Prayer

José Roberto da Silva Barbosa
Union of the Vegetal Beneficent Spiritist Center-UDV

Jair Araújo Facundes
Centro Rainha da Floresta

(*)Translated by Matthew Meyer