



KAMASQA: THE LIVING POWER

A central insight of all shamanic traditions is the realization that we – human beings – are not alone in our conscious participation in the world. In point of fact, consciousness extends far beyond the physicalized spectrum of life and into levels of being no longer appreciated by the Western mode of experience. To most indigenous views of reality,⁷ however, life itself *is* consciousness, implicitly recognizing that all living beings are therefore endowed with that magnificent faculty. Life does not limit itself to the many physical expressions known to us; it is rather an inherent cause of reality itself, the animating nature that gives rise to creation and reveals its hand by the forces through which it is known. The winds are as much alive as the dove that travels them. Likewise, is the *kamasqa* that perpetually creates the Universe out of itself, from its bosom and womb nourishing the body that contains it.

This animating consciousness of the Universe, the vital *kamasqa* that imbues the fabric of creation with its hue and movement, has long been understood as the under-girding of the initiatic arts – the support pillars making possible the temple. Known by various names – the *pleroma*, *manitou*, *mana* – this *illa teqse kallpa*,⁸ or *kamasqa*, is the ocean into which the *curandero* must ultimately submerge himself, recalling in the experience the true source of not only his power, but of his life. This truth is mirrored in the baptismal rites of both *sanpedrito* and *paqokuna* traditions, during whose performance initiates are bathed and renewed in the living waters of the highland lagoons – their essence communicated through this union as a restorative, empowering blessing. Like the majesty of the unbounded Heavens themselves, whose true glory can only be glimpsed through parallax and whose nature far surpasses any inferences of the mind, the living power – the *kamasqa* and *encanto* – is easily apprehended only in the gradation of its becoming, when it settles into form. In its effusive, transient, and primordial state it fast escapes cognition. When made fusile, however, through the evocative acts of ceremonial mastery, it pours itself willingly into the chosen vessel. From this it is forged as a concrete element in the *kaypacha*.

Within the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition this primal, ever-present power remains the true source of the transformative energy whose intent it is to promote the restoration of planetary well-being. It is the generative power behind the mesa itself and behind the collective dreamtime that has emerged as its practice. Like the *prima materia* it offers itself to be molded by the imagination.

Accessed most directly through the balanced medium of the *cruz chonta* or *sepka* nestled within the equilibrium of the mesa, the living *kamasqa* endows the entire field with an animation that is capable of pushing it toward transcending conventional levels of causation, reaching deeply into the ineffable fabric of creation to reweave reality in a manner whose understanding can only be approached by ideas of grace and magic. It is this taproot into the living soul of the Universe that provides the greatest level of Art to the practitioner, linking him or her to the ancestral chain of adepts that is beyond both lineage and tradition, yet is nourished and sustained through them. It is thus that the individual who has attained and been sanctioned with this level of mastery is simply known as *kamasqa* himself⁹.

⁷ The word “indigenous” is used more to indicate the sense of *belonging* to the Earth – being autochthonous – which was once common to all peoples, though is now deeply eroded within the West.

⁸ “Shining Original Power” or “Luminous Founding Power.”

⁹ Both *paqokuna* and *sanpedrito* traditions retain, in certain regions, this phraseology for the divinely sanctioned healer.