

C.1. DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The main aim of the project is to explore the phytotherapy and evaluate its role in the ethnomedicine of Asháninka indigenous people in Peru. We use the term ethnomedicine to refer to the cumulative body of knowledge and use of medicinal plants and healing practices of the Asháninka that have been handed down through generations and shared by community members. We will identify forms of illness treatment and all the possible medical systems, where illnesses are treated and reported (home medicine, local herbal healers, shamans, and representatives of the biomedicine, as well as other places and modes – already not identified). In addition, we aim to investigate the interface between ethnomedicine and biomedicine and answer a question of how these two systems are perceived by the Asháninka: as complementary systems, or rather not compatible. We will respond a question whether medicinal plants are combined with pharmaceuticals and if there exist illnesses exclusively cured within natural phytotherapy and those restricted to biomedical treatment. Our second objective is to investigate traditional ecological knowledge related to medicinal plants. This aim will be obtained by: 1) studying medicinal plant knowledge and uses, 2) studying traditional management of medicinal plant resources by the Asháninka.

The proposed project is a logical consequence of our previous individual research performed in South America. The reason for choosing the topic of the cultural domain of medicinal plants among the Asháninka, with interdisciplinary approach (studies performed by the biologist and the anthropologist) is the need for a shift from the “archaic europocentric dichotomy” between nature and culture in studying relation between people and the inhabited landscapes. This piece of research represents an interdisciplinary approach combining methodology and theory from cultural anthropology, and natural sciences (mainly botany and ecology).

In order to collect information among Asháninka people, both investigators will carry out two field campaigns each. We plan to conduct between 80 and 100 free-listing and semi-structured interviews on medicinal plants with novices (lay people) and experts. Additionally, we will conduct with key research participants in-depth interviews in vegetation zones where they collect their plants from. The next step of the field research will be mapping of sites with identified natural and cultivated stands of medicinal plants. The mapping method will be valuable tool to obtain results for analysis and illustration of local exchange and dispersing of medicinal plants in Tambo river region. Plants will be processed, identified and deposited in herbarium of Lima, and complete sets will be sent to herbarium of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. We will follow the International Society of Ethnobiology code of ethics. The information from the fieldwork will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Statistical ANTHROPAC program will let us to calculate cultural silence of medicinal plants, as well as perform the consensus and cluster analysis in order to investigate the similarities between the knowledge of experts and novices. We will identify a scope of illnesses treated with herbal medicines and/or with pharmaceuticals. We will elaborate list of plants belonging to natural pharmacopoeia of the Asháninka.

These project has a potential to expand our knowledge about current practices related to health and illness within one particular group, but can be outlined in a broader Amerindian perspective. With this, we will be able to take an active part in the international discussion of the current conditions of the Amazonian groups. The research results will be published in at least three international journals such as *Ecology and Society*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Human Ecology* and promoted at international conferences. The minor outcomes and methodological advances will be communicated in Polish and Latin American ethnological and ethnobiological journals and possibly in the *Field Methods* journal. The field material and photo documentation will be also used in the classroom as teaching material for students and during open lectures in Poland and for other outreach activities.