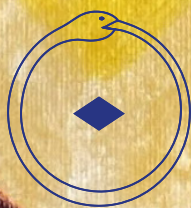
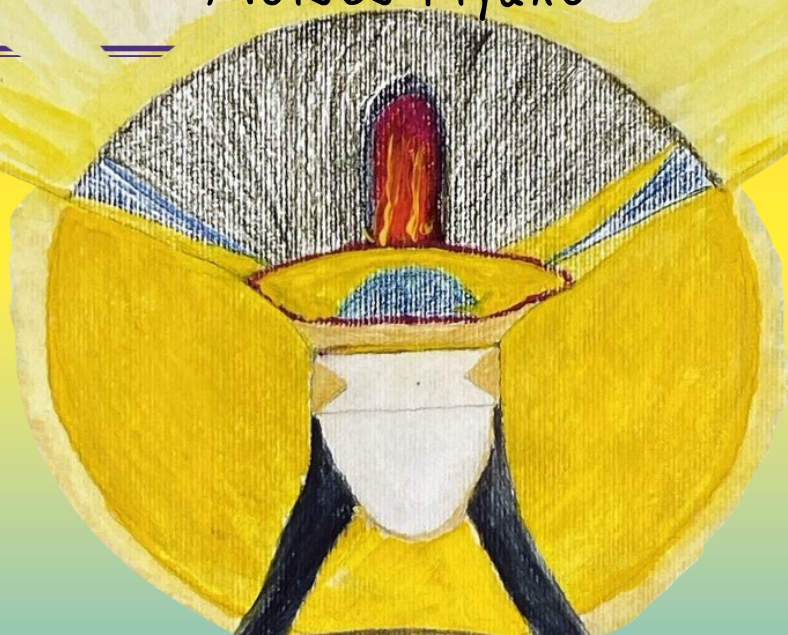
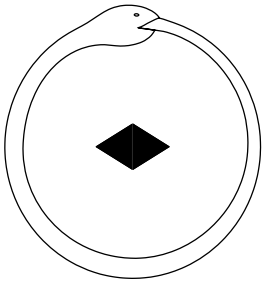


PAWA
THE ASHANINKA
CREATOR

Moisés Piyãko



notebooks
SELVAGEM



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This notebook consists of the translation of the narrative about the Sun told by Moisés Piyãko. Moisés' video can be [accessed here](#) as part of the Sun Cycle, which comprises 17 talks.

The Sun is a very strong being for us *Ashaninka*, is one of the most important beings in our lives. And it was *Pawa* who gave us an opportunity in our history, it was him who formed the planet. He created several invisible beings, called spirits. Nobody was materialised and he appeared everywhere in¹ the planet.

In truth, during this time, it wasn't the planet yet. The planet was laid out as a small space inside a house and after everything had been laid out, the planet was amplified. Because of this our story talks a lot about the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the enchanted beings, about the powers *Pawa* had, he who brought these beings in for planning. *Pawa* only coordinated these several spirits who worked on the creation of the planet. It was him who would give the final word on if what they created was positive or negative.

Among these several beings, Sun also lived together with us in Earth, as a being created by this creator. Each being worked on a part of what there is on this planet today. And Sun took care of the weather, the environment, the heat and the warmth. It is a part of rebirth, like controlling the heat to die, to be born. It was him who did this part of controlling the heat, of the temperature at each place. And this time went by and all these beings who had these powers, who worked on the plan of the planet in which we live today, proceeded materialising.

Like for example *Oriya*, as we call Sun – this being was also transformed. God, *Pawa*, handed it over to him and said: “See, you will continue taking care of all the weather, of the heat, of the warmth”. It is

this warmth that causes birth and death, this temperature that controls our life. So *Ōriya* has done this part.

In our understanding the planet was really low during this time, completely like a house. The sky was the ceiling of a house, so everything was worked on closely, like the yard of our house. And when it started to materialise, everything that was planned found its place. For example, Sun was frozen like a statue. He doesn't move from his place. And *Pawa* handed over his symbol in the form of a crown. Today the *Ashaninka* people use this hat, which is like a crown, imitating this story of the crown which *Pawa* gave to Sun, *Ōriya*. This crown that sends beams downwards and that also takes away the power of our eyesight, so that nobody can see Sun. Our eyesight cannot penetrate the power of Sun to arrive there where he is, to see who he is or what he is like. This is a very strong power, isn't it? And from the brim downwards, the hat conveys heat, shining indeed to support life of all in Earth. And



Drawing of *Pawa*: Moisés Piyaño

from here upwards [points to the brim of his hat] it is much hotter. It is so hot that nobody from Earth is able to walk there, because they would burn all over.

So **Ōriya** does not move. This clarity and this warmth that we feel from Sun comes from his crown, which **Pawa** handed over. He is the being who takes care of the whole planet, from the light, to birth, to death. And we believe that he cannot move, because if he bends his head sideways, if that temperature, which is higher above, reaches this Earth here, it is going to roast and burn everything. So he cannot move from his place. We work in our spiritual world, taking good care of this, so that he does not move. It is only his power that descends here; he does not look at Earth, he looks ahead. Here on Earth only his power arrives, through these beams of light, which we call sunshine.

And this is a very important matter, because Sun enables the birth of everything. He brings the rebirth of the spirits who have already been on Earth, and who, depending on their merit, may return. For example, each time a child is born, as soon as the child sees the sunlight, this child receives the spirit to live here on Earth. That spirit is being sent by **Pawa**. The child who does not receive the spirit does not cry when born. So those who did not cry upon leaving their mother's womb, did not receive the spirit. All the children who are born cry because it is the moment upon which they receive their spirit to live on Earth.

So to us Sun is very powerful, he is one of the main beings within the command of **Pawa**. This is a part of our history. I am trying to tell this part within a train of thought, which comes from a very long story, because our story is very complete. All these beings whom we call spirits, who worked on the creation of Earth, are present here today, enchanted, transformed in some stones, or trees or birds. They all have their powers, which is, I believe, what people call enchantment, isn't it? Enchantment comes in several ways: sometimes we look and we are enchanted by a person; but to us, enchantment has more depth, because enchantment is this which I am talking about, for example, telling a bit about Sun. It is what already has lived, what is someplace today, what did not die, did not end. Sun continues, but the eyes of those who live today do not see him. To be able to see these beings, you have to be in

connection with these spirits, because it is the mind that will see, not our eyes. Our eyes see matter. Because of that our eyes do not see that thought time in the planet in which we live today, because that was a time of thought, of light, of beings whom our eyes were not able to see.

That is why we were materialised, to be able to see and understand what this is. But that world is still alive today, and that is why our Indigenous people work hard on the spiritual part, because we carry this history with us from the beginning until today, we live this. That is why we take care of each one of the beings who are part of these stories, like Sun and Moon.

For instance, when Sun goes through an eclipse, my people pray asking the creator not to let him fall, not to let him move from his place. Like I said, if he moves, we here on Earth are done with. So many people cry believing that suddenly, in one second, we may be done with. And the light shining today because of Sun, of this power which I am talking about here on Earth, which makes each and every seed germinate and gives life to all beings who live on this Earth. If one day that light shines no more, all ends, because not even the very light that is produced by our intelligence will be able to handle illuminating the planet like the light that illuminates from there. So we take care of it. Because of this we are so careful with what comes from there, from the beginning, and what we receive to live where we live today. Principally Sun.

We sing songs for Sun, offer them to Sun, so that he knows that we are in connection with him, with this spirit giving us life, light every day. And to us Sun is a traveller, he does not stop a single second. Even frozen in his place, he is moving day and night, 24 hours per day on his path, to comply with his commitment to Earth. So every turn he makes is a journey. To us it is as if it were the world, a life. Tomorrow is already another world, tomorrow is another life. Nothing repeats itself the same way as today. Today, for instance, I am saying these words, tomorrow I will not be able to say it the same way. So each day for us is as a life that passes, as a lesson received, as a teacher who sits down in front of you to answer what you need to make life continue. So every day we sing for *Pawa* so that he knows that we are also at his side, in connection with him, so that our lives may have peace where he placed us.

Thōkiryari Piyāko sings:

Nama namatsirotxa kemoshire taātsi

I am coming, bringing true joy

So, adding a little: I was saying that Sun cannot bend. If he bends down, as the heat above is much bigger, he will burn everything here on Earth. If he bends down this planet ends, burning down completely. All dies. That is the sign that he arrived in Earth. So he descends on Earth and wipes out all that is there. We also experience, notice eclipses, in our science, in our stories they are a sign, to see if we are connected to Sun. In the story all this clarity may end and may become darkness, like the night. So it is a sign that he gives, that the light changes. If you are not in connection with him, asking for continuity and praying, asking Pawa to continue like it is, and for us to continue alive, he may fall and stop shining. So every single moment of an eclipse my people make offerings, do a complete ritual for this connection with Pawa, who is Sun, and the people in Earth, for this coexistence we share with him. To take care of him, to be together, giving him strength, giving steadiness, so that he may continue in position. So that he may continue to give life to all of us.

So our history also tells that Sun is going to descend. One day, he is going to descend here on Earth. If everybody is in connection with him and taking care, he is not going to burn. But if the person is disconnected, he is going to descend and cause everything to burn. So about this story I am telling from the time when I was a child, and who told it was my grandfather, what we see today is that not everybody is in connection. I feel Sun descending, getting lower. The waters are finishing because the heat of Sun is evaporating the water. The forest is being destroyed and nobody is taking care of her. The Earth is being heated, is getting warmer, and doesn't have her protection anymore. It is as if we took off our clothes and stayed in the hot Sun without any protection. Everything is warming up: many plants are dying, many places are catching fire. So the story my grandfather told about Sun, I see that this is getting closer. If we do not take very good care of all this, he may

descend on Earth and burn everything, all of us. Not only the plants, all the beings on the planet will be burnt.

And nobody can deal with that, right? Because he is powerful, he made all this, it is he who commands everything. So the only thing we can do is continue and take care of what he has handed over to us, look after Earth to be able to live. That is what we do today in the forest. We take care of the entire forest, take care of all the rivers, take care of all the animals, all the beings. So each time we go to the forest, each time we need to use a plant, we work with the spirits of the plants, so that they may protect us and help us within what was created. So we treat these beings, who are invisible, with immense caution. Because of this many people do not have any idea what they are doing when they destroy the forest, because they do not know what is inside, which is part of their lives, right? And we, as we know all this, take care because we understand and really know what this means for our lives.

I feel that Sun today has already descended more, because Sun is very hot. I see that even the green plants sometimes have some burnt leaves still on the tree. There is a lot of heat, much warmth that is coming to us here. And if we do not take care, much worse is going to happen.

One day I had a revelation, a vision, saw the planet splitting, being separated in two parts. Inside a huge chasm opened and smoke came out – nobody could pass from one side to the other in that smoke, because they disappeared in that chasm. One side of the planet froze and the other side was warming up. On the side that froze all ended, all died, there was no life. On the side that warmed up the small plants all died and the big trees continued. The adult people, on the side that was warming up, all died, and the young did not die all, they continued alive. Well, to me this was a very strong vision, about which I think until today. I have studied, thought and come to understand what this was. The small trees do not have depth in the soil, they are on top of it, so they die when the warmth and the heat come, for their roots are shallow. They die more easily. The big ones not, for their roots go deep, so there is more security of humidity in the soil and it is possible to survive longer. So these small ones, all died. The big ones that survived, in time they will develop a new adaptation within that heat and will produce new

fruit, with new seeds, to be born again. And the people, the adults died and the children did not die, because we as adults have more difficulty to adapt to surroundings. The children adapt more easily, as incredible as it may seem. There are people who say: “Ah, children don’t know how to do things”, but in the circle of life the children adapt much more easily to places than adults. So, to me, it was clearly this that happened.

So I have this connection with Sun and Earth. I do follow the stories taking place, how everything is out of balance. Today you see one place being burnt, catching fire and, on the other side, at the same time, in winter, all is flooded. And still somewhere else, during winter the rivers are drying up. So everything is out of balance, even the people’s thoughts. So this is all part of the negative energy and of what is happening.

We speak a lot about all this in our stories. Nobody is entitled to tamper with the creator, nobody can be against him. If we are against him, at any moment, we may receive an answer that we won’t be able to respond to. And the only ones who suffer are we. Many people die and do not know why they died. Many people also live and do not know why they live. So this is way off balance.

We *Ashaninka* see this world and there are two main worlds. Between the two main worlds, the spiritual one is the strongest. It is the spiritual that balances the material, it is the spiritual that continues taking care of all this we are talking about. It is what we need in order for matter to survive. So, if you do not know yourself, if you do not connect yourself to these two worlds there are, the spiritual and the material, as being one, you will not live correctly. You will always be off balance. Because of this our people work a lot with spirit, because spirit created all this, this planet in which we are today, and all of us, like I was telling here at the beginning of the story.

Pasōki, thank you very much.

ENDNOTES

1. The philosopher David Abram proposes using in the earth, instead of on the earth, because the air, even though it is invisible, is part of the earth's system. "[...] why don't we say that we live and dwell in the earth? We live on the earth, this is such a trope in our culture, but I mean come on, does the air exist? Is this a part of the earth? Surely it is! Although in our culture [...] it seems that if you can't see something then it's not there [...] therefore it's just an empty space, so we don't speak of the air [...] between myself and the Spruce out there. We speak of the empty space between us, which is odd because it isn't empty [...] it's just we don't see it, but we can feel it. [...] we don't live on the earth, we live in the earth, we are immersed in the earth, embedded in the earth". (TN)

GLOSSARY

PAWA – Creator god

ŪRIYA – Sun god

MOISÉS PIYÁKO is a respected shaman from the *Ashaninka* people and expert in the spiritual traditions of his people. Moisés lives in the village *Apiwtxa* situated on the banks of the river Amônia, in the state of Acre, Brazil. The village of more or less eight hundred *Ashaninka* people is situated in the Indigenous Territory *Kampa* do Rio Amônia, municipality of Marechal Thaumaturgo. The traditional *Ashaninka* area on the American continent comprises a vast territory, from Brazilian lands to the Andes Mountain Range in Peru. *Ashenĩka* is an autodenomination and can be translated as ‘my family’, ‘my folk’, ‘my people’. Moisés chose to tell his narrative about Sun in Portuguese because he prefers not to connect to the internet and wanted to guarantee the translation.

TRANSLATION
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Educator and translator; hiker, birder, beekeeper and storyteller, who loves reading and art – living in a small food forest close to a stream in the Piracicaba River Watershed. Honouring and acknowledging the *Guarani* and *Kaingang*, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters.

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Marina is a Brazilian dance maker who researches the conversation between performance, literature and philosophy. She runs the dance creation platform and publishing house Acampamento, and coordinates the communal English Translation Group of Selvagem cycle of studies.

Cover: Drawing of *Pawa* by *Moisés Piyãko*

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