

## Taita Hector Ortiz

Hector Ortiz was born in Colombia, in the state of Tolima, Ibaguè, where he grew up and completed his schooling and technical studies, receiving an Accounting Clerk Degree.

Growing up with his grandparents and being exposed to medicinal plants at an early age, he developed a natural affinity and devotion for natural healing practices and the use of homemade remedies with plants to treat all manner of diseases that appeared in the countryside.

In 1982, he began his internship in a prestigious Colombian bank, Banco Central Hipotecario (BCH), the second biggest bank in Colombia, at that time. Additionally, he attended the Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) and the Musical Conservatory of Tolima to pursue musical studies in vocal technique and instrumental execution with guitar.

In 1986 in search of better professional opportunities, Hector moved to the Colombian capital, Bogotà D.C, and started working as an Accounting Clerk. He also continued his education as a certified public accountant at the Central University of Colombia; and played music professionally, as part of duets, trios and sometimes as a soloist.

While working professionally in the world of music, he plunged into a deep alcohol addiction that lasted for 15 years, until early 2002 when he stumbled upon the Amazonian Cultures, and with the sacred element Ayahuasca or Yage. In March of that year, while teaching in the Inca University of Colombia, he met the late Taita RUBER GARRETA CHINDOY, from the Inga community of the lower Putumayo region in the Colombian Amazon and shared his first experience with the sacred culture of Ayahuasca-Yage.

Prior to his first ceremony, he had a brief interview with Taita Ruber, who without previous knowledge warned him about his alcohol addiction. The Taita never talked about Ayahuasca-Yage and just invited him to come and partake on an overnight natural detox. He participated on his first ceremony without prior information or details on the process or what he was going to ingest.

There were ten people sharing conversations about unknown and mysterious topics and after 10:00 pm., the Taita came out with a peculiar outfit, wearing a feather headpiece and a white shirt, that reached up to his knees with butterflies and birds' embroidery. He greeted them with a gesture of respect and much reverence and started with Catholic prayers. Next, he explained all about the process and mentioned the element of Ayahuasca-Yage, stating all the qualities this natural element has and emphasizing in the sacred and spiritual aspects of this experience. That night many other people experienced a variety of reactions, but Hector experienced only sleepiness.

In that unexpected ceremony, the universe was brewing changes to come for him. Unbeknownst to him this would be the beginning of the greatest and most beautiful

spiritual processes. This sacred element, at that time unknown to him, will become his creed and his greatest sacrament. After his first experience, he felt a beautiful energy inside, he felt stillness and peace.

The next Friday, he was encouraged to go to a second ceremony, still not knowing about the countless enigmatic reactions of Ayahuasca-Yage. Thirty minutes after drinking the first cup, he started feeling strange reactions on the extremities of his body. His face felt as if it was distorted and at the same time, he felt vibrations echoing throughout his body. He closed his eyes and saw a giant swirl that was absorbing him, in an amalgam of colors, black, grey and rainbow colors.

In his vision, he was then taken into a large dancing room, where he saw men and women with horns and tails dancing in the nude. It was a desperate moment and a great distress absorbed him. He was frightened and felt that a strange force was taking him to the dark depths. He asked for help from the Taita, but he wasn't there; finally, the Taita entered the room, but his eyes were red, and he also had horns. The fear turned into panic, the despair grew bigger until he started praying the "Lord's Prayer" then he felt like he was lost in a black cloud and suddenly everything ended.

Everything remained as it had begun. Ten minutes passed and then he saw a baby sustained in the air that was approaching him, and suddenly, he heard a sweet voice that told him: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," "let the children come to me, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and he started receiving messages, questions and answers in his mind. He felt the presence of the master Jesus Christ, and he was paralyzed when the master talked to him. Jesus repeatedly asked, "what have you been doing all these years?" And his answer was: "nothing good master." He hugged his own spirit and begged for forgiveness for his bad behavior in his 40 years of existence. Since that day, Hector decided to give up all the experiences from his past immediately, particularly those he considered wrongdoings.

After that experience, he was feeling an exceptional tranquility, he felt peaceful, renovated, and clear; therefore, he decided to make changes in his life which meant being committed to the great master.

He was far from understanding that on that night, his Christ consciousness was being awakened. He then started attending ceremonies each Friday, and sometimes on Wednesdays. Each ceremony was different with profound information of great spiritual degrees, and each time more purification for his spirit.

Four months after his first ceremony, during a journey he spiritually received his guitar and a healing to his vocal cords, and his tessitura was also adjusted. From this moment, his gift of singing and playing the guitar were meant only to praise God, so he quit music for commercial purposes. Two more years passed, and in many of his journeys he remembered many aspects of his previous lives. He received confirmation that in a past life, he had already been a Taita. Each time he was able to understand with more certainty the reason for which he had come to the path of sacred plant medicine.

In 2004 he had already been two years in the process, learning from Taita Ruber and from Taita Yagé-Ayahuasca, since this learning experience comes directly from the element. He had already been travelling through various cities of Colombia and had been in the jungle for several weeks learning from other high ranking Taitas, specifically Taita Miguel Garreta the father of Taita Ruber and his brothers.

Hector's function as Taita Ruber's disciple was fundamentally to sing and hold space in the ceremonies that Taita led, he would observe and learn the ways of healing, and the handling various sacred plants. They visited the great region of Mocoa, Putumayo; Florencia, Caquetá; Villavicencio, Meta; Ibagué, Tolima; Tunja, Boyacá; Bogotá, Cundinamarca amongst others. He followed and worked with Taita Ruber for four years and during this time he acquired great knowledge about the Inga culture, from the lower Putumayo region of Colombia. This knowledge had been passed from generation to generation. Taita Ruber was formed with the teachings of his father and of his mother the grandmother Maria Chindoy and of other Taitas elders of the Inga culture.

Due to personal inconveniences around 2006, Hector decided to part ways from his Taita, and around this time he met with siblings and relatives of the Barrera's Family, who had been taking Ayahuasca-Yage for more than five years and were also followers of Taita Ruber. They also practiced yoga and had been devoted to the doctrine and great Vedic culture of India. (Yogis Ayahuasca-Yage drinkers).

The Yogis invited him to meet an Elder Taita that had arrived from Mocoa, Putumayo, named Taita GUILLERMO MAVISOY MUTUMBAJOY who was about 55 years old, from the Kamentsa Biya community of lower Putumayo region. Hector attended the ceremony and took his guitar. The Taita asked him to sing and after listening to a song celebrating the Virgin Mary, he didn't want him to stop singing. Hector then asked the Taita to accept him as a follower and disciple, to which he was welcomed and thus he began the second stage of his schooling with Ayahuasca-Yage.

Each month Elder Taita Guillermo would lead ceremonies in Bogotá. Hector dedicated himself to be his disciple, learning other customs, ways of handling energy and herbalism. In July 2006, he was invited to the village, the indigenous reservation Kamentsa Biya in Villanueva, Mocoa, Putumayo. In this trip to the jungle, he learned several techniques of healing with plants, worked with several purgatives, and grew a closer relationship in handling the Ayahuasca-Yage.

Taita Guillermo used to host a big party every year in honor of Baby Jesus. The process started during the day with a Catholic mass, followed by a feast with food for everyone and at night, Ayahuasca-Yage was served to more than 150 people that came from several places in Putumayo and other states. Several Taitas from other ethnicities also participated, everyone would drink the sacred element and shared their teachings and traditions.

Each month, he visited the Taita in Mocoa and they also worked together in Bogotá. During the ceremonies he was in charge of the music, and soon he was formally introduced to the official use of different tools for this ancestral work, such as the ‘Guaira,’ the harmonicas, necklaces and the Capisayo, which is a poncho used in ceremonies.

In the First Quarter of 2007, Taita Guillermo invited Hector to the Amazonian jungle, with the purpose of teaching him how to prepare the medicine. There he learned how to cut the Ayahuasca-Yage vine and to harvest the leaves from the Chagropanga shrub.

The Ayahuasca-Yage vine is cut into pieces of about 16 inches in length, then they are scraped with the blade of a machete to eliminate the moss adhered to them. Once the pieces are clean, they are then mashed with a wooden mallet before they are placed into the brewing kettle that holds approximately 53 gallons of water. The Chagropanga leaves are separated from their stems by hand, and then rinsed before they are placed into the brewing kettle along with the mashed Ayahuasca-Yage pieces. And then the process of cooking Yage begins.

A homemade stove built with stones and lumber will hold a brewing kettle containing approx. 53 gallons of water. In approximately 24 hours, the liquid will be reduced to a yellow substance of approx. 26 gallons, which is then moved to a smaller brewing kettle and mixed with the chagropanga leaves and continue to cook for another 24 hours. By now the liquid substance has been reduced to approx. 8 gallons and the concoction is ready for consumption.

In order to obtain a more concentrated concoction, cook longer until the substance has a syrupy consistency, or furthermore into a paste. From the initial 53 gallons of liquid, one might obtain approx. 2.6 gallons of final product. The process of cooking cannot be interrupted from when it starts until obtaining the final product.

The quantity administered to the participants varies according to the degree of concentration of the concoction. If administered in liquid form, 8 ounces can be ingested. The quantity should be reduced in proportion to the concentration or thickness of the medicine. The flavor of Ayahuasca-Yage is always bitter but as it thickens, it becomes sweeter, and it smells more like molasses.

Taita Guillermo, had Ayahuasca-Yage and Chagropanga crops in his farm that needed to grow for five years, until they were ready for harvest. It is known that there are thirty-year-old Ayahuasca-Yage vines that produce a very potent medicine; there are also varieties of Ayahuasca-Yage, such as “cielo-huasca” (*heaven medicine*), “culebra-huasca” (*snake medicine*), “tigre-huasca” (*tiger medicine*), “loro-huasca” (*parrot medicine*), among others.

After learning to prepare medicine, he continued accompanying Taita Guillermo in his ceremonies to different places of Colombia. At the beginning of 2009, while at Taita Guillermo's farm they were invited to drink medicine in a private ceremony with Mama Concepcion Chindoy and Taita Gaspar Chindoy, the greatest expert in cooking Ayahuasca-Yage.

That night, around 2:00 am., Taita Guillermo referred to him for the first time as Taita Hector. Hector asked in a surprise tone, and with all due respect: "Taita?" Why are you calling me Taita?" Taita Guillermo kept silent for a while and then asked him for his '*guaira*', necklaces and the '*capisayo*'.

Taita Guillermo started doing a ritual to cleanse the elements, the same way you do a cleansing on a patient. After finishing this process, he put the '*capisayo*' and necklaces on him and gave him the '*guaira*', while saying "with the license of the great spirit, and the permission of the Taita Ayahuasca-Yage I ordain you Taita". That moment was so exciting and unforgettable, he ordered him to sing and serve the third cup of medicine for everyone. Taita Guillermo stated: "if you feel the necklaces and the *guaira* are very heavy, you take them off and if you don't, this confirms you are being welcomed to my ancestral pyramid KAMENTSA BIYA."

Taita Hector started to sing to the medicine to serve to everyone and drank his third cup. A lot of information came through for him that night, to the point that he felt the spirit of Ayahuasca-Yage overwhelm him; the great weight of responsibility was felt, and he accepted the new challenge. He held his elements to his body and played his guitar to sing praises until dawn.

Once the night was over, Taita gave him some recommendations on the transition from disciple to Taita and shared the rules of moral conduct, highlighting honesty and respect towards the patients and the elements. To become a Taita, a person should become a disciple for at least five years and in the right moment, receive the Taita's blessing to ensure the welcoming and protection to the ancestral pyramids and the ascended Taitas in the astral world. Although, Taita Guillermo had ordained Hector as a Taita, Hector knew he would always be his disciple. The next day before heading back to Bogota, Taita Hector was given a bottle of Ayahuasca-Yage to drink on his own.

Two months after finishing the homework of drinking that bottle of Ayahuasca-Yage and accompanying Taita to his ceremonies; he was then given another bottle of medicine and was asked to hold his own ceremony. The ceremony was successful and fifteen people had gathered to share the healing experience.

During that time, Mrs. Patricia Ramirez, a medicine woman from Taita Guillermo's group arrived in Bogotá and joined Taita Hector. Before the end of 2009 they started working together hosting ceremonies in Bogota, with Patricia Ramirez as disciple and follower.

After years of studying with Taita Ruber and Taita Guillermo, and organizing ceremonies in Bogotá, Taita Hector's following was growing, and other people became his disciples. One of them was Pedro Orjuela who was ordained by Taita Hector alongside Mama Patricia Ramirez.

Just like in every practice, there is a beginning, a learning process and then comes the mastery. It is the same in every discipline, there are stages to the process. And the first ones to achieve this mastery, were our ancestors, and the Masters, like Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and the great Siddhartha Gautama "the Buddha." They decided to study different disciplines in order to achieve their own Nirvana or self-realization and they were able to find the path to heaven and the merging with the everything, the unification with the Great Spirit. The path is a similar one when becoming a Medicine Man/Woman.

A Taita must go through all the stages in order to have good training and have enough experience to handle a very sacred and delicate medicine as the Ayahuasca-Yage. Many people think it is easy to serve Ayahuasca-Yage and earn money, unaware of the spiritual dimensionality of the medicine. From a spiritual perspective, the Ayahuasca-Yage is enigmatic and magical at the same time; essentially, it loves you or destroys you. Depending on your actions, it can be good or bad, heaven or hell. It is and it is not, at the same time, it is a limbo, it is what we are.

In 2011, Taita Hector met with Taita Jose Bernardo Chindoy, from the KAMENTSA BIYA community, brother of the great Mama Concepcion Chindoy at a ceremony in Cundinamarca. The ceremony was beautiful and since that day, they formed a very special bond of friendship and mentorship. Before Easter of that year, Taita Jose Bernardo, an upright man, defender of ancestral tradition of our Ayahuasca-Yage culture, traveled from Puerto Asis, Putumayo to give Taita Hector ten liters of the sacred medicine and they also had the opportunity of sharing space in private ceremonies.

Since then, Taita Hector recognizes his two masters Taita Ruber Garreta Chindoy and Taita Guillermo Mavisoy Mutambajoy as his teachers. By working alongside Taita Jose Bernardo Chindoy Chindoy, he affirms his knowledge, ethical and moral values, inside the same ancestral pyramid and the blessing of the highest ascended Taitas. As well as the divine protection in all places where the great spirit has guided him to carry out this noble cause,

planting this sacred seed in the hearts of those who the spirit has guided towards this encounter.

In September 2015, Taita Hector received a call from Taita Jose Bernardo, who told him that in his medicine journeys, he was seeing doors open up for him outside of Colombia, but he did not specify which country. Sometime in October, the Taita, informed him that once again his visions and other information received pointed to Taita Hector's international travels with the sacred medicine.

In December 2015, Taita Hector moved again to his village, "El Palmar" in the municipality of Puerto Asís, in Putumayo, in the Amazon jungle and participated with Taita Jose Bernardo in two ceremonies, where there was a third confirmation regarding his departure from Colombia.

Around February 2016, Taita Hector met again with a musician friend from Arkawa Productions, who had recorded his two musical productions. Taita Hector was asked to participate in a project and to be part in a video for one of the songs that Arkawa was producing, as well as a photo session in the Guatavita Lagoon in Cundinamarca Colombia. By May of the same year, the producer went to one of Taita Hector's medicine ceremonies and a few days after, called him to ask if he wanted to come to the United States of America to serve medicine. Remembering the prophecy of the Taita Jose Bernardo the process began and by June 2016, Taita Hector had received a letter of invitation from a foundation to join a musical gathering, and a tourist visa was granted to him without any inconveniences. A few months later he was hosting his first medicine ceremony in Miami and then another in Orlando, Florida.

Before departing Colombia, he went to the jungle to share the news with Taita Jose Bernardo, and to receive a spiritual cleansing. During his stay, he participated in two ceremonies and received Taita's blessing. Many inconveniences took place in the process causing him to arrive late to the airport, but thankfully, the flight had been delayed, confirming once again that his future was beginning to be built outside of Colombia. At this moment, he recognized once again that when it comes to God's will, there is no human power which can block the will of that great spirit.

Taita Pedro Orjueja and the musical producer traveled with Taita Hector. Upon arriving to Miami, FL they had a conference talk about medicine and shared some medicine music. Friday night was his first Ayahuasca-Yage ceremony in the US in Miami, FL and on Saturday they traveled to Orlando, FL to hold the second night of ceremony. By Tuesday they were traveling back to Colombia.

Around February 2017, he was contacted by an organizer in Houston, Texas who was inviting him to lead a ceremony in that city and through several other contacts, he did a tour in California, as well as Florida. He returned to Colombia in April and in May and then in June he was contacted for more ceremonies in Houston, Texas. He stayed in Porter, Texas, for five months, hosting ceremonies in that state as well as in Portland, Washington, and other cities in Florida and Kentucky and lastly in Chicago, Illinois.

On these tours, he met various groups of people, and became friends with a Mexican gentleman, who invited him to return to Houston, Texas where he currently resides, serving God, the American people and immigrants from various regions of our planet who have found home in this great country.

Taita Hector's formation included training with Taitas (shamans) from the Inga communities of the lower Putumayo, a humid tropical zone of the Colombian Amazon jungle, and the Kamentsa Biya communities of the higher Putumayo region. The cultural ethnicities of Kamentsa Biya and Inga, among others such as the 'Cofanes' and 'Sionas' have an Ayahuasca-Yage tradition dating thousands of years. These ethnicities have used the Ayahuasca-Yage as well as their ancestral knowledge on Herbalism as a bridge of healing for their communities.

Since starting this spiritual path to the present Taita Hector has spent almost twenty years learning from and serving those who have answered the call to walk the spiritual path. This path awakened his universal Christ consciousness and open him up to learn from the great master teachers who have lived and walked on this earth. Some of the master teachers that he has studied and learn from are Jesus Christ, from the great cultures from Israel. The Mahatma Gandhi Ji, the great Mahavatar Baba Ji and his line of masters, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Juktiswar Giri Ji, the great Sri Parama Hansa Yogananda Ji, from the great Vedic culture of India amongst others.

Taita Hector is a Ayahuasca-Yage medicine man, who has worked with the absolute conviction of serving God. He has found in his heart, that our sacred ancestors, the Taitas, from Amazonia, (Incas, Sionas, Kamentsa Biya, Cofanes, Inga, Wayuu-Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Colombia); as well as the great cultures from Central America, (Mayan, Aztec and Totelc); and from North America (Algonquins, Iroquois, Atapascos, Eskimos and Sioux) are similar to the Yogis of India, of the great Vedic culture. Each one of these with their cosmogony and their universal cosmovision, and yet each one with their universal mission of helping to awaken consciousness, practicing, and bringing religiousness and creed to practice and science.

Taita Hector walks this medicine path stating, "I am not a master, I have not found self-realization and much less enlightenment, I am in a spiritual process, in a search, inside



my spiritual being. My religion and my sacrament are the Yagé-Ayahuasca, and my commitment is with God, to serve humanity.”