



# The globalization of Ayahuasca

## An Amazonian psychoactive and its users

### Location

University of Heidelberg, Institute of Medical Psychology, Bergheimer Straße 20, 69115  
([www.medpsych.uni-hd.de](http://www.medpsych.uni-hd.de))

### Organizers

Henrik Jungaberle, Jan Weinhold, Rolf Verres, Bia Labate as a part of SFB 619 Ritualdynamics  
([www.ritualdynamik.uni-hd.de](http://www.ritualdynamik.uni-hd.de))

### TIME

Fri May 16<sup>th</sup> – Sun May 18<sup>th</sup> 2007

### Aims of the conference

- Discussing the issues of cultural transfer and globalization of a hallucinogenic plant potion
- Comparing ritual settings in different parts of the world
- Defining the most effective dimensions of traditional Ayahuasca rituals and their transformations in (post)modern societies
- Discussing the role of experiential dimensions in ritual
- Promoting a biopsychosocial approach
- Creating an interdisciplinary dialogue between researchers and experts from medicine, psychology, religious science, anthropology and state institutions
- Describing the spectrum of Ayahuasca users and the altered states they experience
- Giving impulses for the dialogue between practicing groups and state institutions
- Interdisciplinary publication (to be finished by Nov 15th 2008)

### Outline

Ayahuasca is a term which describes a hallucinogenic plant potion that has been used in traditional indigenous cultures of the Amazon. Its pharmacological ingredients differ, but always contain *Banisteriopsis caapi* and mostly a DMT-containing additive (most frequently chacruna leaves). From the beginning of the 20th century on a number of religious and other cultural groups have integrated this potion into different non-indigenous cultural settings, including psychotherapeutic treatments. In Brazil three different churches have developed which use this plant as a religious sacrament, at least two of these churches (the Santo Daime and the UDV) have branches in several countries in the world.

From the 1990ties on Ayahuasca has migrated more quickly into the globalizing world. Since this time interdisciplinary scientific studies have increased and institutions of different states have dealt with the question of positioning Ayahuasca within their legal systems. Medical, juridical and religious questions have to be addressed, basic information on the substance, institutions and groups which use Ayahuasca have to be spread and discussed on national and international terms. There is significant confusion and contradiction considering the politics of international and national institutions dealing with Ayahuasca "cases", which have been dealt within the legal system or in public.

The conference is supposed to create a dialogue between different groups engaged with the Ayahuasca phenomenon. Understanding the phenomenon is important for creating local policies and



addressing the stigmatization of its users. Representatives of the Santo Daime Church from Brazil and Germany will give an example of their religious practice and legal situation.

State-of-the-art knowledge on medical, psychological and cultural background of the phenomenon will be presented and discussed with the participants.

A longitudinal study with European Ayahuasca drinkers which is located at Heidelberg University since 2003 will present its results on the psychological and biographical development of its study participants.

**Questions addressed will cover topics like:**

- the ritual structures and dynamics as well as the possible “home use” of Ayahuasca
- the struggle between “modernity” and traditional heritage in Ayahuasca ritual
- the relevance of ritual settings to the social acceptance of Ayahuasca use
- the medical and social risk assessment of Ayahuasca use
- the use of Ayahuasca in healing within and outside of medical contexts
- the recursive use of scientific knowledge within some practicing groups
- the question of authenticity and hybridity in the ritual settings of the practicing Ayahuasca groups within and outside of Brazil
- religious tolerance and dogmatism within and outside of the Ayahuasca communities
- the meaning of altered states of consciousness for the broader study of religion
- current distribution of Ayahuasca use in Europe and the United States
- structures of and conflicts within the user groups in European contexts
- next steps in scientific investigation of the Ayahuasca phenomenon

**Creating a critical dialogue**

In order to create a critical dialogue we want to invite several persons concerned with Ayahuasca from different fields of society.

We will have a “reflecting team” within the conference that will comment on each of the five sections with from a certain viewpoint before or while we discuss the presentations. For example:

- public health, addiction and drug education
- freedom of religion and basic rights
- spirituality and traditional religion
- controlled substances legislation
- ...



## CONFERENCE Plan

Presentations are supposed to last for 30 min plus 15 min discussion on the paper

Friday, May 16th 2008

	TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
<b>SECTION 1</b>			
<b>AYAHUASCA IN SOCIOCULTURAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHARMACOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>			
	09:00 – 09:15	<b>Opening: Ayahuasca and its rituals – An interdisciplinary challenge to science, religion &amp; drug policy</b>	Dr. Henrik Jungaberle, Jan Weinhold, Prof. Rolf Verres & Bia Labate
1	09:15 – 10:00	<b>Reviewing religious drug use from both the perspective of biomedicine and psychedelic therapy</b> <i>Medicine</i>	Dr. Charles Grob
2	10:00 - 10:45	<b>“The investigation of mind in culture” – Ayahuasca as a tool for experiential and (trans)cultural self-exploration</b> <i>Medical Psychology</i>	Dr. Henrik Jungaberle
<b>15 MIN BREAK</b>			
3	11:00 – 11:45	<b>The Ayahuasca plants <i>Banisteriopsis caapi</i> and <i>Psychotria viridis</i>: distribution and management in species conservation</b> <i>Ethnobotany</i>	Dr. Maria Alice Correa
	11:45 – 12:00	<b>Reflecting Team</b>	
	11:45 - 12:30	Open Discussion on the morning presentations and focusing the conference	
<b>12:30-14:30 LUNCH BREAK and RELAXING</b>			
<b>SECTION 2</b>			
<b>THE VIEW FROM INSIDE: THE SANTO DAIME COMMUNITY, UNIAO DO VEGETAL AND INDEPENDENT GROUPS IN BRAZIL AND THE WORLD</b>			
4	14:30-15:15	<b>The spirituality of the Santo Daime Church and its implication for healing</b> Representative of the Santo Daime Church/Brazil	Alex Polari
5	15:15-16:00	<b>Who we are, what we do? – Historical and present situation of the German Santo Daime movement</b> Representative of the Santo Daime Church/Germany	Hajo Sander
<b>30 MIN BREAK</b>			
6	16:30-17:15	<b>The Uniao do Vegetal and its politics towards science and larger society</b> Practitioner	Edson Lodi
<b>15 MIN BREAK</b>			
7	17:30-18:15	<b>Serious Drinking – non-institutional spirituality and counter culture. The Ayahuasca scene in Europe</b> Practitioner	Arno Adelaars
	18:15-18:30	<b>Reflecting Team</b>	
	18:30-19:00	Open Discussion on the afternoon presentations and the day	
<b>60 MIN TAKE A WALK OR REST</b>			
<b>OPEN FILM &amp; FOOD NIGHT</b>			
	20:00	Eating, talking and watching short movies on the Ayahuasca topic at the Institute of Medical Psychology	



Saturday, May 17th 2008

	TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
<b>SECTION 3</b>			
<b>SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES: RITUAL DYNAMICS AND THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS</b>			
8	09:00-09:45	<b>Ayahuasca Groups and Networks in the Netherlands – A Challenge to the Contemporary Study of Religion</b> <i>Science of Religion</i>	Prof. Wouter Hanegraaff
9	09:45-10:30	<b>The Brazilian Ayahuasca Religions – Origins and transformations ...</b> <i>Cultural Anthropology</i>	Bia Labate
<b>15 MIN BREAK</b>			
10	10:45-11:30	<b>Ritual transfer - and its limits</b> <i>Medical Psychology</i>	Jan Weinhold
<b>15 MIN BREAK</b>			
11	11:45-12:30	<b>Charting the phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience</b> <i>Psychology</i>	Prof. Benny Shannon
	12:30-12:45	<b>Reflecting Team</b>	
	12:30-13:00	Open Discussion on the morning presentations	
<b>13:00-15:00 LUNCH BREAK AND RELAXING</b>			
<b>SECTION 4</b>			
<b>HEALTH, HEALING AND MEDICAL ISSUES CONCERNING AYAHUASCA USE</b>			
12	15:00 – 15:45	<b>Health in Ayahuasca Users – Recent Findings and future research</b> <i>Psychology</i>	Dr. Jordi Riba
13	15:45 – 16:30	<b>Effects, Risks and Side-Effects - The subjective dimension of Healing with Ayahuasca</b> <i>Medical Psychology</i>	Prof. Rolf Verres
<b>30 MIN BREAK</b>			
14	17:00 – 17:45	<b>Treating Addiction with Ayahuasca</b> <i>Medicine</i>	Dr. Jacques Mabit
<b>15 MIN BREAK</b>			
15	18:00-18:45	<b>N.N.</b> <i>Medicine</i>	Dr. Rick Strassman
	18:45-19:00	<b>Reflecting Team</b>	
	19:00-19:30	Open Discussion on the afternoon presentations and the day	
<b>HEIDELBERG OPEN ALL NIGHT</b>			
	19:30	Taking the evening off or joining our “Heidelberg Culture & Science” Tour	



Sunday, May 18th 2008

	TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
<b>SECTION 5</b> <b>RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY &amp; DRUG POLICY – FROM RITUAL TO RIGHTS?</b>			
16	09:00-09:45	<b>The State as a keeper of religion? Religious freedom and civil society in history and presence</b> <i>Science of Religion</i>	N.N. (Prof. Dr. Hubert Seiwert?)
17	09:45-10:30	<b>Taking the Santo Daime Case to the European Court – On freedom of religion in national and international law</b> <i>Lawyer</i>	Adele van den Plas
15 MIN BREAK			
18	10:45-11:30	<b>The United Nations treaties on psychotropic substances and the ritual use of psychoactives</b> <i>Medicine</i>	Prof. Charles D. Kaplan
19	11:30-11:45	<b>The use and misuse of basic rights in the debate about religious freedom – Where does it end?</b> <i>Member of the Federal Parliament of Germany</i>	N.N.
15 MIN BREAK			
	12:00-12:15	<b>Reflecting Team &amp; Organizers of the Conference: Focussing the conference – Recapitulating major thesis and questions</b>	Bia Labate Dr. Henrik Jungaberle
	12:15 – 13:15	Final Discussion	