

## SOPHIA FOUNDATION PILGRIMAGE TO PERU (2014)—Part I

Robert Powell

*“When the Eagle of the North and Condor of the South fly together, the Earth will awaken” —  
Exploring the Sacred Sites & Mysteries of Peru*

August 29 – September 13, 2014

### Summary:

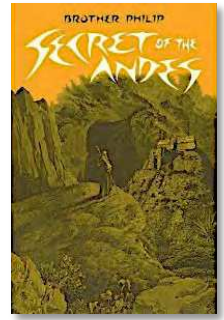
The 2014 pilgrimage of the Sophia Foundation to sacred sites in Peru offered an opportunity to visit the land of Pachamama, the goddess revered as the Earth Mother or World Mother by the indigenous people of the Andes. Long ago it was believed that we are born from Her and will, at death, return to Her. In Inca mythology, Pachamama presided over planting and harvesting. The capital and center of the Inca empire was Cusco—“the navel of the world” for the Inca—which we visited briefly on our way to the sacred Inca site of Machu Picchu, about 45 miles northwest of Cusco. Among the other sacred sites that we visited in the land of Pachamama was Lake Titicaca, the solar plexus (Mercury) chakra of the Earth—as described in *Astrogeographia* (co-authored by Robert Powell & David Bowden). The overarching theme of our pilgrimage: “When the Eagle and the Condor fly together, the Earth will awaken” relates to the ability of the Eagle, the symbol of the peoples of North America, and the Condor, the symbol of the peoples of South America, to soar to great heights, to the realm where the golden light of the spirit is to be found—the light which is to shine into human consciousness and give birth to a New Age, a Golden Age, here upon the Earth. This will be an age of unity and peace, brotherhood and sisterhood between human beings, also manifesting in a new attitude of loving care for Mother Earth (Pachamama). These themes of unity, peace, and care for the Earth were important aspects of our pilgrimage to Peru, our first to South America. Further aspects of this pilgrimage were to connect with the great Earth chakra on the South American continent—Lake Titicaca—and to explore the profundity of the Inca mysteries at Machu Picchu and other sacred sites in Peru.

Dear Friends of Sophia,

It was with great anticipation that a group of twenty-four traveled together on the Sophia Foundation pilgrimage in Peru in late August/first half of September 2014. The rich itinerary began with a short stay in Lima, which happened to coincide with a celebratory parade dedicated to Santa Rosa (St. Rose of Lima), the venerated patron saint of Peru and patroness of the whole of Latin America and also the Philippines. This was a very moving event, as Santa Rosa is also the patron saint of the Peruvian police and armed forces. There were many police present—male and female—who stood with deep solemnity and saluted the great statue of Santa Rosa as she was carried slowly and majestically forward on a magnificently decked litter borne on the shoulders of some thirty priests/novitiates. August 30 is the official date in the Church calendar commemorating St. Rose of Lima, and again on this date we were made aware of Santa Rosa by Jorge Luis Delgado, our Peruvian guide, when we received a briefing from

him upon our arrival in Cusco, the capital city of the ancient Empire of the Sun of the Inca people.

The central focus of this pilgrimage is expressed in the above summary: our visits to the Inca sacred sites of Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. See also the report written by Christine Holmstrom below. Here, in addition to Christine's report, something is presented concerning the spiritual background to our pilgrimage, drawn from the book *Secret of the Andes*, written—or, rather, “transmitted”—by “Brother Philip,” although it was George Hunt Williamson who actually wrote the book (originally published in 1961; republished in a new, expanded edition, with contributions by other authors, in 2011).<sup>1</sup>



The following is an excerpt from the introductory words of Brother Philip to the book *Secret of the Andes*:

#### The Origin of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays.

Lemuria is the name for the last part of the great Pacific continent of Mu. The actual destruction of Mu and its submergence began before 30,000 BC. This action continued for many thousands of years until the final portion of old Mu known as Lemuria was also submerged in a series of new disasters that were terminated between 10,000 and 12,000 BC. This occurred just prior to the destruction of Poseidonis, the last remnant of the Atlantic continent, Atlantis. Lord Amaru Muru [also: Aramu Muru] was one of the great Lemurian sages and the Keeper of the Scrolls during the last days of doomed Mu.

It was well known to the masters of Lemuria that the final catastrophe would cause gigantic tidal waves to take the last of their land down into the angry sea and oblivion. Those working on the Left Hand Path continued diabolic experiments and heeded not the “writing on the wall.”

The Masters and Saints working on the Right Hand Path began to collect the precious records and documents from the Libraries of Lemuria. Each Master was chosen by the Council of the Great White Hierarchy to go to a different section of the world, where, in safety, he could set up a School of the Ancient and Arcane Wisdom. This was to preserve the scientific and spiritual knowledge of the past. At first, for many thousands of years, these schools were to remain a mystery to the inhabitants of the world; their teachings and meetings were to be secret. Hence, they are called even today Mystery Schools or the Shangri-La's of Earth.

Lord Meru [Amaru Muru], as one of the teachers of Lemuria, was delegated by the Hierarchy to take the Sacred Scrolls in his possession along with the enormous Golden Disc of the Sun to the mountainous area of a newly formed lake in what is

---

<sup>1</sup> Brother Philip, *Secret of the Andes and the Golden Disc of Mu* (New Brunswick, NJ: Inner Light, 2011), edited by Timothy Green Beckley and Brent Raynes, with appendices contributed by Joshua Shapiro, John J. Robinson, Charles A. Silva, and Harold T. Wilkins.

now South America. Here he would guard and sustain the focus of the illumination flame. The Disc of the Sun was kept in the great Temple of Divine Light in Lemuria and was not merely an object of ritual and adoration, nor did it serve that single purpose later on when it was used by the High Priests of the Sun among the Incas of Peru. Amaru Muru journeyed to the new land in one of the silver needle airships of the time.

While the final portions of the former continent were breaking up in the Pacific Ocean, terrible catastrophes were taking place all over the Earth. The Andean range of mountains was born at this time, and disfigured the west coast of South America. The ancient city of Tiahuanaco (Bolivia) was at that time a great seaport and a Lemurian empire colonial city of magnificence and importance to the motherland. During the ensuing cataclysms it was raised from sea level, with a mild and tropical climate, to high on a barren, wind-swept plain, with a frigid arctic-like climate. Before this took place, there had been no Lake Titicaca, which is now the highest navigable lake in the world, over twelve thousand feet above sea level.

It was to a newly-formed lake that Lord Meru arrived from sunken Lemuria. Now known as Lake Titicaca, the Monastery of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays came into being here, organized and perpetuated by Amaru Muru. This Monastery, which was to be the home of the Brotherhood throughout all ages on Earth, was placed in a immense valley that had been created during the days of the birth of the Andes, and was a strange child of Nature in that its exact disposition and altitude gave it a warm, semi-tropical climate where fruits and nuts could grow to phenomenal size. Here on top of ruins that had once been at sea level, like the city of Tiahuanaco, Lord Meru had the Monastery constructed of gigantic blocks of stone cut only by the energy of primary light force. This cyclopean structure is the same today as it was then, and continues to be a repository of Lemurian science, culture, and arcane knowledge.

Other Masters of Lemuria, the Lost Continent, journeyed to other parts of the world and also set up Mystery Schools, so that humanity would have throughout all time on Earth the secret knowledge hidden away, not lost, but hidden, until the children of Earth had spiritually progressed to study again and advanced to use the Divine Truths.

The secret science of Atlantis and other highly advanced world civilizations is to be found today in the libraries of these schools, for these civilizations also sent out wise men to found Inner Retreats and Sanctuaries throughout the world. Such Retreats were under the direct guidance and guardianship of the Great White Brotherhood, the Hierarchy of Earth's spiritual Mentors.

The valley of the Monastery of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays is known as the valley of the Blue Moon and is located high in the Andes Mountains on the northern, Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca. Lord Meru did not immediately set up the Monastery on his arrival at Lake Titicaca, but he wandered for many years, studying

and fasting in the wilderness, where he was joined by others who had escaped the catastrophes. He was originally accompanied by his feminine aspect, *Amara Mara*, when he departed from Lemuria in the needle-like airship. These were not space craft, but were used by the Motherland for trade between the colonies.

The Brotherhood of the Seven Rays had existed throughout the ages. However, it had never before had a monastery where students of life, highly advanced on the Great Path of Initiation, could come together in spiritual harmony to blend the flow of their life streams. Each student at the monastery came under the influence of one of the Seven Great Rays of Life, as we all do, and these rays were to be blended by each student weaving his, or her, Ray, as if it were a colored thread, into the tapestry which symbolized the Spiritual Life of the Monastery. Therefore, it was called the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays, also known as the Brotherhood of Illumination.

Held by ropes of pure gold in a shrine in the greatest Temple of Divine Light of the Motherland of Mu was the gigantic Golden Disc of the Sun...In part, it was an object of adoration because it served in ritualistic temple services as a focus or point of concentration for those meditating. It also served as a symbolic representation of the Great Central, or Cosmic Sun, which, in turn, symbolizes the Creator...The Golden Sun Disc of Mu was not made of ordinary gold, but was transmuted gold, and unusual in its qualities in that it was a translucent metal...Lord Meru brought this Disc with him when he journeyed to Lake Titicaca, and it was placed in a subterranean temple at the Monastery of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays...

When the Incas came to Peru (and come they did, for they were not native Quechua Indians, but came from a land across the Pacific), they established a highly spiritual society on top of the ruins of the great culture that had belonged to the Colonial Empire of Lemuria. The High Priests of the Sun of Tawantinsuyo—the name of the Inca Empire—built their Temple of the Sun named Coricancha exactly on top of an older structure dating from very remote times. From ancient records in their homeland across the Pacific they learned of the Golden Sun Disc of Mu and they knew it had been removed from the doomed continent and taken to a new land where Lord Meru had founded an Inner Retreat or Sanctuary.

Once in Peru, the Incan High Priests searched long for the Disc but were never able to locate it. However, when they had reached the place on the Spiritual Pathway where they could use the Disc to the benefit of all their people—the native, indigenous tribes they had amalgamated into an empire—as it had been used on Mu, then it was presented to them for their daily use in their Temple of the Sun at Cusco.

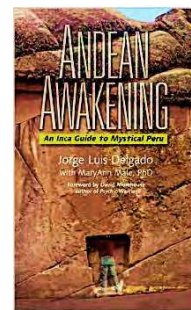
The Inca Emperor at the time was a Divine Mystic or Saint, and he made a pilgrimage to the Monastery at Lake Titicaca, and there Amaru Muru, as Spiritual Head or Abbot of the Brotherhood, gave the Disc to the Emperor. Several Brothers from the lake were directed to journey with him to the capital of the empire, Cusco. Here the Disc was placed in a shrine that had been prepared for it, and it was

secured with golden ropes as it had been held in ancient Lemuria. Even today, the holes through which these ropes passed can be seen at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Cusco which is build on top of the Pre-Inca and Inca Sun Temple. The Incas called their Temple of the Sun Coricancha, which means Place of Gold or Garden of Gold...

The Brotherhood of the Seven Rays became the leading force in the spiritual life of the Incas, and they learned the use of the Disc from ancient records left by the wise Pre-Incas who were Lemurian colonists. The Disc remained in the Coricancha at Cusco until word reached the priests that Don Francisco Pizarro had landed in Peru. Knowing full well what was going to take place, sorrowfully they removed the Disc from the Cusco shrine and returned it to its place in the subterranean temple at the Monastery. The Spanish conquerors never saw it...

It was put in the hands of the Head of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays, Amaru Muru. The Disc will remain at Lake Titicaca until that day “when human beings are spiritually ready” to receive it and to use it once again. On that day the Golden Disc will be taken out of its subterranean chamber and placed high above the Monastery of the Brotherhood. For many miles the pilgrims of the New Dawn will see it once again reflecting the glorious rays of the Sun. Coming from it will be an undeniable tone of purest harmony that will bring followers of light up the foot-worm path to the ancient gate of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays....

So much for the account from the book *Secret of the Andes*, which contains much of great interest to spiritual seekers. The foregoing short extract helps to give a picture of something of the background to our pilgrimage to Peru. In the following, the connection of our guide, Jorge Luis Delgado, author of the book *Andean Awakening: An Inca Guide to Mystic Peru*,<sup>2</sup> to Amaru Muru [also: Aramu Muru] and also to the Golden Disc of the Sun will emerge. Jorge grew up in Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, where his mother tongue was Aymara and where he learned Quechua as well as Spanish. Later he learned English. As he indicates in his book:



In the Andean tradition, Lake Titicaca is the Lake of the Origin of the People. Civilization started on the lake. It is considered the birthplace of the First Inca. The legend says *Manco Capac* and *Mama Ocllo* had been sent by Father Sun to organize the people to help them live more harmoniously. The name Inca originally meant “leader of the people.” Later, all of the people came to be known as Incas. The lake was the place on Mother Earth for the birth of the first Inca, who was sent to lead the people to the Father. Lake Titicaca is considered the Womb of Mother Earth. It is the seat of the feminine polarity of the planet. The masculine polarity is in Tibet, in the Himalaya Mountains...

---

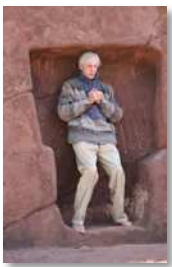
<sup>2</sup> Jorge Luis Delgado and MaryAnn Male, *Andean Awakening: An Inca Guide to Mystic Peru* (Graham, NC: Millichap Books, 2012).

Over and over, I kept having the same dream. According to Andean legend, when the Spanish arrived in South America, a Golden Disc that held the record of many ancient civilizations was taken from the capital city of Cusco to the Monastery of the Seven Rays, and later hidden in a crystal city in the depths of Lake Titicaca. In my recurring dream, I was saying goodbye to my friends and walking in the direction of the Monastery of the Seven Rays. I was walking past some pink stones, like sandstones. Always, just as I was about to arrive at my destination, I awoke...

As this dream came again and again, it became increasingly important to me to know the meaning and why I never got to the monastery...Bebedero del Inca is close to Lake Titicaca, but is not located on the shores of the lake. This ancient site sits inland, about two kilometers from the lake...As soon as I had some free time, I decided to go walking at Bebedero del Inca...[There] I found the exact place manifested from my dream...I was led down into the valley to my left. I soon became aware of a large natural pink sandstone wall on my right. It was approximately eighteen feet wide and twenty-one feet high. It appeared to be very ancient. A mysterious stone portal caught my attention. As I got closer, I sensed that the portal, or doorway, was of another dimension...I experienced many visions while standing in the doorway...

As I stepped back and peered at the doorway, I reflected on the most meaningful vision I had while standing in the doorway. In the vision, I saw the back of a man walking through the doorway and disappearing into the wall. The inner knowing of my open heart then made it apparent to my conscious mind that the man was Master *Aramu Muru* as he passed through this doorway into another dimension.

One of the legends of Aramu Muru is associated with the Golden Disc of the Incas. In the legend, Aramu Muru brought this Golden Disc from Lemuria as a symbol of humanity's connection to *Hatun Inti* (Divine Central Sun). Lemuria, an advanced civilization on a massive continent in the Pacific Ocean, sank before the Andes Mountains were born. When Aramu Muru decided to leave this reality, it is said that he went to Lake Titicaca and walked through the doorway to an unknown mystical dimension.



Robert in the sacred doorway

When we came to Lake Titicaca, Jorge guided us to the sacred doorway of Aramu Muru, where each one of us was offered the opportunity to stand at this mystical doorway to another dimension. On account of Jorge's discovery of this portal and because of his vision of Aramu Muru going through it, the doorway is now called the portal of Aramu Muru / Aramu Muru. In going there and standing at the portal, the opportunity presents itself to follow Aramu Muru through to another dimension into the subterranean crystal city beneath Lake Titicaca, where the Golden Disc is presently located.

We were very fortunate to have Jorge Luis Delgado as our guide, who was able to impart to us much of the wisdom of the ancient Inca priestly tradition. What Jorge shared was very enriching, and I shall explore this further in Part II of this article.

As an indication as to how deeply connected Jorge is with that which is quoted above—from *Secret of the Andes* and from his own book *Andean Awakening*—in February 2010, Jorge organized a gathering of people from all over the world to work with himself and other indigenous elders of Peru to reactivate the Golden Disc. Five hundred pilgrims from all walks of life and all corners of the Earth joined with Jorge and the other Peruvian elders at Lake Titicaca to perform a ceremony to reactivate the Solar Disc. Jorge and other descendants of the Incas believe that a new era has begun, a new *pachacuti*, as they call it—an era bringing with it a return to the essence, to the heart, to the Inner Sun symbolized by the Golden Disc.

During the course of our pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Peru, Jorge described how, through the attunement of our heart to the Sun, we can awaken to the connection of our heart—through our Sun—with the Central Sun at the heart of our galaxy: the Great Central Sun (*Hatun Inti*), that is the Divine Heart at the galactic center, from which everything in our galaxy, with its some two hundred billion stars (each star being a Sun, like our Sun), has originated.

[To be continued in Part II of this article.]

Owing to the profound depths that were activated within us during our pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Peru, we shall explore these mysteries further in our 2015 annual Sophia Conference at Sophia's Sanctuary in Sebastopol, California, from Saturday, June 20 to Tuesday, June 23. The following is a brief description of the theme for this upcoming 2015 summer conference.

### **The Shifting Life Energy of Mother Earth and the Mission of the Americas**

Following upon the 2014 Sophia Foundation Annual Conference, where the weaving together of the Buddhist and Christian streams was contemplated in light of Gautama Buddha's prophecy regarding the future coming of the next Buddha, the Maitreya, this year we shall develop the interweaving of spiritual streams further. In our 2015 annual conference we are seeking to explore the role of Mother Earth in the interweaving of spiritual streams.

Basically, the life of Mother Earth is changing. There is a vast shift taking place in that the instreaming of Divine Masculine energy in the Himalayas is giving way to an instreaming of Divine Feminine energy in the Andes. This was indicated some years ago by the Dalai Lama, who spoke about a shift of the Earth's spiritual energy center from the Himalayas to the Andes. To explore this shift, we shall look at the spiritual treasures handed down through the Inca people, whose kingdom, which extended across the Andean plateau, they called the *Empire of the Sun*, and who called themselves *Children of the Sun*. Could this be seen, perhaps, as a presentiment of the coming of Divine Sophia "clothed with the Sun" (Revelations 12:1)?

What does this shift signify for the Western hemisphere? Can this be viewed in the context of the great mystery tradition of the West embodied in the *search for the Holy Grail*, the striving to become *Grail bearers*, bearing responsibility for the spiritualization of Mother Earth, dedicated to Divine Sophia, who is the archetypal Grail Bearer?

In truth, we are all *Children of the Sun*, weaving the future together as brothers and sisters in the evolving human family united with Mother Earth. The Sophia Foundation seeks to serve the world's emerging spiritual culture, which, in turn, is focused upon caring for Mother Earth and all her creatures, including caring for one's fellow human beings as members of one great spiritual family. This future spiritual culture is known as the *Rose of the World*—the rose being a symbol of Sophia.

Among the various themes we shall explore at our annual Sophia conference this year are: the *Rainbow prophecy* of the Inca people; the shifting life energy of Mother Earth, where the new science of *Astrogeographia* can help us to understand this shift; the connection of the starry heavens to Mother Earth; the mission of the Americas; the messages of various Marian apparitions in the Americas; ways of attuning the human heart in the awakening to the Divine Feminine; the mysteries of the Holy Grail and becoming a Grail bearer; and the coming of the *Rose of the World*—the new Sophia world culture based on love and wisdom.

No previous knowledge of these themes is required. The conference is open to all who are seeking for deeper meaning in life.

\* \* \* \* \*

Courtesy of Michael Choy, here is a link to many of the photos he took on the Peru pilgrimage: [mchoy.smugmug.com/Groups/SophiaFoundation/PeruPilgrimage2014/45637763\\_PJwCGz](http://mchoy.smugmug.com/Groups/SophiaFoundation/PeruPilgrimage2014/45637763_PJwCGz)



Our spiritual guides and leaders  
Junia Imel, Robert Powell,  
Karen Rivers, Jorge Luis Delgado



The assistant editor  
Sandra Eastburn Weil  
at Machu Picchu



## Healing the Earth, Healing Ourselves

Christine Holmstrom

“*El amor de Pachamama, el poder de los apus.*” (“The love of Pachamama, the earth mother, the power of the apus, the mountain spirits.”) The words of Don Isidro, a Quechua shaman wrap around me like a shawl. I shudder as I feel his breath on my body, a whirlwind clearing out negative energy from each chakra. “*Conexión - connection,*” he repeats over and over. The cool pressure of the chumpi – seven hand-carved stones that are keys to open each chakra – the fervor of his prayers, the power of his invocations transport me to a dreamlike place. “*Pachamama – the world mother – is within you,*” he says in Spanish, “and the *apus – the mountain spirits – will*



Don Isidro



Don Isidro with  
Michael Choy

slowly enter you.” Isidro, whose Q’ero ancestors fled the Spanish conquistadores, has joined our group at the behest of Jorge Luis Delgado, our spiritual guide. Don Isidro and the Q’ero people, who live in remote villages in the high mountains, have preserved many of the core elements of Inca and pre-Inca spiritual knowledge and practices. Isidro blesses us with the opportunity for healing, chakra clearing and coca leaf readings. He carries with him the wisdom of the *apus*. Through his *curaciones* – healings – and ceremonies, Don Isidro reminds us of our responsibility to Pachamama.

Many parts of the natural world are suffering because humans have stopped caring for the earth. We can awaken the *apus* in our own lands with our *despachos* – ceremonial offerings – and *oraciones* – prayers.

The pilgrimage begins in Lima. Junia Imel, from Divine Adventures, ensures that we are informed of each day’s schedule and assists us with warmth and competence. Our first group event is a celebratory dinner at a restaurant in the suburb of Miraflores. The next morning, we fly to Cusco (11,200 feet) – a World Heritage Site and capital of the former Inca empire. Once we leave coastal Lima, we are surrounded by the jagged peaks and snow-covered summits of the Andes. The thin air and majestic mountains reverberate with the mystical presence of the apus.



Junia Imel

On our first day at Machu Picchu, we climb hundreds of steps that lead us through the temples and gates of the magnificent temple complex. Jorge reminds us that we are all children of the sun. He tells us that the three Inca principles of life are Love, Service and Wisdom.



Jorge photographs  
a flying pilgrim

At dawn on our second day at Machu Picchu, we make our way to a sacred spot where Jorge instructs each one of us in turn to lay on our back upon a narrow outcropping, close our eyes and move our arms like a condor in flight. I feel the glory of the condor carried aloft by thermals while I remain keenly aware of balancing on a slender stone spine. Snow-covered peaks stand witness, sentinels against the eastern horizon. The rays of the early morning sun warm my face.

After the ceremony, many in our group ascend the monolith of Huayanpicchu. I content myself with reaching the summit of Huchuypicchu, the smaller monolith. At the top, I survey Machu Picchu spread out below – an intricate carpet of stone walls, gates and edifices, grass and terraces. The view from the summit is that of a bird soaring heavenward, its eyes upon the receding earth.



Moray

In the following days we travel to the sacred terraces of Moray, where Jorge leads us in a ceremony to release our heavy energy and offer our intentions to the cosmos. Jorge instructs us to take some time in the morning and evening to quiet our busy minds. “Think of your worries, or heavy energies, and give them to Pachamama, or a Light Being of your tradition, for transformation and healing. Spend a few moments offering thanks for all the blessings you receive from the Divine and from others. You can do this in meditation, in prayer

or in motion.” Jorge suggests that we start each day by facing east, outdoors if possible, and greet Father Sun with open arms “in thanksgiving for the opportunity of a new day. Open your arms to drink in the light and the love.” Then, he says, place your right hand over your heart, and in your mind say “with love,” and put your left hand over your solar plexus, saying “without fear.” Make an intention for the day. Jorge tells us that by incorporating this as a regular practice, he has been given many gifts and insights, including serenity and balance.

We visit a weaver’s cooperative in Chincero, *El Balcón del Inka*, where the women demonstrate how they dye sheep and alpaca wool using only the bounty of nature – herbs, vegetables (such as purple corn – *maiz morado*) roots and minerals. The more complicated weavings – with intricate symbology – take months to complete. The members of the cooperative are



preserving the traditional artistic heritage of the region, using only natural products. Jorge had forewarned us that in the towns and roadside tourist stops, the “*pura alpaca*” garments are often pure acrylic. At *El Balcón*, we are able to support the craftswomen directly, and purchase beautiful, totally natural handmade textiles and clothing.

In Tinjani Canyon, on our way to Lake Titicaca, Jorge and Junia take us to a sacred cave with a statue of the Virgin Mary tucked in an alcove in the wall. Karen leads the choir in song – the “Our Mother” prayer – while the rest of us dance the words in eurythmy.

Lake Titicaca, at 12,500 feet, is the highest navigable lake in the world, and according to legend, the birthplace of the Incas. At Sillustani, a pre-Incan burial and ceremonial site, Jorge leads us in a clearing ceremony where each person voices who she truly is. Sillustani overlooks the mystical island of Umayo, on Lake Umayo. The flat surface of the island mesa is reportedly a site where vessels from outer space land to communicate with human beings.



Fort contemplates Umayo



On Lake Titicaca, the Uros islanders welcome us with song to their floating reed islands, constructed totally from totora reeds. The people maintain much of their traditional ways, depending upon tourism to provide income to sustain their ancient way of life. We are invited into the inhabitants' simple reed huts and shown their handicrafts. Mercedes spreads out a



hand-embroidered piece depicting life on their tiny island, the background fabric as blue as the depths of Lake Titicaca. She points to her handiwork. "Here, look, Mercedes and Augustin are fishing. Here Mercedes is cooking, here is our village."

We sail on their small reed boats, lying back against the sides with closed eyes to meditate and enter a mystical land of waking dreams. The songs of the Uros women fill my mind, the gentle slap-slap of the waves lull me into peaceful reverie, the winter sun rays into my heart, filling me with quiet joy. I wonder if the golden sun disc is radiating its warmth into our hearts. As the Spanish conquistadores advanced towards the Inca capital of Cusco, the Inca priests hid the golden sun disc in the depths of Lake Titicaca to protect the misuse of its power by the invaders. A legend says that the disc was placed in the Eternal Etheric City inside the lake.



The following day, we drive close to the gateway of Lord Aramu Muru, which was rediscovered by Jorge after he saw it in a dream. First, we pay tribute to the three animal guides representing the Incan view of the levels of existence – the serpent of the underworld, the puma of the middle world and the condor of the upper world. At the interdimensional Aramu Muru portal,



we take turns standing in the doorway, our hands outstretched against the stone portal, pressing the third eye against the cool rock. Energy courses through my hands, vibrates in my chakras, my third eye in tune with the timeless wisdom of the mineral kingdom. Jorge cleanses us with smoke from a small fire in a clay vessel, waving plumes of smoke over our bodies with a condor feather.

We cross into Bolivia and arrive by boat at *Isla del Sol* – Island of the Sun – where we splash ourselves with water from a sacred fountain of youth. At a sacred rock ceremonial site, Jorge speaks of Inca wisdom and we conduct the Liturgy to the Earth. The intersection of indigenous and Sophianic rites becomes a river formed of two streams, flowing through us, waters to quench the parched pilgrim.

On the *Isla de la Luna* – island of the Moon – we place our offerings of coca leaves and flowers in the ruins of the temple of The Virgins of the Sun. Like a scene viewed through the scrim on a dimly illumined stage, I perceive priestesses in procession, carrying sacred gifts in their outstretched hands. Is it my imagination or a true image? It doesn't matter; the effect is the

same. *Conexión, conexión*. As I hear Don Isidro's words in my mind, I attune to my connection to these sacred sites.

At the megalithic monuments of Tiwanaku – pre-Incan site later considered by the Inca to be the temple of Viracocha, the creator god – we gaze in awe at the unique construction of the Door of the Cougar and the Door of the Sun, at mysterious carvings of strange, almost alien faces embedded in a semi-subterranean stone temple and at the Pachamama monolith that stands guard within the nearby museum.



On our way to Colca Canyon, we cross the highest section of road on the *altiplano* – the highlands- passing *lagunillas* – small lagoons – inhabited by Andean flamingos, and sighting vicuñas and alpacas grazing on the sparse flora, herded by locals wearing their colorful traditional clothing.

In the early morning we travel to an overlook where we watch Andean condors spreading their enormous wings, rising effortlessly on thermal updrafts, swooping above and below us. Hundreds of onlookers crowd the steps and terraced viewpoints. A small group gathers around Robert and Lacquanna to recite the prayer sequence, filled with gratitude for our mystical journey and for the heavenward soaring condors – the Incan symbol of the upper world.

As our trip draws to a close, I think of Jorge's words. We are at the beginning of a new cycle.

The coming of the Inca signals the expansion of the Christ Consciousness...[ which] allows our hearts to further open, bringing us into communion with the Christ Vibration. This...attunes all the vibration levels of spirit, mind and body of those people of all traditions seeking the Light. This Divine Intervention allows us to become in harmony with all humanity, all of creation, all of the Light Being...and with the Sun [the Central Sun] behind the Sun, the Divine Essence. We are all very fortunate to be alive at this time and to be invited to be Incas, Children of the Sun. \*

Back home, I contemplate the meaning of our pilgrimage. I recall Don Isidro's invocation – *conexión* – and Jorge's message about Love, Service and Wisdom. I look east towards the Sierra Nevada, and envision Mount Shasta to the north. I stand supported by Pachamama, with the California apus overlooking me. I feel our connection to the land of the condor, the pulsing energy flowing through the earth mother, calling us to heal and help her.

\* From *Andean Awakening, An Inca Guide to Mystical Peru* by Jorge Luis Delgado. (This and other quotations are from Jorge's book.)