

THE SYSTEM OF HEALING USED IN THE SANTO DAIME COMMUNITY  
CÉU DO MAPIÁ

A thesis presented to the Faculty of Saybrook Graduate School and Research  
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by  
P. Joseph Sulla III

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Approval of the Thesis

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This thesis by P. Joseph Sulla III has been approved by the committee members below, who recommend it be accepted by the faculty of Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Psychology

Thesis Committee:

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Jeanne Achteberg, Ph.D., Chair

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Date

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Jodie Lang, Ph.D.

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Date

## Abstract

# THE SYSTEM OF HEALING USED IN THE SANTO DAIME COMMUNITY, CÉU DO MAPIÁ

P. Joseph Sulla III

Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center

The purpose of this thesis was to describe the system of healing practiced in the Amazonian community, Céu do Mapiá, as perceived by the healers of this community themselves. This community is the mother church for the Santo Daime religion, which is centered on the sacramental use of the Amazonian entheogen commonly known as ayahuasca. This study utilized a set of parameters that the National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) developed to describe systems of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). Archival data, from a review of the relevant literature; and from the author's personal experience, were applied to these parameters to describe this system of healing.

The resulting description of this system of healing was found to meet the NIH OAM's parameters for CAM systems. Further research is important due to the system's unique eclectic nature, and the rare resources that this culture is preserving in a fragile environment.

Dedication

For my daughter Noelani-Rose Soloína Sulla, for her sister or brother who is to  
be born in a few weeks, and for all children and future generations of the planet.  
May they all have the option to know and experience, if they so choose, the  
awesome splendor that is the Amazon rainforest.

“Sun, Moon, Star

The Earth the Wind, the Sea

The Forest and Her Mysteries

For everyone to Study”

(#60, Hymnal of Padrinho Alfredo Gregorio de Melo)

### Acknowledgements

As this thesis is an archival study, there are many people that have contributed to its completion over the years. To all of these people, I wish to express my gratitude. To my father, Paul Sulla, for bringing his 17 year old son on his first Amazonian adventure to Céu do Mapiá 10 years ago. Madrinha Rita Gregorio de Melo, for providing me with loving hospitality and looking out for me on my first trips to Mapiá. To all of the Madrinhas, Padrinhos, healers and members of the Mapiá community who provided me with guidance and assistance. A most special thanks to Madrinha Maria Alice for teaching me that “traditional researchers”, like Western scientists, have their organized methods. Yet unlike scientists they have no ambition, only reverence for nature.

On the academic front, I wish to acknowledge Stanley Krippner, for providing me with the mentorship that led me to Saybrook Graduate School. His guidance was instrumental in every stage of this thesis. Thanks also to Jodi Lang for helping me to develop this thesis, and to Jeanne Achterberg for being a graceful and attentive committee chair. I also must acknowledge all of the researchers who have gone before me and provided valuable archival data about the healing system of Mapiá.

## Introduction

The Amazon rainforest has been disappearing over the past century, through clear cutting for cattle ranching, mono-crop agriculture, and urban development. This devastation, which is still continuing today, is not only causing a loss of the rainforest itself, but also a loss of the deep spiritual knowledge of healing that is held by the peoples of the forest. There are, however, communities of people in the Amazon who are practicing and working to preserve this delicate environment and this ancient knowledge. One such community is Céu do Mapiá. Located deep in the Amazon jungle, Céu do Mapiá is the central community of a religion known as Santo Daime. This is a syncretic religion that combines elements of indigenous Amazonian tradition, popular and esoteric Catholicism, and African-Brazilian traditions. The Santo Daime is one of three religions that have developed in Brazil this past century centered on the sacramental use of ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is the most common name of a powerful psychoactive herbal beverage that has been used by the indigenous people of the Amazon region since long before the arrival of European explorers.

The members of the Céu do Mapiá community are practicing a system of health care that combines the tradition of the Santo Daime with the wisdom and experience of the people of the forest. The system also incorporates other lines of alternative medicine and Western allopathic medicine. This community serves as a model for, and has recently begun to facilitate, the creation of other sustainable communities within the Amazon region that practice and preserve the medicine of the forest. Céu do Mapiá also provides an opportunity for the world outside of

the Amazon to learn about and experience the spiritual knowledge of healing practiced by the people of the forest.

#### Statement of the problem

Over the past 20 years, the Santo Daime doctrine, and the other Brazilian ayahuasca religions have spread to the large Brazilian cities outside of the Amazon region. Recently these religions have begun to spread to countries other than Brazil, including the United States, Canada, Japan, and several countries in Europe (McRae, 1999). This has begun to cause a broader level of attention and interest in Amazonian culture, ethnobotany, and the unique ayahuasca religions of Brazil. As this interest and attention increases, more people will seek reliable information about these traditions. Yet at this time, this information is hard to come by for the English speaking researcher. Although there are extensive, reliable publications in Portuguese (the language of Brazil) about the community Céu do Mapiá and the healing system of the Santo Daime tradition, the information to be found in English is limited. Most of the English writings on this tradition are publications and internet reports from authors who have limited first hand experience on the subject. Furthermore, most of the reliable sources that do exist in Portuguese do not cover the more recent developments of this system.

If the Santo Daime tradition and the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá are not presented by the practitioners of this system themselves, there is a greater risk that this tradition will be judged from an uninformed Western perspective.

Because of the plant derived sacrament and herbal remedies used in this system, several countries in Europe and North America have already begun to group this system and its central sacrament into the “War on Drugs”. The subsequent persecution of this tradition has already begun to impede upon the lifestyle of the practitioners of this system. This persecution also impedes the ability of these Western cultures to learn from, and possibly benefit from the wisdom, experience and resources inherent in this system of healing.

The culture of Céu do Mapiá has its roots in, and is actively preserving, the ancient wisdom of Amazonian culture. In this time of rapid devastation of the Amazonian environment and culture, it is vital that the work that they are doing be documented. In this time of increased awareness, due to global expansion of this tradition, it is vital that their work be presented from the perspective of the practitioners of this system themselves.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the system of healing practiced in the Céu do Mapiá community from the perspective of the practitioners of this system themselves. This was to be accomplished by applying the body of historical archival data, along with this author's firsthand experience, to specific parameters for describing complementary and alternative medicine. The parameters utilized in this study were presented by the U.S. National Institute of Health Office of Alternative Medicine, and published by O'Connor et al. (1997).

In April of 1995, the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) of the U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH) held a conference to “evaluate research needs in the large, dynamic and diverse field of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)”. The dual goals for this meeting were to establish a definition of the field of CAM, and to “identify factors critical to thorough and unbiased description of CAM systems and practices that would be applicable to both quantitative and qualitative research” (O'Connor et al., 1997, Defining and Describing Complementary and Alternative Medicine section, ¶ 2).

The group defined CAM as:

...a broad domain of healing that encompasses all health systems, modalities, and practices and their accompanying theories and beliefs, other than those intrinsic to the politically dominant health system of a particular society or culture in a given historical period. CAM includes all such practices and ideas self-defined by their users as preventing or treating illness or promoting health and well being. Boundaries within CAM and between the CAM domain and the dominant domain are not always sharp or fixed. (O'Connor et al., General Definition of CAM section, ¶ 1)

The group then presented a list of parameters “for obtaining thorough descriptions of CAM systems” (O'Connor et al., 1997). These parameters will be utilized in this study to describe the system of healing used in the village Céu do Mapiá. An in depth description of this system of healing may then promote and guide further research on this unique culture.

The two research questions guiding this study were: What is the system of healing used in the community Céu do Mapiá? Does the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá qualify as an alternative healing system according to the parameters presented by O'Conner et al. (1997)?

## Background: The Santo Daime Tradition and the Céu do Mapiá Community

The community Céu do Mapiá is located in the southwestern portion of the state of Amazonas, Brazil. Its name is derived from the Mapiá stream, a tributary of the Purus river, around which the community is situated. It was founded in 1983 as a rubber tapping community whose members are united by the religious tradition known as Santo Daime. In order to describe the system of healing in the community Céu do Mapiá, it is first necessary to provide a brief history of the cultural tradition that inspired this community's development.

The Santo Daime is a religious doctrine that was founded in the 1930's in the state of Acre, Brazil. Its founder was a Brazilian rubber tapper of African descent named Raimundo Irineu Serra, who later became known to his followers as Mestre (Master) Irineu. Mestre Irineu was born on December 15, 1892 in the Northeastern state of Maranhão. In 1912 he moved to the state of Acre (Neto, 2003, p.93). The two factors inspiring this move were the devastating drought that was afflicting Maranhão and the allure of the opportunities that the rubber trade provided in the Amazon at that time (Froes, 1986, p.31). During this time, Mestre Irineu came to know the caboclo (or mestiço) culture of the region, and also had contact with the Caxinawá tribe (McRae, 1991, p. 46). He also learned to speak the indigenous language of the Tupi-Guarani culture (Neto, 2003, p. 94).

Soon after arriving in Acre, Mestre Irineu was introduced to the tea known as ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is one of several names for a tea that has been used by several indigenous and mestizo groups throughout South America for an untold amount of years. The word ayahuasca comes from the Quechua language, and

means vine of the souls or spirits. It is made with a combination of jungle plants. The first is a woody liana with the scientific name *Banisteriopsis caapi*. The plant species that is mixed with the ayahuasca liana varies between different traditions. The accompanying plant that is used in the Santo Daime tradition is the leaves of the *Psychotria viridis* shrub (Soibleman, 1995, p.15). Shultes and Hofmann (1992) note that ayahuasca is utilized by indigenous Amazon cultures “for prophecy, divination, sorcery, and medical purposes...” (p. 120). The authors then affirm that “ayahuasca is, above all a medicine—the Great Medicine” (p. 122). They add that the drink “is so deeply rooted in native mythology and philosophy that there can be no doubt of its great age as a part of aboriginal life” (p. 120). MacRae has also noted that all groups that utilize ayahuasca identify it as a “plant teacher” (1991, p. 23).

Mestre Irineu was introduced to ayahuasca by two brothers, also rubber tappers of African descent, Antonio and André Costa. Some of his first sessions were also guided by a Peruvian shaman known as Don Crescencio Pizango, who attributed his knowledge to the spirit of an Incan King named Huascar (McRae, 1991, p. 46). Together with the Costa brothers, Irineu formed a group that regularly used ayahuasca. It was known as the Cycle of Regeneration and Faith (CRF). This would be a precursor to the Santo Daime doctrine (McRae, 1992, p. 46). In his experiences with ayahuasca, Mestre Irineu soon began to have visions of a Lady in the Moon. She introduced herself to him as Clara, and Irineu identified her as the Virgin of Conception and the Queen of the Forest. She soon began to give him instructions for a period of preparation and initiation. His

initiation consisted of spending eight days alone in the forest drinking ayahuasca every day, eating nothing but plain manioc root, and drinking only unsweetened tea.

Following the instructions that he received from the Queen, he received the name Santo Daime (Holy Give me) for the tea, and a series of guidelines for the rituals. “Give me love, give me light, and give me strength” are characteristic expressions of the Santo Daime Doctrine (Froes, 1983, p. 32). The Queen also gave him the title “Imperial Chief Juramidam”. Mestre Irineu was seen by his followers as the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. In this new incarnation the Christ spirit had a new name, “Juramidam” (Couto, 1989, p. 39).

The Queen of the Forest also began to give Mestre Irineu hymns that would provide the fundamental teachings of the doctrine, and the central activity of the rituals (McRae, 1991, p.50). In 1930, Mestre Irineu began to hold ayahuasca sessions open to the public. His first followers were made up mostly of a small community of local people, also of African descent. As the years passed Mestre Irineu, and the Santo Daime, became well known, attracting people of other ethnic backgrounds. Even the local authorities and political figures sought his attention (McRae, 1991, p. 47).

From the beginning of the 1930's to his death in 1971, Mestre Irineu was sought out as a leader, counselor, and healer. One of the people that he healed was Sebastião Mota de Melo. Later known to his followers as Padrinho (Godfather) Sebastião, he, along with his family, would be responsible for the

eventual expansion of the doctrine and the formation of the community Céu do Mapiá.

Padrinho Sebastião was born in 1920 in a small village in the Jurua river valley in the state of Acre, Brazil. From a young age, he heard voices of the spiritual world, and had visions of future events. As a young man Padrinho Sebastião was initiated by a shaman from São Paulo, known as Mestre Osvaldo. He learned to work in sessions known as “white table works” which were centered on the incorporation of spiritual guides. He received two guides, which were the spirits of Western surgical doctors, and he became a healer of great importance to the local communities (Froes, 1983, p. 52).

In 1959, Padrinho Sebastião moved with his family to Rio Branco. In 1965 he sought out Mestre Irineu and the Santo Daime with the motive of receiving a cure for a chronic illness. In his first session with Master Irineu, Padrinho Sebastião received a healing in which three spiritual entities, appearing as allopathic surgeons, dissected his body and allegedly removed three caterpillar-like bugs from his belly (Froes, 1983, p. 55).

After receiving this healing, Padrinho Sebastião began to frequent Mestre Irineu's church. He soon began to receive hymns and teachings himself. Mestre Irineu had a strong connection with Padrinho Sebastião. Irineu soon gave him the authority and instructions to make Santo Daime and conduct rituals at his own house so that his extensive family did not have to walk so far for every ritual (McRae, 1992, p. 52). After the death of Mestre Irineu in 1971, the leadership of the church went to Leoncio Gomes. Leoncio had a difficult time maintaining

union amongst the church's members. One of his main disputes was with Padrinho Sebastião, as Leoncio questioned whether Padrinho should still be allowed to make Daime and do works at his own home. In 1974, after one final attempt at affirming union with Leoncio, Padrinho Sebastião separated definitively, and began to hold independent sessions in his community known as Colony 5000. He was followed by his numerous family and a significant number of adepts of Mestre Irineu's church (Mc Rae, 1991, p. 54). The organization of the church was given the name CEFLURIS (Ecclectic Center of Universal Flowing Light Raimundo Irineu Serra).

In the decade of the 1970's, the community Colony 5000 grew and prospered. Focusing on communal agricultural projects, the community was able to remain relatively self-sufficient. Unlike the other Santo Daime centers, Padrinho Sebastião was more open to receiving newcomers of all social classes, including the large number of backpacking youths of the "hippie generation", thus his community began to grow faster than the other centers. Padrinho Sebastião was a charismatic leader, and his followers believe that he was the reincarnation of St. John the Baptist. By the end of the decade, Colony 5000 had between 400 and 500 members (McRae, 1991, p.55). At this time, following his visions, and memories of conversations he had had with Mestre Irineu in which the Master told him that his destiny lied in Amazonas, Padrinho Sebastião began to be called back into the forest. This was coupled with the fact that the deforestation around Colony 5000 and the community's lack of farm equipment was making their life difficult. Thus the community sold some of their land and

bought a large truck. Following the direction of INCRA (National Institute of Land Colonization and Reform) Padrinho Sebastião and his followers settled in an area deeper in the jungle known as Rio do Ouro (River of Gold). They worked for two years to build a rubber tapping village with over 50 houses, before INCRA returned to say that the area belonged to a wealthy man from the South of Brazil. The solution that the agency came up with was to redirect the community to an unsettled area along the nearby Mapiá stream (Alverga, Lemos, et al. 2003, p. 9). Thus in 1983, Padrinho Sebastião's community arrived in Céu do Mapiá.

Padrinho Sebastião passed away in 1990, yet the Céu do Mapiá community continues to thrive under the leadership of his son Alfredo Gregorio de Melo. The community now has around 600 inhabitants plus 1,000 more in three other nearby riverside settlements. Although the community is isolated, it is considered a model of an ecological settlement in the rainforest. In 1989, the area around the community was designated a forest reserve, and the community is responsible for its caretaking. It is known as the National Forest of the Purus and Mapiá-Inauni, and covers about 600,000 hectares (Alverga, Lemos, et al., 2003, p.27) It currently has about 120 family houses, a large church, a school, a nursery, a communal crafts workshop and kitchen, a medical-odontological station, a general warehouse, administration offices, manioc flour manufacturing facilities and two walking bridges. There are about fifty small farms growing rice, beans, manioc, maize and bananas. They also have 70 rubber tapping trails and about 80 heads of cattle.

Céu do Mapiá is like a Mecca for the followers of the Santo Daime doctrine. People from all around the world come to participate in the large rituals in the middle of a temple shaped like a six pointed star, a common symbol of the doctrine representing King Solomon. In the two annual festivals, up to 800 members participate in the rituals, dancing and singing hymns accompanied by rattles, guitars, flutes, accordions and other instruments (Mortimer, 2001, p.231).

The ecological-religious tourism represents an important resource for the village dwellers and the many projects of CEFLURIS. One of the main projects presently underway for the directors of Céu do Mapiá and CEFLURIS involves the establishment of new ecological villages in the Jurua river valley. Over the last eight years, Padrinho Alfredo has been returning to the area where both he and his father were born, and is purchasing land, and establishing new communities. The intention is to help the local inhabitants, and to create a model of sustainable communal life within the forest. Members of Mapiá's sector of healing are also participating in this new project. In doing so, they are bringing Mapiá's system of healing into these new communities. This process helps to enhance the general health, sanitation, and knowledge of the local people. At the same time, the healers from Mapiá are also benefiting as they are encountering, uniting and collaborating with the local healers, including indigenous groups and forest people with extensive knowledge in the local forest's flora and fauna. Many new natural medicines and therapies have thus been incorporated into Mapiá's system of healing through this process.

## Method

Archival research was the chosen method for this study of the system of healing in the community Céu do Mapiá. The archival method is the science and art of locating, studying and interpreting primary documents (Taubold, 2003, p. 52). The archival data utilized in this study included a comprehensive review of the literature on the Santo Daime tradition, and the community Céu do Mapiá. The review of the literature included publications of several of the practitioners of this system themselves, and also studies from ethnographic researchers in the fields of anthropology and psychology. This author's personal experience as a participant-observer also enriched this study with data from primary sources. It was also presented as archival, because it was done prior to this study.

The National Institute of Health's parameters for describing CAM systems was then employed as the research model to organize the archival data, and produce a description of the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá. In their introduction of these parameters, O'Connor et al. (1997) clarify that "it is essential that scholars and researchers base descriptions of components and subsets of CAM on observation and inquiry and avoid introducing interpretations... into their descriptive material" (Describing CAM section, ¶ 1) They went on to say that, "Appropriate descriptions of CAM systems must be able to yield categories and representations that members of the System would themselves recognize as accurate and be able to verify" (Describing CAM section, ¶ 1) They did acknowledge that interpretations may be suitable for

hypothesis and analysis, yet they affirmed that these “should be clearly identified as such and separated from descriptive elements...” (O'Connor et al., 1997, Describing CAM section, ¶ 1).

### Advantages of the Archival Method

There are several advantages to using the archival research method with this study of the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá. First of all, it is more economical in terms of time and labor. In their discussion of ethnographic research, Morse and Field (1995) say that accurate observation takes time, and it is labor intensive as it involves “prolonged and direct contact with the group” (p.155). This is coupled with the fact that the major threat to credibility of ethnographic research is “too little time in the field to understand the lived-through experiences of those studied” (Morse and Field, 1995, p. 145). By combining the field research of all of the researchers included in this study, the total amount of time in the field ends up being more than any one researcher could do in a lifetime. Several of the researchers and authors included in this study are also leaders and practitioners of this system of healing. As the purpose of this study is to describe this system of healing from the perspective of the healers of this system themselves, the inclusion of this archival data greatly enhances the credibility of this study.

Morse and Field (1995) also caution that the sex or age of the participant-observer may influence the information that they are given (p. 110). As this author was a young man while in the field, it is conceivable that it was not

possible to gain a complete understanding of how this system of healing is perceived by women or elders of the system. By utilizing data collected by researchers of different ages and genders, this problem is minimized.

Archival research also allows the validation of emergent theories to be conducted simultaneously with the research itself. Morse and Field (1995) stress the need to “verify the emerging theory with study participants and/or with the research findings of others” (p.142). The archival data utilized in this study made it possible to verify emergent theories with both the study participants (publications of the practitioners themselves) and the research findings of others.

Another advantage of using the archival method in this study is the fact that it allows for an historical view of this system of healing. The Santo Daime tradition is an oral tradition. Therefore, first hand accounts of how this system of healing evolved in the times of Master Irineu and Padre Sebastião is valuable. The archival research of this author then brings an account which includes the evolution of this system from 1995 to 2004.

### Disadvantages of the Archival Research Method

The main disadvantage to using the archival method is the difficulty in determining the intention and bias of the individual authors. Taubold (2003) states that “as a scientific method, the archival method is based on factual evidence” ( p. 54). Yet this study utilizes popular books (written by practitioners of this healing system), public information (web pages), dissertations, and the personal experience of this author. It must be recognized that all of the

observations and information in these materials are influenced by each author's own belief system and world view.

As most of the authors included in this study (including this author) are members of the tradition under study and/ or practitioners of this system of healing, it is important to consider the inherent bias of their reports. Yet this study does not pretend to provide a factual account on the efficacy of this system of healing. Nor does it pretend to attempt to examine how or why this system is effective or ineffective. The sole purpose of this study is to describe this system of healing from the perspective of the practitioners of this system themselves. Therefore, it can be said that studying and observing the world views and biases of the practitioners and members of this system, enable the reader to learn more about how the practitioners view their own system of healing. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the research and publications by experienced members of this system are the most valuable in the attempt to describe the system of healing in Mapiá. The research conducted by authors who are not affiliated with this group, and/or have limited experience with this tradition is valuable to compare the findings of this study.

#### The Inclusion of Personal Experience in the Archival Data

Before presenting the data and results of this study, it is important to note the experience that this author has had in the village of Céu do Mapiá. I first arrived in Mapiá when I was 17 years old. I had had no prior experience with the Santo Daime tradition or ayahuasca. On my first trip, I spent 2 weeks in the

village with my father. On that visit, I became an initiate in the Santo Daime tradition (“fardado”), following a suggestion of a leader of the village. I did not initially think that becoming a fardado was significant, because I did not see myself returning, and I was not interested in organized religions. Yet many of the people in the village touched me, and I was soon drawn back to Mapiá.

The next summer, I returned to Céu do Mapiá and stayed there for three months. During that time, I learned the language and began to study with some of the healers of the village. I then returned every year for the next five years, staying between two to five months each visit. During these trips, I endured months of feeling awkward and out of place as I struggled to learn the language and the customs of the locals. Yet I also made strong connections and friends with many people in the village. The two people that provided me the most support in these early visits were Madrinha Rita, the widow of Padre Sebastião, and Madrinha Maria Alice. Recognizing that I was a young man far from home, they both provided me with the care, attention and guidance of a mother to her son.

I did not enter the village as a researcher attempting to gather information for a particular study. I did, however present myself as a student, open and enthusiastic to learn about healing, plants, and mediumship. I found that the system in Mapiá functions much like a school, and the leaders and healers were pleased to receive an enthusiastic student. I did not encounter resistance, or evidence of behavior change, sometimes common when an observer is present.

In her study of several groups that use ayahuasca, Soibleman (1995, p. 79) states that “fieldwork and personal investigations under the effects of a power plant are both strong, deep and intensive processes which, in my opinion, are hard to be conducted together.” On each of my trips to Mapiá, I intended to take detailed and organized field notes. Each time, however, I found that the combination of living deep in the jungle, and participating regularly in powerful ceremonies with the Santo Daime made this a difficult endeavor. Most of the time my field notes became dominated by my own physical, mental, emotional, spiritual healing process, and I felt completely disorganized as a researcher. Only after returning home and integrating the experience did the wealth of the research show itself.

Morse and Field (1995, p. 110) warn that, “although data will become richer as the study progresses, there is also an increased risk that the researcher will go native and begin to subscribe to the views of the participants, thus losing objectivity.” It became clear to me early on in my studies in Mapiá, that the only way to truly understand and learn about this tradition is to immerse myself completely and participate fully. Losing objectivity was never a concern. Rather losing the subjectivity of my middle class American worldview become pertinent in order to experience the deeper levels of this system, and maintain my sanity. For example, two of the main aspects of the system of healing in Mapiá are channeling spirits and having “miracões”. To channel a spirit, or experience a “miração”, I needed to unlearn all that I had learned which told me that these things are not possible, or that they are indications of psychoses. When I first

began to experience these phenomena, my mind would either become frightened of the strangeness of the experience, or would attempt to rationalize and categorize the phenomena into some explainable concept. In either case the phenomena would be interrupted, and the opportunity would be lost. Thus, through this process of immersion, and disruption of my subjective world view, it can be said that I went native.

The degree to which I went native, however, should only enhance the credibility of this study which attempts to describe the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá from an insider's perspective. On the other hand, the fact that I am still an American who is not truly native to this system is more of a concern to the validity of the results. This is precisely why the archival data is added to my personal experience, to verify and enhance the results.

## Archival Data: Review of the Literature

The system of healing practiced in Céu do Mapiá involves aspects from several spiritual and therapeutic traditions including Santo Daime, indigenous and mestizo healing traditions, Umbanda, Spiritism, Kardecism, floral therapy, homeopathy, bioenergetics and allopathic medicine. A literature review of all of these traditions is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore this literature review will focus on the writings that concern the healing traditions of the Santo Daime and Céu do Mapiá. Furthermore, the sources reviewed for this study are those that were written by, or contain information about the healers of this tradition.

The first major publication on the Santo Daime doctrine was *O Livro das Mirações* (1984) by Alex Polari de Alverga, an ex-political prisoner and poet who founded one of the first Santo Daime churches in the South of Brazil. This book is basically an introduction to the Santo Daime doctrine through his experiences. He focuses mostly on Padrinho Sebastião, chronicling his early life, his encounter and healing with Master Irineu, and other major events in his time as a spiritual leader. This book had a large part in the propagation of ayahuasca's popularity in Brazil (Soibleman, 1995, p.23). It was translated and published in an English version in 1999 with the title *Forest of Visions*.

The next major publication on the Santo Daime tradition was *Santo Daime Cultura Amazônica: Historia do povo Juramidam*, written by Vera Fróes (1986). This book gives details on the history of the Santo Daime doctrine from its origins with Master Irineu to the founding of the Céu do Mapiá community. The author reviews the socio-cultural situations that facilitated the birth and expansion

of this movement. She focuses the body of the work on the community of Colony 5000, of which she was a member, and then details the subsequent move to Mapiá. The author describes the Santo Daime religion and the community of Padrinho Sebastião as a “messianic movement”. This is partially due to the fact that Master Irineu was seen by his followers as embodying the same spirit as Jesus Christ, and Padrinho Sebastião was believed by his followers to be the reincarnation of St. John the Baptist. She also includes legends and myths about the origins of ayahuasca from various indigenous groups. The most relevant sections to this study are the discussions on healing within the Santo Daime doctrine. There is also a moving section in which the author describes her experiences witnessing and experiencing first hand how women in this tradition are aided by the use of the Santo Daime sacrament while in labor.

There are also a number of anthropological theses written on this subject (cited in Soibleman, 1995). Clodomir Monteiro da Silva (1983) wrote the thesis *O Palacio de Juramidam*, which focuses on the community Céu do Mapiá. Alberto Groisman's thesis, *Eu Venho da Floresta* (1993) focuses on the Santo Daime group in Brazil's Southern state of Santa Catarina.

The Master's thesis *Santos e Xamãs* (1989) by Fernando de la Rocque Couto also focused on the community of Céu do Mapiá. It portrayed the Santo Daime doctrine as a natural evolution of Amazonian shamanic tradition, from indigenous shamanism, to mestizo shamanism to the “collective shamanism” of the Santo Daime. Couto details many of the causes that are attributed to illness in this system, and he describes various techniques that are used to treat these

causes. The author disputes Fróes' claim that this system is a messianic movement, due to the importance this system places on the family, and the absence of extreme radicalism. Instead he calls the system a religious "ecological movement" (p. 70). The author of this thesis is now one of the leaders of the Santo Daime tradition, and he is the commander of a church in Brasilia.

In his book, *Guiado Pela Lua: O Controle Social do Uso da Ayahuasca*, Edward MacRae (1992) expands on some of the ideas presented by Couto (1989). He goes into depth describing the traditional mestizo shamanic tradition and common patterns of use of ayahuasca. He then shows how many of the aspects of the mestizo shamanic tradition are present in the Santo Daime. He also shows how and why some of these aspects may have changed, or evolved, in the Santo Daime tradition. The author presents an in depth history of the doctrine, focusing primarily on Padrinho Sebastião's group. In the section on healing in the Santo Daime, the author also describes some of the more recent developments such as incorporation of other spiritual traditions. The mechanisms for social control within the Santo Daime rituals and tradition are outlined and the author then reviews in detail the process by which the Santo Daime, and other ayahuasca religions, obtained legality in Brazil.

In 1992 there was a special publication, entitled *Revista do Centenário*, and edited by Ruttimann, Van Erven and Monteiro. This publication documented the celebration of Master Irineu's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, in which followers from all of the spiritual lines that descended from Master Irineu reunited. It includes stories from contemporaries of Master Irineu, Padrinho Sebastião, and Frei Daniel

Pereira de Matos (leader of another Brazilian ayahuasca religion, known as “Barquinha”, which branched off from the Santo Daime doctrine).

The thesis *A “Lua Branca” do Seu Tupinamba e do Mestre Irineu* (Guimares, 1992) focuses on a Santo Daime group near Rio de Janeiro that incorporates both Santo Daime and Umbanda (a popular African-Brazilian religion involving spirit incorporation) traditions. This work gives background to these traditions, and then focuses on how illness is perceived and treated in both traditions. This thesis is relevant to this present paper because the healing system in Céu do Mapiá also incorporates the tradition of Umbanda, although unlike the Rio group, the central focus is on the Santo Daime tradition. It is also of note that one of the main practitioners in Mapiá's health sector, Maria Alice Campos Freire, was formerly a member of the group in Guimares' study. Maria Alice also had a part in the union of these two traditions.

Maria Peláez's thesis, *No Mundo Se Cura Tudo: Interpretações sobre a “Cura Espiritual” no Santo Daime* (1994) is a social anthropological study of the Santo Daime church in Florinópolis. The author focuses on the interpretations and representations for the spiritual healing process of the followers of the Santo Daime church in Florinópolis. She uses a model designed by Stanislav Grof to analyze the process and experience of healing reported through interviews by the church's members.

The thesis *My Father and My Mother, Show Me Your Beauty: Ritual Use of Ayahuasca in Rio de Janeiro* by Tania Soibleman (1995) focuses on three groups using ayahuasca in urban Rio de Janeiro. Of the three traditions studied,

the most in depth research was done on the Santo Daime, especially the church in Rio de Janeiro known as “Céu do Mar”. This is an ethnographic, participant/observation study that focuses on the experiences of participants using ayahuasca and how these experiences relate to ancient ayahuasca traditions. The thesis includes an interesting discussion of the difficulties and advantages of studying these traditions as a participant/observer. This is one of the few works in English on this subject.

At the International Transpersonal Association's conference in Manaus in 1996, Alex Polari presented a paper entitled, Might the Gods Be Alkaloids. This paper briefly discusses the history of the use of psychoactive plants. It then goes into detail on the shamanic aspects of the Santo Daime doctrine, and specifically the healing potential of mediumship and the “miração”.

In 1998, Alex Polari de Alverga compiled a book called, *O Evangelo Segundo Sebastião Mota*. After an introduction by the author, the book is made up entirely of transcribed lectures and talks of Padrinho Sebastião. His lectures range from the subjects of his early life, to spirituality and healing within the Santo Daime tradition. As this book contains the words of Céu do Mapiá's founder (who was also a renowned healer), it is valuable to this study which attempts to describe the healing system of Mapiá as viewed by its practitioners.

In 2000, two women who are at the center of Céu do Mapiá's healing sector, Maria Alice Campos Freire and Isabel Facchini Barsé, wrote the book, *Florais da Amazônia*. This book describes the system of floral essence therapy that the authors developed in Mapiá. The authors also present their essential

views of health and illness, and the cultural mythology and cosmology that guide these views. The philosophy of their work is founded on “elemental therapy”. This involves balancing one's inner being with the elemental forces of nature. There is also a significant section on how the tradition of Umbanda integrates into this system. Once again, as this book is written by practitioners of Mapiá's healing system, it is valuable to the goals of this paper.

Lucio Mortimer, a long time member of the Céu do Mapiá and Colony 5000 communities recently wrote two books, *Bença Padrinho!* (2000), and *Nosso Senhor Aparecido Na Floresta* (2001). The former chronicles the life of Padrinho Sebastião and the communal life in Colony 5000 and Mapiá. The latter is about the life and work of Master Irineu, focusing on this tradition's beliefs in his divine nature. Both books include stories of the author's personal experiences within the Santo Daime doctrine.

Maggi Quinlan's dissertation, *Healing from the Gods: Ayahuasca and the Curing of Disease States* (2001) relates the author's three month field study in Céu do Mapiá. The dissertation relates five case studies of people who treated themselves with ayahuasca for a terminal or chronic illness. The author then discusses her interpretation of how illness is perceived in Mapiá, and she uses transpersonal concepts to theorize how ayahuasca acts as a healer.

The book *Contos da Lua Branca* by Florestan J. Maia Neto (2003) is an in depth look at the hymns received by Master Irineu. It includes stories from contemporaries of Master Irineu about the context in which the hymns were

received and what they are about. It also includes a detailed timeline of Master Irineu's life.

In celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Céu do Mapiá, members of the community published a short book about the history of, organization, and current projects within, the village. The book was edited by Alex Polari de Alverga and José Augusto Lemos, and is entitled, *Céu do Mapiá 20 Years: Uma Comunidade Espiritual no Coracão da Floresta* (2003).

The final works that were reviewed for this paper include internet websites and unpublished documents. The sites that were utilized in this study are links from the official website of the Santo Daime, santodaime.org. These sites include information about the history of, and current projects in Mapiá's sector of healing. There are also sites dedicated to the description of Santo Daime healing works, and messages about health, illness, and healing received from spiritual guides by members of the Céu do Mapiá community. The unpublished documents were provided by the Forest Medicine Center, and they provide information on the history and the current projects of the Forest Medicine Center in Céu do Mapiá and the communities in the Juruá region.

## Archival Data: Personal Experience

I have traveled to the village Céu do Mapiá seven times between 1995 and 2004. Each time I have spent between one and five months in the village. In my first trips, I was a wide-eyed observer of a strange, new world of magic and wonder, and a novice participant in elaborate rituals of healing and self-knowledge. My next phase of visits involved receiving treatment as a patient from the healers of the village. I came to find that this was also a period of apprenticeship, or initiation. For in this system, healers learn and are trained by learning how to heal themselves with the floral, faunal and spiritual resources of the forest. In my last few visits to the village, I have participated along side, and aided the healers of the village, as a fellow health practitioner within Mapiá's system of healing. In my visits to Mapiá, I have participated in several types of Santo Daime healing rituals, learned how to harvest and prepare several herbal remedies (most of which I also personally utilized), taken experiential courses of floral essences, and developed my own capacity as a spiritual medium.

### *The Healers*

The system of healing in Mapiá is founded upon the spiritual tradition set forth by Master Irineu and Padrinho Sebastião. As both of these individuals were renowned healers, this study will incorporate the available information about the techniques that they utilized and the philosophies that guided them. My personal experience, however, was with the healers that are currently practicing in Céu do Mapiá.

The two main healers that I worked and studied with are Maria Alice Campos Freire and Clara Shinobo Iura. Maria Alice was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1953. From an early age, she had a deep interest in medicinal herbs. She spent years working in public health programs for the underprivileged in Rio. In the late 1970s, while working for the United Nations, she traveled to the African country of Guinea-Bissao. There she had contact with folk healers, which spurred her desire to help rescue traditional and native knowledge on plants and natural healing processes. In the early 1980s she lived in a community in the mountains outside of Rio, centered on the spiritual tradition of Umbanda, (a Brazilian religion evolved from African culture involving spirit incorporation). There she developed her understanding of mediumship, and her capacity to do healing work with spiritual guides, while still advancing her knowledge of the herbal remedies of the Atlantic forest.

While still a member of this community, she encountered the Santo Daime religion and Padrinho Sebastião. With other members of her community, and some leaders of the Santo Daime, she helped to bring her Umbanda teacher to participate in a Santo Daime ritual and meet Padrinho Sebastião. Padrinho Sebastião saw that the Umbanda tradition could help to further the spiritual development of his people, and the leader of the Umbanda center was impressed with and moved by Padrinho Sebastião and the Santo Daime works. Thus the two traditions were merged. After participating in another Santo Daime community near Rio, Maria Alice moved to Céu do Mapiá in 1989. Soon after her arrival, she helped to set up an herbal garden and a modest house for

processed herbs known as Cabana de Ervas São Cosme e Damião (Cabin of Herbs Saints Cosmo and Damian). She utilized both cultivated herbs from the Atlantic forest, and many remedies from the Amazon forest. Her knowledge of the herbal remedies of the Amazon expanded as she studied with local healers. Her principal teacher in this area was an old man named Seu Severinho. She was introduced to him by Padrinho Sebastião in 1989, in a village near Mapiá. He had lived his life in the forest working with plant remedies, and once spent five years alone in the forest studying with a native pajé (medicine man). In 1995 he came to Mapiá, and they had a reunion of healers. After this they began working together collecting and preparing medicines. I had the opportunity to meet and work with Seu Severinho on several occasions. When I met him in 1996, he was 92 years old. Seu Severinho gave their healing center the name, Centro Medicina da Floresta (Forest Medicine Center). In 1997, they created a nonprofit organization of the same name. Also in that year, with help from foreign visitors, they built a more advanced laboratory to dry process, cook and store their medicines.

Maria Alice has healed herself various times from serious illnesses with natural remedies of the forest. She is the leader of the works involving Umbanda in Mapiá. Over the last few years, she has expanded her work with the Amazonian medicines into the areas of homeopathy and floral essences. She has also been involved in expanding the projects of Medicina da Floresta to the new communities in Jurua.

Clara Shinobu Iura is a Brazilian woman of Japanese descent from the state of São Paulo. Early in her life, after doing an intensive experiential with the Eastern spiritual leader Osho, she began to see auras and beings in people. She also began to hear voices and have visions. Soon after this, she received three spirit guides who gave her an initiation in spiritual mediumship. She then worked as a massage therapist, incorporating spiritual mediumship into her therapy. In the mid 1980s she encountered the Santo Daime. A few years later, she met Padrinho Sebastião. Upon meeting her he said, "So, you came to heal me?" He asked her to do a healing session for him, and then told her to come to Mapiá. She arrived in Céu do Mapiá in 1988. When she arrived Padrinho Sebastião brought her to a healing work in the Star House (a small house in the village for concentrated Santo Daime healing works). After opening the ritual, he asked Clara to work on all of the people present. He then told her to do all-day healing works every Wednesday in the Star House. His aim was for her to help his people further their spiritual growth by developing their capacity for mediumship work and helping them to get to know their spiritual guides. Clara has continued this work in Céu do Mapiá under the leadership of Padrinho Alfredo. In 1999, a house was built in Mapiá especially for receiving sick people and treating them with alternative therapies. Clara now works out of this house known as the Santa Casa de Saude Padrinho Manoel Corrente (Holy House of Health Godfather Monoel Corrente). They still do all day healing works of consultation and service every Wednesday in the Santa Casa.

There are several other healers who I have worked with in Mapiá including Padrinho Alfredo, and his brother Padrinho Valdete. The many children of Padrinho Manuel Corrente, a contemporary of Padrinho Sebastião who passed away in 1996, are also experienced healers. I have also worked extensively with the psychologist Padrinho Paulo Roberto, both in Céu do Mapiá and in the church he leads in Rio de Janeiro. His wife, Nonata, is the daughter of Padrinho Sebastião. She is also a healer and medium. Over the past several years, she has been “channeling” the spirit of Padrinho Sebastião, giving messages and instructions to the followers of the Santo Daime religion.

### *The Healing Transactions*

There are three main locations where healing transactions occur in Céu do Mapiá, the Posto de Saude (Health Centre), the Star House, and the Santa Casa. The Posto de Saude is the village's center for allopathic medicine. It consists of a house in which a medical doctor, who lives in the village, attends and treats patients with a wide range of allopathic pharmaceuticals. The Star House is the location for most of the Santo Daime healing rituals, or “works”, which usually involve spirit incorporation. As with most types of Santo Daime works in Mapiá, the healing works are opened and closed with modified Catholic prayers, and involve participants gathering around a six pointed star table, and singing hymns accompanied by guitars, maracas and other instruments. There is always a separation with men on one side of the room and women on the other. Although the healing works may be held for a specific ill person, they usually do not

involve one-on-one transactions between healers and patients. The participants may write the full name of the ill person, or people, on a piece of paper and place it on the altar. They also may set the intention by dedicating the work to the health of that participant. The healing transactions then occur as the patient drinks the Santo Daime. This often invokes purgative and visionary effects, both believed to be potentially healing. It is also believed that the hymns sung in these works invoke healing spirits and energies that benefit the patient. Within these works, both the healers and patients may have visions, or receive messages about the cause of their illness, and the appropriate treatment. It is believed that the patient does not even need to be present at the work to benefit. Sometimes the patient stays home and rests while the work is being done in their benefit. Many healing works at the Star house do not have a designated patient, and are simply for the benefit of all of the participants.

During my first few trips to Mapiá, healing works of “atendimento” (in which healers work one on one with patients) were held either at the Star House or at various “terreiros”(small clearings in the forest for works, usually equipped with a small thatched house and an alter). At that time, Maria Alice, Clara and other healers also attended people at their own houses. Often, as was the case with me, they would house patients for extended periods of time while the patient was taking one of many herbal remedies. Although the healers still often do visits to the houses of ill people, most of these transactions now occur at the Santa Casa.

There are usually a few ill people living and receiving treatment at the Santa Casa at all times. Clara Iura and other staff and volunteers are usually available to aid people in need at any time. Beyond the spiritual Santo Daime healing work that take place at the Santa Casa, people receive herbal remedies, massage, acupuncture and floral essence therapy from the healers at the Santa Casa. The most regular time for healing interactions to occur is on Wednesdays. Each Wednesday special healing works are held at 4:00AM in the morning. These works usually last until about 8:00AM, and consist of meditation, prayer, and the signing of hymns for healing and calling spiritual guides. These are works for the healers and patients to prepare themselves to receive and facilitate healings. They are also works to develop one's capacity to commune with, and incorporate spiritual guides.

After this work ends, the healers remain in the Santa Casa for the whole day giving one on one consultation and healing sessions. Clara, and / or Maria Alice, usually works in a separate room with a small team of mediums (those with the capacity to incorporate spirit guides) and guardians (those entrusted to maintain a safe, harmonious space, record messages given by spirits, and indoctrinate suffering spirits). The other volunteers and patients remain in the main room and sing hymns as they await their turn to be attended to. I had opportunities to both receive healings from, and participate on, the healing team during these sessions. These sessions generally include one or more of the mediums incorporating a spirit guide who is experienced as a healer. It is believed that these spirits have a higher capacity than incarnate humans to

perceive, diagnose and treat illness. It is also believed that they are capable of manipulating spiritual fluids that effect people's health. Often times the spirit guides will prescribe herbal medications, herbal baths, or specific activities for the patient to do. They also may tell the patient insightful things about what is happening in their lives, or stories about what has happened to them in past lives.

As the medium works on the patient, they may perceive that a spirit of a low degree of evolution is affecting that person's health. In these cases one or more of the mediums may exercise a technique known as "transport mediumship". This involves one of the mediums taking the spirit affecting the patient's health into his or her own body. Usually these spirits are suffering in pain, confusion, or anger. When the spirit enters the medium's body, another member of the team asks the spirit a number of questions. The intention of these questions is to discover why the spirit is with the patient. The answer to these questions often leads to answers as to ultimate causes for the person's illness. The medium that is incorporating the spirit is then given a small glass of Santo Daime. This is believed to help the spirit achieve "spiritual Salvation" so that it no longer hinders the patient's life.

### *The Patients*

The healing system of Céu do Mapiá provides for all of the health needs for its community members. As most of the healing transactions and medications are provided free of cost, many people from nearby settlements also travel several days by canoe to receive treatment in Céu do Mapiá. The healers in this system

also provide for the needs of the many visitors that come from other parts of Brazil and from various countries around the world. Judging from my personal experience, and what I have witnessed, these visitors usually do need this help. This is most likely due to the extreme, rain forest environment (to which they are not acclimated), and the intensive nature of the spiritual works that take place in Mapiá (which often bring up emotional and psychological issues which these people need to heal). Some of these visitors also come to Mapiá with the specific intention to heal themselves of a serious illness.

## Results

The following results section is the application of the literature, and archival data from the author's personal experience with the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá, to a set of parameters created by the National Institute of Health Office of Alternative Medicine. These parameters, known as "The Parameters for Description of Complementary and Alternative Medicine", were published by O'Connor et al. (1997).

*The Parameters for Description of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Lexicon*

*What are the specialized terms in the system?*

"Santo Daime". Couto (1989, p. 21) explains that Santo Daime is part culture and part nature. It is part culture as it is the name of the religious tradition upon which the community of Céu do Mapiá is founded. This religion is the result of the union of religious elements of Brazil's three main ethnic elements: white European, African, and indigenous forest people (Froes, 1986, p.36). The spiritual entities at the center of this doctrine are: the Queen of the Forest (represented as the Virgin of Conception), and Juramidam (the name given to the Christ energy that presides over the spiritual phalanx of Juramidam) (Alverga, 1998, p.211). St. John the Baptist, King Solomon and other Catholic Saints also are central figures in this doctrine.

Santo Daime is also part nature as it is the name used in this tradition for the Amazonian beverage, made from two plants of the forest, which is the

sacrament that this religion is centered on. The ritualistic use of this sacrament is also the central aspect to the system of healing in Mapiá. Its main healing properties are due to its cleansing, purgative effects and the insights gained through the “miração”.

“Miração”. Miração is a term introduced by Master Irineu to designate the state of visionary ecstasy provided by the sacrament, Santo Daime (Alverga, 1996). Alverga (1998, p. 212) describes it as a state of consciousness which usually involves “traveling within oneself”, and experiencing a state of self-analysis, in which one experiences revelations about one's own being. Modifications often occur in a person's perceptions, and one's senses are sharpened. Often the participant in the miração has luminous visions and contact with distant people. Memories and thoughts occur in great velocity, and the notion of time may vary (Froes, 1986, p.145).

The word is made up of the verb “mirar” which means “to look at or contemplate”, yet it is linked with “ação”, which designates action (Alverga, 1996, The Consciousness of the Shaman and the “Miracão” section, ¶ 3). Therefore, Alverga (1996) explains that what one perceives in the miração depends on that person's inner consciousness, courage and wisdom, or lack thereof. He goes on to say that the “crux of the shamanic initiation” one receives in the Santo Daime tradition is to “acquire sufficient strength to execute everything revealed in the miração” (Consciousness of the Shaman and the “Miracão section, ¶ 7).

Paulo Roberto Silva e Souza, a psychologist and long time participant of the Céu do Mapiá community and leader of another Santo Daime Community in Rio de Janeiro, explains how a miração differs from a hallucination:

“Hallucination” is a product of a psychopathological state,...that occurs in various types of psychoses..., normally it is the product of a mind in a fragmented state. The miração is exactly the opposite, it is the product of the expansion of consciousness, the result of the reunion of information that we obtain in a state of extra-sensory perception. (Guimaraes, 1992, p. 59)

“Peia”. Peia has been described as “the thrashing of the Daime” (Froes, 1986, p. 146). It is the name used by the Santo Daime followers for the purgative and mimetic process that sometimes occurs with the use of the sacramental drink, Santo Daime. It is considered a “cleansing” on the physical level, and a “discipline necessary to break down resistances and crystallizations on the interior level” (Alverga, 1998, p. 212). Peia is often experienced due to the lack of preparation or observation of the rules and guidelines involved in participating in a Santo Daime ritual. The spiritual entity attributed with enforcing discipline and applying peia is known as “Marachimbé” (Froes, 1986, p.145). Although in the moment, peia can be an experience of suffering, afterward it is seen as a learning opportunity to reach deeper levels of health and spiritual progression.

“Corrente” (“Current”). Within the rituals of the Santo Daime, the current is the “common reservoir of spiritual and psychic energy” that supports each individual's journey within the miração (Alverga, 1996, Consciousness of the Shaman and the “Miracão section, ¶ 13). Through the sustained attention and focus on the hymns being sung by each participant of the ritual, it is believed that

a “current of energy” is formed which protects and facilitates healing experience for the participants.

“Umbanda”. Umbanda is a Brazilian religion which developed from African traditions. It is based upon the worship of deities, known as “Orixas”. The presence of the various “Orixas” is experienced in the various forces of nature, and they are also syncretic with various Catholic Saints. The incorporation of spirits for charity healing work is central to this religion (Guimaraes, 1992, p.19). Although the “Orixas” are seen as spiritual entities, and they are invoked in Umbanda rituals, the mediums in this tradition do not actually incorporate the “Orixas”. The mediums, rather, incorporate lesser spirits that are believed to be under the command of the individual “Orixas”. The four main types of spiritual entities that are worked with in Umbanda are known as “caboclos”, “pretos velhos”, “crianças”, and “exus”. “Caboclos” are the spirits of warriors, indigenous to the Americas. They have great physical strength, a profound understanding of nature, and are often proficient healers. “Pretos velhos”, literally “old blacks”, are the spirits of slaves of African descent. They are known to have humility, serenity and patience, and the wisdom of old age. They act as therapists, talking and giving counsel. The “crianças” are the spirits of children who bring clarity, purity and joy of life. The “exus” are the spirits closest in evolution to the “human sphere”. They are associated with the “lower human energies, and act as messengers and intermediaries between heaven and earth” (Guimaraes, 1992, p. 26-28). Umbanda has been incorporated into Mapiá's religious and healing systems in the past 17 years. It is also incorporated into the

Forest Medicine Center's system of studying and cataloguing herbs and floral essences.

“Espiritismo” (“Spiritism”). Spiritism is a religion, popular in Brazil, which is based on the writings of Allen Kardec. According to Kardec (1898), “the fundamental principle of the spiritist theory, or spiritism, is the relation of the material world with spirits, or beings of the invisible world” (p. i). The basic concept that guides this system is the idea that there is both a material world, in which humans live, and a spiritual world inhabited by incarnate spirits. It is also believed that the entities of the spirit world can influence and communicate with the world of humans, and vice versa. Spirits are believed to be arranged in various degrees of evolution based on the karma that they accumulated through various incarnations. The Santo Daime doctrine incorporated these concepts into its religious belief system and into its system of healing.

“Medunidade” (“Mediumship”). Mediumship is the capacity to channel and communicate with disincarnate spirits (Alverga, 1998, p.212). The practitioners of this system believe that this is a natural faculty that has been with humans since “the first rays of consciousness”, although it is more active in some people (Freire & Barse, 2000, p. 24).

“Atuação”. Atuação occurs when an individual receives a determined spiritual entity in to his or her own body. The entity may manifests to do a healing, leave a message, or be “indoctrinated” (Alverga, 1998, p. 208). When a spirit is in a medium's body the medium is said to be “atuado”.

“Doutrinacão” (“Indoctrination”). Indoctrination of spirits often occurs when it is believed that there is a spirit of a low degree of evolution affecting the health of an individual or a group of people. The process involves a medium taking a spirit of a low degree of evolution into his or her body. Another person then speaks compassionately to the spirit, welcoming it, and sometimes asking it questions. The person then gives the spirit a small amount of Santo Daime. It is believed that the Santo Daime then facilitates a healing in which the spirit is believed to be released from its suffering, given comfort, and aided to a higher degree of evolution. It is also believed that the person(s) that was affected by the spirit also benefits by being released from the spirit’s negative influence.

*How are common health and illness terms distinctively defined by the system?*

Within the Santo Daime tradition, health is seen as a state of “plentitude of life” in which a person is in harmony with life vigor and all of the elements of nature (Freire & Barse, 2000, p. 15). McRae (1992) has noted that in the Daime tradition, health includes elements that are not always perceived to be linked to the function of the human body. Thus, health is seen as the “balance with the harmonious unity of all”, and it is “almost syncretic with the virtues of beauty and truth” (p. 99).

As health is seen as a state of harmony, illness is seen as a state of disharmony which could be manifesting on the physical, mental or spiritual planes (Freire & Barse, 2000, p. 10). Guimaraes (1992, p. 100) found that, in the

Santo Daime tradition, illness is not seen as synonymous with death and destruction. On the contrary it is seen as a process of cleansing or purification which could lead an individual to be more in tune with their “superior self”, and thus attain a higher level of health. Clara Iura has stated that illness is an opportunity to study why the sickness came up. “It is an opportunity to transform yourself.... To find the healer within yourself” (C. Iura, personal communication, July, 2, 2004).

In her study about the interpretations about spiritual healing amongst members of the Santo Daime, Peláes (1994, p. 78) discussed some terms which she considers essential to understanding the concepts of healing within the Santo Daime. These terms are, “superior self”, “inferior self”, and “aparelho”. “Superior self” (“Eu superior”) refers to the more elevated, or divine, part of one's own consciousness (Alverga, 1998, p. 210). The “superior self” is thus the presence of the Divine within each person, and it is also each person's link to the Divine. The “superior self” is also referred to as “I Am”. The “inferior self” is a concept which is close to the notion of the “ego”. It is composed of the intellect, emotions, and the sensory aspect of one's being, which are different in each person. It is also seen as the principal generator of illness (Peláes, 1994, p.78). The “aparelho” is made up of the body and mind. It houses both the “superior” and “inferior selves”. In mediumship work, it is also the vessel available for the reception of spirits (Alverga, 1998, p. 210).

Peláes (1994, p. 79) explains that within the Daime system, a person is believed to be “sleeping” when they are dominated by their “inferior self” and are

unable to recognize the existence of the “superior self”. Another way this is commonly expressed is that some people live only in the “world of illusion”, and negate the existence of the “truth”. The “world of illusion” includes the material world of earthly needs and desires, and the consumer images of modern society. In this system, there is only one “truth”, which is not constructed by humans, and is only revealed through revelations (Peláes, 1994, p. 63). People dominated by their “inferior selves” are thus seen to be “spiritually sick”. This ultimately will create imbalance, which eventually causes physical illness (Peláes, 1994, p. 79).

*What are the terms used to identify roles and people within the system?*

Experienced elders and leaders in the Santo Daime are addressed as “Padrinho” or “Madrinha” (Godfather or Godmother). Couto (1989) explains that in the tradition of the Santo Daime there exists a “mythical-social lineage, in which the Padrinhos and Madrinhas are the links to the Sacred Family and they are the social-symbolic agents of the whole network of meanings” that involve the Santo Daime (p. 69). Leaders of individual churches are also called “commanders”. The healers that do healing work with mediumship are called “mediums”, “doctors”, “healers”, or “aparelhos”. “Rezadeiras” is the term for the healers that pray over wounds and ill people.

## *Taxonomy*

*What classes of health and illness does the system recognize and address?*

The system of healing recognizes and addresses a wide variety of classes of illness. With both natural and allopathic medicine, the healers in Mapiá treat common illnesses of the area. These may range from malaria to the common cold; and from physical injuries and animal inflicted wounds, to psychological imbalances and domestic problems. Couto (1989, p.94) notes that in the Santo Daime, as with most other traditional healing systems there is not a clear delineation between magic, religion and medicine. Thus it is common for an illness to be seen as having both physical and spiritual causes. The general spiritual classes of illness that this system recognizes are “encosto” and “sentença” (Couto, 1989). “Encosto” means that there is an obsessor spirit affecting the person’s health. “Sentença” means that the ill person is serving a sentence for wrong doing in this life or a past life. It is similar to the concept of karma. The system may recognize that a person has an illness with an understood physical cause, yet at the same time recognize that the ultimate cause of the illness may be a “sentença” that the person received for some wrong doing in his or her past. The system may also recognize that a person has a psychological imbalance, yet at the same time it is understood and addressed as a case of “encosto”.

Along with individual health and illness, this system recognizes and addresses communal health and illness. If the community is experiencing

disharmony among its members, and / or many people are becoming ill, it is common for them to hold large healing works, or St. Michael works. These works are conducted as a general cleansing to address the health of the community as a whole. In these works, suffering or deceitful spirits that are believed to be affecting the health of the community may manifest and be indoctrinated.

As illness is viewed holistically and may be seen from various perspectives, so too is health. When evaluating health, this system looks at a person's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual state. A person who is physically fit, yet often angry and deceitful may be seen as less healthy than a chronically ill person who lives happily and harmoniously, and according to the values of the doctrine.

*What causes for illness does the system recognize?*

This system of healing recognizes natural, spiritual and psychosomatic causes for illness. Living in the Amazon rainforest, there are countless natural diseases healers must be able to recognize and treat. Many of these involve parasites and bacterial infections, such as malaria and.... I have found that the healers in Mapiá do not often rush to the conclusion that the cause of an illness is spiritual. On several occasion, both Padrinho Alfredo and Maria Alice have cautioned me to be “scientific” in attempting to determine the cause of symptoms that I was experiencing.

It is also a common belief that the chemical substances prevalent in the modern world cause common diseases, such as cancer. This is linked to the idea that living in the modern world created by humans is unhealthy and out of balance with the peace, harmony and health inherent in the natural world (Freire & Barse, 2000, p. 26). It is also believed that the artificial food, environmental contaminants, and excessive consumer images nourishes one's "inferior self", thus facilitating a state of illness.

The spiritual causes attributed to disease usually fall under the categories of, karma (sentença), or the obsession of suffering spirits (encosto). Undeveloped mediumship, gossip, and a general lack of cleanliness are more specific causes which are related to these two general categories. It is rare in this system, as opposed to the mestizo tradition, for "macumba", or the influence of malevolent sorcerers, to be seen as the cause for illness. This is most likely due to the Christianization of the traditional ayahuasca shamanism that occurred as Mestre Irineu received and formed the Santo Daime doctrine. McRae (1991) explains that the incorporation of Christian values rid this system of the "moral ambivalence that made it difficult to distinguish between good and bad vegetalistas" (ayahuasca shamans). In place of the methods of aggression and the focus on fighting bad spirits common among mestiço shamans, the Santo Daime shaman is protected by obedience to moral conduct, and the defense of the spiritual guides of the doctrine (p. 93).

One of the most common causes attributed to illness is karma. The basic idea of karma is that the Earth is a "stage for humans to further their degree of

spiritual evolution" (Clara Iura, personal communication July 5, 2004). The concept of karma descends from Eastern philosophy and religion. Karma is seen as a "determinant of future existence". The implication of this philosophy is that "each person will reap the results of his or her every action, in the form of either reward or retribution, and either immediately, or in the future" (Koller & Koller, 1998, pp. 29-30). The idea of karma is linked with the idea of reincarnation, as one can accumulate karma over several incarnations.

In Mapiá's healing system, the idea of karma is also related to the other major spiritual cause attributed to disease, the influence of spirits of low degrees of evolution. In this system of healing, it is believed that a "spirit world" replete with spirits of various degrees of evolution exists along side the "material world" where the incarnate humans dwell. These spirits can influence incarnate humans either positively, through "controlled incorporation of known spirit guides; or negatively, through "involuntary possession" of less evolved "obsessor spirits" (Guimaraes, 1992, p. 64). It is believed that these spirits do not understand that they have died and went to the spirit world. Thus they suffer with confusion and the obsession of obtaining the light that they perceive in the spirits of incarnate humans (p. 63). It is not believed, however that a person under the influence of an "obsessor spirit" is an irresponsible victim. Clara Iura says that these types of spirits are "prisoners to our story, and linked to our karma" (personal communication, July 5, 2004). Therefore, the "obsessor spirit" is responsible for sucking the light and energy of the person, thereby making them vulnerable to

illness, and the ill person is responsible for generating the karma that attracted the “obsessor spirit” in the first place.

Another spiritual cause attributed to illness in this system is undeveloped mediumship. It is a common belief in Mapiá, that everyone possesses the capacity to act as a spiritual medium, yet some people are believed to be more sensitive to, and prone to this phenomenon. When a potential medium is not aware of the spiritualist's science, and has not developed their abilities as a medium; they are believed to be more susceptible to “involuntary possession”, and the psychological illnesses which are believed to be associated with it. Through learning about and developing one's capacity as a medium, it is believed that a person can gain protection from this phenomenon, and gain spiritual allies in the process of self-healing. Freire and Barse (2000, p.25) discuss this idea in the following statement, “...even today, many people suffer due to lack of comprehension of their gifts. We know that the asylums are full of mediums, which are misunderstood by their families and society, yet pay their karma in this manner”.

The idea of karma may seem to insinuate that there is a belief, in the Santo Daime tradition, that illness is a form of Divine punishment. This idea has also been presented by other authors such as Monteiro da Silva (1983, as cited in Pelaes, 1992, p.72) and Couto (1989, p.102). However, in this system; it is not believed that God imparts disease for punishment or any other reason. This can be seen in a statement of Padre Sebastião:

What you speak is what you turn into for good or for bad.  
Everything is going good, but when you falsify anything,

the sickness comes. Was it God who sent it? No way! If God is Perfect Man! Isn't he?...The perfection of God is in everything, because God is everything. How could he cause illness? (Alverga, 1998, p. 98)

In this statement it can be seen that illness is often attributed to psychosomatic causes. This is further annunciated in another statement made by Padrinho Sebastião: "God is the Lord of Good! God does not punish anyone. The very person punishes himself by himself. Through their faults. Through their bad thoughts. Through their bad words. Through their bad desires" (Alverga, 1998, p. 126). Thus it is believed that through continued negative feelings, thoughts and speech, a person nourishes his or her "inferior self", and exists in a type of "spiritual sickness" in which the person is unable to recognize his or her "superior self". This concept is similar to the ideas of narrative and cognitive psychological theories, which state that the stories a person tells oneself and others is what ultimately constructs that person's experience of reality. In this system, these negative thoughts themselves are also often externalized and perceived as negative entities. Alverga (1996) clarifies this as he states,

We then begin to realize that each thought that passes through our mind is an entity. Through this knowledge, we can adjust the mediumistic "dial" in order to tune into beneficial entities....It [the mediumistic "dial"] allows us to indoctrinate harmful thoughts and to ward off detrimental thoughts that would otherwise become our future obsessors. (The Consciousness of the Shaman and the "Miracão" section, ¶#9)

Healers in Mapiá's system also believe that continuous negative thoughts, feelings, and words can build up toxins in physical bodies, which eventually manifest as physical illness.

Another related cause often attributed to illness is known in this system as “o correio da má notícia”. Literally translated this is “the mail of bad news”. Essentially, it means the gossip that can create rumors in the community. The hymns and the teachings of the doctrine frequently give serious warnings that talking about other people can often cause illness. A hymn of Padrinho Sebastião states, “The death of the body is at the point of the tongue”. Another hymn of Mestre Irineu warns, “It is like this, the discipline/ Whoever wants to can run/ If I speak of my brother/ I am subject to death.” Couto (1989) provides a quote from an elder member of the Santo Daime explaining this further,

“...who brings up illness is us ourselves through weak thoughts, to live speaking of my brother, all of this accumulates illnesses.... And us that live in the Daime can not live like this, because if we live like this, we suffer” (p. 111).

In this system, general cleanliness of one's physical body and home is also of utmost importance to avoid illnesses. This is partially due to the realities of the jungle, in which insects and creatures are always ready to invade one's home and body if they are not kept clean. Yet it is also seen from a spiritual perspective. If one allows his or her home and body to be dirty and disorganized, they then attract “heavy” energies, and /or obsessor spirits, which can create physical, mental and emotional illness.

*How important is it to identify and address ultimate as opposed to proximate causes of illness?*

In the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá, the goal of most treatments is generally to discover the ultimate cause for illness. The exceptions to this would be illnesses that have obvious natural causes, such as common cold or animal and accident inflicted wounds. Yet for illnesses that are not easily explained, or for chronic or recurring ailments, the ultimate cause is usually sought out. This is linked to the idea that illness is an opportunity to learn more about one's self, develop as a healer, and become more in harmony with the elements of nature, with the divine, and with one's inherent divine nature (superior self). Although there is allopathic medicine available in Mapiá, the Santa Casa and the medicines and floral essences of the Forest Medicine Center, allow patients the opportunity to study about their illness with the goal of finding and addressing the ultimate cause. This is due to the belief that, "If the part of corruption is not found in its internal levels, a complete cure can not be found" (Freire & Barsé, 2000, p. 26). The authors elaborate on this point in the following statement.

The material man, who has forgotten himself and his life light, often searches hopelessly, to suppress symptoms of illness with the misguided expectation of finding a cure. But for this very reason, this path is likely to cause harm. The man of light contends with his physical body, looking for resources from other lives in order to expand health within the body and dominate all pathological proneness.  
(p.15)

As opposed to common allopathic medicines, which often act to suppress and interrupt the symptoms of illness, many of the medicines used in the Forest

Medicine Center seem to exacerbate the symptoms as they work towards addressing the ultimate cause of the illness. One medicine, known locally as Salsa Tresquina, is used to treat blood infections. It often causes “pussy wounds” to open all over the patient’s body. It is believed that these wounds allow the body to rid itself of the infecting material.

I had the opportunity to take another medicine known as mururé. This medicine is a resin extracted from a large tree of the forest, and it is used to treat arthritic conditions. On one of my trips to Mapiá, I was suffering from a chronic spinal injury, which was causing me pain in my neck and jaw. Maria Alice told me that I should take mururé, and she said that it would be an “initiation” for me. I then stayed at her home for one week. Each evening, I would take a slightly larger dose of the medicine (I began with a half of a tablespoon, and worked my way up to two tablespoons). The first day, I noticed a heightening of my emotions, and an increase in my physical energy. The second and third days, I began to feel all of the pains in my body get worse. It was as if every injury that I had ever had returned to their acute states. Over the next days, the pain got so bad that I could not walk, and I experienced a mid-range fever. After affecting me on the emotional and physical levels, I experienced the final dose on a spiritual level. With my eyes open or shut, I began to see images of women from my past. Beginning with my mother, I was shown how and when I had treated many women with disrespect. Finally, the spirit of a child appeared to me. At this point, I was crying, and I called Maria Alice to tell her what I was experiencing. I explained to her that the spirit of a child that my girlfriend had

aborted two years earlier was appearing to me. We then lit a candle and said some prayers for that spirit. She advised me to find this old girlfriend and do a specific ceremony with her for this spirit. Months later I found my old girlfriend and we did the prescribed ceremony. Soon after, my chronic pains subsided.

### *Epistemology*

#### *Is there a canonical body of knowledge?*

The canonical body of knowledge for the healing system in Céu do Mapiá is the vast collection of hymns received by Master Irineu, Padrinho Sebastião, Madrinha Rita, Padrinho Alfredo and other prominent members and leaders of the Santo Daime church, past and present. Beyond being the central focus that guides the activities and perceptions of the participants in Santo Daime rituals, the hymns contain all of the philosophical, ethical, and practical teachings of the Santo Daime doctrine. They are therefore also the central guiding force for the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá. Cefluris has also produced a pamphlet known as the *Norms of the Ritual*. In it one can find directions concerning how to conduct the various rituals in the Santo Daime doctrine.

The hymns are verses of lyrics with music which are received in revelations and mirações by people under the effects of the Santo Daime. There are hymns about healing, discipline, praise and counsel to the followers of the doctrine (Froes, 1986, p. 36). It is believed that the hymns are messages from the astral world with divine origins. Padrinho Sebastião has said, “Our mandate is in

the hymnal. Because the hymnal is not invented in anyone's head" (Alverga, 1998, p. 65). He explains this further in the following statement:

All of those that are hearing these words that are said through the hymns, know that this word is not ours...The hymn is a thing that (comes down) and enters into the consciousness of the person through intuition, or through voice, depending on the type of receptor aparelho, isn't it? The hymn comes. But it is not him, that body that is bringing it. It is the "I" there of the heights that is sending a message for the internal self. If the internal self is well developed, he soon receives it. If not...if he's still sleeping...the angels don't come to reveal anything to him. (pp. 73-4)

Beyond the hymns, the main teachings for the followers of the Santo Daime are the revelations that they receive directly from their own mirações. Thus Padrinho Sebastião has said that, "The Daime is the scripture for who can not read" (Alverga, 1998, p. 92).

*How do the origins and social history of the system relate to current theories and practices?*

The Santo Daime doctrine, and the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá, is the result of the union of the three main ethnic groups represented in Brazil; European, African and indigenous (Froes, 1986, p. 36). The founder of this system, Mestre Irineu, was a Brazilian man of African descent. At a young age, he had involvements with a group dedicated to preserving African culture. He was also raised as a devout Catholic. When he later encountered and studied with the indigenous healers of the Amazon, he brought with him, and integrated these traditions.

McRae (1992) has said that the “origin of the concepts of the Santo Daime date back to the ancient traditions of the indigenous peoples of the South American continent” (p. 102). Both McRae (1992) and Couto (1989) have detailed how the Santo Daime tradition has evolved from indigenous healing practices, to mestizo practices, and then finally to the more “collective shamanism” found in the Santo Daime. In mestizo and indigenous traditions, the shamans were seen as the rare people capable of employing shamanic techniques of diagnosis and treatment. Yet in this system, shamanic activities are not exclusive to anyone, and all participants are considered students of shamanism, or potential shamans. The commanders of the works are still seen as the more experienced shamans of the group, and they do have authority and the respect of the members. However, because of the cultural imperatives of humility, “he renounces this power to affirm another greater than him, represented by the mythic empire whose commander is Jesus Christ (Juramidam)” Couto (1989, p. 126).

The use of ayahuasca and the many herbal remedies utilized in Céu do Mapiá have been used by indigenous healers long before the arrival of the Europeans to the continent. The practice of mediumship, which is also a central feature of this system, is also seen by the healers of Mapiá as an ancient human faculty utilized since ancient times. Freire and Barsé (2000) cite the prophets and priests of the Old Testament as examples of people who, “possessed the gift for communicating with God (Jehova) and transmitting his messages to those who

could not do the same; that is to say these prophets were intermediaries, or mediums” (p. 24).

*What are the internal disputes and variables in the system?*

Among the followers of the Santo Daime, and even among the residents of Céu do Mapiá, there is a slight disagreement concerning the role of mediumship in this healing system. During the epoch in which the Santo Daime was founded there was much persecution of magic and witchcraft from government decrees. The anthropologist Walter Diaz Jr. has speculated that in order to get the help and support of the local governor and authorities, Mestre Irineu focused his doctrine more on the ritual elements of White Catholics. He also minimized spirit possession and the mediumship practices that were often associated with Amazonian healers (McRae, 1992, p. 48). There are many people in Mapiá and other Santo Daime centers who feel that this separation should be maintained, and that the focus should be on the healing power of the hymns and the Daime itself.

On the other hand it is known that Mestre Irineu did small healing works in which he called upon caboclo spirits to do healings. Although many of his hymns refer to some of these entities, it is said that he did not teach the “callings” to anyone for he feared that they would not know how to use them (Neto, 2003, p.39). It is also known that Padrinho Sebastião was also a practicing medium who did healing work with spirit guides (Alverga, 1983, 1998; Mortimer, 2000). Yet Padrinho Sebastião *did* want his followers to learn these practices, and he actively encouraged them to practice this type of spiritual charity work.

Therefore this is not a very serious dispute in Mapiá. Those who do not wish to incorporate the more esoteric aspects of this system simply do not go to those types of works, and do not seek out those types of healings.

*How does the system respond to novel input?*

It is known that both Mestre Irineu and Padrinho Sebastião were open to and sought out wisdom from other traditions. Mestere Irineu was affiliated with two other spiritual groups, the Order of the Rosa Cruz, and the Circulo Esotérico da Comunhão do Pensamento (Esoteric Center for the Communion of Thought), from which he adopted several prayers and basic concepts of the doctrine (McRae, 1992, p. 50). It is also known that Padrinho Sebastião sought out healers from other traditions near the end of his life (p. 75). The eclectic influence to the system of healing in Mapiá is still evident today in the variety of therapeutic techniques applied at the Santa Casa, which include: various types of massage, acupuncture, tai chi, and work with crystals. The very name of the church organization, Eclectic Center of Universal Flowing Light Raimundo Irineu Serra, also indicates this fact.

On the other hand it must be noted that there is a large conglomerate of people living in Mapiá that are more traditional, and are not as open to novel input. Recently, due to the immigration into Mapiá of a large amount of people from the metropolitan South of Brazil, there have been more people bringing “health food” ideas to Mapiá. Most of the original residents make fun of these

people, calling them “macrobioticos”, and prefer to continue using the white rice and processed sugar that they are used to.

Although it is known that Padrinho Sebastião was open to, and actively sought out help from healers of other traditions, his main source of recourse was the self-knowledge he gained with the Santo Daime and his connection to his “superior self”. He told a story about a man that came to him and offered him a book. The man told Padrinho that the book was important for him to read, and it would help him greatly. When Padrinho said that he could not read, the man offered to read it to him, stressing that it was “the book of the Truth”. Padrinho then responded to him, “I am the Truth” (Alverga, 1998, p. 89).

### *Theories*

*What are the important human systems, their mechanisms of action, and their interconnections understood to be?*

The system of healing in Céu do Mapiá addresses health in a holistic manner. The human systems recognized in this system include, the physical, psychological and spiritual. They are also described as the “material” and “nonmaterial planes”. The “nonmaterial plane” would include the psychological system of thoughts and emotions, the “inferior self”, and the “superior”, divine aspect, which is the “true state of health”. Illnesses may originate from either the material or nonmaterial planes. It is believed that illness that originates from the material plane should also be treated on the material plane. Freire and Barseé (2000, p. 15) state that, “the illness that comes from the nonmaterial plane will be

found in the material or physical body, which is the appropriate terrain for the manifestation, treatments, cleansing, transmutation and cure.” They go on to clarify that,

The human being is not a body with isolated limbs and organs. Nor is it only mind or feelings. The human being is a whole, with its physical body, subtle bodies, and divine presence. To have success in any treatment we must treat the human being as a small whole that is part of a greater whole. (p. 26)

The flower essences and homeopathic remedies which are used in this system are believed to affect the patient’s “subtle body”. The subtle body is seen as the aspect of the human being “where the matrix of our elemental organization is registered” (Friere and Barsè, 2000, p. 13). Thus it is made up of the original balance of elements which came together in the time of human conception. Friere and Barsè (2000) explain that,

This body has a relationship with man in his diverse levels of existence: from the superior bodies, which connect with and transmit information from the matrix, to the inferior bodies, where the materialization of the matrix culminates in the manifestation of the physical body. (p. 13)

*How are the symptoms interpreted within the system, generally and specifically?*

The following verse of a hymn, which is sung in Santo Daime healing works, relates how symptoms are perceived in this system, generally: “The sicknesses that appear/ Is discipline for those who work to deserve”. Thus, it is generally seen that the symptoms of illness are experienced by a person so that he or she can see and understand the blockages and / or destructive patterns that he or she has, and the work that he or she needs to accomplish. This discipline then

ideally leads a person to become more in tune with the divine harmony of nature, and their natural state of health.

On a more specific level, fevers; and the “pussy wounds” (known locally as “perebas”SP) that are associated with common blood infections of the area, are both seen as the body's efforts to rid itself of toxins. Unexplained redness on the skin is also believed to indicate the need to have an experienced elder, known as a “rezadeira”, pray over the area.

*What is the relationship of preventative and therapeutic actions to illness and prevention or melioration of illness?*

In this system of healing, it is believed that leaving the “world of illusion”, dominating one's “inferior self”, and living a spiritual life in harmony with nature, and with faith in God is the best prevention one can take against illness. This idea can be seen in the lectures of Padrinho Sebastião:

My brothers and sisters, if you want to have health, believe in the Truth, believe in the Divine Power. Stop taking so many pills, because the more you take, everyone lives sick. Who takes Daime with faith doesn't get sick. Who takes Daime lives with Christ directly, with God. You can not live sick. No one can live busying oneself with the others. Because God is the Lord of Good. Whichever one of my other brothers that lives sick is because they are still outside of God. Because God is the life, God is the Truth, God is the Love, God is the health. If we live with God, we don't get sick. (Alverga, 1998, p. 125)

Although there are types of works which are specifically for healing, it is believed that all of the works involving Santo Daime are potentially healing. Concentration works are held twice a month, which involve periods of silent

meditation and the singing of hymns while seated. Hymnal works are held on specific dates according to the Catholic calendar. These works involve organized line dances, and the singing of hymns accompanied by maracas, guitars and other instruments. The rituals are called works (trabalhos) because the participants are expected to work on correcting their faults and furthering their spiritual evolution, moral perfection, and internal and external harmony. It is believed that by listening to, and following the instructions in the hymns and the miracões, participants can live healthier lives and avoid illness.

*What is the role of patient's beliefs or expectations of practitioner's intent?*

In this system it is seen as essential for the patient to have faith in the efficacy of the treatment and the practitioner's intent. The healers prepare and distribute medicines, and act as vessels for the sick people to have contact with spiritual entities. These entities are believed to have special abilities to diagnose and treat illness. Yet it is the patient that must follow the prescribed treatment, and give it potency with his or her willpower and faith. Freire and Barsé (2000) address this point, saying,

The key is the will of the human being. This is the same will that leads a being to search for a cure...the same will that can open the doors of transformation. If this will does not come before anything else, no remedy can cure. By the same token, if this will acts truthfully, it alone can cure everything. (p. 27)

Thus it is understood that if a patient does not believe in and have hopeful expectations about the practitioner's intent, his or her will power will not be

active, and a full cure will not take place. It is also believed that the Santo Daime helps inspire a person's will power and faith through the miraçāo. For in the miraçāo, it is believed that a person is able to have their own personal contact with the healing entities of the spirit world. Padrinho Sebastião touches upon this in the following statement:

They only believe if they see directly....What is useful is to see to believe and the person enters to encounter with Christ, to see if he really exists or not, if he is within us or not. This is what is most important: the person to penetrate to really encounter that which the Daime says and he does not know. (Alverga, 1998, p. 109)

### *Goals for the System*

#### *What are the primary goals for the system?*

The goals of this system go beyond curing physical ailments and relieving symptoms. It is hoped that the healing rituals and therapies will help the patients to find the healers within themselves, and incite within them the auto-discipline needed to live a more healthy life. McRae (1992, p. 52) describes this process as a progressive development of the “superior self” and a discovery of one's “true identity” through miraçōes and self knowledge. The “superior self” then becomes a source of inspiration which acts on the “inferior self” in the material world. Padrinho Sebastião often spoke of this goal as a spiritual “rebirth”. “When the man has the attitude to be and say: 'I Am, because God Is', and brings this true wisdom here on the Earth, he is born again” (Alverga, 1998, p. 112). Freire and Barsé (2000, p. 9) explain this goal as a reunion of the body and spirit which facilitates a reencounter with our true identity.

### *Outcome Measures*

#### *What constitutes a successful intervention?*

Illness, in this system, is seen as internal disharmony. Yet at the same time it is seen as an opportunity to discover where the disharmony originates. Therefore illness is seen as an opportunity for a person to learn about his or her self, and further his or her spiritual growth. From this perspective, what a patient learns, and integrates into his or her life, is sometimes more important than the relief of certain symptoms. The focus of the interventions may be on the relief of the symptoms, yet the therapies with Santo Daime, floral essences and the other herbal remedies utilized, often bring the patient to deeper levels of self-discovery. This allows the patient to learn how his or her own patterns of thought or actions brought on the manifestation of the symptoms. It also helps the patient to develop his or her own self-healing capacity. Thus in a successful intervention, the symptoms are relieved, and the patient learns the preventative measures that need to be taken to avoid becoming ill again. The patient will also be empowered and prepared by his or her newly gained knowledge of how to heal his or herself, in case the symptoms did happen to return.

#### *How are successful or failed interventions evaluated?*

In Céu do Mapiá the outcomes for interventions are primarily evaluated through patient self-report. Practitioner evaluation is also important in judging if the intervention was successful.

*How are the successes and failures of treatments and practitioners explained?*

In her study of the perspectives concerning health and illness among followers of the Santo Daime, Pelaes (1994, p. 1) discussed the general explanations used for successful and failed treatments. She stated that the common view among Santo Daime members was that if the symptoms got better, the Daime is “doing away with the illness”. If the symptoms got worse, it was explained by saying that the Daime was “pushing everything to the surface”. If the symptoms persisted and the patient died, the explanation was that it was their karma, and they received a “spiritual healing”.

I have found this evaluation to be generally true, yet I have also seen some other explanations for failed treatments. One of these explanations concerns the amount of responsibility given to the patient. Clara Iura has said that healing in this system is “hard work, because we have to obey the instructions from the Daime and the spirit guides. Many times it is rebelliousness that keeps us sick” (personal communication, July 5, 2004). Along with rebelliousness, fear of surrendering to the “force of the Daime”, or doubt about the efficacy of the treatment, medicine or healer are also other common explanations. On the other hand, the patient's diligent efforts to follow the instructions or prescriptions involved in the treatment, is given much of the credit when the intervention is successful.

Within this system of healing there is also a common idea of a person needing to be “deserving” of a cure. A hymn of Padrinho Sebastião speaks of this idea:

....Jesus Christ is on the Earth/ He is a great healer/ He heals whoever seeks him/ For he is the triumphant one/ He heals whoever seeks him/ According to their deserving/ For not everyone is in the grace/ To receive the healings (hymn #65, Hymnal of Padrinho Sebastião Mota de Melo)

Thus Peláes (1994) says that in this system there are two poles to the healing process. One pole involves the person working to deserve, and the other involves God giving healing with infinite mercy when the person deserves (p. 87). In order to become deserving it is believed that a person must rid themselves of fear and doubt which are seen as thieves that “take a person from their spiritual path robbing them of the certainty and courage, necessary qualities to win the fight against the negative entities which cause illness” (Couto, 1989, p. 115). The ill person then must have faith, humble his or herself, forgive, and ask for forgiveness. Couto (1989) notes that “forgiveness is for many the key of the healing, and this shows the strong influence of Christianity in the ideology of the doctrine” (p. 107).

Couto (1989) also explains that in some instances a failed treatment is simply attributed to the idea that the treatment was not appropriate for the illness (p. 96).

### *Social Organization*

*What are the prevalence and distribution of this system?*

The central location of this system of healing is the village, Céu do Mapiá, located on a tributary of the Purus river in Amazonas, Brazil. Over the past 10 years this system has also begun to be implemented in several communities along the Juruá river in Acre, Brazil. With the expansion of the Santo Daime doctrine throughout Brazil and several other countries, some aspects of this system of healing are also spreading to these areas. McRae (1992, p. 68) has noted that there is significant uniformity among CEFLURIS churches considering their geographic distribution. All of these churches realize regular healing works and participate in “teams of healing”. Maria Alice, Clara Iura and other healers in Mapiá have also traveled throughout Brazil and Europe, helping to train these “teams of healing”. The system of floral essences which was developed in Mapiá has also gained attention throughout Brazil due to the publication of the book *Florais da Amazônia* (2000). Maria Alice, Isabel Barsé and others experienced in this system of floral essence and elemental therapy, have also facilitated several experiential trainings in Mapiá and in other communities. As the many visitors that come to Mapiá each year, return to their churches, they bring back with them the tools and experiences that they gained.

*Who uses this system or to whom is it primarily accessible?*

The primary group that uses this system of healing is the members and visitors of the village Céu do Mapiá, and three communities along the Juruá River

known as: Luz do Juruá, Comunidade Nova Era, and Comunidade Luz da Floresta. It could also be said that this system is utilized primarily by the followers of the Santo Daime doctrine. Yet many of the services provided by the Forest Medicine Center, in both Céu do Mapiá and the Juruá communities are also utilized by some of the local people of the surrounding area who are not active members of the Santo Daime. As these areas are extremely poor, the local people benefit from the free medicines, treatments and health education provided by the Forest Medicine Center.

*What is the system's referral network?*

As Céu do Mapiá is a relatively small village, most of the members know who the healers are and where to find them when they need them. The visitors that need help find information about the local health system by asking any of the experienced community members. The healers may refer patients to other healers in the community if they do not feel they have the time or the specific training necessary for the specific case.

*Are there specialist practitioners? If so, how are they selected and trained?*

There are specialist practitioners in this system. There is a medical doctor who received formal training in a medical school, and there are other types of specialists that receive training through an oral tradition. Both the Santa Casa and the Forest Medicine Center, have education as a central focus. Two days a week

the Forest Medicine Center has community work days in which members of the community come to learn and help prepare the many herbal remedies. The Wednesday works at the Santa Casa and the White Table works held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of every month have as a special focus the training and development of novice healers and mediums. After years of participating in these activities, a person can receive responsibilities to help treat and train other people.

*What kinds of specialists are there?*

In Céu do Mapiá there are several types of specialists. There is a medical doctor who specializes in allopathic medicine. There are several members of this system also trained in massage, and two women who are trained in acupuncture. There are those who are specialized in prayer, they are known as “rezadeiras”. These are often elder women of the village, who know how to do special prayers which are believed to aid the healing of rashes, infected wounds, and other physical ailments. There are also mediums that specialize in the channeling of spirit guides. Some mediums are specialized in “transport”, or “indoctrination of suffering spirits”. Other mediums specialize in receiving “messages” about health, healing and spirituality. There are then those who specialize in the knowledge of the vast array of medicinal herbs of the forest. Some of the healers, like Maria Alice and Clara Iura, are proficient in many of these areas.

*What are the usual therapeutic practice sites?*

In the early days of this system, the healers would treat people either out of their own homes, or they would make house calls to the homes of their patients. Now there is a centralized location for most of the healing transactions. In 1999, the Holy House of Health Padrinho Manoel Corrente (Santa Casa) was built. This house hosts the alternative therapies, and the Wednesday Santo Daime healing sessions. Three years later the Health Centre, which is the site for allopathic medicinal services, was built right next to the Santa Casa. There is also a Star House in the middle of the village, where many Santo Daime healing works take place. Several consecrated areas in the forest, known as “terreiros” are also utilized for small healing works. All the rest of the Santo Daime works take place in the large, six-pointed-star-shaped church in the middle of the village.

*What are the system's internal and external legitimization and oversight structures?*

In Céu do Mapiá there are not any formal legitimization structures. The informal process involves the leaders of the community giving individuals and groups of healers the authority to practice healing work with the Santo Daime. The fact that Padrinho Sebastião requested the help of, and then gave instructions to, both Clara Iura and Maria Alice, gives them both legitimization in this system. Padrinho Alfredo’s continued support of the projects in the Forest Medicine Center and the Santa Casa, reinforces this legitimization.

Within the new communities in Juruá, the organization and legitimization processes are becoming more formalized. The established healers working with the Forest Medicine Center are having reunions of indigenous and traditional healers of the region to establish agreed upon ethics and to form an alliance with the mutual intention of practicing and preserving the knowledge and rights of the people of the forest. They are gaining support of the government, as the Environmental Institute of the state of Acre (IMAC Instituto de Meio Ambiente do Acre) and a prominent senator have supported their recent efforts. They are also working on juridical questions concerning the protection of copyrights and intellectual property of Amazonian folk medicine. They have also begun to hold courses in which members of the community receive training and subsequently certification as health agents.

*What therapeutic measures are undertaken at home or elsewhere, on one's own or with the aid of family members?*

In this system of healing it is common for patients to be instructed to take therapeutic measures at home. These instructions may come from a specific spirit guide through a medium, from a healer him or herself, or from a miração experienced during a Santo Daime work. These instructions from a spirit guide often include actions such as, finding a certain flower, and preparing a bath with that flower; or saying a certain prayer at a certain time of the day. The instructions from one of the healers may include the regular use of a certain medication, which often involve certain preparations of diet and behavior. The

instructions received through mirações often include changing or discontinuing common behaviors such as speaking harshly, or giving up certain addictions. It is believed that by following the instructions received through the Santo Daime, along with becoming a better person, the patient will be able to further their spiritual growth, and subsequently receive deeper healings and revelations from the Daime.

*How are practitioners compensated?*

In both the Santa Casa and the Forest Medicine Center there are paid staff members and volunteers. The paid staff at the Santa Casa receives funds from a philanthropic association called “Maintainer of the Santa Casa”. The donations that support this association are largely supported by other Santo Daime communities in Brazil and the exterior, and visitors to the Mapiá community. The paid staff of the Forest Medicine Center is helped through donations, and money received through courses, and the sale of many of their products. The allopathic Health Centre is funded through governmental support.

*How does the system interact with other CAM systems?*

This system is open to learning and integrating aspects of other CAM systems. This can be seen in the eclectic nature of the healing work at the Santa Casa. This is also evident when visitors arrive with knowledge and experience in a CAM system that the healers in Mapiá are not familiar with. On these occasions, the healers in Mapiá actively seek to learn and experience the new

system. During one of my visits to Céu do Mapiá, a group from the Native American Peyote Church visited the village. They brought with them the teepee and their medicine, and performed two all night rituals. Most of the elders of the community participated in these rituals with enthusiasm and respect for another spiritual line. However, when they invited the Native Americans to join them in a Santo Daime work, none of the members of the NAC showed up. This exemplified how the healing system in Mapiá is more open than some other similar CAM systems, to experiment with and learn from other CAM systems.

In a general sense, the system of healing in Mapiá is open to experiment and learn from other CAM systems. Patients of this system however, are encouraged to follow one course of treatment, and not jump from one type of therapy to another. This has to do with the commonly held belief that if a patient can not receive a spiritual healing with all of the resources and support in Mapiá, they will not be able to receive it anywhere else.

### *Specific Activities and Materia Medica*

#### *What do practitioners do?*

The practitioners in Céu do Mapiá provide a wide variety of services. Mapiá's medical doctor provides professional consultation, prescriptions of pharmaceuticals, and she is also a trained acupuncture therapist. There are several people in the village, including Clara Iura, trained at different types of massage, and there are those trained for midwifery. The other main activities of

the healers include Santo Daime spiritual healing works, and the prescribing and providing of floral essences and herbal remedies. As healers such as Maria Alice, have an extensive knowledge of herbal remedies of the forest, they are usually able to prescribe the remedies after evaluating the patient's symptoms. However, certain illnesses require consultation with the Santo Daime and the spiritual entities associated with it, to discover the proper treatment. This practice of using the Santo Daime as a type of Oracle has been employed by ayahuasca shamans of various traditions, and was also a common practice of Mestre Irineu (Couto, 1989, p. 105). Francisco Corrente, a healer of the Mapiá community, explains this phenomenon:

The indications of remedies by guides is done through the healing bench, the guide passes the prescription, so all illness with that character is cured with that remedy. Yet other illnesses you use other types of medicines. Through the incorporations, of the spiritual irradiations, we seek what type of cure, if it should be a remedy of the jungle, syrup or tea of some root that comes to correspond to the work of combating that type of illness. This is done by the spirits that atuam in the aparelhos and pass through the bench that the people frequent. We already have lines of spiritual remedies, we even know the spirit that sent the prescriptions. Many types of illness, we don't need to make a consultation, we already have the prescription with us, yet there are illnesses that we have to consult to confirm. (Froes, 1986, p. 92)

The healers learn about many medicines by communing with spirit guides, yet it is also believed in this system, that the plants themselves have spirits. Thus, through mediumship, the healers are able to communicate with the spirits of these plants in order to discover their possible medicinal properties. This has been a

main technique in developing the system of Amazon floral essences used in Mapiá.

Beyond seeking remedies and diagnosis, healing works are often the sites where direct healings take place. Many times the healers simply facilitate a healing work for those in need. The healing interaction then takes place internally in the patient's direct connection with the Santo Daime. The healings received from the Daime often include physical purging, which is seen to be cleansing. There is also a psychological aspect, in which the participants often experience intense self-exploration. Couto (1989) explains that this process is often cathartic and psychotherapeutic, as the participant "intensely lives and relives the initial situation that is at the origin of his [or her] disturbance, to be able to overcome it definitively" (p.107).

Although the participant often has revelations about the origin of their illness and the path that they need to take to overcome it, these healing works often do not have profound external results. However, there are several documented cases in which participants of these healing works have received profound healings of serious illnesses (Couto, 1989, p. 104; Frôes 1984, p. 91). All of these cases involved the participant losing consciousness during a Santo Daime healing work. The participants then experienced themselves in an allopathic hospital surrounded by surgeons. The surgeons then operated on them and purportedly removed objects from their bodies. Clara Iura told me of her experience receiving three such "astral operations". The first experience involved a doctor spirit diagnosing her with a serious illness. Tests with an allopathic

doctor in the material world then showed that she did in fact have a serious type of cancer. Then in the two subsequent astral operations she was cured of hydro syphilis and cancer. She later returned to the allopathic doctor, who confirmed that the operation had been successful (C. Iura, personal communication, July 5, 2004).

There are also healing works in which the mediums incorporate spiritual guides who then do healing work on the patients. The spirit guides are believed to have a more profound ability to perceive where the spiritual and physical blockages are in the patient's body. They then are believed to have the ability to influence these blockages by manipulating spiritual fluids. They may also see the need to indoctrinate an obsessor spirit that may be influencing the patient's health. When one of the mediums does incorporate one of these obsessor spirits, another participant asks the spirit questions and records the answers. It is hoped that the answers to the questions will give clues concerning the ultimate cause of the patient's illness.

In other circumstances, the medium and other participants will sing "callings" to invoke other healing entities and energies believed to be beneficial. These guides may also give advice and counsel to the patient. Padrinho Sebastião is known to have worked with two spirit guides who were also known to do operations on patients (Alverga, 1984, Froes, 1986, Mortimer, 2000).

*What is the specific *materia medica*?*

In the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá the Santo Daime sacrament is the *materia medica* that commands all of the healing activities. In all of the sites where Santo Daime works and healing rituals take place, at least three white candles and a double armed cross, known as the Cross of Caravaca, are present. In this tradition, the second arm of the Cross of Caravaca represents the second coming of Jesus Christ within the Santo Daime. Other major symbols utilized in Santo Daime works include the symbol of Solomon (a six pointed star), and photographs of Padrinho Sebastião, Master Irineu and other prominent Santo Daime leaders. The members of the church also use “fardas”, specific uniforms, different for both men and women.

Beyond the Santo Daime, the healers in this system use a wide variety of *materia medica*. Herbal teas from forest plants for such uses as anti-malaria, blood purification, and liver and kidney tonics are used. One of these teas, which was brought to the Mapiá system by Seu Severinho, is known as Salsa Tresquina. Seu Severinho claimed that this is a powerful blood purifier that can cure diseases such as cancer and HIV. There is no documentation to support these claims, however.

The healers in Mapiá also utilize medicines derived from animals. One such medicine, brought to the Mapiá system by healers of the Katukina (SP) tribe in the Juruá region is known as Cambô (SP). This medicine is gathered from a certain type of frog. After the frog is found, its skin is scraped without harming the animal. The film that is scraped off of the frog is then stored on a small piece

of wood. The healer then applies the film onto small burns made on the patient's skin. The patient then experiences about twenty minutes of discomfort, often accompanied by vomiting. This medicine is believed to be a powerful immune system booster. Many people testify that they did not get sick for an extensive period of time following this treatment.

Over the last several years, the healers in Mapiá have been developing homeopathic remedies, using the powerful medicines of the forest. They have also developed an extensive system of floral essences. Locally harvested clay, often mixed with herbs, is also used both internally and externally in many treatments.

*What are the classes and purposes of interventions?*

In this system of healing, interventions are either physical or spiritual in nature. The interventions on the physical level include the use of massage, acupuncture, and a wide variety of natural and allopathic remedies. Many of the natural forest remedies also are believed to affect the patient on a spiritual level, yet the purpose of all of these physical interventions is the treatment of observed physical symptoms.

The spiritual interventions utilized in this system include various types of spiritual healing works. Each type of healing work has a specific purpose. Star Works and Saint Michael works are done for the physical and spiritual cleansing of the participants. They are also executed for the indoctrination of suffering spirits which may be affecting a certain person, or the community as a whole.

They consist of the participants sitting around a table shaped like a six pointed star. On the table, are at least three white candles and a Cross of Caravaca with a rosary hanging on it. The women are seated on one side of the room, and the men on the other. The participants drink a cup of Santo Daime about every two hours, and they sing hymns which are believed to invoke healing energies, and spirit guides. In these works, mediums may channel suffering spirits for indoctrination; or spirit guides, who may come to relay a message or do a healing.

Another type of healing work is known as a Work of Crosses. This is a work, developed by Mestre Irineu, which is done when a person demonstrates spiritual problems which develop into psychological imbalances. The purpose of this type of work is usually to free the patient from the negative influence of “obsessor spirits”. These works are done for three consecutive days. They consist of having three, five, seven or nine people standing at the table with a candle in their right hand, and a small cross in their left hand. This is a brief work that includes specific prayers and the singing of only two hymns. Another type of healing work is known as a White Table work. This work is similar to the Saint Michael work, yet its purpose is for the participants to study and develop their faculties of mediumship.

Each Wednesday, healing works, specifically for the healers to attend to individual patients, take place at the Santa Casa. These works last for most of the day, with individual patients receiving treatments from a team of healers in a separate room. There are also several locations in the forest, known as terreiros, where small healing works may be held for individual patients. One type of

healing work done at these locations is known as a Bed of Leaves. This work comes from the tradition of Umbanda. It consists of the healers first discovering the spiritual entities (Orixas) that are most closely related to the patient. The healers then collect leaves and flowers that are associated with these same Orixas. The patient then lies down on a bed made from these leaves, and then he or she is covered with a sheet. The healers then sing callings for all of these Orixas, while the patient lies down in meditation. This is believed to invoke the healing and protecting capacities of these entities, thus giving the patient more strength and clarity.

### *Responsibilities*

#### *What are the responsibilities of practitioners?*

In this system of healing most of the responsibilities for the healing process are placed on the patient. The healer is responsible to attend to the patient's needs, and to do their best to provide the patient with the appropriate treatment for those needs. They may provide the patient with a certain type of natural remedy. Often times these remedies have powerful effects, and the healer is required to monitor the patient and give him or her the care and support that may be needed throughout the process. They are then responsible to follow up with the patient to verify that he or she has successfully completed the course of treatment.

In terms of acting as a medium to facilitate healing transactions, the healer also has some responsibilities. This would include the proper preparation prior to the healing ritual. In this system it is suggested that people refrain from having sex, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or eating red meat for at least three days before working as a medium. The next phase of preparation involves, silencing one's mind, straightening one's spine, focusing on one's breath, and observing and connecting with nature.

In order for us to be able to work, we connect with nature, integrating ourselves in the harmony of the rainforest...It is necessary to improve the sense of hearing and connect with the sounds of nature...When we connect with it, the vision awakens, which put into action the mechanisms of the mind that speak to the consciousness and touch the heart... At this point of integration, a medium channel is adjusted for communication that can arrive through elemental beings, guardian spirits of the nature's realms and gardens, healing spirits, caboclos and shamans. (Freire & Barsé, 2000, p. 23)

Freire and Barsé (2000) also say that an effective mediumship interaction can only take place with sincerity, honesty, humility and an objective that is “altruistic, and for the benefit and cure of other beings” (p. 21).

Couto (1989) notes that Padrinho Sebastião “emphasized the importance of the healers to first examine their own selves, doing a self-atonement and seeking to heal themselves so that the ill person is able to receive the benefits of the spiritual healing” (p. 92).

#### *What are the responsibilities of patients or clients?*

In this system, the responsibilities of the client are central to a successful intervention. Guimaraes (1992, p. 112) found that in the Santo Daime tradition, a

successful cure depends upon the faith the patient has in the treatment, and on his or her level of deserving. The idea of deserving involves the person's karma. It also involves the level that he or she cooperates with the treatment, and is open to, and prepares themselves to receive the cure. To achieve this level of deserving, one needs to be free of fear and doubt, and they also must be diligent in implementing the instructions that they receive from the Daime and the healers. A message from a spirit guide, received in a work by one of the healers speaks of the patient's responsibility.

Today I come to say some words of preparation to the sick. Those who find themselves sick and seeks the cure together with the spiritual phalanxes of healers should reflect on your attitude so that it is the attitude of faith in the Spirit of the Supreme Healer. It is a responsibility that the ill person assumes with the Spirit, to ask for your cure and surrender yourself in that cure. Attend rigorously all the instructions that were dictated by the Healer Spirit. In the case that one does not fulfill the instructions, all of the work will be null. Further more, it is necessary that all stay conscious that asking and not consecrating your request is to throw out the gift of God and this implies the accumulation of more karma to be drained and purged in the sufferings of life. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, be firm in your request, conscious and consistent. Receive these words with the love of the brother, and always friend,  
Bezerra de Menezes.

([http://www.santodaime.org/doutrina/cura/doutrinario/mesa\\_branca/bezerra.htm](http://www.santodaime.org/doutrina/cura/doutrinario/mesa_branca/bezerra.htm))

The responsibility of the patient also does not end when the patient receives a cure. They are then responsible to integrate all of the lessons received in the healing process, and not repeat old mistakes and patterns. Padrinho Sebastião often warned people not to be like the dogs which “vomit, and then come back and eat the same vomit” (Alverga, 1998, p. 165). In speaking further

about the work and responsibilities of those who seek healing in this system; Padrinho Sebastião said, “The people arrive full of confusion and want a sea of roses? It is not possible” (p.165).

*Are there consensual ethical norms?*

The healers in Céu do Mapiá do follow some basic standards of ethical norms, yet there is no formalized ethical system. The healers maintain confidentiality about their patients, and the patients have autonomy to follow the treatments or withdraw themselves at any time. The main ethical norms that guide these healers come from the Santo Daime doctrine from which they practice. This basically includes the respect for all people and the harmony in all of nature, humility, and the edict to “love God above all things, and your neighbor as you love yourself” (Alverga, 1998, p.126).

There are also acknowledged ethics in respect to the use of the forest's many resources. When entering into the forest to collect medicinal plants, Maria Alice and others always, sing hymns and say prayers asking for permission of the Queen of the Forest to use her medicines. When harvesting medicinal herbs, prayers are also said, and great care is taken to disturb the forest environment as little as possible.

In terms of the research into traditional Amazonian healing that is being conducted by the Forest Medicine Center, there are more formalized ethical norms. In December of 2001, the Forest Medicine Center held a reunion of healers in one of Mapiá's sister communities in the Juruá river region. The

reunion was attended by members of Céu do Mapiá, the directors of the Forest Medicine Center, and representatives from several indigenous nations and rubber-tapping communities. One of the main things accomplished at this reunion was the establishment of a consensual letter of ethical principles. The principles basically ensured that the medicine of the forest belongs to the people of the forest and should only be patented by them. They stated that the government should ensure their rights by not letting outside parties exploit the forest's resources, and should also help the Forest Medicine Center to gain resources and scientific legitimacy.

### *Scope*

*How extensive, varied or specialized are the system's applications?*

In the community of Céu do Mapiá, and the sister communities in the Juruá river valley, the system of healing is extensive enough to cover almost all of the communities needs. The healers in this system provide services that range from assistance in birth and labor, to caring for the needs of the elderly. They treat psychological ailments, physical wounds, social and domestic problems, and severe illnesses. The only times patients need to seek help in the city is when they feel the need for examinations or operations which require advanced technologies. Although basic dental care is provided in the village, many also travel to the city if they need (and can afford) more in depth dental services.

### *Analysis of Benefits and Barriers*

*What are the risks and costs of the system from the insider's perspective?*

As most all of the treatments and medications in this system are provided to the local people free of cost, there is very little cost involved in this system. The cost would be the amount of work needed to maintain both the Santa Casa and the Forest Medicine Center. As Céu do Mapiá developed with a communal system requiring work and contribution from all of its members, there are sufficient human resources and experience to maintain these projects. For the first ten years of this community's existence (1983-1993), the community functioned without any circulation of money. The community now depends largely on the contributions of the worldwide members of the Santo Daime religion, eco-religious tourism, and some governmental assistance.

Life in the Amazon rainforest is replete with risks, like exotic diseases and a variety of threatening animals. This system of healing helps to provide support and cure for the local people faced with these risks, and does not in itself provide more risks. If one does not wish to risk their health on the traditional healing methods of the forest, there is an allopathic doctor with medications available.

### *Accommodation and Views of Suffering and Death*

*How does the system view suffering and death?*

In this system suffering is seen as an opportunity to learn about one's karma and the blockages that are keeping one from experiencing a state of health.

It is believed that only by embracing the suffering, and learning about why it has come, can a person expect to transmute it and be free of it. Attempting to suppress it or heal it quickly, will only prolong the experience of suffering, or ensure that it will soon return.

Padrinho Sebastião has said that suffering is "...the best thing for us. We suffer, but when we come out the other side say: Thank God! Those were some more difficult degrees that I climbed" (Alverga, 1998, p.158).

Couto (1989, p.119) notes, that in this system death is seen as a journey, or a passage. How this system views death is best described in a hymn of Master Irineu, which he received while his friend and disciple was dieing.

I sang alone on the sandbar/ and thus made it shake/ If you want life, I give it to you/ For no one wants to die/ Death is very simple/ here I will say to you/ I compare death/ It is equal to birth/ After you disincarnate/ Firmness in the heart/ If God gives you permission/ Return for another incarnation/ On the Earth as in Heaven/ Is what everyone says/ If you don't prepare the grounds/ You become a vagabond spirit. (#74, hymnal of Master Raimundo Irineu Serra)

#### *Comparison and Interaction with the Dominant System*

*What does the system provide for healing and coping with illness that the dominant system does not provide?*

There are several elements that this system provides that the dominant system does not provide. These include: a focus on prevention, the utilization of techniques that are spiritual in nature, an openness to learn from and utilize resources of the people of the forest and other CAM systems, the charitable

nature of the system, and the support needed to learn from illness. The focus on prevention is seen in the intention of all of the spiritual works done in the Santo Daime tradition. This intention is to correct one's flaws, examine one's conscience, and focus on one's spiritual growth. It is believed that with the aid of the Santo Daime, and the spiritual guides of the doctrine, one is able to dominate the influence of the inferior self, and recognize the divine, superior self, which is the true identity.

Several techniques and aspects of this system of healing are spiritual in nature. This system is centered on the traditions and teachings of the Santo Daime religion. The practitioners of this system recognize that the Santo Daime works and the other spiritual aspects incorporated in this system help to activate the faith and willpower of the patient. This then is believed to facilitate more productive therapies.

Another aspect of this system which is not found in the dominant system is the openness to learn from and incorporate techniques and resources from the people of the forest and other CAM systems. This system of healing is constantly expanding its knowledge of the healing potential of the plants and animals of the forest, by working with traditional healers of the area. This system is also expanding its repertoire of healing techniques, by integrating aspects from other CAM systems such as, tai chi, work with crystals, various types of massage, etc. This increasing diversity allows this system to attend to a greater number of ailments, and personal needs of patients.

The system of healing in Céu do Mapiá is charitable in nature. All of the services and medicines of the system are provided to the local people free of cost. This is of fundamental importance, seeing that most of the people who benefit from this system have relatively poor financial resources. Aside from the obvious benefits of the patients, the practitioners see this as essential to, and an aid to, the efficacy of the treatments. First of all, it is believed that for spiritual healing to be effective, the intention of the practitioner must be altruistic. Second, the healers often find that patients who have been denied by, or unsuccessful with, the allopathic system are often more open to and ready to receive a spiritual healing.

The system supports patients in learning from their illness. It does this by providing treatments that do not simply suppress the symptoms. Many of the treatments actually exacerbate the symptoms so that, the patient goes deep into self-discovery. The system then provides guidance, support and tools, for the patient to find the cause of the illness, and get in touch with their superior self. Thus the patient becomes the healer. This process is related in a hymn of Padrinho Alfredo. “I entered into an understanding/ Between my “superior self” and my matter/ I am light, I expel sickness/ And unravel its cause” (hymn # 67 of Padrinho Alfredo Gregorio de Melo).

## Discussion

This study attempted to determine whether the system of healing in the Amazonian community, Céu do Mapiá qualifies as an alternative healing system according to the parameters presented by O'Conner et al. (1997). After reviewing the archival data and applying it to the parameters created by the NIH's CAM department, it is clear that this system does qualify as a system of complementary or alternative medicine. By utilizing the NIH's parameters to demonstrate this fact, this study has given a substantial amount of credibility to this system and its practitioners

By applying the archival data to these parameters, this study has also attempted to produce a comprehensive description of this system of healing from the perspective of the practitioners of this system themselves. There was a wealth of archival data on this subject which, when combined with the author's personal experience, made it possible for this study to fulfill this goal. This study does not pretend, however, to be the definitive source on the Santo Daime doctrine, or the system of healing in Céu do Mapiá. With a broader scope, the archival data on ayahuasca, Santo Daime, the traditions of Céu do Mapiá could yield a more complete description of this system. Above all, this system is founded on an oral tradition that puts substantial importance on lineage. The true teachers and guardians of the wisdom and traditions of this doctrine and this healing system are the elders living in the forest.

When I first began working with Maria Alice in 1996, I asked her how long I needed to stay in Mapiá to learn about the plants and traditions of this

system. She responded by saying, "If you stay here for five years, you'll learn something". I then responded that I was not able to stay so long, and I asked how long I would need to stay to begin to learn a little bit. She then said that if I stayed for six months, I might begin to learn a little bit. As this system is broad and immense in its scope, this study and its description of the Santo Daime tradition provide an opportunity for the reader to begin to also learn a little bit.

The verification that this system does qualify as a system of alternative medicine indicates that this system and the rights of its practitioners should be respected. This healing system has its historical roots in the traditions and practices of the indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest. It then incorporates Christian traditions, popular African-Brazilian traditions and practices of other CAM systems. The result of this synthesis is a system that makes the ancient wisdom and practices of the Amazon people accessible to a variety of people foreign to Amazonian culture. As the Amazon rainforest continues to be destroyed, the Santo Daime tradition, and others like it are continuing to expand, and reach new corners of the Earth. This tradition is linked with the health of the Amazon and its people. The practitioners believe that the Queen of the Forest, one of the faces of Mother Nature, gave this mission to Mestre Irineu to "indoctrinate the entire world" (hymn #78 of Mestre Raimundo Irineu Serra). The expansion of this doctrine then is believed to provide to the world the healings of the Santo Daime doctrine, its sacrament, and other medicines of the forest. On the other hand, the Santo Daime is seen as a means for the Queen of the Forest to speak directly to humanity, calling for them to reconnect with nature

and help protect the forest from devastation. The progress in the villages of Céu do Mapiá and Juruá tradition indicates that this culture has thus far been successful in achieving this. Many people throughout Brazil and the world have received benefits and healings from this system. The aid of these members living outside of the jungle is helping to support the communities in the forest that are working to preserve this knowledge and these resources. Several countries including the United States, however are currently attempting to group this system of healing into its “war on drugs”. Thus they risk losing the opportunity to learn from and reap the possible benefits of this system, while at the same time supporting the well being of the Amazon forest and its people. The results of this study show that this tradition is a valid system of healing in a religious context that should not be confused with an illegal drug trafficking group.

Although this study did not evaluate the effectiveness of this system, it did illuminate the fact that the members of this system deem it to be effective. Krippner (2003) asserts that, “if a traditional medical system yields treatment outcomes that its society deems effective, it is worthy of consideration by allopathic investigators” (p.2). The description of this system that is provided in this study illuminates what further research could focus on, and how it could be accomplished. After reviewing the archival data, it is evident that there is a substantial amount of documentation about the history, traditions, and practices of the Santo Daime Doctrine and the community Céu do Mapiá. The most authentic of these publications, however, are in Portuguese. Thus work in translating existing documents could be as beneficial as further research in this area. All

future research, however, will benefit from utilizing this wealth of archival data.

One area that could be researched further involves the applicability of the practices of this tradition to North American and European societies. Legal issues currently could complicate this research in several countries, yet the Santo Daime religion has gained legality in both Spain and Holland. The main area that invites various types of research involves the current practices of the Santa Casa and the Forest Medicine Center in both Juruá and Mapiá. Documentation on the nature and efficacy of the medicines and therapies utilized in these communities could be done from various disciplines. From a psychological perspective, research could be done to document and evaluate the effectiveness of integrating the Santo Daime sacrament and religious tradition with the study of mediumship to treat various psychological and psychosomatic disorders. From an ethnobotanical perspective, the various plants utilized in this system could be catalogued and studied for their potential to help cure some of the common illnesses of our time.

It is essential that this research be done in a way that respects the rights and ethics of the people of the forest to which these medicines and technologies belong. The results of future research should benefit both society as a whole, and the goals of the people in these forest communities, which is the well being of the forest itself. One way that this could be accomplished is to recognize and take advantage of the fact that, as noted by Couto (1989, p. 54), this system functions as a school. A hymn of the current leader of the communities in Mapiá and Juruá also indicates the scholastic nature of this system, “Sun, Moon, Star/ The Earth,

the Wind the Sea/ The Forest and her mysteries/ For everyone to study" (hymn # 60 of Padrinho Alfredo Gregorio de Melo). Recently, as the healers of the Juruá region have been uniting, they have begun to conduct trainings of health care practitioners, in which they impart their wisdom and experience of the jungle flora and fauna, and various therapeutic techniques. The Forest Medicine Center has also begun to organize the concept of creating a University of the Forest. If an accredited university developed a program in which it allowed its students to go to these communities and take courses with these traditional healers, it would be a way to give support and credibility to these teachers and healers. At the same time it could allow for much of the knowledge of these healers to be documented and dispersed.

As the elders of the forest are the teachers of this system, they are also the most proficient researchers. This is basically what has been happening in the jungle for thousands of years, research with the plant teachers of the jungle. The most proficient studies therefore must be done in partnership with these elders, by bringing them the scientific and monetary resources needed for them to present these resources to the world themselves.

## Conclusion

After applying the available archival research to the NIHOAM's "Parameters for Description of CAM Systems", it is apparent that the system of healing in the community of Céu do Mapiá qualifies as a CAM system. It is now the conclusion of this author that further study of this system is warranted due to its unique, eclectic nature and the rare resources that it is preserving in a fragile environment. The healing work practiced in Céu do Mapiá, and especially at the Santa Casa demonstrates how various systems of alternative medicine, and the dominant allopathic system, can be integrated in a way that enhances the scope and depth of the care provided by each of these systems. The work currently being done in the Forest Medicine Center, both in Céu do Mapiá and in Juruá, also provide a rare opportunity for further research. As the forest is rapidly disappearing, the knowledge of healing that the people of the forest have held for ages is also disappearing. In the projects of the Forest Medicine Center, this knowledge is being actively preserved, through practice and education; and protected, by alliances among indigenous and traditional people with the government. Further research could focus on discovering possible remedies for the major illnesses of our times, while at the same time supporting and protecting the rights of the people and the environment to which this knowledge belongs.

At this time of widespread depletion of natural resources and cultures, Céu do Mapiá and the Juruá communities offer a unique chance for the ancient

wisdom of the forest people to be preserved and protected so that it may be available for the rest of the world, and for the future generations of the planet.

With time we will know what is going to be of Mapiá and of this people. I am saying that it was the Spirit of Truth, that through the Superior Self ordered that I leave for the center of the jungle, of the forest, that is the paradise.

–Padrinho Sebastião Mota de Melo (Alverga, 1998, p. 177)

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## APPENDIX

### LETTER OF PRINCIPLES OF THE FIRST ENCOUNTER OF HEALERS OF THE FOREST MEDICINE

1 – Each and everyone who works with the Forest Medicine has love for the forest and for all of nature and its creations, and, therefore, commits his or herself to its preservation and to the environmentally correct procedures in his or her extractive activities, as well as to the investment in the reforestation of areas which have been deforested.

2 – The people of the forest, the indigenous nations, rubber tappers and other organized communities of traditional culture have the right to decide over the patrimony of natural riches they zeal and preserve. It is not the right of governmental organs to give concessions for exploitation or research of this biodiversity without our authorization, but it is their duty to represent us and guarantee our rights.

3 – The traditional knowledge is a property of the people of the forest and, as such, cannot be patented by anyone else, except us.

4 – We defend the construction of this alliance as a guardian of traditional knowledge, with the possibility of aiming for the concept of a collective patent in the name of the signatory parties of this letter. The referred patents acquired in the name of this alliance of traditional communities are not negotiable – that is, they constitute a non-alienable patrimony.

5 – In case of eventual commercial agreements over physical patrimony, the chain of production should be completed inside the forest itself – not exporting raw materials or matrices for medicine manufacture, but bringing technical expertise and means of production to the forest.

6 – We defend the preservation of the rights of each tradition, as well as the freedom to share them amongst us. In this sense, we defend as our aim the creation of a cooperative enterprise for those who produce forest medicine, so as to generate financial resources and economic support for our medicine.

7 – We defend the dialogue with the scientific community within our ethical principles, aiming for the improvement of our research through the scientific methods of experimentation that legitimate us before civil and judiciary public powers, and also strengthens our fraternal ties to all humankind.

Sign this document:

**Maria Alice Freire**  
National Superintendent of the Forest Medicine Center (FMC)  
Representative of the Association of Residents of Céu do Mapiá Village,  
in the State of Amazonas

**Davi Nunes de Paula**  
President of the Action Committee of Civil Rights and Citizenship of the  
Alliance of the People of the Forest (ASAEBRICAL)  
General Secretary of the Forest Medicine Center in the State of Acre

**José Osair Sales (Siã Caxinawá)**  
Representative of the Caxinawá indian nation of the River Jordão  
Member of the Comission of Human Rights for the Indigenous  
Populations of Brazil

**Antonio Francisco dos Santos**  
President of the Association of Producers and Rural Workers of the City  
of Rodrigues Alves (APITRA)  
General Coordinator of the Forest Medicine Center in the State of Acre

**Serafim Cruz**  
Bolivian doctor, representative of the Public Health Office of the city of  
Cruzeiro do Sul and representative of Quechua traditional medicine.

**Fernando Rosa da Silva**  
Coordinator of the FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Índio, Brazil's main  
governmental organ for indigenous issues) in the Juruá Valley  
Representative and heir of the Katukina indian nation of the River  
Campina

**Luis Valdemar Silva de Souza**  
Coordinator of the UNI (União das Nações Indígenas, Union of  
Indigenous Nations) in the Juruá Valley  
Representative of the Nukini indigenous community of the River Môa

**Francisco Lima Silva**  
Representative of the Arara indigenous community of the Humaitá  
Stream

**José Ivo Brito da Costa**  
General Secretary of the Extractivist Association of High and Mid-Juruá

**Luis Ferreira de Albuquerque**  
Representative of the ASAREAJ Public Health Project  
President of the ASAMONIA

**Elizabeth Cristina Mendes**  
Treasurer and Responsible for the Healthcare Sector of the Association of Residents and Producers of the Céu do Juruá Village

**Alfredo Gregório de Melo**  
General Secretary of the Institute for Environmental Development – Eclectic Cult of the Flowing Universal Light Raimundo Irineu Serra (IDA-CEFLURIS)  
President of the Superior Indoctrinary Council of the Church of the Eclectic Cult of the Flowing Universal Light (Patron: Sebastião Mota de Melo)  
General Counselor of the Action Committee for Rights and Citizenship (APFAJ)