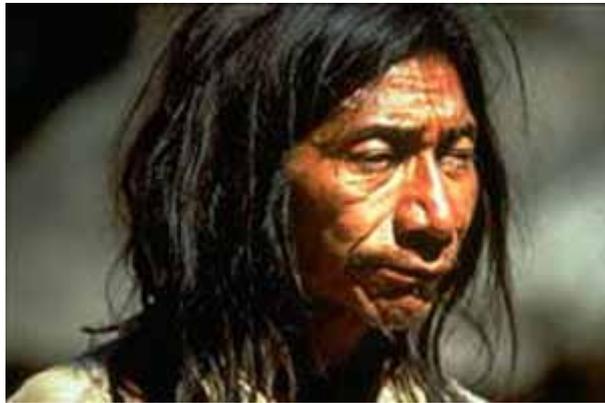


An Important Message from the Kogi Elders

Cultural Anthropology, Ecology – The Kogi; “The elder brothers’ warning”



Img.1. The Kogi Mama

VIDEO: “The elder brothers’ warning”

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-521537373096312859>



Img.2. Lost City W73°44'19" N11°02'49"

By Raymond Rugland

Our love of truth is evinced by our ability to discover and appropriate what is good wherever we come upon it. -- J. W. von Goethe

The Elder Brothers by Alan Ereira (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992; 243 pages, ISBN 0-679-40618-2, cloth \$23.00), tucked among the new books on display, caught my eye. Its subtitle, "A lost South American people and their message about the fate of the earth," clinched the matter. The dustjacket portrayed Indians of unknown genre, dressed in neat cotton garments and wearing conical hats, against a backdrop of mist-shrouded mountain slopes. Alan Ereira, historian and film director/producer, was chosen by the Kogi Indians of Colombia to bring their message to the world. This he was able to do with his TV film *From the Heart of the World* (British Broadcasting Corporation, London) and with his book *The Elder Brothers*.

Many of us were moved in the '30s by James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* with its Shangri-La, a city deep in the Himalayas ruled by a wise lama, where peace and harmony prevailed. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is no fiction. Its two peaks, nearly 19,000 feet high, seem to rise out of the sea in Colombia, and are home to the Kogi. They have lived in harmony with the Great Mother with great fidelity for Millennia, following an ancient wisdom which affirms all things are rooted in divinity. All things, they believe, exist in the mind of the Creator before they finally become manifest. Spirit permeates every thing.

That binding thread of spirit, called aluna, is central to the Kogi philosophy. An enlightened teacher, Mama Valencia, explains:

Everything we do is an event not only in the physical world but also in the spirit world. We live in a world shaped in spirit. Every tree, every stone, every river, has a spirit form, invisible to the Younger Brother. This is the world of aluna, the world of thought and spirit. Aluna embraces intelligence, soul and fertility: it is the stuff of life, the essence of reality. The material world is underpinned, shaped, given life and generative power in aluna, and the Mama's work is carried out in aluna. -- p. 63

Because Kogi elders or Mamas are seers, graduates of a mystery school, they have the natural ability to penetrate higher planes of existence and hidden causes. They understand the vital truth of the maxim "as above, so below." When the Younger Brother in his vanity, urged by his greed and ambition, thinks that he is "running things," that is when the planet and our existence on it become endangered. The expression of the law of the Great Mother is interfered with.

The Kogi way of life -- being content with the ways of old -- is a deliberate choice on their part, rooted in a profound sense of duty for carrying out the will of the Great Mother and insuring the well-being of this living planet. Other peoples of the New World were not so much conquered by the invader as they were seduced into believing that they were inferior to the race that identified "progress" with self-fulfillment in a limited sense. Many became Christians, assured that they would be considered more civilized. The Kogi have adopted the Spanish word *civilizados* ("civilized"), but when applied to the Younger Brother it expresses a contempt for the Western understanding of that word. The word civilization is an invention of the seventeenth century, but was, in fact, excluded by Dr. Samuel Johnson from his Dictionary on the basis that it merely duplicated "civility." Since then civilization has been used to refer to almost anything that distinguishes man from the animal. Almost every culture regards its way of life as the supreme achievement of the ages.

Though much of the Kogi philosophy is unfamiliar, that should not deter us from opening "new doors" and widening our horizons. The end-product is the strong conviction of brotherhood and respect for the earth. But how will the sophisticated "man of the world" react to it? Possibly millions of TV viewers saw *From the Heart of the World*; far fewer will read the book. The film permits a glimpse into the pure hearts and minds of this people, but to share in Alan Ereira's adventure fully one should read the book. Every paragraph is worthy of note and calls for response. In this writer's opinion, Ereira's commitment to the Kogi, their elders or Mamas, is well taken. The message they bring indicates -- as the evidence is totaled from many sources -- that there is a sunrise of spiritual awareness in the world, and in response to that awareness the "gods come out of hiding" and allow their voices to be heard once again.

Was there ever a time when humankind was not encouraged to come up higher -- to truly evolve forth its inner capabilities to bring it to a higher moral, mental, and spiritual level than it has ever known? The proof is obvious: it resides in the existence of great souls who, history records, shone like beacons and, because they were once ordinary humans like ourselves, could identify with the masses and inspire them. How many more left no record of themselves? The Kogi have told us repeatedly the Highest dwells within us. They modestly consider themselves "a simple people" while striving to work ever more perfectly in harmony with the Great Mother. Few outsiders would have the grasp or the stamina to take instruction from the Mamas.

Does not the Kogi Genesis sound familiar?

In the beginning, there was blackness.

Only the sea.

In the beginning there was no sun, no moon, no people.

In the beginning there were no animals, no plants.

Only the sea.

The sea was the Mother.

The Mother was not people, she was not anything.

Nothing at all.

She was when she was, darkly.

She was memory and potential.

She was aluna. -- p. 115

Mama is the name the Kogi give to the Great Mother, to the sun, or to a wise or enlightened teacher (male or female). In the Inca pantheon Mama Ocllo corresponds to the Egyptian Isis (*A Land of Mystery*," by H. P. Blavatsky,

The Theosophist, March, 1880, p. 160). Even if we call this Mother "Space," no matter how universal, it is not an emptiness but an existence, a manifestation, of something. The wisest of the wise gave it no name. The Hindu calls it Parabrahman, "beyond Brahman" or limitless. Unnamed, this power is nonetheless real and no thing exists but what is derived, supported, and sustained by it.

While most native Americans left no written records, there is no doubt they identified with nature and the Great Spirit. The first invaders from Europe took slaves, gold, silver, and jewels. Full of missionary zeal, priests used every means to make converts. They had no sympathy for native cultures and did their best to eradicate them. The little we know about many early American cultures is derived from Spanish accounts. Alexander Humboldt, a man of universal interests, came to Colombia in the early nineteenth century. He visited the famed sacred lake of El Dorado ("The Golden Man") that had proved such a magnet to the Spaniards. He brought back to Europe descriptions and drawings of Inca and Maya temples.

In 1915 Hiram Bingham, an American, made the first excavations at Machu Picchu, the sacred Incan city. On his team was O. F. Cook, botanist, a man of open mind. Because of our proclivity to regard ancients as uncivilized, their structures are usually labeled sacrificial altars, fortresses, or temples dedicated to gods and goddesses -- all an expression of barbarism. Cook changed all that. He showed that the prehistoric walls and terraces were built to convert rocky hillsides and canyons to tillable land. Behind them, in every case, Mr. Cook found that selected soils had been brought in from afar and then placed in layers to achieve the ideal mix for agriculture. This unknown people was dedicated to the art of farming and, hence, to the well-being of the community. What was done there on a grand scale has never been equaled in any other place and must have taken millennia.

The Kogi, today's custodians of the Tairona civilization, have managed to cling to their mountain refuge against great odds. In four hundred years they have had to contend with slavers, land-grabbers and plunderers, fanatic missionaries and, in our own time, hostile drug traffickers, warring politicians, and murderers. Realizing that this reclusive people had "stuck their neck out" by allowing themselves to be publicized, Ereira set up a trust fund to help them regain their rights and reclaim some of the coastal land which formerly was theirs. The Kogi learned from bitter experience they had nothing to gain from hospitality. Their first words to a stranger are: "When are you leaving?" Alan Ereira proved to be a rare "gringo" who treated the Kogi with respect, put his skills as a publicist at their disposal, and consented to take instruction from the Mamas for a period of one year.

Why did the tribe finally decide that now is the time for their message, and why is it important in their efforts to save the planet? They point out that the world was made by Serankua, the Son of the Mother, before we humans were. A long time ago all humanity held a common belief: there were no Younger Brothers. All recognized an indebtedness to the Creator for their worldly blessings. Understandably, payment has to be made for everything -- game taken for food, air that we breathe, and all that we require in order to live.

When the Younger Brother was given knowledge of mechanical things, it became apparent that its application would prove destructive to Mother Earth. There was no place for him in the sacred land. Serankua, recognizing the danger, declared: "Let us send them away to the other side and, so that they respect us and so that they do not pass, I make a division -- the sea" (p. 74).

The Kogi message, delivered by the Mamas in the Chibcha language in the nuhue (ceremonial house), was translated into Spanish, and finally into English. The English conveys some of its primitive majesty.

After centuries and centuries of years

the Younger Brother passed from the other country,
says the Mama.

Senor Christopher Columbus* came to this land

and immediately saw the riches

and killed, shot, many natives (*The symbolic name for all invaders).

He took the gold which had been here.

Sacred gold, gold of masks,

all kinds of gold.

They took so much.

So much.

So much. -- p. 59

Younger Brother thinks

"Yes! Here I am! I know much about the universe!"

But this knowing is learning to destroy the world,
to destroy everything,
all humanity. -- p. 197

Because Younger Brother is among us,
Younger Brother is violating
the basic foundation of the world's law.

A total violation.

Robbing.

Ransacking.

Building highways,
Extracting petroleum,
minerals. -- p. 196

If all the Kogi die, do you, Younger Brother,
think that you will also go on living?
Many stories have been heard that the sun will go out,
the world will come to an end.

But if we all act well and think well it will not end.

That is why we are still looking after
the sun and the moon and the land. -- pp. 166-7

The civilization we boast of does not embody what spiritual man is capable of. G. de Purucker in his *Studies in Occult Philosophy* states the kernel of the problem -- so difficult for our dominant culture, which permeates the whole world, to grasp: "That which sins in man is his intelligence. Sin lies in choice, in action" (p. 72). Now it becomes apparent what H. P. Blavatsky meant in *The Secret Doctrine* when she gives the reason for a "select number of fragments" of the ancient wisdom making an appearance again, after millennia of silence: "The world of to-day. . . is rapidly progressing on the reverse, material plane of spirituality" (1:xxii). Modern man has been largely persuaded that he is not born of spirit. Whether he is aware of his divine origin or not, he exercises, as a matter of course, a sacred gift: his freedom to make choices, guided by his intelligence. When we use this gift solely for our own ends -- more plainly, selfishly -- we do it in the face of nature's examples all around us of selflessness. This, in my opinion, is what is meant by proceeding on the "reverse, material plane of spirituality."

In our heart of hearts -- for all our declared beliefs and good intentions -- we know better. The Kogi Mamas see clearly; they are not naive. They are unmoved by pious declarations, alibis, excuses, and the down-deep conviction that nobody is looking and we can get away with it. If what we are doing is destructive to other humans, the lower kingdoms, and a living planet which provides home for mankind, is it too much to ask us to consider changing our direction -- say 180°?

Gloom and doom are not what we like to convey. Neither can the strength of good intentions undo the harm that has already been done. Good intentions are not enough. The bottom line is that there are those who will not stop plundering the earth for the dollar bill until they are compelled to do so by a rising tide of public indignation. Apparently nothing is sacred to those who are determined to plunder the planet of its riches. There is no thought for the generations to follow. The exploitation of other human beings did not end with the abolition of slavery and serfdom. Our ingenuity never ceases. The Kogi Mamas see us for what we are: very Younger Brothers.

The last resort of the "intellectual" is: "What are your proofs that the Kogi initiates have more insight than our Ph.D.s in the universities in preparing students for life?" Compare the practicality of the Kogi with our own: possessing few of the gadgets we regard as necessities they, nevertheless, have no homeless or starving, no gangs, no banks, no "working mothers"; whatever urban renewal they need, they do themselves. They do not feel disadvantaged because they have no shopping malls.

A Mama was assigned to Alan Ereira to instruct him in basic teachings and make him welcome in the ceremonial lodge. At one point the pupil asked the teacher about creation. He was told there was no time for it: just to run through the chapter headings would take nine nights. The details would require nine times nine nights. "We will tell you what you need to know." From this we may deduce that The Elder Brothers is based on the same logic. The Kogi message is limited to what the Younger Brother can receive.

Present-day scientists are beginning to investigate the world of sleep, in which we spend a third of our lives, but do they really understand about death or the causes of birth? The Kogi Mama knows that it is only in recognition of

the reality of soul and spirit that the divine side of human nature can be cultivated.

Over the next days, Javier (Rodriguez) was a mine of information about the Kogi. He told me that Mamas are educated from infancy in the dark, and only allowed into the light when their education is complete, after two periods of nine years. Nine is the number required for completeness, as a foetus spends nine lunar months in the womb, and there are nine worlds. There are also characters called moros, he said, whose education continues for two more periods of nine years. These I would never meet; they live high in the Sierra, and speak only with Mamas. These are the oracles who determine ultimate policy. These creatures are the ones who have seen the approach of the end of the world. I later discovered that moro is the word for any pupil studying to be a Mama. It does seem quite possible that some students are not released into the light until they are over thirty. . . . The Kogi are profoundly ascetic, and prepare themselves for important moments by fasting, meditation and sexual abstinence; contact with anyone who is still locked into the gross physical world can, they believe, render this preparation useless. Javier's moras would be in this heightened state all their lives, and it would therefore be impossible for me ever to set eyes on them, but he suggested that they would have their eyes on me. -- pp. 77-8

Anyone who can discern the pure virtues of the bushman, the Australian aborigine, the Athapascan, Seminole, or the Hopi, should have no problem with the Kogi. They wear the seal of majesty: the recognition of the divinity in the heart of all. That gold insignia shows in their concern for their very Younger Brother.



Img.3. Tairona Gold Pendants - Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

**"Accepting what is going on, is the same thing as
condoning it" E.T.**

Please accept truly what is going on and be happy.

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