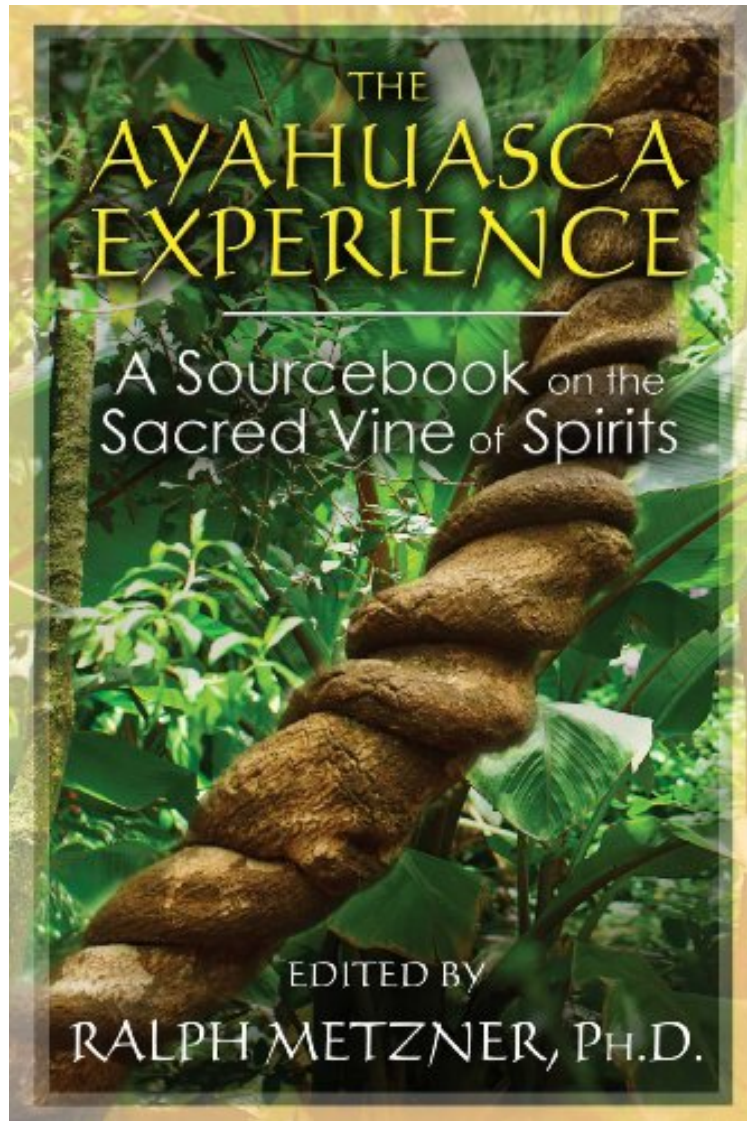


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The Ayahuasca Experience: A Sourcebook on the Sacred Vine of Spirits

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From Park Street Press : The Ayahuasca Experience: A Sourcebook on the Sacred Vine of Spirits before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ayahuasca Experience: A Sourcebook on the Sacred Vine of Spirits:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A good read. By DrLAN in depth view at the medicine, physiology and psychology behind ayahuasca. The verbiage is quite technical and scientific at times but truly still available to the

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An exploration of the chemical, biological, psychological, and experiential dimensions of ayahuasca Details the scientific discovery of ayahuasca's sophisticated psychoactive delivery system in the brain and body and its potential applications in medicine and psychology Includes contributions from Dennis J. McKenna, Ph.D., J. C. Callaway, Ph.D., and Charles S. Grob, M.D., on the ethnopharmacology, psychology, phytochemistry, and neuropharmacology of ayahuasca Provides 24 firsthand accounts of ayahuasca experiences and resulting life changes Widely recognized by anthropologists as the most powerful and widespread shamanic hallucinogen, ayahuasca has been used by native Indian and mestizo shamans in Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador for healing and divination for thousands of years. Made from the Amazonian vine *Banisteriopsis caapi* and the DMT-laden leaf of *Psychotria viridis*, ayahuasca is regarded as the embodiment of intelligent plant beings who can offer spiritual teachings and healing knowledge to those who respectfully engage with them. Many Western-trained physicians and psychologists now acknowledge that ayahuasca allows access to spiritual dimensions of consciousness, otherworldly realms and beings, and visionary experiences indistinguishable from classic religious mysticism. With contributions from leading psychoactive scholars Dennis J. McKenna, Ph.D., Charles S. Grob, M.D., and J. C. Callaway, Ph.D., on the ethnopharmacology, psychology, phytochemistry, and neuropharmacology of ayahuasca, Ralph Metzner provides a comprehensive exploration of the chemical, biological, psychological, and experiential dimensions of this Amazonian hallucinogen. He includes more than 20 firsthand accounts from people who have participated in ayahuasca rituals and experienced major life changes as a result. He details the scientific discovery of ayahuasca's sophisticated psychoactive delivery system in the brain and body as well as the deep psychological impact of this potent entheogen. He concludes with his own findings on ayahuasca, including its applications in medicine and psychology, and compares the worldview revealed by ayahuasca visions to that of modern cultures.

Ralph Metzner, world-famous pioneer of psychedelic research and consciousness explorer, brings together a masterful collection of writings exploring the nature of this extraordinary sacred potion, from its chemical and biological properties and psychological effects to its enormous healing and spiritual potential. This book will be an inspiration for lay audiences and a treasure trove of information for scholars studying consciousness and the human psyche. (Stanislov Grof, M.D., author of *LSD : Doorway to the Numinous*, *Healing Our Deepest Wounds*, and *When*) The Ayahuasca Experience is a classic in the entheogenic literature genre. (Ruth Parnell, *Nexus*, June 2014) The Ayahuasca Experience is a most valuable resource, encompassing the history, psychology, spirituality, scientific understanding, and raw experience of the ian vine of the spirits now entwining itself into the Western psyche. Metzner's work is particularly recommended to those first encountering ayahuasca, who require an authoritative, user-friendly guide to the mysterious terrains opened by this traditional, sacred medicine. (Robert Tindall, author of *The Jaguar that Roams the Mind* and *The Shamanic Odyssey*) Thought provoking, wide ranging, and well reasoned, Metzner's collection of essays and self-reports contains an extraordinarily wide representation of subjective effects of, and scientific findings regarding, ayahuasca in the modern West. It provides ideas for future research and is essential for beginners and veterans in the field. (Rick Strassman, M.D., author of *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* and clinical associate professor of psychi) About the Author Ralph Metzner, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist and professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. He studied psychology and psychopharmacology at Harvard University and was part of the Psilocybin Research Project with Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert (later Ram Dass). He is the author of *Green Psychology*, coauthor of *The Psychedelic Experience*, and editor of *Sacred Mushroom of Visions: Teonancatl*. He lives in Sonoma, California. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. INTRODUCTION ian Vine of Visions Ralph Metzner, Ph.D. Ayahuasca is an hallucinogenic ian plant concoction that has been used by native Indian and mestizo shamans in Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador for healing and divination for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. It is known by various names in the different tribes, including caapi, natma, mihi, and yag. The name ayahuasca is from Quechua, a South American Indian language: huasca means vine or liana and aya means souls or dead people or spirits. Thus vine of the dead, vine of the souls, or vine of the spirits would all be appropriate English translations. It is however slightly misleading as a name, since the vine *Banisteriopsis caapi* is only one of two essential ingredients in the hallucinogenic brew, the other one being the leafy plant *Psychotria viridis*, which contains the powerful psychoactive dimethyltryptamine (DMT). It is the DMT, derivatives of which are also present in various other natural hallucinogens, including the magic mushroom of Mexico, that provides visionary experiences and thus access to the realm of spirits and the souls of deceased ancestors. DMT is not orally active but is metabolized by the stomach enzyme monoamine oxidase (MAO). Certain chemicals in the vine inhibit the action of MAO and are therefore

referred to as MAO-inhibitors: their presence in the brew makes the psychoactive principle available and allows it to circulate through the bloodstream into the brain, where it triggers the visionary access to otherworldly realms and beings. The details of this remarkably sophisticated indigenous psychoactive drug delivery system, and the history of its discovery by science, will be described and explored in this volume. As a plant drug or medicine, ayahuasca is one of a group of similar substances that defy classification: they include psilocybin derived from the Aztec sacred mushroom teonanacatl, mescaline derived from the Mexican and North American peyote cactus, DMT and various chemical relatives derived from South American snuff powders known as epena or cohoba, the infamous LSD derived from the ergot fungus that grows on grains, ibogaine derived from the root of the African Tabernanthe iboga tree, and many others. As plant extracts or synthesized drugs, these substances have been the subject of a large variety of scientific research approaches over the past fifty years, particularly as to their potential applications in psychotherapy, in the expansion of consciousness for the enhancement of creativity, and as amplifiers of spiritual exploration. They have been called psychotomimetic (madness mimicking), psycholytic (psyche loosening), psychedelic (mind manifesting), hallucinogenic (vision inducing), and entheogenic (connecting to the sacred within). The different terms reflect the widely differing attitudes and intentions, the varying set and setting with which these substances have been approached. We will be describing the Western scientific psychological and psychiatric approaches to ayahuasca in this book also. The concepts of shaman and shamanism are not peculiar to South America; the terms themselves are derived from a Siberian language. In recent years they have come to be used for any practice of healing and divination that involves the purposive induction of an altered state of consciousness, called the shamanic journey, in which the shaman enters into nonordinary reality and seeks knowledge and healing power from spirit beings in those worlds. The two most widespread shamanic techniques for entering into this altered state are rhythmic drumming, practiced more in the Northern Hemisphere (Asia, America, and Europe), and hallucinogenic plants or fungi, practiced more in the tropics and particularly in Central and South America. Ayahuasca is widely recognized by anthropologists as being probably the most powerful and most widespread shamanic hallucinogen. In the tribal societies where these plants and plant preparations are used, they are regarded as embodiments of conscious intelligent beings that only become visible in special states of consciousness, and who can function as spiritual teachers and sources of healing power and knowledge. The plants are referred to as medicines, a term that means more than a drug: something like a healing power or energy that can be associated with a plant, a person, an animal, even a place. They are also referred to as plant teachers, and there are still extant traditions of many-years-long initiations and trainings in the use of these medicines. Many Western-trained physicians and psychologists have acknowledged that these substances can afford access to spiritual or transpersonal dimensions of consciousness, even mystical experiences indistinguishable from classic religious mysticism, whether Eastern or Western. The new term entheogen attempts to recognize this element of access to sacred dimensions and states. In several Brazilian churches using ayahuasca, we have seen the incorporation of an entheogenic or hallucinogenic plant extract as a sacrament--developing both syncretic and highly original forms of religious ceremony. These churches have thousands of followers, both in South America and in North America and Europe, and they are growing in numbers and influence. So here we have a substance that has profoundly affected the transformation of individuals now beginning to bring about something like a cultural transformation movement. These facets of the ayahuasca story will also be explored in this book. As hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Westerners and Northerners have participated in shamanic practices involving ayahuasca (as well as other medicines and nondrug practices) and joined the ceremonies of the various ayahuasca churches, it has become clear that there is a profound discontinuity in fundamental worldview and values of traditional shamanistic societies and practitioners. A powerful resurgence of respectful and reverential attitudes toward the living Earth and all its creatures seems to be a natural consequence of explorations with visionary plant teachers. As such, this revival of entheogenic shamanism can be seen as part of a worldwide response to the degradation of ecosystems and the biosphere--a response that includes movements such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, bioregionalism, ecopsychology, herbal and natural medicine, organic farming, and others. In each of these movements there is a new awareness, or rather a revival of ancient awareness, of the organic and spiritual interconnectedness of all life on this planet.