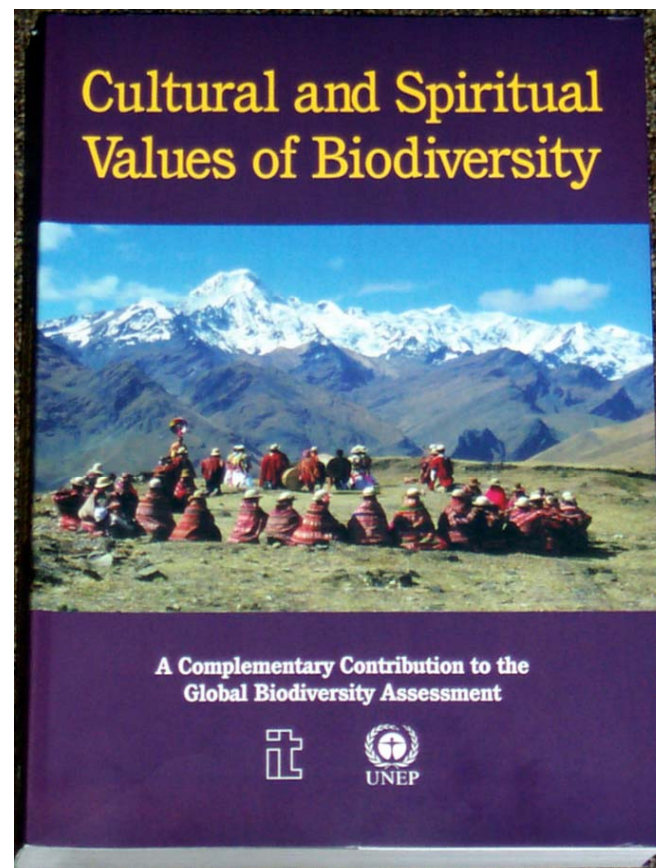
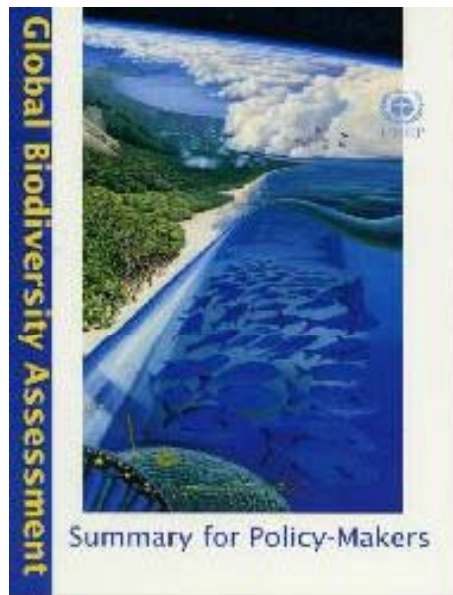


**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) publication
on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity (1999)**





UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) is the United Nations system's designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. UNEP was established after the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden.



The Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA) is the most comprehensive analysis of the science underpinning biological diversity ever undertaken. Funded by a \$2 million grant from the Global Environment Facility, it is the work of over 1,500 scientists from all over the world coordinated by UNEP. With 1,140 pages was launched at the second Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Jakarta

Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity

Darrell Addison Posey

- The publication presents a positive approach to balance the methods of preservation used by the indigenous peoples and the continuing global economic pressures.
- Provides case studies of projects and programs funded by international organizations that use the concept of TEK as a base.
- **TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge)** – concept developed to bring attention to the knowledge and local experience of the indigenous peoples and traditional communities.
- Recommendations of international organizations and philosophical contributions that relate to the subject of the chapter are provided in boxes of text. Statements and case studies written by representatives of indigenous and traditional peoples are found throughout the book.
- Language and how cognition and speech encode indigenous knowledge systems and are critical for preservation of diversity;
- The complex issue of indigenous people and the problems of preserving their relationships both with and within their societies;
- Holistic health practices where environment and diet are integrated into indigenous medical health systems;
- The importance of developing effective intellectual property rights and territorial and land rights to enhance and maintain local control.
- Specific examples of how local people have learned to conserve biodiversity in an range of environments and social conditions.



- **Darrell Addison Posey** (march 14, 1947 – March 6, 2001)
- His first research as an ethnobiologist began with the Kayapó Indians of the Xingu Basin of Brazil's Pará State in 1977, in order to complete a doctoral dissertation on ethnoentomology.
- In 1982, Darrell initiated a multi-disciplinary ethnobiological research project called Kayapó Project that eventually included over 20 scientists and technicians from different scientific fields such as agronomy, botany, entomology, plant genetics, astronomy, geography, anthropology and linguistics in effort to document the traditional biological knowledge of the Kayapó.
- Posey (1989) explains that indigenous groups such as Kayapó of central Brazil actually increased biological diversity in managed areas such as trail sides, gardens, forest openings, and rock outcropping. In the same article he suggested that many tropical ecosystems usually considered as “natural” may have been profoundly altered by indigenous in the past. So that, to say that Amerindians adapt to their environment and respond to the environmental limits is fallacious. Instead, they culturally manage their “natural” environment, such as fish, plants, soil, and game.
- One of the recurrent key-concept in Posey's analyses of the Kayapó knowledge was the distinction between “emic” and “etic”. He said that “emic” interpretation reflect cognitive and linguistic categories of the natives, whereas “etic” interpretations are those that have been developed by the researcher for purposes of analysis. However, he pointed out, “it would be nice if such distinctions clearly existed” (Posey, 1990). He continued by saying: “after 12 years of research among the Kayapós, I learned that the dialogue between the researcher and the informant obscures these categories”, which is natural, given that individuals from different cultures think and speak with distinct cognitive “realities”.

Kayapó's Images



Payakan's history

Darrel Posey was one of the main organizers of the first International Congress of Ethnobiology held in 1988 in Belém, Para, Brazil. The Kayapó chief Paiakan, s indigenous leader was brought to the congress by Posey in order to speak to the scientific audience and lobby against the Brazilian government "structural adjustment plans", which included flooding an area as large as New England, and consequently vanish the last Kayapó village from the map.

He was known by the environmental community as a rain forest campaigner, and is a recipient of the UN 500 Global Environment Award. His successes include the closing of the Maria Bonita gold mine, which contaminated the areas rivers with mercury. He also led a successful protest, which stopped the construction of a series of dams near Altamira, which would have flooded the lands of many native Indian villages. Paiakan's trip to the World Bank was very instrumental in stopping the funding for these dams.



Amazon Benefit Helps Chief Paiakan buy plane to protect his rainforest home.



Ricardo Azoury





Two days into the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio, the designated keynote speaker of all native people, Paiakan, was accused on trumped up rape charges, placed under house arrest, and therefore unable to attend the UN Summit. The charges were brought by state and local candidates of Redencao (the closest town to Paiakan's village).

"Veja," the largest weekly magazine in Brazil features Paiakan on the cover with the rape story. Leticia Ferreira, the alleged rape victim has been telling people that Paiakan did not even rape her, however, she has never been allowed to tell her story in court. After two years of court battle, Paiakan is found innocent under the law of "Lack of Evidence."

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