

Men and Women Healers In Mexico's Indigenous Regions Today

For a culture to become a culture, a series of bases must be developed that bring cohesion to its life and structure day-to-day events. They are symbolic, that is, they are those highly significant questions that nourish and give form to a specific context. One way to approach that culture is to look at the knowledge about men and women indigenous traditional healers in Mexico through the descriptions of their practices. Even though they have a dynamic of social relations with other actors, in their context, they act according to their



cultural patterns and in relation to other individuals; this is why the personality and recognition of the folk healer is clear to the extent that he or she reproduces the culture of his/her group. That is, the healer is the result of a specific cultural context.

Achieving health in their communities is not traditional healers' only objective. Their function includes offering the community other benefits. One is having knowledge of the cosmos and what inhabits it, as well as being the repository of knowledge of the body and its contents; for that very reason, the folk healer is the initiator of the rituals for establishing health among the population.

This is why we maintain that to be able to approach this topic, we must start from the practices themselves, and not from a pre-established theory. In the following pages, our aim is to show the reader the importance these specialists in healing and their rituals have in four ethnic groups in contemporary Mexico: the Yaqui of Sonora, the Tepehua of the Veracruz Huasteca region, the Nahuas of Puebla's Black Mountains, and the Otomí of Hidalgo's Eastern Mountains.

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