

Patricio Alvarado
(Guide and manager of tour operator "Ecuador in color")

Patricio: Let's see girls, I think I can share a little about Ecuador with you.

Well, my name is Patricio Alvarado, I am the manager of "Ecuador a color"; We are a tour operator that works and have our office in Quito. We explore all of Ecuador trying to transmit unique experiences about nature, culture, and traditions of our Country. We have been working since 2012 with our company. It has been a teaching process, a learning process, a process of experiencing things and meeting new people, like Byron in this case.

I am from the city of Quito, which is the capital of Ecuador. The city of Quito is important because it is located in the center of the Earth, at zero latitude. We are 18 million inhabitants at this moment, of which 10% consider themselves indigenous. And within these indigenous peoples and nationalities we could consider 14 nationalities and 18 autochthonous peoples. When we talk about autochthonous peoples, we mean the Otavaleños, the Salasaka people, the Montubios people and the Afro-Ecuadorian people.

Finally, there are a variety of peoples in the region, basically some who have come and settled in Ecuador, such as the Afro-Ecuadorian people in the north of the country. We can also highlight the Salasakas, for example, who migrated from Bolivia as nomadic people and then basically settled in the Andes. Something very interesting is that when we talk about pre-Inca cultures we go back to 5500 years before Christ. The traces of first civilizations that arrived here in Ecuador are from 13.000 years before Christ. We are talking about very ancient cultures that stopped being nomads at the time they discovered agriculture.

These people lived in caves, people who began to develop rock art. Humans are curious and developed a curiosity about seeds and specifically corn seeds. Corn is native to South America and from the Andean peoples. Corn is found by accident, humans saw that after a seed falls to the ground a new plant starts to develop. Humans discover agriculture and go from nomadic to sedentary life and to settle in towns.

So, returning to the theme of nationalities and indigenous peoples, this is how our ancestors emerged. The Preceramic/Ceramic Paleoindian was the period of regional integration before the conquest of the Incas.

It is known that our original people spoke an ancestral language that comes from Polynesia, the Tsafiki. In one of my guide works, which I had in Mindo, in the cloud forest (in the northwest), there was a family from El Salvador that told me that the original peoples from El Salvador spoke Tsafiki language too.

From this information I got from my client I deduced that all the peoples that migrated from Polynesia to the Americas, expanded throughout different ways. Certainly we always handled the Bering Strait as one of the areas with the greatest arrivals from the ancient continents to the New Continent, but there were also large migrations through the Caribbean area, as well as the Peruvian area, or the Pacific coasts. They

started expanding all over America, and integration began to happen between all these ancestral peoples that lived in the Americas.

Lina: The Kichwa language appeared before or after the period you are talking about?

Patricio: Kichwa has been an introduced language, we could no longer say that it is a dialect, it is a language as such, written and spoken. Tsafiki, in the same way, is a written and spoken language. Tsafiki has been the primary language in our culture, when there is the immersion of the Incas, which basically has been a very large empire that our pre-Inca peoples conquered, the integration is made and the Kichwa language is adopted as a main language throughout the Inca empire, in the area of influence.

Lina: But, another question regarding the Kichwa. Because the first night we were at Guango Lodge, I was talking to one of the girls in the kitchen and she told me that her mother was from the Andes and her father was from the Amazon and that they both spoke Kichwa, there is a distinction between the Kichwa from the Amazon and the Kichwa from the Andes?

Patricio: Kichwa is the same but the dialect changes, it's like the English of the United States and English from other continents. The United States itself has different dialects, this is basically what happened, with the Kichwa from the Andes and the Kichwa of the Amazon. So basically it has been the same Kichwa but in different times and spaces, a change of dialect.

Lina: And Kichwa and Quechua are the same?

Patricio: We could say yes, they start from the original language. Because basically the Quechua people expanded throughout all of Peru, Bolivia, and a little further to the south, towards what is Chile and Argentina. It was huge, one of the greatest civilizations in ancient periods, we are talking about basically between 5,000 and 5,500 years before Christ. Quechua is the language that is currently spoken in Peru. Here in Ecuador the Kichwa changes certain words, but in essence the Kichwa is still the same language. We could differentiate the primary peoples that existed here as Quechuas, and from there the Incas were born, with the same language.

The Tsafiki topic is very important. I am from the Central Andes, from the city of Quito, the Kitos (which is written with "K", Quito is written with "Qu"), are a community that settled in the Quito area and were a population that existed 3500 years before Christ. They settled in the city of Quito for a great reason. Most cultures sought to be close to the Sun and eagerly sought to reach a point close to the sun.

The pre-Inca Kitos arrive in Quito and begin to explore this area. In the Quito area we have some very important geographical points, such as volcanoes, hills, and the elevations of the Andes, and we always refer to the Cayambe volcano. The Cayambe volcano is a very important natural landmark because the equatorial line reaches a certain part of the volcano. If we take Cayambe as a point of reference, the equatorial line passes through its right side. The zero equatorial line divides the two hemispheres. On March 21 and September 23 we have the equinoxes. The world aligns with the sun at the equinoxes. The

earth spins on its own axis and the Sun stays in its place. In Quito the earth is perpendicular to the Sun and it is the only point in America that you don't have a shadow. For ancient people the shadow was the soul. The pre-Inca indigenous peoples knew that something was wrong because they lost their soul. The moment they understood that they lost their shadow, they understood that they were at a very special place on Earth. They started to investigate by making a sundial and started to understand where on Earth he was. That is why we can deduce that the shadow was the starting point to be able to understand the Equatorial line of Ecuador. And in this context, the name of the city of Quito has a meaning, the original name in Tsafiki is "Quitizato", "Quitiza" which means "half" and "to" which means "all" or "land". So the word Quito, which in this case, is already becoming a more Spanish word, means "half of the Earth."

Look what these people discovered, just with the shadow effect. At the end of the investigation, which I imagine took years and years, they also discovered the shape, the time of day, the seasons to be able to harvest, to sow, when plants were germinating, when to give thanks to Mother Earth (Pachamama) for the crops they had in the year. And indigenous people today still have these traditions, there are festivities for it.

Lina: That also seemed very curious to me, because yesterday, we were on the bus and there was a religious procession and then you are talking about syncretism. But what I was going to ask you is if there is still a community that has beliefs in the Sun, or in the Rain, without syncretism.

Patricio: In the Andes people still celebrate the Pawkar Raymi, which is a germination festival. This is celebrated on March 21st, the first equinox on a Western calendar. June 21 is the first solstice. In the colonization era it was spoken to not celebrate these mundane festivities. Catholicism tried to make a very bad syncretism, putting saints (in the traditional festivities), such as San Pedro, San Juan... The festivals of San Juan are, if I'm not wrong, on June 21, the first solstice. In the first solstice, original people celebrate the Inti Raymi. "Inti" means Sun and "Raymi" means party or festivity. So it's a festival of the Sun thanking Mother Earth, the Pachamama, for being able to harvest that year. So you have the Pawkar Raymi, the Inti Raymi and Koya Raymi (Koya is the time to begin sowing). Because sowing is one thing, then the plant germinates and then it is harvested. So for each natural event like the equinox and solstices there is a festivity that is still managed by the indigenous people. The Pawkar Raymi and the Inti Raymi are the strongest festivities that exist in the indigenous towns, especially in the central area, in the Andes area. In the Amazon area, I have heard about some of the festivities, but it is more the nationalities of the mountains that celebrate this kind of festivity.

Lina: And what do they do in these festivities, do they make an offering or dance?

Patricio: Let's talk about the Inti Raymi. They make a collection of corn grains, of all the products that could have been harvested that year and make a big circle. The indigenous people always celebrate with a circular shape, the circle representing an Andean cross, the Chakana. The Chakana has eight points, four very notable points that represent the four cardinal points and the other four points that represent the family. In the center of a Chakana, all these harvested grains are gathered and offered to the Sun. The indigenous peoples do not believe in a Christ, they also did not believe in a devil as such. They believed in

good and evil. When Christianity was introduced, when the Spanish arrived here, they basically began to change their way of thinking a bit, but currently maintaining these adorations or these references to their minority gods, if we could put it that way, because the majority of indigenous people are already converted to Christianity.

The Equator basically contains 3/4 of the water in the entire world and only 1/4 of it is land. So, if you go through Brazil, for example, where the Equator passes, you will not find any reference point, if you are without a GPS, you will not find a reference point. If you go to Africa it is the same thing. Now that you have the GPS system that helps you a lot to orient yourself and to be able to know where you are on Earth.

That is why in 1736, a French geodesic mission came to Ecuador to be able to investigate and learn about these natural reference points that we have near the city of Quito in order to determine the Equator line. But this is in the new century, our ancestors 3500 years ago knew about the Equator.

Something that I am forgetting to tell you about and we were talking just yesterday is the pre-Inca issue, the issue of the first civilizations, about 13,000 years before Christ, we have the first record of people and between 11,000 years before Christ and up to 5500 of the common era, we have no archeological records. After 5500 years, traces of archeology are found. The human begins to have movement again and the ceramic time begins, they start to create art with their hands, to make ceramic pieces, to work with the terracotta, similar to the work with baked earth in Polynesia, Egypt. The cultures that emigrated to America did not have that way of working and creating art. The first inhabitants in America began to have this type of art, to create ceramic pieces and to begin to create figures of animals, shamans and well, everything that women do, because women are in charge of creating this type of art.

Everything that the woman saw could be transmitted through a piece of ceramic. The man, as I told a couple of friends here in the group, has always been lazy. I don't know if the word fits, but since ancient times we have only dedicated ourselves to hunting and fishing, nothing more. The woman was the one in charge of taking care of the babies, managing their house, collecting seeds, planting, working on their farm (which basically was a garden they had in the back of their house), making clothes and making ceramic pieces. Basically the woman was the one who did all this type of work.

At the time of the ceramic age there was a great evolution of the human being, after this period we went to a period of regional integration and to have contact with other cultures. The cultures of the Mayas, the Aztecs, the Huachos, the Huaorani, the Mapuches. Then a connection with these cultures started, and also a product exchange, with what was considered as currency or as something valuable. In this case, in Ecuador, Cocoa and the *Spondylus* Shell (which is a jewel in the sea, which we only have in Ecuador).

Our country is blessed to be on the line of Ecuador. This is an advantage over all countries, we have sun all year round, we have all those natural resources, such as *Spondylus*, Cacao.. Cacao originated in Ecuador, 5300 years ago. In the last archaeological investigation it was determined that Cacao originated in Ecuador and in 4,200/4,300 years BC these groups contacted the people of Mexico, The Mayas, and

exchanged products and services. They used Cacao, ceramic pieces and the Spondylus Shell, which were basically things of value, as a coin. The Mayans began to plant Cocoa beans and since the climate in Mexico is pleasant, Cacao began to spread throughout all of America.

Lina: Can I ask you a question? You are more from the Andes, not so much from the Amazon?

Patricio: My origins are from the Andes, the center of the province of Chimborazo, with my mother, but I have a mixture of things, because my father is from the Coastal area, not from the beach as such. So my father is from the province of Machala, from a town called Zaruma.

Lina: Are these towns indigenous or are they more Spanish?

Patricio: They are Spanishized, basically the Central area of the Andes is considered an area that has still been preserved with indigenous cultures and especially Kichuas. We call it "Kichuas de la Sierra".

So, for example, my mother could not tell you that she is 100% indigenous, but she keeps a part, she would be the 4th generation, but the first generations, the first or the second, were positively indigenous. So I am more from Central Andes, which is the province of Pichincha/Cotopaxi.

Lina: Yes, now I am going to take the opportunity to ask the meaning of some words, we had talked about the names "Pichincha" and "Cotopaxi" when we arrived at the airport (in Quito), what do those words mean?

Patricio: The word "Pichincha", in the original Tsafiki, the correct one would be "Tsinsa", with "Ts", because the "t" and "s" are used a lot in that language, I would love to speak a little more Tsafiki, but it is very complicated because currently in Ecuador there is only one nationality, in this case the Tsa'chila nationality, that speaks that language. It is very interesting, but it is in danger of disappearing due to the modern world in which we live, the new generations align a little more with colonization and they have lost a bit of their essence. Although older people try to rescue, I think it is the nationality with the fewest people in Ecuador, possibly no more than a thousand. In this "Pichincha" case, the original word would be "Tsinsa", "Tsin" means "peaks" and "sa" means "two". The city of Quito is precisely at the back of a volcano, which we know as "Los Pichinchas". I say two, because there are two peaks, it is actually a volcanic complex, but the most significant peaks in these mountains are Wawa Pichincha and Ruku Pichincha. Wawa, (it's already a mixture), is a Kichua word that means baby. When a baby cries it makes a sound like: "UAAAAAUAAAAA!!!". So the native described a baby, and why does he describe this mountain, this Pichincha, as a baby? Because it is an active volcano. Its last eruption was in 1999. A large, high-altitude ash mushroom was ejected from this crater and moved almost to the Amazon, because the winds moved east from the city of Quito.

So Wawa means baby and Ruku means old. Yes, because this volcano (the Ruko Pichincha) is basically inactive. You will never have an activity or a rash again. The word "Cotopaxi", which is one of the natural parks that can be visited here in Ecuador, has a very interesting meaning. The correct word in the ancient

language was "Cutupati". Cutu which means "Neck" and pachi which means "Moon", then, Neck of the Moon. The vision of the indigenous is very rich, right? The glacier of the mountain is the neck. The word "Chimborazo", has a very interesting connotation, because in Puruhá language, which was a community that lived before the Incas, the word was "Chimborazu". When the settlers come, they use the word "o".

Lina: So basically all the other languages that existed, apart from Kichua, didn't have the "o", only the "u"?

Patricio: Just the "u". For me, they already had some derivations, Tsafiki had derivations from Kichua and that is why some ancestral words have derivatives of Quichua. The richest language is Tsafiki. The word "Chimba", for example, means "braid" and "razu" means Ice (Chimbarazo = Ice braid). It's because this mountain has a special shape, a mountain range that 's like a braid. Let's say it's a man with a braid, because the Chimborazo is considered the Tayta Chimborazo, which means dad. In Kichua to describe the mom we say "mama". So basically the Tayta(dad) and the Mama(mom).

Lina: And they name the mountains after men and women?

Patricio: Well, there are very beautiful legends that we, from Ecuador, can tell the world. Infatuation with volcanoes, for example, from crossing volcanoes creatures come out, these Wawa volcanoes come out, these baby volcanoes.

For example, one of the legends of volcanoes is that Tayta Chimborazo had Mama Tungurahua as his wife ("Tungu" means throat and "rahua" means fire,throat of fire) and they lived a married life, but in this marriage, Mama Tungurahua met a friend who was the right hand of Tayta Chimborazo, this was the Kapak Urku ("Kapak" means man and "urku" means strong, a strong man. So she has an affair with Kapak Urku and betrays Tayta Chimborazo. They saw each other secretly, in one of those Tayta Chimborazo realizes that Mama Tungurahua is betraying him and basically signs the war.

He signs the war against the Kapak Urku and eruptions begin, an eruption on Chimborazo, an eruption on Kapak Urku, etc..A battle between the two to see who stays with Mama Tungurahua. The Chimborazo wins and stays with his beloved wife, from that extramarital relationship, the Wawa Pichincha is born. That is why we say that when the Wawa Pichincha wakes up, Mama Tungurahua cries. In this case, the Wawa Pichincha has some activity and Mama worries, she begins to have activity too, it's like a volcanic connection that these two volcanoes have, which is part of that beautiful legend.

Lina: So those volcanic eruptions happened?

Patricio: Yes, of course, they followed one another. In pre-Inca times, and especially after the Inca conquest here in our lands, some eruptions arose. A volcano was revered as a god too, so it was understood that the gods were angry at the immersion of foreign groups that did not belong to those communities and that is why they began to erupt. The Quichua language in this case is very rich, I would like to know more about words, phrases.. Getting to know the language in depth is a bit complicated

because the Quichuas are very closed communities, they don't like sharing because you're obviously a stranger, and they think you're going to get a lot out of them, and that's why they close off when telling stories, when telling you, when transmitting their language, now it's a little easier because there are already people, for example, online, on YouTube, on social networks that you can learn (with them).

But it really is complicated, and as I told you at the beginning, we are talking about 1,800,000 people who consider themselves indigenous. There are some words, some phrases that we can distinguish like the ones we were talking about and phrases like, for example, "what's my name". In Quichua we say "Ñuqaqa Patricio mikani". "Ñuqaqa" means "I", "Patricio" is my name and "mikani" is the verb (I am). But if you realize the grammatical structure in Quichua, it's completely different, it's not like English, it's not like Spanish.

Lina: (The grammatical structure) is the noun, then the verb? (In Quichua).

Patricio: Yes, it's like "Me Patricio, my name is". So the issue is that the Quichua language has the grammatical structure of German and would be a bit different in terms of grammatical structure. As I told you, I would love to learn a little more, and at the university we took a few Quichua classes. It was very interesting, but it was only a few hours and well, I think a little more due to neglect, I haven't studied that language in depth. When you go to indigenous communities in the Amazon, (you realize that) the Amazonian Quichua has a slightly more closed, stronger accent.

So people say that the Quichuas of the Sierra have a good pronunciation and people say that, if you want to learn pure Quichua, go to the city of Otavalo, because there you will really learn what Quichua is like. The people of Chimborazo already mix it a bit with Spanish words, with Castilian. On the other hand, the Quichuas of the Amazon already have a different dialect, which they know, obviously when they talk they know what it means, but we tell them otherwise.

Lina: So the best Quichua is the Quichua of the Sierra (the Andes)?

Patricio: Yes, from the Sierra (the Andes), from Otavalo. That's why I said if you want to learn Quichua, go to Otavalo and learn it there, because it's going to be better there, you'll be able to learn Quichua well and correctly.

Lina: Those words we have seen along the road, don't you know the meaning of some (more)?

Patricio: I know of some, for example, "Papallacta". "Papa" is "dad" (in Spanish) and "lacta", means land (in Quichua).

Lina: Is it the same for "Mom"?

Patricio: "Mamallacta"? Yes, exactly, it would be like "mother earth". Although in Quichua to describe Mother Earth, you say "Pachamama". "Pacha" means "land", too.

Lina: And the word "Wincha"?

Patricio: Well, "Wincha" is not a Quichua word. "La Wincha" is a machine, a platform that helps to raise a damaged car. It's like a crane. Exactly, the word is "grúa" in Spanish. I don't know where they get the word "wincha" as such.

Lina: And then the names of the lodges, I also find it very curious because there are names like "Guango".

Patricio: Yes, there I go a bit to the pre-Inca language, "Guango" means "ponytail". Possibly the word Guango, for the Guango lodge, means "a long thing" because the lodge is in the lower part between two mountains. Possibly it means something else.

Lina: Well, I don't know if I'm pronouncing it correctly, but did I see something like "Yusehuayco" on a sign?

Patrick: Where did you see that? So leaving San Isidro, we pass Cosanga and then we arrive at Guacamayos

Lina: In this transect there I saw this one.

Patricio: Maybe you saw "Quinde Huayco"? Here between Guango Lodge and San Isidro, it was possibly "Quinde Huayco". Have you seen the word "Huayco" well? I think you've seen the sign on the right hand, possibly. You were sitting on the right?

Lina: Yes, I sit here (on the right), but I see both (sides).

Transcriber's Note: Here Lina mentions that she saw the sign when we were riding the bus the other day.

Patricio: Yes, there is a very big sign on the right. It seems to me that he says "Quinde Huayco". "Quinde" which means "hummingbird" and Huayco could possibly be like "young" or something like that. I am not very sure of the word "Huayco". "young" or "beautiful", something like that.

Lina: I have seen a lot of protection here (in Ecuador) for hummingbirds and I don't know if it is because they are very beautiful or because they have some cultural significance.

Patricio: Well, in general information, as I mentioned, the list of birds here in Ecuador is very long, we are talking about 1.724 species. Birds in Ecuador are very important because it is a very small country, but very diverse. It is among the 17 most megadiverse countries in the world, due to the four natural regions, which are actually five natural regions. We are talking about the Amazon, Sierra (the Andes), Coast, Galapagos and the maritime region. With these natural worlds a variety of flora and fauna is found, this explains the number of bird species that we find in Ecuador. Now, something important that we must mention at this point is that Ecuador is very small and people who do ornithology do not need to travel a lot to be able to see different species, depending on the altitude. Well, that's what (Dr.) Mark Bush was

explaining. The cloud forest, the páramo, the sub-páramo, etc... you find a variety of countless birds. So, for people who do ornithology, photography and bird watching, it is very easy to move in Ecuador through such small spaces and in a trip of a couple of weeks you can see around 700, 600 or 800 species of birds, depending on the seasons of the year.

That is why Ecuador is a very privileged place in terms of birds and tourism. Now, about hummingbirds, in some towns, cities and provinces of Ecuador the hummingbird is considered an emblematic bird due to its colors, its morphology, its flight.. Things that all birds have, but the hummingbird is the one that stands out the most. For ancestral peoples like the Yumbos and Quitos they are considered by its cultural significance. Also because of the large number of hummingbird species we have here. For example, if we talk about the tanagers (I'm not very good at the subject of birds), there is around 26 species of them here and is a tiny number in comparison to the number of hummingbirds we have

Lina: With other animals, how is it in terms of conservation?

Patricio: Oh, with respect to your question, I would have to be a little stronger, people no longer have that respect, right? If we talk about mestizo people, the mestizo has lost (concern with conservation).

In our work as tour guides we can teach people about caring for the flora and fauna. For example, the spectacled bear is an animal that is in danger of extinction, but people don't take care about it. The government has decreed within its constitution a prison for those who attack wildlife and wildlife throughout Ecuador. There is no clear rule for public policies on conservation issues, and people still continue to hunt indiscriminately, for the Andean Condor (as an example), they hunt them as trophies. The Andean Condor is important because it is the emblem of the Ecuadorian flag, because it is one of the largest birds in the world that can fly and can be found in the Andes. Better conservation is now being done because of the change in public policies.

If we talk about how the animals are considered in the indigenous communities, they are basically sacred. For example, the Andean puma, the jaguar in the Amazon, the tapir. Although, when Amazonian peoples find these types of animals, they still have that hunter essence. So in some communities, let's talk (for example), Waorani, which would be the most remote peoples from Western civilizations, are dedicated only to hunting and fishing. So, let's say, if a Waorani meets a tapir in the Amazon, where it is completely protected in an intangible zone and his family has not eaten animal protein in a week, that Waorani is going to hunt the tapir to provide. They know that they don't hunt for sport, they do not hunt because they like it, they hunt for need. If they've already hunted the tapir once, or a second tapir, basically that's going to give them enough food for a week and they're not going to hunt again until it's gone.

So it's not that they kill again and again, they hunt when they need to. Animals within indigenous cultures are considered sacred. The monkey is considered a reproducer within the indigenous worldview in general. The armadillo, for example, is considered very important because of its meat, but also because of the materials that this animal can give to generate musical instruments, for example. With the shell of the armadillo, mandolin and charango can be created. The charango is not an Ecuadorian instrument, this

instrument was created in Bolivia, is a small guitar that has 12 strings and those strings are played at the same time to create some super delicious melodies.

The snake is considered an animal of respect. And thus, basically each animal has its distinction and pre-Columbian groups had reverence for these animals until today. Now that you are going to Waita lodge you will see that there are indigenous communities around it. They have a lot of respect for the snake, the jaguar, etc.. Those are little things that the indigenous people still preserve, part of their beliefs and part of their traditions, part of their culture.

Lina: The Pampa grass caught my attention in the Andes, on the first day. But this is a name in English.

Patricio: Yes, well, I mentioned it like that so you can understand what I was explaining. The local name for that plant is called "Paja". The Paja is a plant of the páramo. It is basically located at an elevation of 4.000 meters above sea level, at 3.700 meters there will be a change in vegetation, the tree line basically ends between 3.500/3.600 meters. Then, when the tree line ends, a line of vegetation typical of the páramo begins. Paja is the plant that stands out above all other plants. You find lichens, mosses, Asteraceae..., countless plants that are the ecosystem of the Páramo.

Talking about environmental education, burning the Paja is deadly because it is a great preserver of water and our cities are maintained with pure water maintained by the Paramo vegetation. The Paja is one of the most important plants that exist in the Paramo.

Lina: Yes, you also mentioned the Lycopodium, and other plants as well, like the Chupalia.

Patricio: Chupalia, it is a very important plant for the habitat of the spectacled bear. It is a Bromeliaceae, from the pineapple family. The pineapple was basically introduced, the other day I went to investigate where the pineapple comes from and it comes from the area of Brazil. When the Portuguese conquest came, the Guaranis produced it, but at the time of the conquest the Portuguese started to cultivate this fruit. The Chupalia is a Bromeliaceae that is the appropriate habitat (for the spectacled bear), because the spectacled bear can eat in this area and also in low areas, such as cloud forests. In the Cosanga and Baeza areas you can find the spectacled bear. But if you go to the Páramo, for example in Papallacata, you will also find the spectacled bear, because all that is the habitat, the ecological corridor of the spectacled bear.

Lina: So the spectacled bear's habitat goes all the way to the Paramo.

Patricio: Perfect, well understood, we could detail it in meters, from 1,000 meters to easily 5.000 meters (the habitat of the spectacled bear). There is a video (of the spectacled bear) in Cotopaxi, above 5.000 meters. We could consider it between 1.000 and 5.000 (meters) without a problem, because it was 5.100, but the glacier has decreased, perhaps because of global warming and the greenhouse effect.

Before 1802 the famous Alexander von Humboldt, made a very large expedition here in Ecuador and throughout the United States and Mexico. He was here from 1802 to 1803, where he made his largest expedition. Humboldt detailed the plant life that could be found on our volcanoes. He determined that you could find at 4800 meters above sea level the last lichens and mosses. There has been a 300 meters retreat of the glaciers from 1802 to today

Lina: Do you know anything about medicinal plants?

Patricio: Well, I am going to make a very brief introduction. You notice that in the road there are some people selling leaves, with bottles and some vines. All of these are natural medicine laboratories. People know what kind of plants to use, you can find Dragon's blood there. Dragon's blood is a phenomenal natural healing agent. You find Guayusa, which is used for intestinal purification, cat's claw, which is anti-inflammatory, Camphor, which is also anti-inflammatory. If you could take pictures of these places, it would be interesting because it is part of all this knowledge that the people of the Amazon have about what is around them.

Lina: Anyway, if you have a plant that you know is edible, or that has some use, let me know and I'll take a photo.

Patricio: When we are with Byron we will have the support of the Quichua people who know this type of information. But if I can help you, I'm delighted.

Linna: Thank you very much.