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The Story of the Apiwtxa Ashaninka tribe and How They Defend Mother Nature as a Part of Their Culture



In the dry season, the river waters are safe for children to play in, and the night is always peaceful. The Ashaninka people love to share stories, camp, and fish in nature, and they deeply value their surroundings, enjoying the beauty around them to the best of their abilities. In 2021, they received bad news: A road project had been initiated, and it threatened to destroy their habitat. Logging companies were planning to build an illegal road, and had moved equipment from Peru to a village at the edge of the forest. Drug traffickers would perform massive deforestation, and gather young indigenous youths to become drug couriers, which would be disastrous. The area, home to the woolly monkey and the jaguar, has been threatened by colonizers for centuries, but the Ashaninka people have defended the land throughout by joining Indigenous alliances to fight off invaders.

The indigenous people adapted to the increasing risk of incursion posed by technological advancements in the urban world by developing a sophisticated, enjoyable, sustainable, and self-sufficient way of life, in which cultural empowerment played a big role. Antônio Piyãko, the chief, said that they would perish if they didn't take care of the precious land they live in. The Sawawo people reached the forest edge and saw tractors with supplies. They took pictures of the damage and interviewed the loggers. They used the internet access they had in their villages to share the information with Peruvian authorities through a local indigenous organization. The Sawawo shared evidence with the Apiwtxa, who showed up by boat and set up camp at the forest edge. Supporters from three NGOs arrived by foot. The twenty people, led by a woman with a baby, formed a human barrier and prevented the tractors from moving forward. The Ashaninka were fierce warriors, and confiscated the keys of the tractors before the workers could react.

An environmental official arrived the next day, and surveyed the damage. The Ashaninka people stayed there for months to make sure the tractors were not used for harm once again, and the NGOs alerted the press. The Loggers eventually left, and the Ashaninka people proved to the world that they would defend their natural homeland from being destroyed for mere profit.

The Ashaninka people have completely transformed the degraded patch of land they had originally received into a beautiful and thriving natural environment. They regenerated the forest through the simple ways of life ingrained in their culture, and restored endangered species. They used agroforestry and shifting cultivation to improve food sources. They have received the United Nations' Equator Prize in 2017. Their culture is drawn from shamanic visions, and the people share an intimate relationship with their plants and animals, who they regard as close relatives. Women spin cotton, and spiritual men sit under starry skies and chew coca leaves in silence. The people of the tribe are extremely well rested, sleeping by 8 PM when the sun sets and waking up with nature when the birds sing in the morning. They communicate with each other like the rest of nature, with not much noise but through subtle changes in expression and posture.

This culture was saved through nonviolence and their deep love for the environment. Hopefully, this inspires others to get to know nature better.

Instagram Link:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyNATn7uVqm/>

Screenshot:

The screenshot shows an Instagram post from the account 'pollution_police23'. The main image is a black and white line drawing. At the top, the text 'NOT THIS TIME! - THE RESISTANCE' is written in a hand-drawn, blocky font. Below the text, a tractor is shown from a front-three-quarter view, moving towards the viewer. A long line of stylized human figures stands in front of the tractor, forming a human wall. The background features a row of trees and a simple landscape with hills. The drawing is enclosed in a decorative border with small circular motifs.

pollution_police23 The Apiwtxa Ashaninka People successfully defended their homeland in the Amazon from illegal loggers with tractors using only nonviolence! They were driven by nothing but their deep love for nature, which is ingrained into their culture. We can all learn from them.
@pachamamaorg
@turninggreenorg #pgc2023
7s

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The Pollution Police