

## Chipaya mytho-history

Bueno werh tshi k'int'asaéha tukita timpu mathñillaž qamta –

Well, I will tell you a story of the lives of the grandparents ...

An elderly man from Santa Ana de Chipaya told us the history of his community. There are several important facts and events he narrates. The first was the existence of a lake where the inhabitants of a nearby place used to come to hunt and fish and eventually construct a house called *ch'ipa* so that they wouldn't have to walk every time. Gradually they settled by the lake, thereby losing their access rights to where they had lived before. The Chipayas are related to the *chullpas* (ancient burial towers), their ancestors. These *chullpas* lived and worked by night and the light of the moon. When they started going to another village, Sabaya, they were captured. When communication was finally achieved (which was difficult because their language was different from that of the Aymaras) they were questioned by the priest about how and where they lived. According to their answers he gave them their surnames which they have kept until today.

Different versions of these episodes of Chipaya mytho-history are known. In our consultant's narrative several key elements occur which define and affect Chipaya culture and identity until the present: the origin of the community name and the localisation of the village, their origin as a people of land AND water, their particular language, their contact with and expropriation by the Aymaras, their relation to the *chullpa* ancestors, their Christianisation, and the origin of their family names.

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