

1. *Pajé: Spiritual leaders of certain Brazilian indigenous tribes. Equivalent to the shaman people of Northern Asia and North America.*

2. *Arabé: Indigenous word from the Tupi-Guarani linguistic matrix that defines cockroach or insect in general.*

## COVID 19 AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

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The peoples of the forest still struggle  
It is from afar and shall be abiding  
Genocide and epidemics  
Prejudice brings extermination.

In this path of ordeals  
The great journey will be trailed knee-by-knee  
Facing all ailment  
That came from beyond the great sea.

Smallpox that blighted our nations  
Coming from tokens we did not need  
Pieces from foreign lands  
Tuberculosis butchered our families  
Malaria shattered the elderly and children  
Touching even those who made us bleed.

We counted plenty of moons  
We crossed rivers of grief  
We resist these plagues  
And the carbine of dreadful “conquistador”.

There came twenty-twenty  
Bearing the wake of resistance  
Notwithstanding epidemic pursuing us  
We endured it with patience.  
The virus showed its true face  
Deaths, sequels, more pain  
Uprooted so many elders  
And the everyday life fell apart.

To defy and resist  
The people redraw the path  
And the medicine from the ancestors  
Quieted the crown of thorns  
Hovering above our heads  
And makes the heart bleed.

Pajé<sup>1</sup>, our doctor,  
Felt into oblivion  
Blew a new life to sacred wisdom  
The smoke staving off the arabé<sup>2</sup>  
The children of sun, moon and fire  
Found relief and deliverance.

It is time for Medicine from the city  
To weigh the guidance of the ancestors  
All the sciences together  
Will make humankind  
Respect themselves and the other  
in the wake of conscience  
For them we're still barriers  
In this land of great  
sages... of intelligence!

**GEOGRAFARES** 

Revista do Programa de  
Pós-Graduação em Geografia e  
do Departamento de Geografia  
da UFES

JANEIRO - JUNHO, 2021  
ISSN 2175-3709