

## The Tapukus and the Origin of Water. Sayari Campo



**Translated from Spanish by Anya Skye Tucker**

In Sayari Campo Burbano's words:

“Art for me is the capacity to transform fear into hope, it is the innate creativity that all beings have to express and share who we are. Movement, words, gestures, songs: what we create with our being is art. Art is what allows us to dream and build our world, it allows us to be bridges of memory and knowledge, sharing with others our way of being, thinking, and existing. For me, art is the expression of the spirit, it is that which saves us from fear and destruction, it is healing in times of darkness.”

In the following video that the artist Sayari Campo Burbano (Yanakuna Mitmak nation) has shared with *Siwar Mayu*, voice-over and scenography are crafted by Sayari, while the script is an adaptation of “Relatos y pensamiento yanakuna” (“Yanakuna Stories and Thought”) by poet Fredy Chikangana / Wiñay Malki. Following the video, we have included the original text.

→ Video: [TAPUKU AND THE ORIGIN OF WATER](#)

### **The uterus ~ Yanakuna Story. By Fredy Chikangana / Wiñay Malki (2012)**

The first beings that populated this land came in the form of steam and were called Tapukus because they arose from the bottom of the earth and when they came to the surface, some made the sound tapuk...tapuk...tapuk... and others responded ku...ku...ku.... So they kept jumping and trying to fly.

The Great Father Waira, who was the wind, took them by the hand and carried them to his realms, and soon they were brightening the earth.

However, some tapuk and other ku did not want to follow the Great Father Waira and they came together, forming a great shadow, from which arose a mass that formed the first body, who had the sounds and the traits of both Tapuk and ku.

Father Waira, feeling rejected, blew strongly over this mass which gradually caught the form of a big drop, and then took on the shape of a woman. Father Waira continued blowing and threw it through the air, but the mass already had the body of a woman.

With the force of the wind, the shadow was making both sounds of tapuk ku, tapuk ku.

So the Great Father, observing that it was a woman, decided to call her tapuku and accompany her in her flight to form with her body the bellybuttons of water: the lagoons, the rivers, and the streams.

She was singing, brushing her body against the darkness, with her sound and breath the warm and cold waters were forming, the Great Father Waira blew gently and thus the waters bursted and began to flow through the universe.

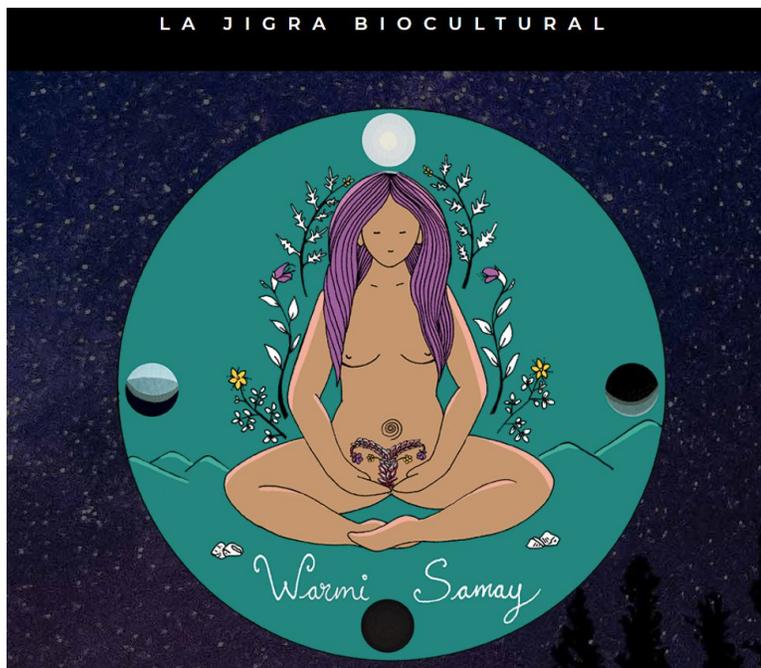
This is why the Yanakuna grandparents say that the first mother is a Tapuku, and her territory is the uterus, where life germinates to be watered by the universe.



Sayari Campo Burbano is a descendant of the Andean Yanakuna culture. She was born on September 4th, 1991 in the territory of the Colombian Massif. From an early age, she was interested in dance and movement, something that later led her towards being part of native dance and music groups. Art has always accompanied her, since her parents and relatives have instilled in her this knowledge from a very young age. Sayari grew up in the indigenous community of Río blanco (Sotará, Cauca) and studied in the city of Bogotá. She has a degree in biology from the National Pedagogical University and today is a midwife apprentice, dancer, and pedagogical facilitator in her territory. She is also a guardian of the Munayki –Uma House in San Agustín (Huila), a space dedicated to the investigation and the exchange of ancestral knowledge, where she has been developing work from art and ancestral medicine. Sayari collaborates in pedagogical processes aimed at strengthening the art and language of her community. She is the creator of the *Warmi Samay project (spirit of woman)*, a pedagogical initiative around issues that involve the feminine body, the cycles of life, and caring for the territory.

## More about the *Warmi Samay* project and the *Yanakuna Territory*

- <https://warmisamay.org/warmi-samay/> Warmi Samay project



“Manage comprehensive, collective and contextualized educational processes around health and menstrual education, as a fundamental part of the political formation of women, girls and their relationship with the territories.”

“Heal and take care of your first territory, your body.”  
©2021 Warmi Samay

- [Yanakuna Ceremony in Defense of the Water](#). San Agustín, Huila. Subregion newspaper. Featuring Fredy Chikangana / Wiñay Malki
- [The Sound of the Yanakuna People](#). Sumak Komunikaciones Collective.



### About the Translator:

Anya Skye is from the Ashe end of the New River, the second oldest in the world. She likes getting to know bellybuttons of water and the other beings of the earth.