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The Pishtacos

They say that a long time ago, around the times of the beginning of the Republic, there roamed around individuals from almost all locations that killed people that came out to the field/park especially those who were overweight and had a very good voice. They said that the blood and fat of these people was served in the foundation of the bells and that the bells would ring better with the best voice of a person. This is how these bloody men called PIshtacos, were greatly feared by the villagers.

With respect to this belief in the village of San Buenaventura there is a story that proves the existence of the Pishtacos.

In those days there was a very close union or fraternity with the citizens that formed a community, they were a whole family for any type of job; that for example when an individual built their house everyone would gather around and help. When that day came one of them wanted to make a house and because of custom, everyone, men and women went to go help. When they only needed the roof to finish that is made of straw they agreed to go out and find it in the mountain tops, they went on the next day. Since it was far in the middle of the trip they sat and ate their “Fiambre’, which is how they called it a cold breakfast, contained cancha (toasted corn), cheese, charqui, roasted potatoes, roasted beans, etc.as they were calming eating they were approached by strangers that faked their friendship; the strangers invited them to have some of their fiambre that consisted of pork rinds, roasted meat chunks; but the pork rinds contained a narcotic. The wives of those who had gone to look for straw had noticed that the strangers were the so called Pishtacos. They made signs to their husbands so that they wouldn’t eat their meat, but they didn’t care and kept on eating. As they finished eating the strangers left, surely they went to go hide waiting for the result of their deviousness. After a couple of minutes the men had knocked out and fell into deep sleep. The desperate women rushed to hide them in caves or hide them with the straw, so that the Pishtacos wouldn’t take them. The women right away returned to the village to give notice to the authorities and everyone else that had stayed. When everyone arrived armed with axes, knives, machetes and so on, to where they had hidden the men there were two men missing. Everyone was bereaved of the disappearing of their comrades and relatives; they decided to go after the men that had caused such a crime. At approximately 2 or 3 kilometers of distance, they came to a final cave where they discovered for the first time the bodies of the two missing men; they were headless and hung by their feet by hooks that were insured by the rocks that formed the cave. At the bottom there was a large cauldron, where the blood deposited the rigid bodies. Full of disgust and horror they started to look for the bandits, one of them discovered a Pishtacos a few meters away from the cave that slept peacefully after his act. He approached him carefully and with the ax that he had in his hand, discharged it right in the neck of the Pishtaco that the head came out rolling by the side; however the reaction was so quick that the headless body moved with a sharp movement achieved to stand up, but he didn’t remain like that for long and returned to drop dead. The other Pishtacos, hearing the noise, ran away without being seen. So then the men collected the corpses of their family members and took them to the village to give them burial, leaving the Pishtacos corpse in the same place so that the crows could eat it.

The rest of the Pishtacos fled; discontented with what had happened to them, they headed and went in search of other people so they walked until they reached a secluded hut in which lived an old lady with her two grandchildren. The Pishtacos had surrounded the hut and were preparing to enter inside when they heard the old lady pronounced words that they had never heard of <<Janampa, janampa, chaita chaita, uraypi, uraypi! >>; and the bandits believed the old lady called people for help or they thought she was a witch and would put a spell on them, and they fled without ever wanting to come back. But in fact the old lady indicated to her grandchildren to rub her back and ignoring what was happening in the exterior, told them in Quechua << Arriba, Arriba; abajo, abajo! A ese, a ese!>>, so that they could know where to rub; and just like that they contributed to their salvation, because if not they would have been beheaded by the Pishtacos.