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THE KAYAPO-XIKRIN OF THE CATETE

INTRODUCTION

The Kayapo are an indigenous people who belong to the linguistic group Gê and who live in a large area of Central Brazil, between the rivers Tocantins and Xingú, in the southwestern part of the state of Pará (see map).

For over two centuries, despite continuous fissions, always moving from the East in a westward direction, and in spite of a significant weakening caused by their first contacts with the surrounding society, the Kayapo are still today a representative group of approximately 2,500 individuals, divided into fifteen sub-groups forming scattered, semi-autonomous villages. However, generally speaking, the Kayapo way of life is very homogeneous as far as the subsistence activities, socio-political structures and cultural aspects are concerned. The differences between groups are due to the successive fissions, diversified means of adaptation to the geographical environment (forest and bush land) and also to the internal evolution of each group, linked to more specific factors such as the demographic configuration, the intertribal and

interethnic contacts and idiosyncrasies. The most important differences being found between the Kayapo of the Xingú region and those of the Tocantins. The Xikrin of the Cateté, whose music is recorded in this compact disk, belong to this second group.

In the fifties and the sixties, the Kayapo were still considered "savages", unknown and feared by local people, hidden in a jungle where very few whites had dared venture. Now-a-days, they live in a region renamed "Legal Amazon" and the Indians are often referred to as "People from the Forest". This is the stamp of modern times ; On the one hand the threat of expansionist projects and of savage capitalism in the heart of the rain-forest, together with, on the other hand, the birth of a new social and ecological consciousness. A conflicting situation indeed, and it is not by chance if the Amazon has turned itself the center of attention of the international scene since it has been undergoing a disorderly process of land occupation and a constant destruction of its natural resources. Over the recent years, the increasing amount of land appropriation by means of important investments in infrastructure, added to official

projects of colonization, brought about migratory movements of great mobility which, together with agricultural projects and the extraction of minerals (Projeto Ferro Carajás) led to deep modifications for the forest and for its inhabitants.

The Southwest of the state of Pará, the region inhabited by the Kayapo, has been one of the most affected by this constant advance of the frontier. This process has been witnessed, year after year, through satellite pictures which have shown the dramatic appearance of new and countless "white spots".

The Projeto Grande Carajás, set up in 1982, and many other undertakings have totally transformed the geographic and socio-economic map of Eastern Amazon, area where conflicts caused by the fight over lands are continuous.

The Kayapo own territories demarcated or officially delimited by the State, but they are constantly invaded by "garimpeiros" searching for gold, or by lumbering companies looking for the world's ultimate mahogany resources, noble wood of high commercial value.

The Indians' traditional life in that region used to be very different from what is now offered to them as a model of progress

and civilization. These people had their way of life based on an agriculture of subsistence, on the gathering of products from the forest, fishing and non-predatory hunting. They developed a specific cultural way of adaptation and integration to the Amazonian environment. Throughout generations they accumulated and transmitted their knowledge of the potentialities and limitations of the various ecosystems forming that region. Occupying both forest and savannah-bush land they knew how to draw out of them, not only the means of their physical survival, but also how to establish social and symbolic relations constituting the basis of their vision of the world, supported by a rich and constant ritual activity which is still alive among the Kayapo. The music recorded in this album belong to a masculine and feminine naming ceremony produced in grand style. Furthermore, their music, accompanied by dances, body-paintings, formal speeches and a rich ornamentation, is one of the highest manifestation of Kayapo cultural identity.

Paradoxically, it is this very attachment to customs and traditional values which most strongly motivated the Kayapo to fight for their land and for the acknowledgement of their rights. They are indians known for their capacity to organize political forums

and resistance movements. We remember for instance, the constant presence of the Kayapo in 1988, while the new Brazilian Constitution was being elaborated at the National Congress in Brasilia. And also, in 1989, the promotion of the Altamira Meeting and its important impact on the medias, where all the Kayapo groups had gathered in an act of denunciation of the construction of the Xingú hydroelectric complex, whose reservatory would flood part of their land together with that of other indigenous groups of the region.

But the future of the indigenous people of Brazil, and of the Kayapo, does not only depend on them. On the one side they live within the frontiers of a Nation State which imposes rules of conviviality and, on the other side, they are limited by the multiple problems of a still developing country. The difficulties in the fields of education, health and environmental protection are characteristics of an always uncertain institutional framework, thus diminishing the possibilities of mutual agreement between the indigenous people, the State and the surrounding society. And finally, there always is the danger for the indians and their organizations, in an unfavourable socio-economic climate, of losing control over their destiny. eventhough, since 1988, they have won many legal and consti-

tutional battles.

NAME

The term Kayapo comes from the Tupi (Kaia : monkey and Po : look like) and never was used by the Gê groups to which it is applied. All the Kayapo call themselves Mebengôkra, that is to say people from the water-hole or people of the big water, referring themselves to the rivers Tocantins and Araguaia whose crossing supposedly meant the splitting of the ancestral group. Added to this common designation, each group has its own name derived from that of a leader or depending on the village's location. The latter being the most frequent reference used to identify each group.

LANGUAGE

The language spoken by the Kayapo belongs to a branch of the linguistic group Gê, to which other groups also belong such as the Apinagê, the Eastern Timbira, the Suya of the Upper Xingú, and more remotely the Xavante and Xerente of Central Brazil and the Xokleng and Kaingang of the southern part of the country. As for the Bororo, the link is believed to be even more distant. There are some dialectal

differences between the various existing Kayapo groups, nevertheless the language is the strongest characteristic of their ethnical identity and the leading factor in their acknowledgement of sharing a common culture.

The Kayapo who consider speech a highly estimated social practice define themselves as the people who speak well, beautifully - Kohen mei - in opposition to other people who do not speak their language. On some occasions, as during the speeches of the council or during ceremonies, the men speak in falsetto - Reg - thus differentiating this type of speech from common speech. The degree of knowledge of the Portuguese among the Kayapo varies from group to group according to the remoteness of the contact, the degree of isolation, the existence or absence of a FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) school. Generally speaking the young men who have the biggest opportunities of contact with the surrounding society speak a better Portuguese than the elderly, the women or children. This at least, as far as the Xikrin of the Cateté are concerned.

HISTORIC FISSIONS AND OCCUPATION OF THE LAND

The present configuration of the Kayapo groups results from a

long process of social and spacial mobility, underlined by the continuous formation of factions and political fissions. The histories of these trajectories full of tensions, conflicts, accusations of witchcraft and leaders' epics, fill the memories of the living Kayapo and are told over and over again with dramatic intensity and details by the eldests.

After the fission from the ancestral Apinagê group which occurred approximately at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, and after having crossed the Araguaia river, the Kayapo split at the end of the same century. The original group remained in the Pau d'Arco - an affluent of the Araguaia - area, while the group called Pore-Kru, ancestor of the present Xikrin, moved northward towards the region of the rivers Paraupébas and Itacaíunas. The Kayapo who remained in the Pau d'Arco region split again and the dissidents moved towards the rivers Xingú and Fresco. All the groups known as Kayapo of the Xingú come from these dissidents after several other fissions. The Kayapo who stayed on the left bank of the Araguaia river were the first to establish friendly contacts with the local population and became known as the Kayapo of the Pau d'Arco. In 1897, the Dominican brother

Gil Vilanova arrived in the Araguaia region and founded Vila de Conceição, from where he started his work of catechesis among the Kayapo: A school for indigenous children was opened and around it was created an important mission. In 1909 these Kayapo were suffering from a drastic and progressive depopulation. In 1921 the group was living in a single village, and in 1949, counted only six individuals.

THE XIKRIN

As already mentioned, a fission took place at the end of the XVIIIth century among the Kayapo who had crossed the Araguaia river, resulting in the departure of the Pore-Kru. Later on, the same group was divided in two : the Kokorekre who settled in the river Paraupabas area, and the Put-Karôt who moved towards the region of the river Cateté in the Upper Itacaíunas.

The Kokorekre who had started offering goods for barter to the locals travelling up the river Paraupabas became victims of diseases, and around 1910, suffered a punitive expedition from the locals who killed many.

The rubber exploitation caused the deterioration of the relations between the Put-Karôt and the locals. The Indians left the Cateté

and settled at the sources of the river Itacaiunas. It was in this villoge that a debilitated group of Kokorokra joined the Put-Karôt and began a long period of hostilities with the Gorotire. Around 1926, for fear of the Gorotire (Kayapo of the Xingú) they migrated to the North and settled in the region of the river Bacajá. A little later, between 1930 and 1940, a group which did not like the place left and went back to the Cateté river. These two groups are known today as the Xikrin of the Bacajá and Xikrin of the Cateté.

THE XIKRIN OF THE CATETE

Location

Xikrin never was a self-denomination of these groups. Although it is a name coming from the Kayapo language, it was imposed from the outside. But, now-a-days, the indians identify themselves under this name.

The Xikrin of the Cateté possess a territory, now delimited, of approximately 400,000 hectares, that is to say an indigenous reservation ; this territory is set on the municipality of Marabá (Pará), in between the Serra Carajás (the river Aquiri constituing the Northern border of the reservation) and the Serra da Seringa (the Highway

PA-279 presently limiting the territory to the South) ; the Eastern limit of the reservation being the river Itacaíunas, the river Cateté and its tributaries to the West. This is what is left of a much larger perambulation area. The whole region is bathed by the two rivers mentioned above and is set on firm grounds in the tropical forest, called in that region the liana forest. This forest is composed of mahogany and of Brazilian chesnut trees. In the clearings a concentration of babaçu can be observed, and, in the swamp areas, to the south, lots of buriti palms can be found. The village and the FUNAI post are set on the left bank of the river Cateté (6° 15' 20" of latitude South and 50° 47' 25" of longitude West), thirty kilometres from the confluence of the Cateté with the river Itacaíunas, in a place the indians call Pukatingró (dry sand) where the river makes an ample curve with a beach and a shallow water-fall. In between the river and the circle formed by the houses, the indians built and keep a 900 metre landing ground.

This village is located at 210 kilometres in a straight line from Marabá, and at 300 kilometres by the river Itacaíunas, a distance which can be covered in approximately three days by a motor-boat; Today the large mineral complex (Projeto Ferro Carajás) and its re-

sidential center can be reached in no more than fifteen minutes by helicopter. To the North of the reservation, at ninety kilometres from the village, going down the Itacaiunas, one can find the encampment of the Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, the "caldeirão" from which starts a road leading to the "Salobo" - a copper detection encampment - and to the urban centers of the Serra Carajás. From Carajás to Marabá the road is asphalted and it takes approximately a two-hour drive for a bus to link the two cities. At thirty kilometres from the village, to the South, on the Rio Seco, a temporary encampment can be found. The indians call it Kamkrokro, a place rich in chestnuts, hunting and fishing in the summer.

The post of vigilance is set further to the South, on the land of the Fazenda Cateté, recently taken back from an invading farmer, at eighty kilometres from the Highway PA-279. Young indians travel along that road, visiting localities such as Tucumã, Agua Azul, Xinguara and Redenção, where they meet and talk to representatives of other Kayapo groups but also to local farmers, lumbermen and miners. It is a region of the State of Pará where lots of conflicts take place.

POPULATION

The Xikrin of the Cateté were pacified in 1952, at the Las Casas Post, near Vila de Conceição do Araguaia, towards which they had come to experiment contacts with local whites.

In 1953, accompanied by a member of the SPI (Service of Indian Protection) the Xikrin went back to the Cateté. According to this man 300 indians left with him (personal information).

There are no reliable populational data concerning the first decade after the pacification of the group, but it is known that the mortality rate over the period was very high.

In 1962, they were visited by the ethnographer Protasio Erikel who reported 164 indians living in eleven houses set in a circle, forming a village of the traditional type. In 1963, when this ethnographer returned to the Cateté the situation had changed. Over this one year lap the group had split, their opinions about civilized people and the fruits of civilization in general, being different. At that time there were two villages: "the Conservatives" led by the old chief Bep-Karoti, had stayed in the old village, while the "Progressists" under the leadership of Bemoti, had settled on the bank of the Itacaíunas, at the Boca do Cateté, in order to make easier

contacts with the locals. The indians had expected a lot from these contacts and from the possibilities of exchanges they would offer but they were ^ecrucially disappointed. They were explored and caught diseases which killed them. In one year they lost ten per cent of their population. Many young also left the village to meet inhuman working conditions picking Brazil nuts or in other activities.

In 1964, under the care of the Dominican brother José Eron, the Xikrin were persuaded to return to the Cateté.

The first goal of the Missionary Assistance was to mobilize the group, bring back those who had left the village, and avoid that the indians looked for the locals to make disadvantageous exchanges. In 1966 the whole group represented only ninety-two people. The second preoccupation was to give the indians the conditions to become a group again. This meant medical assistance, the building of a landing field and the organization of an activity which would bring profit thus enabling the acquisition of manufactured goods. 1967 is a new step in the history of the Xikrin and explains the three phenomena which occurred from then on. In the first place the return to the village of all the young people who had left and their reintegration to tribal life which seemed to offer advantages they had not found among

the white community. In the second place, the Xikrin's attitude towards the invaders of their land became more intransigent and, finally, there was a gradual revival of the tribal institutions.

In december 1969, on my first visit, the group was composed of 119 people living in eleven households. With the young men's return the women had asked for the reconstruction of the Atukba (men's house) which, together with the council - ngobe - , started to play their political and social functions again.

The missionary's work improved the group's health, diminishing drastically the mortality rate. In 1971 the Xikrin were 130 and, since then, the demographic increase continues in the same proportion.

In 1976 the population was of 183, in 1982 of 263 and in 1989 of approximately 380 individuals.

Added to the high natality rate, partly due to the disappearance of taboos linked to birth control, one can observe, since 1985, (period of the Projeto Ferro Carajás) a migration of Xikrin families from Gorotire and Bacajá who settle in the village of Cateté.

LIFE STYLE

Subsistence activities

The Kayapo universe corresponds to a well-structured spatial organization and shows a successful integration of both environmental adaptation and social organization. When possible the Kayapo build their villages near a river or narrow water-way, but always on dry and well-drained land. The Indians choose an area of transition between various ecological zones, giving them the advantage of an easy access to a great variety of vegetal and animal species, each zone offering different natural products according to the season of the year. The Kayapo explore the tropical forest and the bush land of the transition region of the Tocantins-Xingú in an organized way. They are rich areas for hunting, fishing and gathering. Furthermore the region is very rich in spots of black earth, favourable to agriculture.

Until now, all Kayapo, even when faced to drastic and quick changes, never failed to maintain their traditional subsistence activities. In the future, one can foretell that the reduction of territories and the continuous deforestation will induce a progressive diminution of the hunting and fishing and a quick exhaustion of the cultivable lands. This will result in an increasing number of hours dedicated to the subsistence activities and a higher dependence on

a market economy.

The method used for cultivation is that of the swidden agriculture. The men do the cutting and the women the planting and the harvesting. The gardens are both collective and individual. They mainly grow different qualities of sweet potatoes, inhams and bananas, sweet manioc and corn. After their contact with the locals they began to grow more manioc to make flour which became their basic staple food. They diversified their products and now cultivate pumpkins, broad-beans (feva), watermelon and fruit trees such as avocado, papaya, cashew, mango, passionfruit, lemon and pineapple. They also produce some sugar-cane, coffee and rice, and traditionally grow cotton and urucu.

The Kayapo define themselves mainly as hunters despite their dependence on the products of the land. Their most appreciated game is : tapir, boar, peccary, deer, paca and cotia. They hunt a lot of land turtles and armadillos. They eat some poultry such as guan and curassow which they did not use to eat before.

Since their contact with civilization they hunt with rifles and need amunitions which are very expensive, creating a high dependence on external subsidies for this traditional activity. Also, the defo-

restation which took place in the whole Southwest of Par  drastically reduced the fauna of the region.

They hunt an important quantity of birds such as macaw, lapu, jo o congo and parrots for the confection of feather adornments. They fish in the winter with nylon lines and hooks. In the summer the communitarian fishing with timbo (a poisonous vine) prevails. The Xikrin slowly abandoned most of their food taboos and now eat all kinds of fishes, but still avoid some of them when sick.

From the forest they gather hearts of palm, Brazilian nuts, different kinds of coconuts, different qualities of honey, wild fruits (a ai, bacaba, frut o etc.) and coconut larva. They also pick big quantities of genipap for body-painting, vines to fish with timbo, and a large variety of medicinal plants. The baba u oil, mainly used as a cosmetic, is also used today in the preparation of food. They also collect all the raw material necessary to their material culture, especially wood, lianas and straw, shells, snails and different seeds.

ALIMENTARY HABITS

The traditional alimentation is extremely well-balanced. The food is always baked in stone ovens or on an open fire. Over the recent

years, with the use of pans, they began to cook some meals and started using salt.

Children are breast-fed, later on they start eating bananas, parayas, hearts of palm, potatoes and other types of food, pre-masticated by their mothers,

There are various alimentary taboos linked to specific conventional classifications, beliefs related to body, soul and illnesses. Some taboos have been partially abandoned, increasing the number of edible products. Yet, others are still observed, the Xikrin do not eat game's heart or liver which are associated to the loss of blood.

Traditionally a sick person was relegated to a marginal condition. Now-a-days the frequency of diseases unknown to amerindians, such as flu, malaría, infectious and broncho-pulmonary diseases turned the alimentary assistance essential for a good recovery.

NOMADIC LIFE

The subsistence activities are cyclical and seasonal. There are times of abundance and times of scarcity.

Traditionally the Kayapo are semi-nomadic, with a pre-established calendar of displacements, the village always being the return

point. Their moves can vary from a few days or weeks to up to two or three months during the dry season (July, August, September). Since their contact with civilization this last alternative was abandoned. The trekking groups are composed of men and are organized according to age-sets, men societies or kinship ties, and sometimes can even be composed of all the villagers. The reason for these trekkings, aside from culturally traditional, is the exploration of their territory's resources, especially during the dry season when their gardens are less productive.

When travelling they build more simple shelters and change encampment every day. They sleep next to a river to fish, or next to an area rich in some specific resource such as taquara for arrows, buriti palms or fruit trees, or still close to a fallow garden to hunt and gather fruits.

This perambulation habit, aside from allowing the diversification of their diet, also permits a very balanced use of the various ecosystems, without wearing out an only area. Many rituals depend on these trekkings, essentials for the supply of extra food needed to promote the ceremonies. The alternation of a sedentary and nomadic life among the Kayapo plays an important role in the various aspects

of their social organization.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Before the contact the Kayapo used different types of very elaborated clubs for hunting and spears made of wood and jaguar bones. The bows and arrows on the other side were always of simple making. The women use a wooden stick to dig the tubers from the garden.

They make baskets, sacks, boxes and bags out of palm trees to keep their belongings. They used to carry water in hollow bamboo containers for they did not make potteries. They keep seeds, birds' down and urucu seeds in calabashes. They sleep on raised platforms or on mats stretched on the ground. They spin cotton and weave arm-bands and supports for feather adornments ; They do not make bigger fabric nor hammocks. Neither do they make canoes or fishing nets. The Kayapo material culture is obviously limited.

The adorning paraphernalia on the other hand is very developed and the body-painting constitutes a highly structured semiotic system with its formal characteristics and own aesthetics.

The feather adornments, of huge appearance, constitute a rich set of headdresses of macaw, hawk, joão congo, japu and heron feathers,

and of armbands and pectoral and dorsal adornments.

Another characteristic of the Kayapo is a necklace made of pieces of shell: Some adornments, still, are made of cotton, plant fibers, bast and straw.

The Kayapo only possess three musical instruments : the bamboo trumpet, the gourd rattle and the transversal flute. On some occasions they also use sticks to beat time.

ILLNESSES AND CURES

The kayapo believe that illness is caused by the loss of the Mekaron (a kind of spirit, the double, the image) or by the attack of a wild animal's Mekaron.

To heal they use various plants under the form of bandages, baths and fumigations, plants linked to some game, to the jaguar or to the water-snake. The non-obedience to alimentary taboos and to stipulated restrictions can lead to the attack of these spirits, causing illnesses and even death. For wounds they use tobacco fumigations, for muscular pains, light scarifications. For headaches or nevralgies, applications with a naturally polished stone heated on a fire. The best remedy anyhow, being to rest in the hammock (Bought

in Marabá) or on the raised platform surrounded by the family, until one gets better.

The Kayapo accept well the medical treatments introduced by the whites. Not sometimes without bitter reflections about their being affected by a series of serious illnesses which did not exist before the contact, and for which they have no solutions. In parallel they keep on practicing their own medicine, more closely related to the Mekaron's recovery and to the psychological aspect of the therapy. The shaman, when devoting himself to his benefic activities, is mainly a healer knowing medicinal plants and healing rituals, but his role can be played by other specialists, men or even women. To become an authentic shaman one must have gone through certain ordeals enabling supernatural visions and the capacity to enter in contact with the supernatural.

DEATH

The Kayapo are afraid of dying and do not possess a very elaborate eschatology. The individual dies because he has definitely lost his Mekaron (soul).

The Mekaron goes to the village of the dead which lies within the

tribal territory, very often on top of a hill. The Makaron go on living there as they did in the village of the living, but of an incipient and non-dynamic life. The body of the dead is painted and decorated with feathers and adornments and then put on a mat with his personal belongings. It is buried in the cemetery and after some time the bones are taken away, washed and painted with urucu and are submitted to a secondary funeral. The mourners follow restrictions, cut their hair, do not paint their bodies and show their sadness and nostalgia through the ritual crying, an expression of pain with its formal structure.

WORK

According to specialists the Kayapo work an average of fifty-one hours a week, including all their activities. The latter is programmed according to the season and can vary greatly during the different periods of the year.

The Kayapo divide themselves into groups based on sex, age, men's societies under a leader's orientation for the accomplishment of economic activities or other communitarian tasks. The women are always organized in groups according to kinship or age-sets.

Women perform the garden work in time of planting, but also do the daily picking of tuber for alimentation, supply the wood and water and do part of the gathering in the forest. They are responsible for the domestic tasks such as the processing and cooking of food and also look after the children. The women dedicate, individually or in group, a good part of their time to body-painting - an extremely developed activity among the Kayapo -, they weave cotton and play an important role during the rituals. Although they do not formally participate of the council, they give their opinions about collective decisions and decide on matters linked to naming and marriage. The objects they make or those that were made for them are their property and if they want to sell one of them they set its price and receive the payment.

The men usually work under the leadership of a chief, divided in men's societies or age-sets. They sometimes work as a group for an individual who retributes the work giving food. This occurs on the clearing of the gardens or on the building of a house.

Hunting or fishing can be individual or collective activities, sometimes highly ritualistic, as in the case of naming ceremonies or initiation. On this occasion the men in charge of the food supply for

the whole village are kin groups, generally real and classificatory brothers.

The Xikrin of the Cateté do not work for locals. They commercialize the Brazil nut. The chiefs and various adult men have each their "sectors" where they lead the work during harvest time. They also dedicate themselves to the making of handicraft sold in Belém or in neighbouring towns.

Now-a-days, on several occasions, the indians have allowed the lumbering and selling of noble wood in their territory, a predatory activity which ends up prejudicating them enormously. The lumbering being done without criteria, and the given price being far lower than its real value on the national and international markets. This activity, essentially encouraged by some young elements of the village, causes many controversies and disagreements. For traditional tasks, nevertheless, in the decisions concerning collective work, a consensus is usually reached, ratified by the chiefs over the council's meetings. It is interesting to keep in mind that, from an ideological point of view, the indians consider work the activities linked to gardening and harvesting of Brazil nuts, and as simple activities hunting, fishing and gathering.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

The traditional education is given through conviviality and participating observation. The adults orientate, correct and sometimes teach in a more systematic way, chants, choreographies and ritual sequences to groups of young boys and girls. The pedagogical importance of repetition and participation in the various events is stressed. An individual who shows a special inclination for a specific activity will be taught in a more systematic way by an acknowledged specialist in that area. The girls learn body-painting at home with an adult kin. The myths are told by the elderly, under the form of tales, dramas or political speeches. Punishment exists, or rather some kind of pressure can be exercised by kin or by the community to avoid deviant behaviours, through ridicule or slight ostracism. A good work or a behaviour considered adequate is publicly praised and admired. The education follows steps corresponding, more or less, to the ages and to the sexual division of activities.

According to personal abilities some individuals are specialists of activities such as shamanism or handicraft. Accepting a given function means the acknowledgement of one's ability. The future shaman has to undergo a serious illness, dream a lot and be taught by

an older shaman. The singers inherit their functions through their name-givers. Those who are gifted for handicraft-work seek the company of senior craftsmen to learn.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

There is a definite organization of space among the Kayapo. It is within this space (delimited by the central plaza, the circle of houses and the surrounding savannah) that the familiar and collective lives articulate themselves, basis for the constitution of the society and of the social being.

THE VILLAGE

The Kayapo villages consist of a circle of houses set around a central plaza. This spacial division is very important on a symbolic level for it is a tangible reference to other divisions of the social structure such as : periphery/center, men/women, private/public, domestic life/ ritual life. Traditionally the side of the house facing the plaza is open, the three other sides closed by straw-walls, with a door at the back. Inside the house the space is continuous, but each nuclear family occupies a sector delimited by a spacial

distance of one or two meters, with their own mats and fire. Each family possesses a "catre", or raised platform, where the couple and their young children sleep. Each family has its own belongings. Baskets and gourds hang from the house's wooden pillars or are put on top of platforms built at a certain height from the ground. Small objects are kept in the straw of the walls. Thirty or more can live under the same roof. The present trend among the Kayapo is to build the households with mud-covered walls and to rise internal divisions between the families, although maintaining a communitarian area. The stone-ovens where most of the food is baked are set at the back of the house.

THE DOMESTIC GROUP AND THE EXTENDED FAMILY

The basic institution is the domestic group living under the same roof. It is the home of an extended family related through the women, the residence thus being uxori-local. A Kayapo woman comes to life, lives and dies in the same house. The houses, like the gardens, belong to the women. After marriage, a man comes to live in his wife's house, the birth of their first child brings stability to their union. The women of a same household participate in many activities

together, such as gardening, the processing of manioc, the gathering of fruits in the forest, they also go to the river together to fetch wood. They take care of the children of other women of the household. This last activity generally being the responsibility of girls. The women spend most of their time at home. The men, on the contrary, do their share of the work outside from the house, in the men's house, where they also meet to talk. The women usually talk in front of the village's chief's house, whose wife is also the women's chief.

AGE-SETS

A fundamental institution of the Kayapo society is its division into socially-determined age-sets.

Children of both sexes are called meprire and live in their respective households. Around four to five years old they receive, in a public ceremony, their ceremonial names. When they reach ten years old the boys are taken to the men's house - under the responsibility of an adult man - where they live (and especially sleep) until their marriage, when they start to live in their wife's households. From his introduction into the men's house until puberty the young boy is called me-ôkre, he lives with his companions of the same age and is

submitted to various initiation ordeals. When he reaches puberty he receives a penis-sheath and is called me-mudje-nu, and later, when initiated, manõrõnu. A man, traditionally could remain in this category until twenty or twenty-five years old. After the birth of his first child the man becomes a mekrare (Kra: child). This moment is very important for him and is celebrated by a ritual symbolizing (through a continuous to and fro movement between his house and the council's house in the center of the plaza, and an elaborate body-painting) the change which has just occurred, both on the level of the domestic group (the constitution of a new nuclear family) and on that of the political and collective institution, the men's council, where the young father now enters into the category of adult men. It is in this category that he is initiated to the art of the oratory and of the ceremonial tales. He will come to use the big tembeta, a lower lip-plug often dyed with urucu and adorned with a feather and bead pendant. When he grows old he is called mabangêt ; The elders are the ones who make the formal speeches and lead the rituals; they are excellent craftsmen, story-tellers or healers.

The women go through the same categories, but in a simplified way, for they are more safely and steadily related to the domestic

institution. Before they have their first child they are kuñerê, after mekrare, emphasizing their social status of procreatresses.

The age-sets are more easily observed on certain occasions. It is the case during trekking expeditions when each category dedicates itself to specific activities, or during certain rituals or sports competitions. Among the Xikrin of the Cateté for instance they divide themselves into moieties (young versus married) who take part in various political, economical and ceremonial activities.

MEN AND WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

Men and women's societies sometimes superpose themselves to age-sets, forming differentiated groups, especially in bigger villages where various chiefs are present, each with his group of followers. The women integrate the society corresponding to that of their husbands. The men's societies very often turn into very powerful political factions which can lead to violent fissions. Sometimes they disappear and new alliances are defined.

THE MEN'S HOUSE

Among the Xikrin of the Cateté, until 1985, stood the open-sky noqbe, in the village's center. It was the place of the political

council, and further away from the circle of houses stood the Atukbe, the warriors' house. The Atukbe is used in the evening and early morning as a meeting place for the men. During the day it is used as a communitarian space where the handicrafts are made. At night it is used as a dormitory for the young. It is a space reserved to ~~the~~ men, although not strictly prohibited to women.

KINSHIP RELATIONS

The Kayao kinship is bilateral and its genealogical calculation lacks in profundity. Due to the continuous fissions the Kayapo have kinsmen in various villages but there is no rule of village exogamy, on the contrary most of the weddings take place among people of the same village. Theoretically one cannot marry a close relative nor someone belonging to the same residential segment. Added to real kinship, the Kayapo possess a certain number of acquired kin, links established through adoption, mutual agreements and friendship. Every individual knows his ties with the other village members through the kinship terminology. This terminology is of the Omaha type. The nuclear families of an extended family or of a residential segment, including affinal relatives, constitute units of mutual support in

the daily life and in case of illness.

A man who comes to live in the house of his wife's parents after his wedding, feels like a stranger for some time. As a consequence a man always visits his mother and his sister's house with whom he keeps strong affective and ceremonial links. Generally, the relations between sisters-in-law are calm and friendly and they visit each other frequently. On the contrary, the relations are almost always tense between brothers-in-law for the young man has to leave his mother's house knowing that an outsider - his sister's husband - will come to live in his place.

NAMING PRACTICES

Important kinship and ceremonial relationships are those established between ngēt (paternal and maternal grand-fathers, mother's brother) and tabdjuo (grand-son and sister's son), or between Kwatui (paternal and maternal grand-mothers, father's sister) and tabdjuo (grand-daughter and brother's daughter). Ngēt and Kwatui transmit their names and ceremonial privileges to their tabdjuo.

privileges consisting in the right of making and using special adornments, or of playing certain roles in the various ceremonies. This

institution is one of the most important in the social reproduction of the Kayapo. It is through this naming practice that the private and public spheres, the biological and ceremonial relations are articulated. The name is also intimately linked to the person, as if it were his soul, even if it also defines the social and public status of the individual.

RELATIONS OF FORMAL FRIENDSHIP

This relationship is a patrilineal inheritance and is found between people of the same or opposite sexes, without kinship ties, and with whom exists a relation of respect and avoidance. Formal friends, Krobdjuo, play an important role during certain ceremonies, when they assist their partners, especially during passage rites.

CEREMONIAL LIFE

When the community is composed of a sufficient number of people, human resources, the cycle of rituals is continuous. For these ritual activities the Kayapo program trekking expeditions to gather the necessary raw-materials and the additional food ritually offered to the whole village.

The most important rituals are (1) the male naming ceremonies (Bep, Tokok) and female naming ceremonies (Bekwe, Ire, Nhiok, Payn, Koko) and (2) the male initiation ceremonies. These two rituals are sometimes inserted into other rituals (3) such as the ceremony of the new corn or the mārêrêmei - "beautiful ceremony" - which takes place over the transition period between the dry and the rainy seasons ; (4) the feasts including new members to a ceremonial society, such as that of the armadillo - Apieti - ; (5) the ceremony of the new corn ; (6) the wedding ritual or feast of the straw mats ; (7) mortuary rituals and the (8) ritualized fishing with timbo. There are also the more recently introduced rituals such as the Kworo-Kango, or the feast of the manioc, of Juruna origins. The rituals are always accompanied by chants and dances. These artistic demonstrations were never before the subject of an in-depth study on the part of specialists. This compact disk being, in that respect a pioneering experience.

Men and women prepare their feasts together or separately. The boys are constantly submitted to a large variety of initiation tests : a fight against a wasps' nest, representing an enemy village, races and scarifications of the legs to become more agile ; duels with

heavy swords, Aben-tak, or competitive games ; stays in the forest and obligation to eat jaguar meat are some examples of these tests. Over certain periods, the ritual cycle reaches its climax and the ceremonies take place several days in a row, with great intensity and style: The Kayapo are highly performant.

All these rituals are divided into phases taking place either in the village or in the forest and even on the river bank. The ritual and economical activities are very closely linked.

WAR

There is a valorization of strength, toughness, resistance and aggressivity in the formation of Kayapo men. Throughout their initiation period, the young boys are submitted to strength tests which prepare them to that effect.

In the past, war played an important part in the process of male initiation : taking part of a war expedition contributed to the formation of the young seeking for adult's status. The victorious, who had killed an enemy, would receive a specific tatoo mark. During the war expeditions the men used a white club covered with straw until the moment of the fight. When possible the enemy

was killed without blood shed and the club was left to the side of the body. After killing an enemy the warrior would respect a long period of restrictions. If the enemy was always killed, the women and children were abducted and taken to the village where they would have to live. Some managed to escape and find their way back. Sometimes they were kidnapped again by a third group.

The implantation of Kayapo villages within SPI or FUNAI posts after the "pacifications" meant the end of the war period. Although the conflict with the whites, for territorial reasons, in its most critical moments often took the form of an authentic war for the Kayapo.

COSMOLOGY

The Kayapo consider themselves as part of a circular world and universe and see the process of life and of universe as cyclical: the cycles of ecological and structural time define and accompany life and human activities. The center of the world is represented by the center of the village's patio where ritual and public life in general take place. The symbol of the world's center is the gourd rattle, musical instrument, round-shaped in form of a head. The

indians dance to its music, following a circular course which accompanies the solar trajectory. Dancing, the indians say they go ~~back~~ to the time of the mystic origins and thus recreate the energy necessary to their subsistence, the continuous reproduction of life and the various social institutions to assure the balance essential to communitarian life. Paradoxically the rituals are considered powerful, and sometimes even dangerous if factionalism is very present in the village. The execution of certain games such as tug-of-war or the blunt-headed arrow fight can lead to violent fights and consequently to the village's fission.

Allegorically the pattern of the dance represents the water of the river and its origins, the source, the spring. As a matter of fact we already know that the Kayapo call themselves "those from the water-hole". Water also contributes to the psychological and physical development of the individual. The bath is an important activity for the Kayapo who go bathing in the river two to four times a day.

MYTH

The myths tell the origins and the foundation of the Kayapo

society, the origins of its institutions, and its historic - the group's legendary performances. The feats of cultural heroes, the complex articulation between the human and the animal worlds, the radical inversions, the dogmas and deviant behaviours form a vision of the world which allowed the Kayapo to enrich their experience, create a totally original way of life and assert their own identity. Follow parts of some Kayapo-Xikrin myths told by chief Bemoti and collected by Lux Vidal (in Folk Literature of the Gê Indians - Johannes Wilbert and Karin Simoneau, University of California, 1984).

THE RESCUING OF THE RITUALS BY THE COMMUNITY

OF THE XIKRIN OF THE CATETE

Before starting the description of the Takak-Nhiok ritual it is necessary to contextualize it, for it seems that some important facts led the Xikrin group to renew with the initiation and the naming cycles which had been abandoned for over twenty years.

Among these reasons is the valorization of the Kayapo culture by this nation's own groups when faced to the Brazilian society. In 1987-1988 the Kayapo were very active during the elaboration of the Brazilian Constitution. At the end of 1988 the Kayapo met in Belém and in the Gorotire village and decided to organize a massive meeting in Altamira at the end of February 1989. During this meeting they discussed the problems raised by the construction of the hydroelectric complex of the Xingú and the Kayapo took advantage of the occasion to realize the corn ritual (Baũ Kadju mâtóro) revealing the relation between rituals and historical events.

A second reason for this revival can be seen in the demographic factor. A group of approximately 400 individuals (they only were 100 in 1964) can perform these rituals through (1) the formation

of the various ceremonial societies, necessary condition for the realization of the ritual ; (2) the public transmission of the inherited prerogatives and of the names ; and (3) the community's supply of food on part of a kin group of both initiands and name-receivers. Just as an illustration, twenty boys were initiated in August 1988 during the Mēkutop ritual (and passed from the Mēbengodju age-set to the Mēnōrōnure age-set) ; during the Nhiok ritual of September 1988, fifteen girls received their names.

During the rituals, the individuals acknowledge the kinship relation, the relations of formal friendship - heirloom of every individual - that is to say aspects of the social organization and reproduction. When dealing with naming, Vidal says "it is the moment which allows the children to learn all the significance of Bam (father) and Nā (mother) categories, but also of the Ngēt and Kwatui, grand-parents, uncles and aunts, who transmit the names and prerogatives : individuals who care enough to help them pass from the mē-kakrit category (common people) to the category of the ceremonial name-holders, mē mei. It is mainly during the rituals that the individuals get acquainted with their own culture in a systematic and collective way, through myths, chants, choreographies and

and adornments.

When talking about the mārere mei ritual among the Xikrin of the Cateté, Vidal (1977 : 193) notes that "what is most striking during the ritual's progression is the logical order of its sequences, its symbolic coordination but also its integrated aspect... The main aspects are passed on, in a clear, explicit and orderly way, with an almost didactic neatness, showing that the Xikrin are consciously in command of their world".

The male and female naming rituals Tākək-Nhioċ, but also the naming rituals Bep, Bekwei, Koko, Iro and Pāyn are parts of an initiation cycle, which ideally takes place over a five-year period, and is divided into five stages.

The first stage is the Mē-kutop-ā-kangore. The Mē-kutop is a wax helmet into which is stuck a feather adornment. Kangore is one of the numerous men's societies to participate of this phase. This first stage is linked to feather handicrafts. The second stage takes place in the forest and is linked to the tapir hunt, with the initiands' participation, the Kukrut mēnōrōnu: The third stage is called mēnōrōnu ngroa. The ngroa is the buriti trunk which is carried by men, divided into age-sets, to the village center. The fourth

stage is a very elaborate ceremony, the mēnōrōnu ngō-re or ngōre-raixi, which also takes place in the forest and is the occasion for a great fishing with timbo. Finally, the fifth stage is a short ritual which takes place in the village. Only the men take part in it, their faces entirely painted with coal dust, and therefore called mē-kuka-tuk.

The cycle began with the mēkuto with shortly afterwards, in September 1988, the male and female naming Tākak-Nhiok, whose songs are recorded in this compact disk.

THE TĀKAK-NHIOK NAMING RITUALS

a.) The collective hunt

On September 4, 1988, the first men to leave the village for the collective hunt were the members of the Mābagnēt age-set (mature or elderly men) and those of the Mēkranti age-set (mature men with four children or more). The encampment was set on the bank of the Seco river, where the men could fish and provide the daily food supply. The hunting realized on this occasion, which was to be used later as an offering during the ritual, was chunked.

prepared in the stone-oven (Ki) and kept to be taken to the village, together with the land turtles (kaprã) which were found. The hunters were the name receivers' fathers (Bam) while the fathers' brothers (Bam Kaãk) were charged of taking the product of the hunt back to the village.

The fish caught with timbo in the Seco river was used to feed both the men in the forest and the women who stayed in the village. A "messenger" would head to the village every day to bring the fish or fishballs (Iep kupu) the men had prepared, and would return early the following day bringing flour , bananas and papayas.

Very early on September 9, 1988, they all returned to the village. On the way back, a man from the Mãbêgnê (elderly) category, Piudjo, a master in Xikrin music, started singing chants called Mrü Karon Iaren (mrü : hunt, karon : spirit, iaren : speech)

When approaching the village, as they always do on their way back from a collective hunt, the men stopped to prepare themselves. They opened a clearing and covered the ground with buriti leaves.

They made the krã-dje (straw headdress), kã-uru-djo (bracelets), mã-akokako (a thirty centimetre stick put slantwise in the lip-hole), and ikô (fiber slings). They then coated their bodies

with urucu and painted themselves with the nô kai krê design (coal painting put at eye level and on the shoulders). Once ready they resumed their way back to the village. As they got closer they started to shout to announce their arrival.

b) Description of the male naming ritual Tākak

The men begin the male naming ritual as soon as they reach the village, outside from the circle of houses. They form a small closed circle, dance and sing the whole Tākak chant.

They then enter the village and resume their dancing and singing in front of one of the name-receiver's house. Then they go towards the village center repeating this ritual, go back to the name receiver's house, to the village center and then to the house of yet another name-receiver, and so on.

The following diagram will enable us to visualize more clearly the above mentioned displacements.

caption :

men's displacements

numbering :

spots where the men sing and dance

Figura 46.

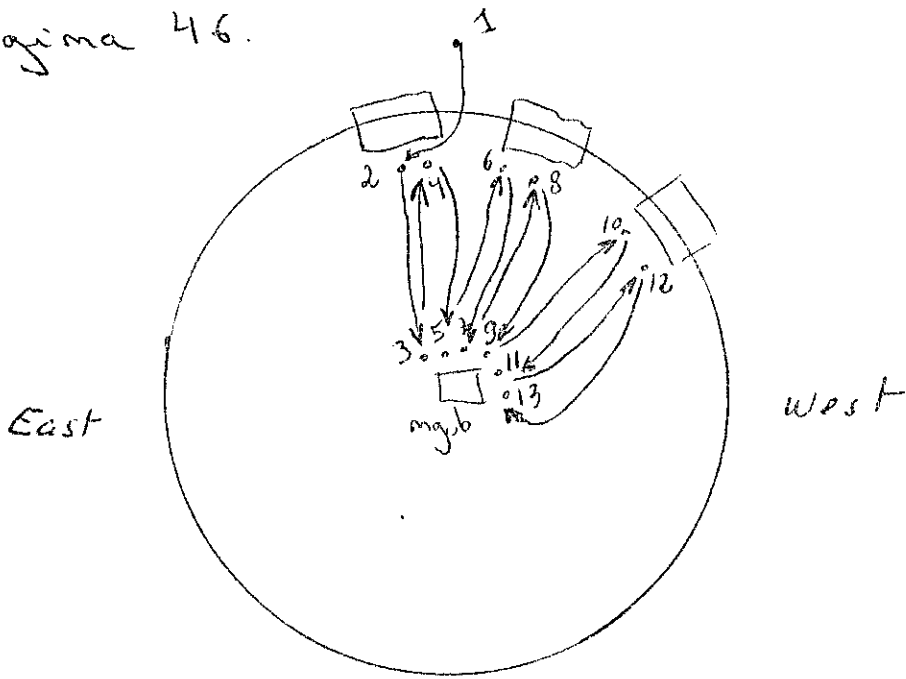
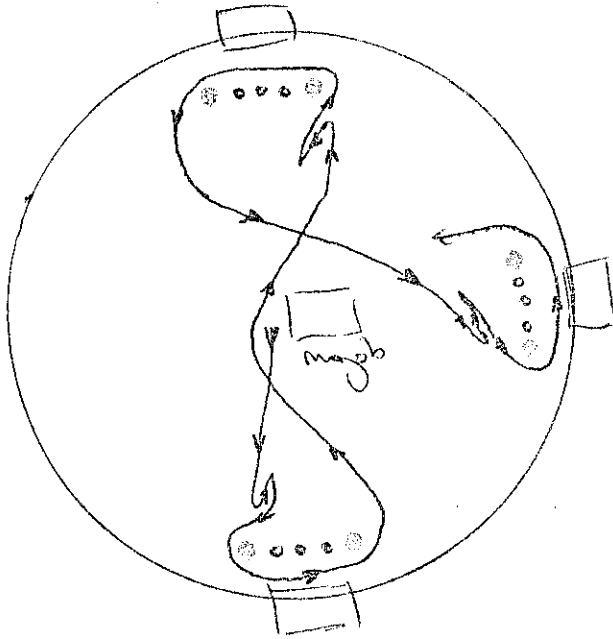


Figura 55



On the second phase of the diagram (in front of the first name-receiver's house), four women whose participation in the ritual was conferred according to their Kwatui kinship category (FZ, FM, MM, ...) enter in the center of the circle and dance (moving their arms to the front and to the back) and accompany the men until the end.

At this point it is necessary to introduce some elements of indigenous exegis linked to the ritual. From now on the naming ceremony Tākak will occur concomitantly with the female naming ceremony Nhiok.

According to chief Bemoti, the Tākak ritual used to be exclusively feminine, and took place in the gardens, unknown of the men. One day, a man passing by saw the women singing and dancing, he ran to the village to inform his companions and they all came to watch. The women then taught them the ritual and they started to realize it in the village. Now-a-days this ritual is considered exclusively masculine but, as we already mentioned, takes place in the presence of its "female owners".

The women were taught the chants and music by the mythological heroes Kukrut-Kako and Kukrut-Uire. The name Tākak comes from the

tapirs (Kukrut) . A shaman heard the tapir call its son lākak and, when back at the village, gave this name to his grand-son.

The mythological hero who created, transformed and introduced social institutions and cultural elements, is also a shaman, which, according to me is possible for in the myths Krukut-Kako actually incorporates various characters, this being the real essence of the shaman. The mythological hero of the "Okti" myth is depicted as a boy who saw, in the garden, his grand-mother seized and taken away by the harpy eagle (Okkaikrikti). The boy then ran towards the village to tell the men what had happened. The men transformed him together with his brother Kukrut-Uire, into a giant able to kill the eagle. After killing the bird of pray, the hero created the big birds out of its larger feathers, and small birds out of its down. Kukrut-Kako stuck a feather in his hair thus creating the Nekreĭ (Xikrin feather artefacts).

The Kukrut-Kako and Kukrut-Uire myths are important for they represent relevant aspects of the creation, transformation and integration of the social institutions, and above all represent the Xikrin ideal of human being (see myths).

Coming back to the ritual, the lyrics of the lākak music are.

in reality, the proper Okti myth, as we shall see.

In fact although the Tākak ritual is very short (compared to the Nhiok naming ritual) and scattered within the Nhiok ritual, it remains extremely important because of its close relation to the mythological heroes. The ritual uses an ancestral hero and puts him in contact with modern society. I am now going to present the transcription and interpretative translation of the Tākak's lyrics, work realized with the help of Barānhopari.

- 1 - Tākak-kōrē Tākak muru rē ia
 " " " " " "
 Ken ne rē kuka kabe io ari be
 Tākakōrē ia muru to dja
- 2 - Onhui mudjuo mana tōtōrē ia
 " " " " "
 Tākakōrē ia muru to dja
- 3 - Onhui mudjuo mana tōtōrē ia
 " " " " "

- Omryru kanlere toi kwari kudjua
mē ba ni pokori kudja
- 4 - Aringrō toi dja kama na mē
Tākakōré iaren ni to dja
kuba ibei ti Tākakōré
kumu imākin ni ti dja
- 5 - Tākakōré Tākak tukutire ia
nhiu dja angoro nidji be
Tākak tukutire mē ba tē
mē ba tē ru to dja
- 6 - Tākakōré Tākak priketire ia
ngōnire nidji be
Tākak priketire mē ba nirān
ne gue dja
- 7 - Tākakōré Tākak djoiadjuruti ré ia
turuti a nidji ba

Tākak djoiadjuriti nē
kumā nhiu na ni krē

INTERPRETATIVE TRANSLATION

- 1 -
Tākak is crying
" " "
a stone hit his head when turning
Tākak is crying
- 2 -
Tākak is sitted with armadillo in the field
when (harpy eagle) seized his grand-mother with force
Tākak is crying
- 3 -
Tākak is sitted with armadillo in the field
when harpy eagle seizes his grand-mother with force
don't move in the center we'll stay
- 4 -
The sun is already hot
Tākak speaks and remains still

scratch with force because we like it

5 - Tākak tukutire stay here
and be the name of the peccary
Tākak tukutire putend stay

6 - Tākak priketi is name of shrimp
Tākak priketi remains standing

7 - Tākak djoiadjuruti is name of banana
Tākak djoiadjuruti with everyone remains sitted and quiet

Another relevent aspect is that Kukrut-Kako taught his own *life-*
story, for, in the Okti myth he is the boy whose grand-mother is
taken away by the harpy eagle, only turning himself into a giant
afterwards.

c) Description of the female naming ritual Nhiook

This ritual, as the Tākak ritual, was never described before
in the Kayapo bibliography. I shall try not to omit any of its

aspects, keeping in mind that the preparations but also the chants aren't aleatory, and that to a certain extent, they operate jointly. On the other hand, at the moment we get in contact with other worlds, when there is a revival of the ceremonial life and a public transmission of the prerogatives and names, it is extremely important that the process be gradual.

On the day preceding the return of the collective hunt, the preparations for the ritual of female naming Nhiok begin. The berarubu (manioc cakes baked in the stone-oven) are prepared by the mothers (Nã) and the mothers' sisters (Nã Kaok) of the female name-receivers. The fathers make the artefacts that will be used during the ceremony, the krokroktire (large feathered head-dress with a row of red macaw feathers and another of harpy eagle feathers) and the Pré (large belt made of cotton beads).

The female name-receivers are painted in their houses by their mothers with the kuõ ku ã õk design, this painting is entirely done with a palm-rib stylet, both on the body and face.

In the afternoon, the men are gathered in the mer's house in the middle of the plaza (Ngob), and start singing the three first verses of the Nhiok chant, and after repeating it for a long time.

go out towards the female name-receivers' house, dancing and singing.

The female name-receivers aren't present but remain in their houses. After this first men's dance, they go out and stay in front of their respective houses, they stretch their arms and put their hands behind their necks, posture called Nhiok em̃n krâ nhōti, and remain in this position. At this point they only wear their body-painting. At the side of each girl stands her name-giver (kwatui) and her formal friend (kropjuo). Some of the men wear the rigid diadem (kruspu), armbands (Padjê), and the shell necklace (Ngõb-onkre-dje) and hold a long stick with a red macaw feather to its extremity (Putê).

The dance realized by the men is called Nhui-torô (humming-bird's dance): It is composed of two rows of men formed by the Ikie (friends of the same age-set), who dance together, gathered according to their age-sets. In front, to the side of the row, stand the men of the Mebegnêt age-set (mature or elderly men), at the beginning of the row stand the Mâkranti (mature men with more than four children), then come the Mâkranu (mature men with one, two or three children) and last the Mânörõnu (initiated boys

and boys who sleep in the men's house).

These men get out of the Ngob towards the house of each female name-receiver. When they arrive in front of the Nhiok, they step back and fro twice, movement called katē-omu (step back to see). Afterwards they go around the Nhiok in a movement called Nhiok-kupu (to envelop the Nhiok).

For a better understanding I made a diagram of this dance.

caption : → men's displacements

◊ : the female name-receivers

● : the female name-givers

⊗ : the female formal friends

According to the Xikrin of the Cateté's tradition, this dance is that of the hummingbirds, the reason why we can identify this bird's behaviour. The Katē-omu movement (katē : backwards, omu : see) reminds the hummingbirds when they stop in their flight, move backwards and forward again, being the only bird capable of such movement. The Nhiok girls also look like hummingbirds when, after their bath, they remain in the sun , with their open wings. This

shall be observed in the song's lyrics.

The ceremonial chief Bemoti divided the chant of the Nhiok ritual into seven parts.

- 1- Nhuiti ngrere, large hummingbird's chant
- 2- Mĩn ngrere, crocodile's chant
- 3- Nhuigrere ngrere, small hummingbird's chant
- 4- Ngoi ngrere, vulture's chant
- 5- Irārādja ngrere, mat's chant
- 6- Rob ngrere, jaguar's chant
- 7- Okkaikrikiti ngrere, harpy eagle's chant

In this first stage of the ritual only the first three verses of the chant were sung and they are the following .

TRANSCRIPTION

- 1 -
A nhuinhuire a na kruoi
nhiok nhoikōrē pari be
ngō tō djua eae eae eae gu ga
- 2 -
Gōra mē mrān
boi ne mĩn kōkōtire ngō atō

māna nhiok kōré kumān
ibō ne eae eae eae gu ga

3 -

Amīn angrō tutchi kamā
na ba kanā koto a bīn
nhui-mu nhiokōré pumu ketere
kumā ibō ne dja eae eae eae gu ga

INTERPRETATIVE TRANSLATION

1 -

Hummingbird and parrot
Nhiok is standing
Hummingbird is bathing

2 -

Let's all walk and arrive
Where the kokotire crocodile lies on the water
side warming up
Nhiok goes bathing with her head bent

3 -

The feathers are drying in the sun

I am going to wait and then kill (crocodile)

Male hummingbird cannot see

Nhiok bathing bent

I asked the indians about the hummingbirds in this ritual and their answer was that "hummingbirds are the jaguar's remedy". Actually, in the Xikrin healing system, its feathers are burnt and mixed to a plant (unidentified) and called Rob-kane (Rob : jaguar, kane : illness). This preparation, used as an ointment over the ^whole body, serves as a prevention and as a remedy against jaguars. This is very important for on the next stage of the ritual jaguar men are going to appear.

After the dance we just described, the men go back to the ngob. there is a pause and, in the afternoon, the chants and dances start anew. Some new elements appear over this period, such as the jaguar men's society (Robkrore). I already set forth the necessity and possibility of formation of these ceremonial societies. So far only the armadillo society was present (Apieti). During the Mēkutop which took place in August 1988, the fish society (Tep) played its part, composed of fifteen men representing four different types of

fishes : Amod (white piranha), Amod kuka kamrik (red piranha), Tep-tuk-ti (piranha) and Tep-kruā tu (bicuda). During the Nhiok ritual appears and acts the jaguar's society, composed of six individuals of the kinship category ngēt (MB, MF, FF, ...). They represent three types of jaguars, the Robkrore (jaguar), the Robmō (cougar) and the Robtuk (panther).

In the Xikrin village, only one living indian, chief Boatié, owns this ceremonial prerogative, confirmed in a ritual. The other indians who belonged to the jaguar's society are already dead, but these prerogatives were passed on to their tabjuo and confirmed during this ritual. The men from this society are called Rob-mu.

The chief Boatié transmitted the Robkrore (jaguar) ceremonial prerogative to his grand-son (tabjuo). The boy was painted with the Mē kuka tuk design on his forehead and was carried by his grand father during the ritual, but is not yet considered a Robkrore for he is very young and still a Robkra (jaguar's son).

While the jaguar men get ready in the ngob, some women with the Mēkukatuk painting (coal painting on the forehead) appear ; they are the Robnā or Robni (mother jaguar or women jaguar) who stand in front of the Robmu during the Nhui-tōro; They are the

formal friends of the jaguar men.

The village's oldest woman who possesses the "beautiful name" Nhiok also wears the Mêkuka-tuk painting.

The body-painting of the jaguar men (katiek-ôk) is realized by them in the ngob. This painting is made of coal and represents, both for the Robkrore and Robmô, the spots of the jaguar, on the body and face. As for the Robtuk, the spots are represented on the body and the face is all black.

While these preparations take place, the men are sitted and sing the next three verses of the Nhiok chant which is translated as follows.

TRANSCRIPTION

4 - Dja ne ga mē rob mā ôkô pumu
nhoi rônru kurékré ia pumu rob pô puma
 tiré ôkô pry m̄re tē boi ne boi

5 - Irārādja ne kré ia rumu rob pô puma
 tiré ôkô pry mā re tē boi ne boi dja
 eae eae eae gu ga

6 - Dja na ga mē amĩn amimaprin ba
rôrô kamã kruoire nhoini ia tô
gue katoba ikatieterere eae eae eae gu ga

INTERPRETATIVE TRANSLATION

4 - All of you stay here for the jaguar to see the feathered
headdress in the nest of vulture
for us to see for we are afraid of the jaguar
All with feathered headdresses along the path will arrive and
stay

5 - Open a space on the straw mat
for we are afraid of the jaguar
All with feathered headdresses along the path will arrive and stay

6 - All stay here and I will slowly adorn myself
with parrot down
and then will burn the parrot down
go out and be painted as a jaguar

Everything is achieved at the music's pace, slowly.

The men leave the ngob again towards the female name-receivers' houses. The Nhui-tôro dancing goes on, but now the Robni dance in front of the Robmu and the Nhiok are no longer alone in front of their houses, but are accompanied by their name-givers (Kwatui) and of their formal friends (Krobdjuo). The Nhiok use at that moment their specific artefacts, the Pré (belts) and the Kadjot-ia-^budja (cotton slings with three red macaw feathers put on the shoulder). The Pré are different for each Nhiok. The Pré, the Kadjot-ia-^budja and the diadem of white heron feathers (Kamri) and black macaw feathers (Mădkătukti) are bestowed together with the name.

During the rituals, one doesn't only visualize the artefacts which are the property or heirloom of each individual but also the specific artefacts of each name-set, of the initiands, of the men's societies, of the age-sets and sexual categories.

The jaguar men are now wearing their body-paintings and, as the other men, each with his specific artefacts, appearing little by little, gradually enrich the ritual.

On the following morning, very early, the men gather in the ngob where they make two bee-wax helmets (Măkutop) onto which the rigid diadems Panikoti will be put. This artefact will be used by

the Robkrore. They are the only ones who use the Mēkatop for they represent the jaguars, considered of highest prestige and, in reality, the shaman's auxiliaries.

The Ak patkó (eagle's tarsus) is made by one of the name-receivers' father and represents a harpy eagle's tarsus. This artefact is made out of buriti straw and bast and the eagle's claws ~~patka~~ Okhakkrikli will be used at the end of the ritual to claw symbolically the Nhiok.

Simultaneously, we note that the boys about to receive their names are being prepared by their fathers and are taken to the ngob where they stay. These children use five bracelets (í-í), psitacideos down on their bodies (Kruio nhoiti), king-vulture down on their heads (Kreamin) as well as their specific artefacts (Ku-krodjo). Their faces are painted with urucu and the shaven part of their heads are painted with a mixture of coal and tree resin (Arob), keeping away evil spirits (Mēkaron) ; they also use the shell necklace (Ngõb onkre dje) and the cotton sling.

Around one in the afternoon the Tākak-okiere, food offerings, begin (bananas, sweet potatoes, and land turtles), given by the mothers and mothers' sisters of the Tākak name-receivers. The brothers

of the name-receivers' fathers are the ones who leave the ngob to fetch the food offerings. The food is then offered to all the men and is the final point of the Tâkak ritual.

Immediately afterwards a man from the Mēbegnât group, Piudjo, talked about the female naming ritual Nhiok, and also about the rituals which would follow, called Krua djo aben muru (arrows' ritual) and Angrô mētôro (sun ritual). This speech lasted for an hour. The climax of the Nhiok ritual would take place just after this "native exegesis", at three in the afternoon.

While all the men and female name-receivers are being adorned, the men start singing the Nhiok, Irārādja and Rob chants.

All the men are adorned with their respective Kukrodjo (property, heirloom) and Nekreï (riches). In this ritual the Kruapu (headband of bamboo and japu's tail feathers) are only used by their owners.

The Robkrore (jaguar men) show their Mēkutop, called in the case of the indian Bebdjare, Mēkutop Krê Nô Pudji (bee-wax helmet with one eye), and in the case of the indian Roiri, Mēkutop Krê Nô Ame (bee-wax helmet with two eyes).

The two representatives of the Robkrore wear on their faces

the same painting composed of the Ngré ko (mask of egg-shell dust of the tinamous bird) and Nó kre Ipok (coal painting). Their bodies are covered with budgerigar and macaw down (Kruoi nhoi).

The transformation or, to a certain extent, the socialization of the jaguar, is an interesting point to observe. In an early stage, as described above, the jaguars only showed the body-painting imitating the animal (spots on the body). Now they display feather artefacts, their bodies and heads are covered with down, giving the impression of being birds and consequently Kayapo.

At a certain point of the ritual there is, in reality, a metamorphosis of the jaguar into a harpy eagle, as we shall see later on. This metamorphosis is linked to the shaman's cycle of initiation, who first goes into the forest exhibiting the Mêkutop (wax helmet onto which a feathered headdress is embedded) representing the jaguar, seen in a second moment as a bird.

The Nhiok name-receivers display the artefacts already described, to which their fathers add the krokroktire (large feathered headdresses made of parrots' wing feathers), and the Peyoti amu (small feathered headdresses made of japus' tail feathers). Their bodies are also covered with down, such as vulture down on their

heads.

When all are ready, the hummingbird's dance begins in the eastern part of the village. When the dance is over, two groups are formed in the village center. One called Mē kramti (men representing the community), and the other one formed by the jaguar men's society and by the name-givers and formal friends of the female name-receivers, people with distinct ceremonial status.

A Robkrore (jaguar), whose muffled tread imitates that of the animal, leaves towards one of the female name-receiver's house in order to fetch the Nhiokdjokiere (food offering). In that case the food is composed of land turtles, manioc and meat cakes (mrü kupu).

When the female name-receiver's father offers this food he says "kumren kabei" (my Nhiok daughter, you claw well). The jaguar goes back with the offering and shows it to the community, he then gives it to the panther who in turn puts it on the ground, in front of the group formed by the society of jaguar men and the female name-receivers and their formal friends. This is repeated with every female name-receiver.

At sun-set, the men and the female name-receivers form a cir-

cle in the western part of the village; The Nhiok with their backs to the sun.

This stage of the ritual is called Nhiok kabei (Nhiok :to claw). The men start singing the harpy eagle's chant (Okkaikrikhti), alternating with the Robkrore scream (Koro ba) and the symbolic clawing of the female name-receivers. This phase lasts until dawn.

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE OKKAIKRIKTI CHANT

Okkaikrikhti patkó pó tam be nhiokó kabei
iatché apru tē aeece...
iatché kumu nhui itóróry itóróry

TRANSLATION OF THE HARPY EAGLE'S CHANT

With the claws of the harpy eagle will claw the Nhiok
breathe and come through the path
breathe and keep seeing hummingbird's feathers be born

The Koro ba (harpy eagle's scream) is a shrill and prolonged whistle "wi-uu", onomatopoeia of the vocalization emitted by the harpy eagle during the mating period and lasting until the be-

bies are ready to fly.

The dance of the jaguar men (already transformed into eagles at this stage) recalls the return of this bird to its nest. It flies in a circle, going up to the nest only when reaching the right tree.

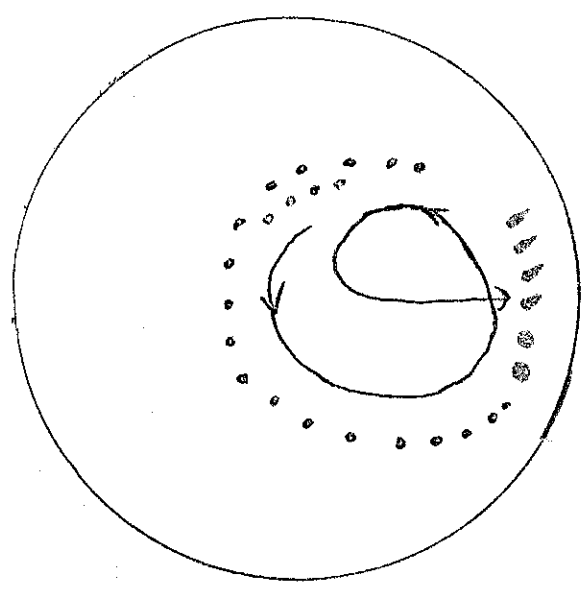
caption→: jaguar men's moves

- : female name-receivers
- : jaguar men
- : men singers

At dawn, tired, the indians say "Arup ket" (it's finished).

The end of the ritual is marked by the Mökukatuk body-painting, used by the fathers of both male and female name-receivers. This body-painting represents the end of the Kra rere mei ritual (Kra : offspring, Rere : transpose, Mei :beautiful).

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BODY-PAINTING AND GRAPHIC ART

For the Kayapo the body constitutes an ideal support for ~~the~~ non-verbal, ~~speech~~ ~~but is~~ graphical ~~word~~ ^{which} and tells about the society and the natural world. The body is the canvas, the white paper receiving the writing called body-painting. Body-painting among the Kayapo constitutes a graphic whole, rich but delimited, entirely codified and formally structured, essentially produced by the women, individually or in groups, under the care of a female chief.

In this respect the Kayapo women and their highly stylized art confirm what many theoreticians had already established, i.e. the body "is the initial technical object, and the most natural to men", (Mauss 1968) and also that body adornment can reveal important aspects related to the notion of person, and can be the concrete expression of fundamental cultural values. Later on, Lévi-Strauss, analyzing facial and corporal paintings, reproduced on paper by Kadiweu women, tried, in a brilliant essay (1955) to reconstitute the context into which such paintings would be used, discovering the social structure of that society and especially its style. In the light of this analysis, instead of considering

body-painting as a cultural trait abstracted from its context, we shall examine it as a symbol, with a variety of referentials, that is to say as a system. Mary Douglas showed the existence of a strong link between the way people lead with the body and the social structure (1966). According to Terence Turner (1980) on this general level of significance, body-painting constitutes a "social skin" superposed to the naked, biological skin of the individual. This author also shows how this second skin, constituted of standard references, expresses symbolically the "socialization" of the human body : the subordination of physical aspects of individual existence to behaviour and common social values.

In a recent publication A. Seeger (1987) transposes these functions to music. Among the Suyá indians of the Upper Xingú, the body can be seen as a musical instrument and society as an orchestra where the vocal recreation reproduces the social relationships. Furthermore, music, its origins coming from the animal world, transcends merely human attributes, for its vocation is also spiritual and cosmological, reaffirming the reciprocal agreements existing between the animal world of nature, and the world of men in society. Among the Kayapo, who ^{beside their names} also integrated nature in their paintings,

chants and rituals, ~~more than names~~, the body adornments and especially the body-paintings express the comprehension these indians have of their cosmology and social structure, of the biological ^{manifestations} ~~expressions and of the relations to nature~~, or even better, ^{of} the subjacent principles of these different fields. But above all, it reveals to each individual the manifold facets of his own self as related to other selves, in time and space.

The Kayapo consider body-painting as an attribute of the very human nature. In the myth of the woman star, cultural heroin responsible for the origin of the cultivated plants, the metamorphosis of the star into a human being accomplishes itself through painting and corporal adorning. The new born also, after the fall of the umbilical cord, is immediately painted with genipap, acknowledgement of his status of human being.

The designs, however, show a great variety of references, taking the form of abstract patterns of : fishes, birds, tapirs, deers, jaguars, plants, snakes, chelonians, butterflies, refering to another level of cosmological correspondances, of which the Kayapo consider themselves members. On the body, the painting's function is essentially social and magico-religious, but it is also

the acknowledged aesthetic - mei - and correct - kumren - way of presenting oneself. Thus demonstrating the link between the ethic and the aesthetic. We yet ought to underline the importance of body-painting as an activity as such, a process of production and reproduction of social relationships. And also as a means of integration, control and socialization of the individual.

At least among the Kayapo Xikrin, body-painting is an exclusively feminine task and is transformed into a genuine habit, as any other activity, such as gardening, cooking and caring of the children. All women paint, consequently the quality of painter is considered an inherent attribute of feminine nature.

In order to receive body-painting with designs and decorative patterns the individual has to be healthy and clean-skinned. The body is divided into various areas which receive the painting in a different mode.

Facial painting, made with a palm-rib stylet, comes before the body-painting and requires special care. The head, generally speaking, is the most decorated part of the body, and the part towards which converge the highest amount of symbols and meanings. On the body, most of the time, stripes of genipap paint are applied

with the hand and then scratched with a special comb.

From a formal point of view, the pattern as a whole is composed of a base-design (several parallel stripes) accompanied or not by a highly stylized decorative motif, linked to some aspect of the environment, flora, fauna, or object of the daily life.

Small children from both sexes receive the same body-painting. Painting the baby is a way for the mother to show her interest and tenderness, but is also part of the socialization process of the child. Kayapo mothers spend hours painting their children, the child's body is the laboratory, the canvas onto which the young mother can practice. It is using again and again her child's body that the woman rehearses, learns and becomes a qualified painter. The painting of the children is an individual activity for the mother who has total freedom of choice for the pattern.

Adult painting is different from that of the children for various reasons. In the case of adults, the designs are less numerous and obey to more rigid standards. The moments and occasions for painting follow rules which are linked to other spheres of social organization and public life. Women paint the men, young initiands (their children) and their husbands. They also might paint

a widower brother or father.

On the face they apply with their fingers a thicker layer of urucu, some patterns being used according to sex and age. The feet and the lower part of the legs are also painted red. Most of the time the hair is shaven in the typical Kayapo fashion, on the forehead, the rest is combed and anointed with babaçu oil.

The children, after each application of genipap paint, are heavily adorned with red urucu hear-plugs, necklaces of beads and pieces of shells, cotton shoulder slings also dyed red, and white harpy eagle down put on the hair. On the forehead, where the hair has been shaved, black striped designs of coal dust mixed with strong-smelling resin are applied to keep evil spirits away. Individuals participating of passage rites are literally transformed into birds using large feathered diadems. On other occasions still, they wear large masks of palm-tree leaves and bast, transforming themselves into monkeys, ants, ant-eaters and aruanã fishes.

KAYAPO FEATHERWORK

The two most expressive forms of Kayapo artistic production are body-painting, an exclusively female activity, and the fashioning of feather adornments, an entirely masculine task. Body-painting is a daily activity which is done in the household, women's territory, while feather adornments are linked to ritual life and executed in the men's house, an exclusively masculine space. Kayapo featherwork is highly diversified. The feathers are used in the making of armbands, wristlets, shoulder slings, dorsal adornments and arrows, not to mention the various headdresses and diadems. Down is also used on blowing-horns, gourd-rattles and on the body. The white king-vulture down glued on the hair is a typical adornment of these groups. It's interesting to observe that the same adornment varies in size and shape from one Kayapo group to another, enabling the identification of the various subgroups through their featherwork artefacts. This also shows that in spite of a common artistic background, each group has evolved towards personal aesthetic orientations or how the creativity of an anonymous craftsman led to new artistic expressions.

During the hunts and the daily expeditions through the forest the men look out for birds whose feathers, after properly selected and separated, are tied on fiber threads and then stored in the potik-pu, a bamboo case the men always carry with them. When fashioning any adornment the craftsman always has at his disposal a great variety of raw-material, each type of feather being appropriate to the specific artefact to be fashioned.

The feathers are essentially worn during the great male naming and initiation rituals, during the wedding ceremonies and for the adornment of the dead during the funerary rites. In general, feather adornments are linked to the ceremonial life as opposed to everyday life when body-painting is the body's only adornment.

Some adornments, such as the great krokrokti feathered headdress have a profound symbolic signification. Among the Kayapo Xikrin of the Cateté river for instance, it can represent an eye, the feathers being the eyelashes, or else it may represent, in a different context, the sun, the feathers then symbolizing the rays.

But, more than anything else, the diadem symbolizes the circular shape of the village where the blue feathers, in the middle, represent the plaza, the masculine place and above all the ritual,

while the row of red feathers, on the periphery, symbolizes the domestic world of the women, the house, and where the white down tied to the tips of the feathers represents the surrounding forest, thus closing the world of this little Xikrin group which during millenniums lived, adapted and reproduced itself in the heart of the Amazonian forest, creating its own means of artistic expression, always similar although always renewed.

Texto: Lux Boelitz Vidal
 Descrição do Ritual Takak-hhiok :
 Isabelle Vidal Giannini.

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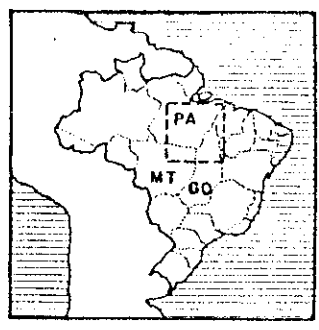
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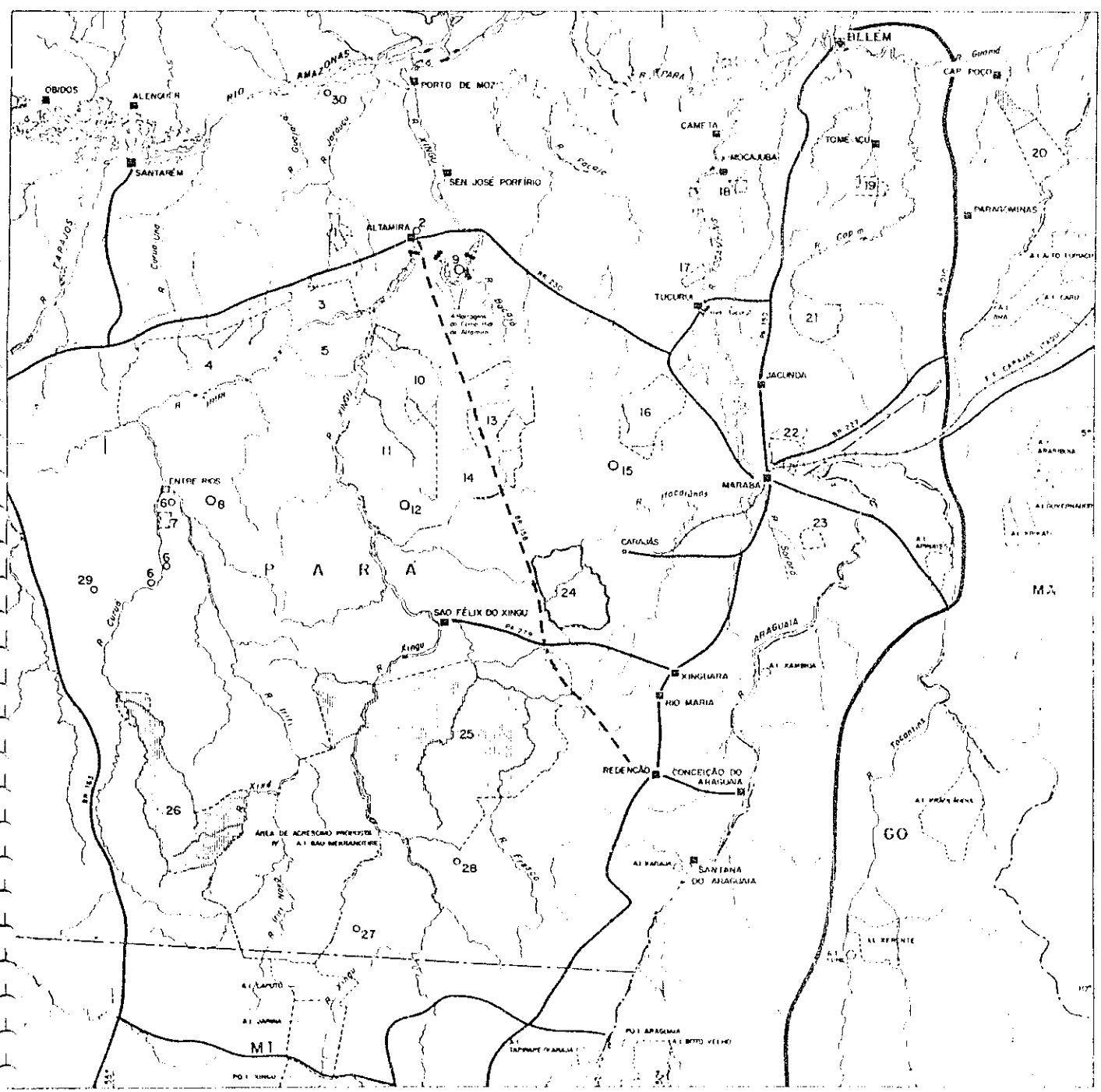


ESCALA GRÁFICA
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1986

POVOS INDÍGENAS NO BRASIL
- CEDI -

SUDESTE DO PARÁ



1. The Descent from the Sky

Up there in the sky an Indian dug an armadillo hole in the ground.
The armadillo fell through the hole.

Looking through it the Indian saw this earth, with many buriti palms.
It was our land, the savanna.

All the Indians tied themselves together with a red and black cotton
belt.¹⁴

They tied it to a tree and descended.

Having reached the earth they cut the belt, and the wind carried it
away.

No one remained up there.¹⁵

Informant: Bemoti

¹⁴Mê-prê: the informant explained that this is a belt like the ones they use during the Nhiok naming festival.

¹⁵Another informant said that a certain number of Indians were afraid of descending, and so remained up in the sky.

2. The Jaguar's Fire

An Indian boy left with his brother-in-law to catch macaws. They went, and placed a staff against the rocks to reach the macaw's nest on top. Then the boy climbed up. He did not grab the macaw, for he was afraid; instead he took stones and threw them down. The brother-in-law was hurt, and he removed the staff and went away, leaving the boy up there.

He had to eat his own excrement and drink his own urine, for there was nothing up there on the rocks.

The jaguar went out to hunt peccaries. On his way back he saw the shadow of the boy on the ground, and as he looked up he saw him. He replaced the staff for the latter to climb down. On his way down the Indian took a young macaw and threw it down for the jaguar to eat. Then the jaguar carried him to his house on his back.

When they arrived the jaguar's wife was spinning cotton. The jaguar said: "I brought a boy." He gave him a lot to eat, for the boy was thin after spending such a long time on the rocks. The Indian called the female jaguar mother and the male father.

The jaguar said to his wife: "Whenever he's hungry, take some meat and give him."

The boy grew hungry but she did not give him anything. Then he grabbed some meat and ran out. He was afraid of her. When the jaguar came home the boy told him, and the jaguar made some arrows for him, saying: "If she does it again, kill her." Once more she began to tease him, refusing him meat. The boy killed her.

He made a basket to carry *berarubu* in, and his father, the jaguar, showed him the way to the village. He carried the meat there.

In one day he was there. He told them what had happened to him and said that there was fire there. Everybody went.

Taking a big burning jatoba they carried it home on their shoulders, all together. And to this day the jaguar remains without fire. He eats raw food, as we eat cooked.

Informant: Bemoti

27. The Star from the Sky

It was night, and the young men⁵⁷ were sleeping in the men's house. One of them did not have a wife. He lay there, looking up at the sky.

He looked at the beautiful star⁵⁸ and thought: "I want a pretty wife; I wonder if she'll marry me?" He fell asleep. The star came down to the earth and took the young man by the hand.

"Who's that?"

"It's I. I came from up there. Did you not call me?"

She lay down on the ground with him. She was very beautiful.

When the day dawned she went back up.

The next day she descended again.

Early in the morning he gave her something to eat, and then he hid her in a large gourd so that no one would see her.

The Indians went out on a collective expedition and were walking through the forest. The young man gave the gourd to one of his sisters to carry. She wanted to open it to see what was inside, for she found it very heavy. He said: "Don't open it."

⁵⁷*Mênôrônu*: age class of young men who have been initiated.

⁵⁸Identified as Venus. The navigators of the Araguaia and those who travel across the country guide themselves by this star.

"I want to see what it is."

"Don't open it."

"Yes, open it, for it's very heavy. That's no good."

The sister opened it. Immediately *Nhiokbôkti*,⁵⁹ who was looking up, bent her head in shame. The sister tapped her on the head but she would not look.

The mother said: "Don't carry the gourd, let her stay as a sister-in-law and a daughter-in-law (*djuoy*). I'll paint your wife so she'll look pretty."

In the camp they put palm fronds on the ground and built a hut, also of palm leaves. Inside they cut *Nhiokbôkti*'s hair and painted her with *genipapo*. They decorated her with vulture feathers,⁶⁰ resin,⁶¹ cotton string,⁶² a belt,⁶³ a black shoulder belt,⁶⁴ armlets,⁶⁵ a polished stone necklace,⁶⁶ and *urucu*.

The next day they went out once more on an expedition. Before leaving, the men who were going to hunt were sitting together in the men's meeting place outside the camp, waiting for the women to pass. When *Nhiokbôkti* appeared, followed by her mother-in-law, the men all began to stare, saying: "Who is that attractive woman? Who is that beautiful woman?" They all wanted to marry her and kept saying: "I'll marry her." "I!" "I!" "I!" Her husband heard, and he was looking. Inside, speaking to himself, he was saying: "No, I!"

Then *Nhiokbôkti* said to her husband: "I am going up there where your parents-in-law are. I shall fetch something there, and then return. Stay right here and don't move."

With the help of a flexible stick her husband catapulted her up into the sky.

In the afternoon he went to bathe, and when he returned to the place she was already on her way back. She arrived with three baskets, one on each side and one on her back. She brought everything to be planted: shoots of bananas, squash, yams, potatoes, manioc. She gave them everything, many things to plant, and she taught her husband how to prepare a field, saying: "My father and my relatives do like this." Then the Indians planted, and now they have a lot of potatoes. "What we really like is potatoes."

⁵⁹*Nhiokbôkti*: the name of the star and of the heroine who brought cultivated plants to the tribe.

⁶⁰*Kreanim*: vulture feathers.

⁶¹*Rob*: resin.

⁶²*Kain*: cotton string, tied below the knee.

⁶³*Pré*: belt.

⁶⁴*Arapê-tuk*: black shoulder belt made of cotton thread.

⁶⁵*Pudjé*: armlets.

⁶⁶*Ngob*: necklace of small disks of polished stone. All are ornaments used by a young woman after the wedding ceremony on the mat (*inê-kamro*).

informant: Bemoti.

481 The Origin of Corn

The men had gone hunting, and the women had gone to the forest to gather food.³⁰ An old woman was alone in the village with her grandson.

She went to the river to wash the boy who was very dirty. Up above a macaw was cutting off ears of corn. The corn fell to the ground and the opossum³¹ ate it.

The opossum went up to the old woman but she pushed it away with an abrupt gesture. The opossum came back, saying: "Look, old woman, look, grandmother, I've got good food."

"Where?"

³⁰Among the Shikrin this myth is separate from the myth about the origin of cultivated plants, which it follows.

³¹Ngua, opossum. It has two black streaks on both sides of the nose, and lives at the edge of water.

"Here in the corn tree. The macaw dropped it; it's good."

The old woman left her grandson sitting there. She gathered the corn kernels and put them in a gourd which she carried back to the village and covered. Then she made flat cakes. When her daughter came she said: "Now, my daughter, there is some good food; the opossum said so. Tomorrow we'll paint ourselves with genipapo and put white vulture feathers and resin³² on our heads, and then we'll grind the corn." In the afternoon the men were in the men's house, in the center of the plaza. The old woman gave a piece of flat cake to the children, saying: "If the old men ask you for some, give them." Thus the little ones went to instruct the group of old men in the men's house.

The latter were saying: "*I-tabdjuo*, come here and give me some, I'd like to try it." One old man said: "It's good, it's sweet: what is the cake made of? It's good."

When it was finished the children ran to the old woman's house to get more.

An old man talked to the new chief, *ngó-kon-bóri-mu*, asking him to summon the old woman to speak in the men's house. The chief called her: "Look, old woman, come here and tell us what this good food is."

The old woman came to the men's house where she spoke loudly.³³ All were listening, the men in the men's house and the women in the village. All were listening when she said: "It was the opossum that taught me."

Everybody asked: "Where? Where?"

"It's what we used to throw away when we were bathing."

Seizing their baskets the women ran to the river. They carried everything to the village and then they ran back to the river. The little girls picked up all the kernels, leaving the ground completely clean. In the village everybody ground the corn and made flat cakes.

My grandmother said: "For a long time there was no food; we ate nothing but meat dried in the sun and rotten wood." But then an Indian brought the jaguar's fire.

The men went to cut down the corn tree. It was as big as the village, and its kernels were falling into the water and on the edge of the river. It was a large corn tree (*bórirai*). An old man said to two boys (*mébokti*): "Go and fetch an ax, boys, a stone ax." On the way they saw the opossum running to hide in a hole in a coconut palm. They killed it, roasted it, and ate it. Immediately they turned into old men. Their ear orna-

³²*Kreamu*: white vulture feathers; *roh*: resin.

³³Like a man who speaks formally in the council

ments³⁴ became old and completely black, and their leg bands³⁵ became old and loose fitting. They were walking along slowly.

One old man said: "Let's go quickly with the ax."

They replied: "We cannot, we're old."

They reached the corn tree. The boys were old men, and the corn was falling.

All the Indians carried the corn into the forest, and today they all have corn: Gorotire, Carajá, Arara, Suruí, Shavante, Gavião, Assurini.

"Didn't the Gorotire tell you this?"

The Christians only brought hard corn.

The Indians eat corn paste.

³⁴*Urekuko*: cigar-shaped wooden ear ornaments.

³⁵Cotton string tied around the legs below the knee.

80. The Origin of the Names Bekwe and Bep

The sororal nephew of the shaman burned himself in the fire.

He burned his foot.

The nephew cried a lot.

The shaman went there and asked: "Why is my nephew crying?"

In his sister's house there was a large stone hearth.

The shaman said to his sister: "Open the hearth; I want to lie down on it."

The sister opened the hearth.

The shaman said: "I'll lie down on one side, and then on the other side."

Burning, he ran to the river and jumped into the water.

Another brother said: "He didn't die. The water is deep; he remained with the fish."

The shaman was gone for a long time, three winters and three summers.

Then he returned.

The shaman who had burned himself was coming.

He arrived.

His sister was weeping because the shaman was coming.

His hair was long, with many fish in it.

The shaman went to dance in the plaza all by himself.

The others did not know this dance.

He had learned it among the fish.

The shaman went to his sister's house and said: "My sister's child shall be called Bekwe-bô, and if it's a boy, Be-tuk-ti."^{10*}

Informant: Bemoti

^{10*}Another version of the myth specifies that when the shaman came to the bottom of the river the fish were singing a Bekwe naming ceremony (*mêrêrêmê*), and the *piabanha*, the *cará*, and the *bicuda* were being named. There are many Bekwe names among the fish.

With a *buriti* bud the shaman made a decoration for his head (*tôrônti*, the ornament of the Bekwe girls during the naming ceremony), and many fish were caught in it. When he returned he went to the village plaza, singing, and leaving the name Bekwe in several houses successively, as it is still done today. Then he went to paint himself, and the naming ceremony began. Those are the only two names that he brought back from the bottom of the river.

175. Kukrut-kako, Kukrut-uíre, and the Deer

A deer was eating souari nuts.

The *ngétwa*²² of Kukrut-kako and Kukrut-uíre wanted to kill the deer, but as he was running after the animal he tripped over a stone and fell.

Kukrut-kako and Kukrut-uíre came to the village and asked their *tuyuwa*²³ "Why is our *ngétwa* lying down?"

The woman said: "Your *ngétwa* was in the forest; he saw a deer eating souari nuts and wanted to kill it. The deer began to run, and when your *ngétwa* ran after it he hit his knee against a rock."

Kukrut-kako asked: "Where was this? Let's go and have a look."

The two brothers went off with their *ngétwa*, who took them to the souari tree.

After showing them the tracks he returned to the village.

Kukrut-kako and Kukrut-uíre ran after the deer.

They found a deer that was lying down, but that was not their *ngétwa*'s deer.

The latter animal was running.

The two brothers met another deer but it was not the one they wanted.

They went on running.

Kukrut-kako grabbed Kukrut-uíre's hand, saying: "Wait, the deer is very far away."

The deer ran on. It climbed a mountain and ran down into a valley, and then it ascended another mountain. When it reached the bottom of the valley it climbed up yet another mountain, with Kukrut-kako and Kukrut-uíre in pursuit.

The brothers were gigantic and they soon reached it.

²²*Ngétwa*: mother's brother, mother's father, father's father.

²³*Tuyuwa*: here, the wife of the *ngétwa*.

They succeeded in seizing the deer and tried to stun it by hitting it on the head, Kukrut-kako on one side and Kukrut-uíre on the other. The deer was exhausted.

Kukrut-kako carried the deer on his back, and on the way home to the village they sang the song of the deer: "More, more, more . . . !"

That is the name for a white deer out in the bush.

When they arrived in the village they went to the house of their *ngétwa*.

They placed the deer in front of him, head first, and he killed the animal with the pestle.

Cutting open the deer they removed the stomach and the entrails in order to make meat pies with the rest.

Informant: Bemoti

The Origin of the Christians: The Story of Wag-mē-kaprā

Long ago there were no Christians, only Indians; everybody was Indian. Wag-mē-kaprā quarreled with his wife. She told the other Indians to kill him. They did, and then he came back to life. He arrived at the new camp in the afternoon. Again the wife ordered him killed. They killed him once more and went away. He revived again. The Indians kept moving their camp, and Wag-mē-kaprā kept following. When he arrived once again his wife screamed. Then he said: "I'm not coming for you but for my yellow macaw and my dog. I want my things so I can leave for good." His wife gave him his belongings.

When his son had grown up and become a man he went into the forest with his *compadre* (*krobdjuo*). The latter shot a macaw that was sitting in a tree, and the arrow remained stuck high in the tree. Climbing up to fetch it he saw a plantation from above, and he descended and went to have a look. He saw Wag-mē-kaprā's field; it had rice, squash, beans, and corn. In his house there were salt, pots, kerosene, cans of gasoline for outboard motors, everything. The *compadre* only looked through the window but he saw everything. He went back to the forest. "My *compadre*, the man who's in the plantation cutting away the brush isn't an Indian, he's a Christian. He's got clothes. Your father is a white man now."

The son went over to the field and approached his father, saying: "Father, father." The other did not listen but went on hoeing. Again the son said: "Father," taking the man's arm. He looked at his son: "I'm not your father." The son wept: "I'm grown up, I'm no longer little." His father asked: "There's another Indian; did you come alone?" "No, my *compadre* came, too." "You may call him."

The father took them to his house, a large house like this one (the mission). When they arrived he sat down a while, for he was tired. He gave them something to eat, and afterward he went to get some *ango* beads. The son did not get much, and he wanted more: "More, more!" he said. And his father gave him more. The *compadre* did not get many beads: "More, more, more!" he said. And he got more. There were knives as well; he got several and wanted more: "More!" Again he got some. Then he said: "That's fine, I've gotten many."

The father said: "Take a rifle, my son." The son replied: "I want only a bow and arrows." He did not want the rifle, for he did not know what it was. Then he went away. When he was far away he heard a rifle shot. They were listening: *Boom, boom!* They ran, both of them, and afterward they were thinking that they would have liked to go back and take the rifle but they did not. They reached the village.

In the evening they told the women: "Wag-mē-kaprā has many beads and axes and knives." The next morning all the women went over there, including the man's wife. In the house everybody took things, beads, axes, knives, and then they went home. Others were waiting for him to give them. Wag-mē-kaprā was busy clearing his field. His wife called him so that he would give her things. He came, cleaning his knife and asking: "Who is my wife?" Cleaning his knife and talking he came up to the woman, and he said: "Where's your husband?" He seized her by the hair and killed her with his knife. Frightened, all the women ran into the forest. Wag-mē-kaprā said: "Don't run, I only wanted to kill my wife. I'm not going to kill everybody." He caught the women, and closed and locked the door: "Stay here."

During the night they all went away in a boat. In the morning the Indians wanted to go and kill Wag-mē-kaprā but there was no one in the house. The men ran along the edge of the river, but they grew tired and did not see anything. The boat was fast and traveled on the river, whereas the Indians were traveling on land. They returned to the village without having found their wives. Wag-mē-kaprā took many women with him. Now there are many whites, in Conceição do Araguaia, in Belém, in Rio, in Brasília (as you know; I haven't seen them). The women had many children, and today there are many whites.