

## 1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Great Andamanese Negritos, Aka-Jeru, in the Northern Andamanese language family.
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): AKJ
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 12.5000° N, 92.7500° E
- 1.4 Brief history: Characteristically known to have very black skin. They live in SE Asia and are facing extinction.
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: British colonization wiped out 99% of their population.
- 1.6 Ecology: Very low populations in Southeast Asia.
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, and density: Before British colonization it was normal for local groups to contain 20-50 men, women, and unmarried children. An average tribe has 10 local groups. And the density was 0.72 person/km<sup>2</sup> – However, there are now only 43 Great Andamanese left, and they are facing extinction.

## 2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Rice and Wheat
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Fish, dugong, and turtle eggs.
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: A bow and arrows for the boys.
- 2.4 Food storage: Once dried or cooked, the Negritos hang their meat from the top of their huts, so the dogs and earth can't get to it.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men went out and hunted while women gathered vegetables, fish, and anything edible in the reefs/beaches.
- 2.6 Land tenure: Any member of the local group could notify the others that a tree within the group's territory was to be reserved for him because he wished to make a canoe out of its trunk; such claims were respected by the others for years if the owner did not get round to his project immediately. Some men were also reported to have possession of certain fruit trees from which nobody could take fruit without permission and from which the owner expected his share of the picking.
- 2.7 Ceramics: Indications are that someone showed the Andamanese how to make pottery sometime before 500 BC –they did not take much care of it, took little pride in it, did not try to improve their skills at it, had no legends and stories on it and attached no religious significance to it. But the Great Andamanese did decorate their ceramics.
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: The lucky owner of any food was expected to share with those who had little or nothing. While a married man could keep the best parts of his catch for himself and his family, bachelors were expected to distribute most of theirs to the older people.
- 2.9 Food taboos: Mussels, collected by women were so low on the ranking of food animals that their very mention was enough to bring up thoughts of famine and hunger. The Great Andamanese only touched them when there really was nothing else to eat. Also, not eating meat is a taboo; the Great Andamanese frown upon Muslims because they do not.
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? A canoe was made in cooperation by several men under the direction of the owner who would later be obliged in return to help his helpers make their own canoes.

## 3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): *M*- 149 cm (4'-10.5"), *W*- 137 cm (4'-6").
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): *M*- 43.4 kg. (95.5 lbs.), *W*- 39.5 kg. (87.0 lbs.)

## 4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): 11-13 years old.
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): male- 32, female- 21.8
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): unsure
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): unsure
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): male- 25.86 years old, female- 16.12 years old.
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce is rare and is considered immoral after the birth of a child.
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygamous, percent males married polygamous: Monogamy is a strict rule.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: A man's patrilineal relatives take gifts and demand a daughter from a man's matrilineal group.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Men and women inherit rights and obligations primarily from their matrilineal lineage. Tools and canoes may be inherited from the father's side.
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions: Children were much loved, pampered and spoiled by all
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Homosexual activity is reported only between aboriginals and outsiders. Nothing is known of homosexual behavior among traditional Great Andamanese groups, just as we know almost nothing about sexual practices among them following 1858.
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): People were free to leave their own group to take up residence with another and this seems to have been a common occurrence. Newly-weds could take up residence wherever they wished: at the local group of the bride or the bridegroom or with any other local group that would accept them.
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? To then be the baby's father. If adoption plays a role, then paternity is partible and the prior parents are not recognized. The new adoption parents then immediately view, and claim the adoptive child as their own (and truthfully so, by their standards).
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") Mother's role in procreation would be the baby's belly for it to grow. Once pregnant, the mother stops going by her name and starts being called "Baby's Belly."

- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? It is unknown whether or how the Great Andamanese make the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: An ambiguous report on an attempted rape of a boy serving as a waiter by a male convict in 1882
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): They may marry whoever they prefer; no specific category.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? The sexual life of traditional Andamanese is fairly but not totally restricted.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Because monogamy was so enforced, there is no evidence of extramarital partners or gift-giving to extramarital offspring.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? This is unclear in my findings –however, because of the Great Andamanese’ openness to adoption, the father would more than likely give up the child for adoption or to be taken care of by the women in the tribe.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: 1:1; equal number of total male and female.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvade: No evidence
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): Age gap between Great Andamanese couples is 15 years.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No avoidance between offspring and parent, and the children show an equal amount of respect to their parents as they do to elders.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? Yes, they enjoyed laughing at dirty jokes and freely discussed sexual subjects.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: They inherit rights and obligations primarily from their matrilineal lineage. But tools and canoes may be inherited from the father’s side.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: when parents gave away their own child for adoption, while adopting a child from yet a third couple, then the new adoptive child could marry within their adoptive family.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? The marriage ceremony is simple. As soon as the chief of a tribe gets to know that a young couple interested in each others would like to get married, the bride-to-be is taken to a newly built hut. She sits while the groom runs away into a jungle. After some seeming struggle and feigned hesitation he is persuaded to come back and made to sit in the bride’s lap and that’s it –they are now married.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? A Great Andaman gets their first name while in the womb, they get their second name at birth, their third name either during puberty or once becoming a man, and then once a women is pregnancy goes by “Baby X’s belly.” After pregnancy they may revert to their old name of choice or a nickname.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Marriage usually occurs within the community, but not mandatory nor frowned upon.
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages are not arranged in this culture, the couple expresses interest first and then the elders must approve.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Yes, however an older man or woman who has lost a spouse receives priority for marriage.

### **Warfare/homicide**

- 4.15 Out-group vs. in-group cause of violent death: In-group: famine or sickness. Out-group: disrespect, unloyalty.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: In-group: none. Out-group: being a stranger on their territory.
- 4.17 Relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Neighboring groups from the Great Andamanese and Jarawa populations were at war. And all groups killed, tortured, and mangled the bodies of any shipwrecked sailors who landed on their shores.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? No indication of cannibalism.

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: 20-50 people
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): depending on the season, lived either at the coast or in the forest.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Chiefs existed but had no power to enforce their will on anyone; they were only men of influence. A chief reached his position through strength of character; heredity played no role whatever. A headman had to rely exclusively on respect and reputation to keep his followers in line and loyal. The final decision was taken by general consent among the older members of the group. It was the headman alone, however, who directed the movements of hunting parties and who made all decisions that had to be taken quickly on the spot. He was also in charge of the meetings and festivities.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: post marital residence patterns were flexible.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (Defined boundaries, active defense): They were very defensive of their territory, and all groups of people who landed on their shores were immediately killed, tortured, and mangled.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (Age and sex): After boys reach puberty, they are able to move into the bachelors hut.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Some special friendships are undeniably made because during child labor, the woman’s closer female friends assist her.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: The Great Andamanese had communal round huts that consisted of many individual huts built together in a circle.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures: Akar-Bale huts, one with a front protection against sun and rain were known to be used during the dry season. Also the Great Andamanese boys move into a bachelors hut after reaching puberty.

- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? They slept on the dry sandy ground. Only when the ground is wet did the Great Andamanese construct low platforms to sleep on.
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: There are 10 tribes in the Great Andaman islands.
- 5.12 Trade: A system of gift giving took the place of trade. All moveable goods, including canoes and even the skulls of ancestors, could be given away. No one was free to refuse a gift offered, and it would also have been bad manners to refuse someone an article that had been requested. However, for every gift received something of roughly equal usefulness or value had to be given in return.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? No indications of social hierarchies. Elders are respected most, although all people are listened to.

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: Not horribly frequent, just during milestones in peoples lives'
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): There were medicine men credited with powers and influence over the spirits that produced and cured disease. Their powers were thought capable of crippling and even killing people.
- 6.2 Stimulants: The Great Andamanese are ignorant of the process of making intoxicants.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Young women on their first menstruation received a flower name in a – for Andamanese elaborate – ceremony. The name was determined by a tree or bush in flower at the time of the ceremony.
- 6.4 Other rituals: Close associates or kin who have not seen each other for a long time weep and caress each other at first reunions and have a tearful greeting ceremony. Also, when boys received a ceremonial name, they went through the turtle eating ceremony.
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): The world, according to a myth collected by Mr. Man from the Aka-Beas, was created by Puluga, the Creator-of-All in E.H. Man's reading of the Andamanese myths. However, Radcliffe-Brown later collected other myths in the northern parts in which Puluga appeared only as one of several major spirits.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): soundboard for music, as well as singing, dancing, but no figurative art.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Only women could perform the scarifications on people.
- 6.8 Missionary effect: None overly apparent.
- 6.9 RCR revival: No revival.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Believed that after death their bones gave protection against evil spirits and disease.
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No taboo.
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? Yes, once pregnant and the baby is given it's first name, the mother and father are referred to as, "Baby X's belly" and "Baby X's father."
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) They believe in different classes of spirit living above the sky, below the earth, and in the sea. Also, they believed that the sun was the wife of the moon and that the stars were their children. Concepts of a superior spirit or high god, heaven and hell, virtue and sin, are absent among them.

## **7. Adornment**

- 7.1 Body paint: both men and women did a lot of body painting with clay, iron oxide, and ochre.
- 7.2 Piercings: No.
- 7.3 Haircut: Men and women alike cut their hair and shaved their heads every few weeks because it was another way for decorating oneself that was used by both males and females. Haircutting and partial shaving of the head was originally done with splinters of quartz or with shards of glass.
- 7.4 Scarification: Yes, scarifying was done purely for beautification and "to make the children stronger". Every boy and every girl had to undergo scarification; the first cut was made at an early age and new cuts were added at intervals over the years until the child had grown up. Only women did the scarifying work and it was they who decided what design the scars were to follow.
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): The Great Andamanese wore narrow belts or girdles of hibiscus fiber, short string-skirts, ancestral skulls, and strung-together human bones.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: There was certain painting patterns put on the Great Andamanese men after undergoing the turtle-eating initiation ceremony.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: The women traditionally left only two narrow parallel bars from forehead to neck. The men left a circular patch on top of the head, not more than 8 inches in diameter, while shaving everything around the central patch.
- 7.8 Missionary effect: extinction.
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: None.

## **8. Kinship systems**

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: general honorifics were used e.g. "Oka's Father"
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: Levirate marriage is acceptable; however, widows are free to marry who they so please.
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No other notable kinship typology, other than the unique and fairly common adoption system.

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