

1. Description

1.1) Name: Panará (alternate names: Kreen-Akarore, Krenhakore, Krenakore, Índios Gigantes). Language: Panará. Language family: Je. (1,2)

1.2) kre (1)

1.3) (-9.371, -54.183) (3)

1.4) In 1967, Cláudio Villas Bôas was on a reconnaissance mission to locate the “giant Indians” in order to pacify them before contact was made with the whites in the Peixoto de Azevedo River area. On February 4, 1973, more than five years after the initial sighting, the Villas-Bôas brother could finally approach the aloof Panará. However, before this historical contact, the Panará came in sporadic contact with the white highway workers and their diseases as they built the Cuiabá-Santarém road right through Panará land. In two years, the group was almost decimated due to deaths from flu and diarrhea. The Brazilian Air Force airlifted the survivors from the Peixoto de Azevedo River area to the Xingu Indigenous Park, 250 km westward. Within two years, the Panará were essentially decimated, de-structured, and evicted from their native land. Twenty years later, the Panará returned. They flew back to the Peixoto de Azevedo River. From the sky, they spotted a pristine chunk of their land, still covered with forests, and preserved from prospectors, squatters, loggers and cattle. They moved back, set up camp and built a new village. They filed suits in court, and convinced the National Foundation for the Indian to support their cause. Finally, they got their land back. (2)

1.5) Aluminum pans, salt, matches, kerosene and sometimes even sugar are found in their lodges. Changes in feeding habits and contact with microorganisms and bacteria have promoted tooth decay. Women wear dresses and men wear shorts. All have knives, axes and machetes, and a few have rifles or shotguns. Adult women no longer wear the traditional cropped haircut, with two parallel lines running atop their heads. It has been replaced by long hair with fringes, in the Suyá female style. Body painting, feather artistry and music have also assimilated elements from the Xingu culture, mainly from the Kayapó, the Panará’s nearest neighbors. Nearly all understand some Portuguese. (2)

1.6) Forests with low-flow rivers (2)

1.7) Population: 437. Home range size: 495,365 hectares. (2,3)

2. Economy

2.1) Maize, potatoes, yam, several banana species, manioc, squash and peanuts (2,4)

2.2) Fish, tapir, monkeys of several kinds, paca (a rodent), jacu, mutum and other hen-like fowl (2)

2.3) Bow and arrows, war clubs, knives, axes, machetes, rifles, shotguns (2)

2.5) Women harvest cassava or other produce, men hunt and fish. The men’s traditional role is with contact with those outside the Panará community, which traditionally happened by way of war. The influence of elder women, by turn, is effective in any decision that affects the village as a whole. (2)

2.6) The circular design of the field, with certain plants along the periphery, and its lines, sometimes crossed, of banana trees or maize crisscrossing the center of the field, is a partial reproduction of the village space. (2)

2.8) The exchange of food is done both on a daily basis and as part of their ceremonial life

(4) The growth of maize and peanuts are time frameworks for piercing rites of ears and

men's lower lips and the etching of thighs, which, in turn, determine the exchange cycle among the clans. (2)

2.10) Canoes (5)

3. Anthropometry

3.1) Average height: 5 feet 7 inches (1.67 m) (2)

4. Life history, mating, marriage

4.6) Marriages are commonly dissolved and people remarry four or five times over. (2)

4.7) Mostly monogamous (2)

4.8) The sons-in-law must work for their in-laws tilling the fields for their wives and their wives' families, hunting and fishing to feed their lodges and their mothers' lodges and show respect, by way of a formal attitude of deference vis-à-vis the elders' age group. (2)

4.12) Wives are sought from the clan that lives across from you, not from the clan to the left or right. (4)

4.25) Matrilineal (2)

4.27) By residing at the Men's Lodge, the relations between the boys and their families are severed. From this point in the cycle, they begin to create their own family by incorporating themselves into the lodges of their wives who will bear their children. Marriage is consolidated upon the birth of children. (2)

4.28) Names are given based on the house where the mother was born, where in the village circle the father was married and so forth. Men convey Panará names. The father names the sons and the father's sister, or some female kin to the father, names the daughters. Men give their own names to their sons, or the names of their brothers or other kin. Everybody has at least two names, and a few have a baker's dozen. Everybody carries the name of some ancestor, and their mythical ancestors named the Panará, as well as the animals, the birds and the fishes. (2)

4.29) Wives are sought from the clan that lives across from you, not from the clan to the left or right. (4)

4.30) Following a few years of residence at the Men's Lodge, the boys commence more serious relations with girls and gradually incorporate themselves into the lodges of their future wives. (2)

Warfare/homicide

4.15) According to chieftain Akè Panará, "The elders told us that, long ago, the whites killed many Panará with their rifles. They came to our villages and killed many. 'If they ever come here,' they said, 'kill them dead with your war clubs, for they are vicious.'" (2)

4.16) Since serious illness or death except by accidental causes or violence was in traditional terms explained as Panará witchcraft, many Panará were executed as witches as a result of the epidemics. (5)

4.17) Today, the Kayapó travel through Nesapoti, the Panará village, on their way to town, and often stop for long visits. The Panará also continue to interact with Xingu Indians on shopping trips to Guarantã. Other places where they have contact with other indigenous groups include Cuiabá and Colider. (4)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1) Only one village (2)

5.3) The names of the clans suggest spatial mapping of growth and maturation. The clans are called: *kwakyati pe*, *kwasôti pe*, *kukre nô pe* and *kwôsi pe*, all alluding to the processes of maturation. *Kwa* means "buriti palm tree"; *kyati* means "root" or "the place where the trunk plunges into the ground"; *sôti* means "leaf", "point" or "end"; *kukre* means "lodge"; and *kwôsi* means "rib." East, where the sun rises, is *kwakyati pe*; West, where the sun sets, is *kwasôti pe*. In other words, East is the root or the beginning, and West is the leaf or the end. The two polarized clans inscribe within the spatial organization of the village the sign of time, following the trajectory of the sun from sunrise to sunset. They map this spatial representation from the root's growth process until the leaf's development. (2)

5.4) Uxorilocal (2)

5.5) Today, the Kayapó travel through Nesapoti, the Panará village, on their way to town, and often stop for long visits. (4)

5.6) These are the basic relations that organize events in village life. Traditionally, boys live with their parents in the mother's lodge until the age of 12 or 13. Upon reaching this age, they then sleep at the Men's Lodge, as dictated by their ceremonial half. Following a few years of residence at the Men's Lodge, the boys commence more serious relations with girls and gradually incorporate themselves into the lodges of their future wives. By residing at the Men's Lodge, the relations between the boys and their families are severed. From this point in the cycle, they begin to create their own family by incorporating themselves into the lodges of their wives who will bear their children. (2)

5.8) The Panará live in a large round village, with lodges positioned along the periphery of the circle. In the center is the Men's Lodge. The village's circle comprises the sites of the four existing clans and all lodges belong to these clans. The Panará cardinal points indicate the sites of the clans in the village circle, guided by the sun's trajectory. (2)

5.9) Men's lodge (2)

5.11) Women do not simply belonging to the clans; they effectively are the masters of the lodges where they live with their husbands, their daughters and their daughters' husbands and children until they, too, will commence their own family life. If a monogamist marriage ends – and it may end several times in adulthood – men leave the lodge. (2)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion

6.3) Puberty feast (2)

6.4) The daily chores of each family core – women harvesting cassava or other produce, men going hunting or fishing – provide content to a transcendental ritual cycle. These complex service requests and provisions among clans mobilize the collective work force. This culminates in the collective preparation of a great quantity of cassava or maize, which in turn is a complement to a successful collective hunt that sometimes lasts weeks. At the conclusion of the ceremony, everybody prepares an immense *paparuto* (a cassava or corn pasta filled with meat, wrapped in banana leaves and baked in a ground oven). It is eaten every day, to be split among the clans and then to be consumed. (2)

6.5) The mythical ancestors, who named the Panará and the world, were "combined" beings – not just animals, but Panará people, too. Piercing rites of ears and men's lower lips (2)

6.6) Log racing (2)

6.7) Log racing is the major public demonstration of male power and energy. Log racing is done at various times during the year, such as during the female puberty feast, or following warring expeditions, or by itself. (2)

6.10) The dead, who lived in the village of the dead beneath the ground, bred many animals that they in turn offered to the living to raise and slaughter. For the Panará, the stars represent the Panará of the past - the small ones being men, and the larger, more brilliant ones, being women. (2)

6.13) The forest, the rivers, the igarapés and the lakes are sources not only of material resources, but the basis of social order. The mythical ancestors, who named the Panará and the world, were "combined" beings – not just animals, but Panará people, too. The dead, who lived in the village of the dead beneath the ground, bred many animals that they in turn offered to the living to raise and slaughter. The living were to use these animals during sacrificial rites designed to keep relations among the clans on good. One interpretation of the scarcity of game in the Xingu is that "the dead give us no more." The relations between the living and the dead and between kinship and friends were in jeopardy because of this scarcity of game. For the Panará, the stars represent the Panará of the past - the small ones being men, and the larger, more brilliant ones, being women. A white man seeking a semblance of religion among the Panará would find nothing. Social life, natural world and cosmological life are integrated into the same order. (2)

7. Adornment

7.1) Body painting, feather artistry and music have also assimilated elements from the Xingu culture, mainly from the Kayapó. (2)

7.2) Lip and ear piercings (2)

7.3) The name Kreen-Akrore comes from the Kayapó name "kran iakarare", meaning "roundlike cuthead", a reference to their traditional hair style which invariably identifies them. (6)

7.4) Thigh etching (2)

7.5) Their body painting, feather decorating, and music have all assimilated aspects of the culture of other groups in the Xingu Park, mainly the Kayapó. (4)

7.7) Adult women no longer wear the traditional cropped haircut, with two parallel lines running atop their heads. It has been replaced by long hair with fringes, in the Suyá female style. (2)

7.9) Body painting, feather artistry and music have also assimilated elements from the Xingu culture, mainly from the Kayapó. (2)

9. Other interesting cultural features

- There is a song entitled "Kreen-Akrore" on Paul McCartney's first solo album.
- Calling them giants, or white Indians or black Indians, was a way of identifying them while removing them from the disturbing state of absolute otherness. There were various reasons for this reputation, which, after contact with the Villas-Boas brothers, proved to be unfounded. Of course there were some who were very tall, but most Panará were more or less the same height as other indigenous groups such as the Kayapó or the Xavante. On the other hand, their enormous bows and war

clubs, which stood 6 feet on end, impressed the whites and led them to suppose that they could be handled only by enormous men. The Kayapó, traditional enemies of the Panará, also spun tales of the giant Indians to increase the value of their own battles against their foe. There was one documented case. Mengrire stood 6 feet 8 inches (2.03 m) tall. He was a Panará Indian who had been abducted from his village while still a child and raised by the Kayapó Metuktire. He was later taken to the Xingu Indigenous Park where he died or was killed in the 1960's at the age of 38. Mengrire, a real giant, was the only such Panará measured and recognized as such by medical doctors and researchers. Besides this sole proof, Orlando Villas-Bôas tells that at the time of contact there were at least eight giants among the Panará. However, they died from white men's diseases. Panará's adults who lived in the Peixoto de Azevedo River area prior to 1973 are absolutely emphatic about the existence of "veerry tall" kinfolk in the past.

Sources

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