

The Camayura Tribe

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

- Kamayurá, Camayura, Camaiura, Kamaiurá, Kamayirá. Part of the Tupi-Guarani family (1, 1)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

- Kay (1, 1).

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- Mato Grosso, Xingú park. The headwaters of the Xingu include five major tributaries which join the Xingu proper at approximately latitude 12 degrees south, thus forming a Triangular drainage basin enclosed roughly between longitudes 52 degrees and 55.5 degrees west, and latitudes between 12 degrees and 14 degrees south. From west to east these tributaries are Rio Von Den Steinen, Rio Ronuro, Rio Batovi, Rio Kuliseu, and Rio Kulven (2, 1)

1.4 Brief history:

- The region was declared a national park by the Brazilian authorities in 1961, intended to prevent further intrusions and spread of deadly epidemics to locals. (2, 11)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- No data found

1.6 Ecology:

- During rainy season the short forest is covered with water. During dry season, trees and plants are able to grow by water obtained from the river. On the flood plains you would find only buriti palms, bushes and grass. (2, 1)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- In 2002 there were an estimated 355 people. Now there are about 544 (2010). Their numbers made a good recovery from an all-time low of 94 people recorded in 1954, the previous reduction in numbers due to a measles epidemic. The total population was 264 when adventurer Karl von den Steinen originally visited the area (2, 11).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- Bitter manioc, sweet potatoes, maize, peanuts (2, 17)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Mostly fishing which is considered a lifetime occupation. Hunting of monkeys and pacas are also done, but only men are permitted to eat their flesh (2, 24)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?

- Bows and arrows are used (2, 30)

2.4 Food storage:

- Due to the climatic conditions, the nature of resources, and the methods of production, there is not much demand for regularized storage of food products (2, 41)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Men are real cultivators of the soil, for they perform the cleaning and the planting of the fields. They also do all the fishing and hunting. Men make the canoes, bows and arrows as well as weave baskets, carve the seats and ground vessels. Men are also responsible for building the houses. Women do all the spinning and weaving and make pottery. The women are responsible for the process of food products and the preparation of the food. They fetch water and take care of the children before they hit puberty. Women are also responsible for all the cotton picking and planting. When it comes to the harvesting of manioc, sweet potatoes, and maize, both sexes are responsible. Both sexes also participate in collecting firewood, paddling while traveling in canoes, processing fish, and making necklaces from beads and shells. (2, 40)

2.6 Land tenure:

- There is no large accumulation of property. There are three types of property among the Camayura which include the village or tribal property consisting of the ceremonial house and the important ceremonial objects, a house group property consisting of the house and the larger objects used by the members in common, and the individual property made and used by the individuals (2, 40)

2.7 Ceramics:

- The Camayura are experts in production of certain articles, such as bows and arrows, hammocks, and ornament. They also participate in basket weaving (2, 41)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- Every married man owns his own hammock, bows and arrows, dishes, and various small gourd and basket containers for his tools and paint. He also possesses a canoe equipped with paddles and poles. Since these are obtained by the man himself, they would be considered his personal property. A married woman also possesses her own personal objects like combs, ornaments, dishes, hammock and tools (2, 41)

2.9 Food taboos:

- Only men are allowed to eat monkey and paca flesh (2, 24). During pregnancy, both husband and wife observe food taboos. They avoid eating large fish without scales and the flesh of turtles and turtle eggs (2, 41).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- The Camayura use the Jatoba bark canoe. The canoe is an indispensable means of transportation and is made for fishing, hunting, raiding, and visiting. Every family owns at least one canoe (2, 32)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): no data found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): no data found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): no data found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): no data found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): no data found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

- The woman waits an average of 3 or 4 years until she is allowed to bear another child. This is due to the fact that a woman breast feeds her child until 3 or 4 years, and is forbidden to be pregnant while breast feeding (2, 61)

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- After puberty (2, 59)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No data found

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- % not found, but most marriages are monogamous, although very few polygynous relationships do exist. Polygynous relationships do not consist of more than two wives (2, 66)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, or dowry?

- There is no evidence of bride purchase. A bride service, where the husband moves into the wife's home as a trial marriage does exist. The husband is being tested to see if he is capable to take care of wife and children (2, 66)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- The Camayura is a patrilocal residence, but there is a **short period of matrilocality after the marriage** during which the husband performs his bride service. In this matrilocality period, the husband performs his bride service. The husband undergoes a trial marriage in which the husband's father-in-law decides if the marriage should continue. The trial marriage goes on until the wife has her first child (2, 42)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- Before puberty, the mother has authority of the children. Mothers often reprimand their children for not carrying out the task allotted to them, or for carelessly injuring smaller children while playing. This is especially true boys who play with the bows and arrows. The mother would slap the children over the head and shoulders as punishment. After puberty, the father has authority of children. If a child would commit any improper conduct, they are subject to punishment (2, 52)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No data found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- The Camayura tribe is mostly consisted of endogamy. If a man is unable to find a kinswoman, he will marry a woman from another friendly tribe, or capture a Suyu woman engaging in exogamy (2, 45)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

- No evidence found.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): No evidence found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

- Conception may not be believed as an incremental process, but the Camayura recognize that sexual intercourse and the introduction of male semen into a womb is necessary to bring about pregnancy. They refer to semen as a seed that when planted in a woman grows into a child. This is why the man is considered the effective cause of birth and the creator of the offspring (2, 61)

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

- There is no complete record of rape, but it is not difficult for a man to waylay a woman when she is on the way to the river. There is also evidence of the husband beating his wife if she commits adultery (2, 66)

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

- Cross cousin marriage is preferred (2, 44)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- Female do not enjoy much sexual freedom. Faithfulness is demanded by the husband of a young wife (2, 66).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No evidence was found.

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

- In the case of a mother's death, the younger sister may live permanently with her married sister and care for her children (2, 62)

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

- No ratio was found, but evidence shows that there are more adult males than the number of reproductive females (2, 45).

4.22 Evidence for couvades

- The birth of a child is done at home, and the husband is present at the time of the labor. He continues to remain in the house for a month or until the wife has her first menses after birth. During this time, both mother and father observe certain food taboos, and the husband avoids all economic activities (2, 61).

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

- Only one father (2, 43)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

- The attitude of respect for the fathers is quite noticeable in mature individuals. This respect is extended to the father's brothers as well. If a young man or woman behaves rudely towards his or her father's brothers, the father might punish the offender with scarification. Mother's brothers have no authority and no special respect is paid to them. The mother's sister is treated like the mother and the father's sister is treated with respect. The attitude towards the aunts and uncles changes after marriage. The son-in-law shows a great amount of respect to the father-in-law. The mother-in-law must be strictly avoided. A man can never speak to his mother-in-law, but instead he must speak to her through his wife or some other person (2, 43).

4.24 Joking relationships?

- Brothers, when young, are seen continually together, playing and imitating the activities of their elders. When mature, they wrestle with one another, joke, and play tricks without any show of respect (2, 42).

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

- As descent is bilateral, a genuine Camayura is one whose father and mother are both Camayura (2, 66)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules? No data found

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

- Marriage is solemnized during a kwarup ceremony. During this ceremony, the young people come out of puberty seclusion. The young man then cuts the hair of his wife, and the young wife tonsures her future husband. This act is publicly performed and unites them in a trial marriage (2, 66).

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

- A few days after birth, the father and mother each gave the child a name. These two names will be used until the boy reaches 7 or 8 years of age. His ears are then pierced by an older relative who gives the boy a new name. At puberty the boy receives a permanent name which once belonged to an ancestor. Girls continue to have two names until puberty, when they too receive an ancestral name (2, 61).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

- Marriage is preferred inside the community, but some men do marry outside of the community (2, 44).

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

- Long before the children mature, the parents have arranged the marriages and the young people know who their future spouses are (2, 66).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No reported evidence

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No data found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

- Relationships with enemy tribes are on permanent was footing characterized by raids and counter-raids (2, 52).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: No data found

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): No data found

4.18 Cannibalism? No evidence of cannibalism.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- About 110 (2, 3)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- No mobility

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- No clans or moieties. Extended family homes only (2, 45).

5.4 Post marital residence:

- The first year of marriage, which is the trial period, the couple resides in a virilocal residence. After the first year, the couple lives in a patrilocal residence (2, 44).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): No data found

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): No data found

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No data found

5.8 Village and house organization:

- The village is built on the edge of the forest belt which rises abruptly above the flood plain. The houses look like a huge dome-shaped haystacks set in a circle. The houses are arranged in six large homes that differ in shape (2, 13).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): No data found

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- They sleep on hammocks (2, 34).

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: No data found

5.12 Trade:

- Individual and tribal specialization among the Indians of the Upper Xingu has led to extensive trading and incipient forms of market. Exchange of food, and products are common (2, 41).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? No data found

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: No data found.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- The art of sorcery and healing was taught to the ancestors by the bemtevi, a yellow-breasted flycatcher. He taught them how to grow tobacco and how to use it in shamanistic performances. The jacobemba is also a shaman that is believed to cause illness when angry. Illness is believed to be caused by injection of foreign objects into the body by an enemy (2, 59).

6.2 Stimulants:

- Tobacco is the main stimulant and is believed to have the powers to call out the spirits, which then carry out the orders of the shamans (2, 60).

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- After 6 hours of observing the birth of a boy, the father blows tobacco smoke over his son to ward off evil spirits. During puberty the young woman and man go through a period of seclusion. The girl sits behind a reed screen near her mother's hammock, where she must remain during daylight. She is not allowed to speak to anyone and must respond in a low voice and downcast eyes. The girl stays in seclusion for 3 or 4 months or long enough for her hair to grow over her eyes. The boy also participates in seclusion after puberty (2, 65).
At the time of death the body of the deceased is washed and painted with urucu and genipapo. Ornaments are put on the body and then the corpse is sewn up in a hammock and buried in the plaza of the village. **After death** immediate relatives cut their hair, **scarify their heads and arms**, and wail in a loud voice as they try to jump into the grave. They are prevented from doing so by the villagers (2, 74)

6.4 Other rituals: No data found

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- Camayura believe in a supernatural being known as the Mavutsine. They believe he is a hero who has created the sun and the moon (2, 54).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- The flute is a very common instrument played by many in the Camayura tribe (2, 54).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: No data found

6.8 Missionary effect: No data found

6.9 RCR revival: No data found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- After death, the Camayura believe that the ghost goes to the adobe of the dead, where the ancestors dwell. The Camayura have no fear of the dead for they believe that ghosts never return to haunt the living (2, 74).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- The dead person's name can never be said (2, 74).

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No evidence of teknonymy

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

- The Camayura have their own traditional tribal religion that is defined by shamans and different myths (2, 52).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- Men use body paint during special ceremonies when they are wrestling (2, 59).

7.2 Piercings:

- Boys have their ear pierced at age 7 or 8 (2, 61).

7.3 Haircut: No data found

7.4 Scarification:

- Only during punishment (2, 44).

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- Necklaces are worn by both female and male. Feathers are tied around a band on the head (2, 59)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- Body paint is common and yellow and brown feathers are also worn (2, 59).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- Standard dress of a man includes a fine buriti fiber string around the waist called yakualap. Women wear the uluri (2, 59).

7.8 Missionary effect: No data found

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: no data found

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: No data found

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- Levirate (2, 45).

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No other data

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- If twin children or cripples are born, they are buried alive because they are considered a misfortune (2, 62).

Numbered references

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2. Oberg, Kalervo. 1953. Indian Tribes of Northern Mato Grosso, Brazil. Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Office. Print.