

## 1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Parakana, Tupi/Guarani

1.2 Location: in Para, two separate Indigenous lands—The first is the Terra Indigena Parakana in the Tocantins River Basin with the municipalities of Repartimento, Jacunda, and Itupiranga and five villages and a population of 600. The second is the Apyterewa in the Xingu basin with the municipalities of Altamira and Sao Felix, two villages and a population of around 300. Altogether 1,124,000 hectares of legally marked off land for the Parakana. (2, p.1)

1.3 Brief history: The Parakana are split into two blocs, the Western and the Eastern. They are thought to have been part of a larger population of Tupi found in that area since the 1600s. They may or may not have had run-ins with the whites prior to the 1920s, but the Parakana themselves say they have no memory of such things. The split in the indigenous group occurred in the 1890s during a trip to find enemies, and resulted in two deaths. The argument is said to be over a woman. The Eastern bloc maintained a semi-sedentary lifestyle while the Western became increasingly nomadic. Attempts to breach the disagreement only ended in a third death, which solidified the current situation of the groups. The groups became different economically and culturally over time. (6, p. 686; 2, pg. 3)  
*West*: increasingly willing to engage in warfare (kidnapped women), created new enemies and remained hostile, mobile (hunter-gatherers), had a de-centralized political structure, and practiced generalized polygamy. (2, p. 3)  
*East*: had/have a more centralized political structure, remained isolated, defensive, with a dualist morphology and restricted polygamy (2, p. 3).

1.4 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: after the initial contact made with the Terra Indigena Parakana in the 1970s, FUNAI has worked to establish schools, raise the population, provide vaccinations, raise production and demarcate the area in which they live (1). The Western group was increasingly mobile partly due to hostile Ge neighbors prior to “pacification.” Neighbors include Ge and other Tupian groups, as well as the whites. (4, p. 254) Missionary Christianity seems to have affected certain shamanistic beliefs and ideas of immortality (6, p. 678).

1.5 Ecology: tropical rainforest

## 2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): as nomads the Western Parakana ate bread made from the babacu palm nut (*Orbignya* sp); bitter manioc was added after pacification in the Western Parakana, and remains a staple for the Eastern group (4, p. 254)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: excellent terrestrial hunters, tapir, tortoises, wild hogs, sometimes armadillo and paca, the fat from fish and tapir is incredibly important to diet (4, p. 259).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: bows and arrows, though guns increasingly are a commodity

2.4 Food storage: meat is smoked for prolonged preservation (4, p. 259).

2.5 Sexual division of production: specifically in the Eastern Parakana, but in both groups the men generally do the slash and burn portion of agriculture, along with the hunting and harvesting; the women tend gardens and do the majority of the manioc processing, but these activities are seen as complementary rather than a division (2, p. 7) Among the Western Parakana the men do a good portion of the agricultural work including the processing of manioc (2, p. 13).

2.6 Land tenure: property offices now monitor Agrarian land, and the indigenous lands are demarcated and monitored by the Union (1).

2.7 Ceramics: not available

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Tapir meat is brought back to the village in portions of 30-45 kg (4, p. 259). Only women, children and the elderly generally eat the armadillo meat only (2, p. 10). Among the Western Parakana the male is responsible only for his own nuclear family (2, p. 13).

2.9 Food taboos: prior to European contact the Parakana did not eat deer or monkey; they continue to avoid these and also large birds such as macaws. (4, p. 259-60). Also men having recently committed a homicide are put on specific food taboos. They are only to drink a bitter substance from the inner bark of the carapanauba tree for the first four or five days. Then he is only allowed to eat small portions of white tortoise, followed by some manioc and babacu nut. Different foods are in general said to have different effects on the body in the post-murder killer. (2, p. 10)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Canoes (2, p. 5), these became an adaption for the Western Parakana after contact.

## 3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): not available  
3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): not available

#### **4. Life History, mating, marriage**

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): 11-12 years, sexual initiation follows soon afterward (5, p. 488)
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): (f) 11-12 years old; (m) (5, p. 488)
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): 1-3 is normal, but 4-6 or more are also not infrequent (5, p. 487 table 1).
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): 2-3 years (5, p. 488)
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): (f) marriages can be arranged before birth, due to the avuncular preference in the Western Parakana, so that the girls are married before they hit puberty (married in the sense that they are spoken for), men of the Parakana tend to be a generation older than their wives, as the prescribed marriage pattern tends to be sister's daughter or paternal aunts' daughters. The mother usually arranges the son's first marriage (2, p. 9).
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: not available
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: bigamy is allowed (5, p. 488) and polygyny is suggested, "His wife, or wives, prepared the palm and handed them over to him" (2, p. 7).
- 4.8 Arranged marriage, bride purchase/service, dowry: sometimes brothers will trade sisters, the strategies of marriage are based on past kinship arrangements and exchanges (2, p. 9).
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: patrilineal (2, p. 8)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: in the Eastern Parakana the father and his sons operate in "Production Groups," also in the Western Parakana the mother is responsible for finding the son his first wife (2, p. 9 and 13).
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: not available
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): The Eastern Parakana are broken up into three exogamous patri-groups, the Apyterewa, Wyrapina, and Tapi'pya. The Tapi'pya are recognized as not true Parakana, but the groups are required to marry according to these fairly important traditions. In the Western Parakana they prefer patrilineal cross-cousins or mother's brother arrangements for marriage (2, p. 9)
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? According to Fausto's email "The Parakanã do not have an idea of partible paternity. The father is the one who made the woman pregnant. Subsequent intercours with the same men (or other men) are considered as part of the process of making the belly grow." (1/20/2010)
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") not available
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? See 4.13, they do believe that the semen builds up to produce the child; as dreamers the men believe that they deposit future infants inside of women (7, p. 169).
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: not available
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): patrilineal cross-cousin, mother's brother preference (2, p. 9) overall the avuncular is the most emphasized relationship (3)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Having multiple sexual partners is tolerated (5, p. 488). Also "women therefore have dual role in fixing alliances: they circulate among men, but they also plan a part of this circulation in order to benefit their sons and brothers" (2, p. 9).
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: not available
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Not available
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: using Programa Parakana numbers as of August 2009, 407 males (51.32%), 386 females (48.67%): 105.44 men/100 women; annual growth rate 4.89% (1)

4.22 Evidence for couvades: “These restrictions are followed conceived of as a seclusion that is linked to two situations: the couvade and the post-homicidal restrictions. In both, there are a set of negative prescriptions concerning the consumption of food, sexual intercourse, and the carrying out of certain activities.” These restrictions are observed by the parents for the sake of the new child (2, p. 10).

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): not available

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Not available

4.24 Joking relationships? Not available, but ritual partners are chosen as part of shamanism and these exist between cross-cousins (Fausto, 681).

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: patrilineal (2, p. 9)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: not available

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Not available

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? parents usually ask dreamers to name their child, for names can be obtained through interaction with persons in dreams (6, p. 682). Names are further added to in important ways through the death of the enemy, an intricate mix of shamanism and warfare (3).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Marriages seem to be preferred within community, through arrangement or trade, but also by kidnapping women from an enemy (2, p. 9).

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: “Narratives of conflict do not give dimension of its scale, the numbers of deaths, and the numbers of killers. Scale is not a central element in descriptions of warfare, which tend to focus on a logic of quantity rather than quality.” Killing is seen as a way to build individual history, and is seen as a form of production (2, p. 9).

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: a woman caused the violent death of a certain man, and later several other deaths causing and later solidifying the split of the Parakana into East and West. (2, p. 2)  
Cannibalism and its productive qualities for the killer (3).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: women have specifically been part of in-group conflicts in the past, “they had to vie with their kin for wives” (2, p. 2-3). Also conflicts among the Parakana caused splitting into smaller groups (2, p. 3). Out-group killing can be the result of revenge sought for the death of kin, but also prior to “pacification,” “between 1910 and 1955 the Western Parakana captured more than twenty foreign women, seventeen of whom later gave birth to children.” This practice actually worked to stabilize the internal affairs of the Western group during this period (2, p. 9 and 3).

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): hostile local Ge groups forced the nomadic lifestyle found in the Western Parakana prior to “pacification.” (4, p. 254)

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: probably somewhere between 50-100 (2, p. 1); prior to 1971 a village had a population of approximately 145 according to FUNAI (2, p. 7).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Previously among the Western Parakana, they moved often and never made sedentary homes, living as hunters and gatherers, going on prolonged hunting expeditions (3). Hunting treks are done by the Parakana in family groups, and Milton writes that such ventures are done quite often (4, p. 259).

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The social and political systems are split between the Western and the Eastern “on the one hand, the blurring of social and political nomads west, on the other, social segmentation (patrilineal groups and moieties) and leadership among Eastern semi-sedentary” (3). The Eastern have a recently (historically) developed dualism for their chieftain-like political sphere in which the men of the village are separated at “tekawata” (the political center of this group, literally meaning *place of being*) into two separate halves divided by a north-south axis. Each half has a chief, and “hierarchy is based on differential capacity to accumulate memory and to present it through speech.” One cannot simply be old and remember a lot to be chief, “The chief’s role is to personify a collective memory and to re-transmit it” (2, p. 8). The significance of this unique system in the Eastern Parakana is still unknown (3).

5.4 Post marital residence: virilocal (2, p. 9)

- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Both the Parakana groups attacked working camps and groups at posts prior to FUNAI contact (6, p. 671). Today both groups live in areas demarcated and actively monitored by the government and FUNAI (1; 2, p. 1).
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): women in the Eastern Parakana are not allowed to participate in the political meetings, and the house and tekatawa seem to serve as specific spheres of separation. In contrast if a woman is considered a “dreamer” among the Western Parakana (generally older women) they are allowed to participate in the meetings (6, p. 687; 2, p. 8). At these meetings daily occurrences are discussed, hunting information, plans for production/collective work, and so on; the main topic taboo is women (2, p. 8). The group is split between elders, chiefs and younger childless men (2, p. 8).  
The women work in the gardens everyday while men work on agricultural clearing/harvesting and so on (2, p. 7).
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: ritual friendships, specifically found between cross cousins and enemies (6, p. 681).
- 5.8 Village and house organization: a village is called a “tawa,” previously organized into a communal house made of babacu palm thatch, gardens consisting mainly of manioc and the tekatawa, plaza of meeting for the men. Now there is more variation involving more housing, different styles of grouping families together in housing. At night the house serves as the meeting place of the women and the adult/adolescent men meet at the tekatawa. Housing was a place for family interaction. (2, p. 7)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): tekatawa, a cleared open space for men, and also the communal house called “aga-ete” built from babacu thatch likely to have 10 entrances with an open area marked only by hammocks hung in family groups (2, p. 7).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Hammocks (6, p. 682)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The Eastern Parakana are suggested to have a moiety (3), and is also separated into three exogamous clans Apyterewa and Wyrapina (who make up one half of the circle at the men’s meetings) and the Tapi’pya. All of these are carried down paternal lines. Both Parakana groups are patrilineal (2, p. 8-9).
- 5.12 Trade: not available
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Based on memory and speech (2, p. 8). Also “when building a house, the place chosen, the availability of raw material and the building itself are activities that are exclusive to the male leader of a domestic group” (2, p. 7).

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

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: nightly meetings of men include the telling of myths (2, p. 9). The “clarinet feast” only lasts a night, while the “cigar feast” can last up to four days (2, p. 12). Warfare is connected very much with dreaming and shamanism (2, p. 9).
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): there are no shamans among the Parakana; there are only said to be dreamers. A shaman would be said to have the ability to heal, the dreamers do not, and the possibility of witchcraft attached to dreaming of the pathogen agents that cause disease prevents dreamers from disclosing those dreams, therefore discouraging the institution of actual shamans (7, p. 159-61). It is thought that all dreamers have some healing powers, but it is better to remain equals (2, p. 11). All real healings are down by outsiders who are thought to be called by the dreamers to perform the healings (6, p. 679).  
Songs are given to a person in dreams and are learned there; they act as evidence and authentication in the real world of that dream (2, p. 11).
- 6.2 Stimulants: tobacco is used by posthomicidal men to counteract the scent of blood; it is also associated with love, sexual relations and heaviness. It is said to increase the ability to dream and see into the spiritual world. White-sap liana is used for dreaming purposes, and the red-sap liana for killing (7, p. 166-67).
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):  
Death: no secondary burial, “In 1998...they buried him and build a shack over the rave. For many days his father and other elders danced on the grave, smoking their long cigars, and singing the Songs of the Earth...the elders danced and danced again. In vain. No dreamer succeeded in bringing the young man back to life,” (6, p. 685).  
The Clarinet Feast: acts as a way to “introduce women into the circle so that they may have a long life as sexual partners” demonstrating the reason behind which pubescent women are the most sought after (specifically in the case of foreign women). In the Eastern Parakana this is how the feast is carried out, though in the West the roles are reversed, as it is the women’s job to introduce the men to partners. The feast takes fifteen days to prepare for and involves the make of the clarinets and after they are made, rehearsals as well as food gathering. Those dancing are painted by the women and the feast lasts only a night (2, p.12).  
The Cigar feast: is longer and linked to warfare and predation activities.
- 6.4 Other rituals: notably there are no rituals relating to agriculture (2, p. 11).
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): “white” associated with superhuman powers, shamanism and immortality, “In a well-known myth, the white-to-be dances around his mother's grave, while blowing the smoke of his cigar. He raises the skeleton and dances with it. The boy's

grandmother, however, disturbs him and the revived dead escapes to the forest as a big rodent. Later on, having become a full white, he brings his mother back and takes his new kin out of the earth" (6, p. 672-73).

Menstruation/dreaming/blood: "Originally it was the men who menstruate. One day the armadillo shot the moon. The men told the women not to leave the house, but they came out to the plaza and the moon's blood dripped on them. Thereafter they menstruate, and men do not. The men, however, can now shed their victim's blood and can become a dreamer" (7, p. 168).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): music and dance, musical instruments, song associated with shamans (2, p. 11-12).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Adult men are required or expected to dream, while women only sometimes have the privilege to do so (7, p. 169).

6.8 Missionary effect: appear to have weighed on the afterlife beliefs of the Parakana (6, p. 687).

6.9 RCR revival: By the mid-1980s after contact the rituals were becoming lost, by the present these cultural practices have been revived as the populations continue to grow (1).

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: follow in the Tupi-Guarani people beliefs that individuals can come back to life; this belief was later (prior to contact still) tied into the idea that the "whites" were great men who could do so (6, p. 687).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Not available

6.12 Is there teknonymy? Not available

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint: use genipap, specifically for rituals (2, p. 12), everyday it seems not so common (6, p. 673, 675).

7.2 Piercings: ear piercings (6, p. 675).

7.3 Haircut: Generally kept short, almost shaved (6, p. 673; 675; 2, p. 8)

7.4 Scarification: not available

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Feathers are used in the Clarinet Feast, "they finish ornamenting themselves by fixing white feathers of the king vulture or harpy eagle on their legs, placing red bands and maracas on their ankles" (2, p. 12).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: see 7.1 and 7.5

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: not available

7.8 Missionary effect: not available

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: not available

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system: unsure

8.2 Sororate, levirate: men often marry the wife a deceased man (2, p. 9)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): emphasis between women and their brothers among the Western Parakana, cross-cousins are incredibly important to marriage practices (2, p. 9).

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

9.1 The connection between dreaming and warfare is deep, and the enemy of the dreamer is important within the dream. There are specific dreams called "bringing in the enemy." These are the ones in which the dreamer goes to ask for healing from the enemy in the form of a double during the dream-state (6, p. 679).

9.2 Cannibalism is a distinct part (or was) of warfare; it serves as a part of what Fausto sees as the productive attitude towards warfare, the turning enemies into a "raw material" (3).

9.3 The Parakana eat palm larvae and other insects as a source of fat (4, p. 259).

## Numbered references

1. "Programa Parakana." Operated by the FUNAI. <<http://www.parakana.org.br/index.php>> (March 22, 2010).
2. Fausto, Carlos. "Parakana." December 2004. Indigenous People of Brazil. <<http://pib.socioambiental.org/en/povo/parakana>>
3. Dal Poz, Joao. "Tupi-guarani, um caso de fidelidade." Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais. vol.18 no.51. São Paulo: Feb. 2003. <[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0102-69092003000100013&script=sci\\_arttext&tlng=es](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0102-69092003000100013&script=sci_arttext&tlng=es)>
4. Milton, Katherine., Knight, C.D., and Crowe, I. "Comparative Aspects of Diet in Amazonian Forest-Dwellers." Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences. Vol. 334, No. 1270 (1991): 253-263. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/55462>>
5. Brito, E.B., Martins, S. J., and Menezes, R.C. "Human Papillomaviruses in Amerindian Women from Brazilian Amazonia." Epidemiology and Infection. Vol. 128, No. 3 (2002):485-89 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3864750>>
6. Fausto, Carlos. "The Bones Affair: Indigenous Knowledge Practices in Contact Situations Seen from an Amazonian Case." The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Vol. 8, No. 4 (2002): 669-690. <<http://jstor.org/stable/3134938>>
7. Fausto, Carlos. "A Blend of Blood and Tobacco: Shamans and Jaguars among the Parakana of Eastern Amazonia." In Darkness and Secrecy: the Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004: p. 157-78.