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KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

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KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY OF THE TUKANO (DÁTSEA) IN N.W. BRAZIL

The Tukano are the best-known of the culturally related tribes living along the banks of the Rio Uaupés and the Rio Tiquié rivers in the north-western border regions of Brazil. A number of groups are often referred to by this name even though only one of them is the Tukano. This can possibly be explained by the fact that the language of the Tukano has become the lingua franca of this whole region. The "real" Tukano also call themselves Dátsea.

These groups, which are referred to in the literature as "tribe", "sib" or "clan", form exogamous units comprising several hundred members. The term "clan" would be appropriate were it not for the fact that they all have their own distinctive language. Moreover, the people themselves are emphatic that the "tribe" is the largest unit and they have no notion of an even larger grouping.

The Tukano live in longhouses each of which provides accommodation for about 100 people. Missionary influence caused these partly to disappear and they were replaced by settlements consisting of family huts. It appears that the inhabitants of these longhouses or settlements are often though not always related to one another; yet there are no clear rules according to which these local groups are assembled. In principle, every grown man can affiliate himself to the local group (longhouse) of his tribe that suits him best. Considering the fact that marriage is virilocal, a married adult woman has less choice in the matter.

The head of such a local group is the *tuxaua* (this term is also used elsewhere in Brazil to refer to the Indian headman). He is respected, and in theory, the oldest man and the son of the previous *tuxaua*. Of course, it is somewhat difficult to follow the rule and fulfil both criteria at the same time.

As I mentioned, marriage is virilocal and descent patrilineal. There is no defined rule of connubia even though it is most likely that a man will look for a wife in his own district. There is a preference for sister-exchange and bilateral symmetrical cross-cousin marriage. These verbal rules have not been applied for a long time. This fact emerges from an analysis of about 150 marriages (with in fact another end in view). In any event there is no objection to substituting any female kin for a real sister.

I was able to compile a list of kinship terms during a visit to the Dátsea at the beginning of the sixties.¹ The number of terms is restricted. It appears that in a number of cases the people themselves "use" the system followed by anthropologists, and, for example, refer to the son of a brother of the father as "my father's brother's son".

In some instances, no term is provided in the list. This implies that there are kin for whom informants would not or could not provide terms, even though it is possible that the terms did exist.

As far as I was able to establish, the terms were male-ego centred. People address one another using a proper name. It cannot be ruled out that this is a relatively recent innovation, even though informants maintained that this form of address had always been operative; but the names which people have suggest a more recent origin. Outside influences in this area were fairly superficial, yet the Dátsea are especially keen on adopting imported names, some of Portuguese and some of Spanish origin. This is even the case with those who have had little or no contact with whites and who are very much in favour of preserving indigenous usages and traditions. These proper names are not only used in interaction with visiting whites, but also among people themselves.

Genealogical knowledge does not go back very far. They do not know corporate groups with common descent, unless they wish to preserve the earlier named "tribe" as such.

In cases where relatives died some time ago, the relationship is certainly not remembered. In this connection, it is interesting to note those people who are referred to as *beksukéh*. There are indications that this term is used more often than is apparent from the list, for possible relatives who do not belong to ego's exogamous group. Considering WiBr and SiHu one can then think of the ideal of sister exchange in marriage whereby, according to the rules, these two become *beksukéh* to each other.

The criterion of age is given recognition in the terminology by separate terms for older brother, younger brother, etc. This is possibly connected with the practice that an older sibling is given preference: he or she has to marry before a younger sibling; in succession, for example of the *tuxava*, ideally the older should be chosen; and even in matters of little importance, the rule of primogeniture prevails, so that at an evening smoking session in the *maloka*, the passing round of the cigar should go in an order determined by age.

This list is quite different from the one compiled by Fulop,² which is not a consequence of negligence in either case — his list was assembled from the "Tukano" of the Rio Uaupés in the Columbian district. He possibly gathered his material in one or other "Tukano-speaking" group, but he is not specific about the details. My list derives from the Dátsea, also "Tukano-speaking", on the Rio Tiquié, near the present post, Parí-Cachoeira, to be precise. Considering the haphazard and inaccurate use of the term "Tukano" by most authors, it is possible that we are dealing with the terminologies of different tribes.

Hu	manapéh	FaOBr			
Wi	nemóh	FaYBr	kimbarjí	also FaBr	iee pakéh mami / akabí *
So	makéh	FaOSi	kessauwó		
Da	makóh	FaYSi	kimbarjó	also FaSi	mejó
SoSo	panami	MoOBr	kɔpɔfbarjí		
SoDa	panamió	MoYBr			
DaSo	panamió	MoOSi	kɔpɔfbarjó	also MoBr	iee pakóh paneme
DaDa		MoYSi			
SoWi	makéh nemóh	FaFa	nhekwéh	also MoSi	mejó
DaHu		FaMo	nhekwó		
OBr	mami	MoFa	nhokwéh		
YBr	akabí	MoMo	nhokXó		
OSi	mamió	WiFa	manhekéh		
YSi	akabió	WiMo	manhekó		
Fa	pakéh	WiBr	beksukéh		
Mo	pakóh	WiSi			
		SiHu	beksukéh		
		FaBrSo	iee pakéh mami (akabí) makéh		
		FaSiSo	beksukéh		

*) iee = possessive

N.B. The terms *panami*, *panamió* and *paname* are certainly different words. SoDa and DaSo have the same term.

On checking, the orthography in use appeared to be understandable to the Dátsea who were able to read.

NOTES

¹ Ernst, P. van

'Indians and missionaries on the Rio Tiquié, Brazil-Colombia.' *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. Vol. L, No. 2, 1966.

² Fulop, M.

'Notas sobre los términos del sistema de parentesco de los Tukano.' *Revista Colombiano de Antropología*, 1955.

J. D. M. PLATENKAMP

OUT OF MIND, OUT OF SIGHT

Suppression and Taboo in the 'Leach-Theory'

"... if there is such a difference between 'ideal order' and 'empirical fact', presumably a difference comparable to that between ideology and action, with which level is Leach concerned?" (A. Kuper 1973: 196)

Introduction

This essay is concerned with the interpretation of a rather problematical anthropological concept: taboo. My interest in this previously resulted