THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE RAMKO'KAMEKRA (CANELLA)

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN a previous article[1] we defined the position of the Ramko'kamekra within the Gê stock and described the four types of dichotomy characteristic of their social organization. The present contribution sketches all the essential social ties, with special attention to formalized friendship, age-classes, and government.

Strictly speaking, the Ramko'kamekra of Ponto, Maranhão, are not the sole inhabitants of this village, but form the overwhelming majority of their community, which harbors remnants of kindred groups, viz. the Ča'kamekra, the Kare'kateye and the Kro'rekamekra. The King Vulture ceremonial (see p. 69) preserves these distinctions, the indigenous Ramko'-kamekra men occupying the very center of the plaza, while the three immigrant groups remain in the east, northwest, and southwest, respectively, corresponding to their original homes. Formerly there were also representatives of the now extinct Hoti' (an offshoot of the Apinaye', *Western* Timbira) and the Apa'nyekra, who in 1931 had dwindled down to two members. The Ča'kamekra, once an independent Timbira tribe related in speech and custom, are second to the Ramko'kamekra in numbers; they were formally incorporated about the turn of this century. The number of Kare'kateye and Kro'rekamekra is insignificant.

PRINCIPAL SOCIAL UNITS

The social structure of this people is extraordinarily complex. Every individual belongs to (a) a family; (b) a matrilineal lineage growing out of matrilocal residence and feminine house ownership; (c) a matrilineal exogamous moiety; (d) a nonexogamous Rainy Season moiety. In addition, all males belong to (e) a particular group stationed in the plaza on certain occasions and forming part of (f) a nonexogamous Plaza moiety, East or West; (g) an age-class. The four athletically active age-classes are paired, the two pairs (h) yielding a fourth type of moiety.

Membership in (b) and (c) is hereditary; in (d), (e), and (f) it hinges on the bearing of certain names; in (g) on joint initiation into adult status.

[1] Curt Nimuendajú and Robert H. Lowie, *The Dual Organizations of the Ramko'kamekra (Canella) of Northern Brazil* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 39, pp. 565–82, 1937). The Ramko'kamekra occupy the village of Ponto, in the steppes of Maranhão, about 78 km. south of the town of Barra do Corda.

There are six men's societies, each with a membership of about 30 and most of them with two girl auxiliaries (mekuičwei), who, however, serve only for a particular ceremonial period. A man may simultaneously belong to two societies, but some of them are mutually exclusive. The total list follows: (i) Rop = Jaguar; (j) Kuke'n = Agouti; (k) Koikayu' = Duck; (l) Hak = Falcon; (m) Kokri't = Water Monster, a masquerading society; (n) Me'ke'n = Water Bird, the Clown society.[2]

Membership in (n) depends on one's talent for buffoonery; in the other societies, on personal names, each determining admission to two of the five organizations—Duck and Agouti; or Falcon and Jaguar; or Jaguar and Mummers. Masculine names are transferred in the maternal line, feminine names patrilineally.[3] The names, of which each individual successively acquires from two to eight, also determine affiliation with other social units. For every name of either sex is associated with one of the Rainy Season moieties, and every masculine name goes with one of the Plaza groups constituting the Plaza moieties. Further, formalized friendships largely rest on a similar basis.

FORMALIZED FRIENDSHIPS

Hapi'n–pinčwe'i. This relation most frequently springs from name conveyance. A man who bestows his name on a sister's son and a woman who transfers hers to a brother's daughter thereby make the boy the hapi'n and the girl the pinčwe'i of all those who by a similar transfer had become the uncle's and aunt's "friends." For every personal name involves this bond with the bearers of from six to ten other names, masculine and feminine, including individuals of alien Timbira tribes. Thus, Tunko''s friends are those called by the following names:

Males		*Females*
Kaukre'	Pepkro'	Krakupe'
Keča	Panate'k	Nyona'n
Priče't	Kukapro'	Ikure'
Ke'ke'		

A person is always the special friend (hapi'n-pey or pinčwe'i-pey, pey = real, proper) of the bearer of a particular name, while the others treat relevant obligations more lightly.

More rarely the tie automatically results from joint exercise of ceremonial offices or is created voluntarily in two ways. First, a person becomes

[2] For convenience' sake (m) and (n) will be called "Mummers" and "Clowns," respectively.

[3] For the principle of transfer, see Nimuendajú and Lowie, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

an unborn child's friend by tying any ornament round the pregnant mother's neck. The relationship holds regardless of sex and is considered as strong as though it rested on names. Secondly, youths and their two auxiliary maidens in the final phase of initiation may choose one or more "friends." The day after their seclusion is lifted, the initiates, limiting themselves to their own age-class, make their choice when camped in the woods by a creek near the village. If two initiates not yet so coupled by virtue of their names wish to become "friends," they enter the creek, which is about a meter in depth, stand back to back, dive and simultaneously swim away in opposite directions, rise to the surface, and turn about so as to face each other. The relationship thus formed, though taken less seriously than in the two preceding cases, may be inherited.

Especially at secret nocturnal meetings during the second (Pepye') initiation, the first commandant of the novices explains the twofold obligations involved in "friendship," viz. mutual respect and solidarity. Speaking of or to one another, friends never use personal names, invariably substituting hapi'n and pinčwe'i without the pronominal prefix; the second term mostly accompanies teknonymous circumlocution. If two friends meet on a narrow trail, neither yields precedence, *both* turning aside to the right and left, respectively, until past each other. A hapi'n is neither allowed to marry nor to philander with his pinčwe'i; the two avoid erotic references in mutual conversation, mentioning nothing relating to their own sex experience. Even friends of the same sex are serious in social intercourse with each other; neither laughs at or mocks the other. A dispute, if unavoidable, must not be carried on in the presence of others. For a definite breach the chief preferably names an arbiter who is hapi'n to both. Conjugal quarrels are usually settled by a similarly appointed umpire, a hapi'n of both spouses,[4] who are obliged to heed his admonitions.

Too much familiarity is forbidden to "friends." Without looking at each other, they converse standing abreast and each gazing straight ahead. At the Mummers' entrance into the village, girls customarily tie badges to the horns of the paraders, thereby becoming the masqueraders' "mothers." But a mummer whose girl friend is about to favor him in this way mutely declines the gift by a movement of his shoulders.

No friend may beg of another. At times it was droll to watch my special friend Čatu', an age-class commandant and one of the worst mendicants in the village, when in inward conflict he tried to check himself from begging of me. If I absolutely refused to take a hint, he would wait for a moment

[4] How this double bond is possible, remains obscure. A subsequent statement indicates that the arbiter is the friend of only one spouse.—R. H. L.

when we were alone, then in a soft voice and with timid glances round about he would say, "Hapi'n, as you know, . . . I am not allowed to say anything, . . . but . . . ." Only when I expressly insisted, would he express his wishes in plain terms.

Obligatory solidarity may assume grotesque forms. Though mutual mendicancy is barred, each friend must heed the other's needs and present gifts spontaneously. In danger and disputes they make common cause. Odd, indeed, is the official appeal to a fellow-hapi'n for aid in some difficulty. The supplicant waits for an assembly of the men in the plaza, then steps in front of his friend but with his back toward him, explains the matter publicly without once glancing at his "friend," and goes home. The man addressed then must do his best to carry the affair to a satisfactory conclusion.

But even unsought a friend is supposed to leap into the breach if there is danger. During my periodic disputes with the whisky dealers, Čatu' quite unobtrusively takes up his stand near-by, leaning on his huge sword-club and noting the course of events. Sometimes he would bring with him several members of his age-class. Subsequently he is likely to approach and say apologetically: "Look, hapi'n, I know you told me not to meddle, but he might have been impudent . . . ." And at that Čatu' is very far from being a teetotaler!

In case of a "friend's" accident it is meritorious to subject oneself voluntarily to the same pain or what not, thereby giving evidence of one's solidarity. Once I slightly injured my arm; as soon as Čatu' heard about it he lightly gashed himself with a knife in the corresponding spot. Such a display of friendship is usually rewarded with a present.

For a girl friend such performances are exaggerated to a grotesque degree. When a little girl had once been stung by a scorpion, her two women friends publicly executed a mad scene. While the child was wailing indoors, the two women acted as though they had caught the scorpion (which had long since escaped) and were allowing themselves to be stung. Then they pretended crushing it between their fingers and devouring it. In addition they indulged in all sorts of antics, so as to evoke general mirth.

Similar nonsense is also practised when a "friend" is ceremonially honored, especially when he is to be secluded for the puberty initiation or the Pepkaha'k festival, or when the seclusion is lifted. Then the "comrades" carry on most extravagantly round about their friend in order to indicate their mad exultation over the distinction conferred on him. One man once straddled his sword-club hobby-horse fashion and wildly galloped about, wielding his signal-drum as a crop; another howled and

scratched up the earth like a dog; still another pulled back his prepuce and simulated copulation. Most commonly they dance about with protruding tongues, grotesquely swinging their limbs and heads.

Mutual ceremonial obligations are extremely numerous and intricate. A friend of either sex invests a person with ornaments, glues falcon down on his body, or daubs him with ceremonial paint. Thus, the first commandant of the Pepye' was decorated by his pinčwe'i when freed from his seclusion. So far as possible a hapi'n paints the Pepye' with the designs peculiar to their Plaza groups. When King Vultures are feathered for their great ceremony at the Pepkaha'k, the falcon down is stuck on by their girl friends; and the similar decoration of the Pepkaha'k themselves devolves on corresponding "friends." Anyone who has either absented himself from the tribe for a long time or been long segregated from social activities because of illness, mourning, etc., cannot publicly participate in the communal life until his pinčwe'i or hapi'n, respectively, has painted him for presentation before the elders and chiefs in the plaza. Whenever I return to the tribe, my girl friend Kanõ' paints me and—since I am a King Vulture, hence hamre'n (see p. 67)—she adorns me with falcon down. As a fee for such services at a major ceremony of the main festivals the friends receive meat-pies from the decorated performers' kinswomen; otherwise a minor gift is offered.

When set on the bier, a man's corpse is painted by his pinčwe'i, a woman's by her hapi'n; the feathering with falcon down being substituted for a hamre'n. The remuneration is not taken from among the dead person's possessions.

Usually the decoration worn at a ceremony is surrendered to the wearer's friend immediately after its close. At the end of a Pepye' seclusion, the comb with which a Pepye''s sister had stroked his hair was forthwith given to his pinčwe'i, who hung it on her back from a cord round her neck. After the procession of the first Pepye' commandant subsequent to his segregation, his special girl friend immediately removed all his decoration: his forehead and girdle bands, bandoliers, and cotton belt; and nothing could induce her to sell it to me. The two girls graduating with the Pepye' were divested by their pinčwe'i at the girls' final appearance in the plaza, while their hapi'n took up the presents laid down before them by the initiates' kinswomen. When at the close of their festival the Pepye', decorated with cloths, beads and green tucum cords, left for a log-race against the next oldest age-class, their pinčwe'i surrounded them at the exit from the village and took off all their ornaments. Similarly, the women and girls who twice divest the Pepkaha'k of their yellow cords are the wearers' friends.

At the Pepkaha'k a man delegated for the task and accompanied by an assistant cuts off the long hairs at the back of the heads of the Falcons' pinčwe'i, as well as of the King Vultures' friends of either sex. The clipped hair, united in a tuft, is hung from a tree in front of the village.

Further, at certain occasions the hapi'n and pinčwe'i have to clean the streets used for ceremonies in which their "friends" participate. Thus, at the Pepkaha'k, celebrants' hapi'n and pinčwe'i cleaned the radial paths leading from the performers' mothers' huts to the plaza; and the King Vultures' friends cleaned the radii on which these performers appeared for their main ceremony. The street-cleaners are always compensated with food by the kinswomen of the persons on whose behalf they work. At other festivities, however, street-cleaning devolves on definite societies.

A friend also in certain circumstances carries his hapi'n on his shoulders. At the solemnity closing the ceremonial season the Little Falcon, a boy about four years of age, straddled the neck of his friend because the maternal uncle who had bequeathed the office to him and should properly have introduced him was no longer living. At the "Parare" log-race of the terminal ceremony of both initiation phases, the two new class leaders ride on the shoulders of their hapi'n.

In other cases the hapi'n and pinčwe'i protect "friends" taking part in ceremonies. When at the close of the Mummers' masquerade the feathered Little Falcon parades round the village ring, the Agoutis swarm about him in order to tear off the down stuck on his body, while his friends of both sexes protect him. At the inspection of the new class-leaders, toward the close of the Pepye', their hapi'n with transversely held sword-clubs seemed to bar the older age-class from access to the seclusion hut, but finally they left the way clear. For this act the two leaders' kinswomen gave them bowls of food, put in front of the house. At the close of their festival the Pepkaha'k joined the King Vultures in a house, where the pinčwe'i of the former stuck falcon down on them; the Falcons approached, but the friends of the Pepkaha'k denied them ingress and were remunerated with meat-pies.

On the eve of the King Vulture ceremony the members' women friends have a special duty while the Pepkaha'k and King Vultures chant in the plaza. Spreading the mats made by the Pepkaha'k for the King Vultures over their own backs, the pinčwe'i formed a close circle around the dancers in order to shield them from the nocturnal cold. For this service they had received an advance payment of small meat-pies from the King Vultures' kinswomen and further retained the mats as their property.

The only institution personally observed that in any way corresponds

to this bond is the maitu'ma of the Šipaya (Tupi stock), who lived on the Rio Iriry, an affluent of the lower Xingu', and were in every respect closely related to the Yuruna'. Those desiring to become maitu'ma had to step before the wooden statue of Kumapa'ri, the war and national spirit, during a purely religious festival sacred to him, and announce their wish. The medicine man replied on behalf of the spirit and blew tobacco smoke at the supplicants, who then jointly drank fermented manioc. Two maitu'ma must not quarrel, but respect each other; refrain from indecent speech in each other's presence; and render mutual aid as long as they live. In Portuguese the Šipaya and Timbira, respectively, render maitu'ma and hapi'n by "compadre."[5]

Kwu'no'. The kwu'no' radically differs from the hapi'n relationship in lacking its manifold ceremonial affiliations and duties, for which it substitutes the boon companionship of young age-mates.

The tie is invariably formed by voluntary agreement during the last Pepye' of a particular age-class—the occasion also used for creating the hapi'n relationship. The candidates step into the brook, grasp each other while standing abreast, jointly dive, then without relinquishing their grip swim as far as possible below the surface of the water. The two girl auxiliaries also became kwu'no' to a fair number of their contemporaries.

The term of address, irrespective of the sex of the person spoken to, is iy-kwu'no', iy- being the first person singular pronominal prefix. Very often the form iy-no-re is substituted (-re = diminutive).

This relationship is reckoned indissoluble, lasting theoretically until one partner's death; practically its importance is confined to youth. Persons over about forty no longer use the kwu'no' address, nor have I noted anything relating to this bond among older persons.

Two kwu'no' are expected to be particularly good comrades, constantly associating and aiding each other, in former times especially on war expeditions. In speech and jesting they are unrestrained, each at his pleasure publicly reproving and mocking the other as opportunity arises. This is not considered an insult but a friendly service; no one resents a kwu'no''s scoffing.

Between married kwu'no' the occasional exchange of wives is the finest proof of comradeship; the free consent of the women, however, being prerequisite. When all concerned are agreed, the matter is arranged quite unobtrusively. Kwu'no' are in any case in the habit of visiting each other. If on such an occasion the husband is alone with his wife, he may say some-

[5] See Curt Nimuendajú, *Bruchstücke aus Religion und Überlieferung der Šipaia-Indianer* (Anthropos, Vols. 14–15, p. 1028, 1919–20).

thing like, "Iy-no-re, I am going out for a while now; you may stay here." This puts the guest under obligation to offer his host the corresponding opportunity some time in the future.

Such wife-exchange is invariably temporary, in no way affecting the permanency of the two marital bonds. Although no blame attaches to the participants, the transaction is arranged as unobtrusively as possible, so that its frequency is difficult to ascertain accurately. It is probably rather rare, for since it implies reciprocity, a proposal fails from either wife's refusal.

At all events the institution has nothing to do with either "promiscuity" or civilized prostitution. The wives traded receive not the slightest gift, nor is the exchange the main purpose of the kwu'no' bond, for anciently the Pepye' were not yet married at the time of the contract, and with only a few exceptions this holds even today.

I have neither seen nor heard of any homosexual aspect of this tie. Characteristically the Ramko'kamekra turn a usage of this type not into homosexual excesses, but into a heterosexual exchange of women.

The two forms of formalized friendship evidently correspond roughly to the respect and joking relationships of North American tribes.

AGE-CLASSES

The age-classes result from the boys' initiation, hence cannot be described apart therefrom, but for present purposes the ceremonial aspect of the phenomena is minimized.

Rotation of Classes. All males pass through an approximately ten-year cycle of initiation. Those jointly initiated form a fixed life-long age-class: no one can resign membership to join a younger or older class. Thus, males (except for the boys below, say, ten) are divided into age-groups; separate units *not* consolidated into anything like a tribal society. In addition, the prospective novices at the next initiation organize themselves in an unofficial class and mimic as far as possible their elders' activities.

The four youngest and athletically active of the recognized classes occupy each a distinct place in the plaza, two on the east side and two on the west side. This position automatically shifts with the lapse of time. Two successive entering classes always alternate as to the side of the plaza they first occupy: if the former is admitted on the east, the second inevitably goes to the west side ten years later (see fig. 1). With the appearance of a new class, the survivors of the oldest active class on the same side leave the sport community to pass into the council, i.e. into the very

center of the plaza; the next older class of the side moves up to the site thus vacated, creating in turn a gap filled by the new class. Ten years later, when a new age-class is founded, a corresponding shift occurs on the complementary side. Since every group of novices enters at the north side of its semicircle, the transposition is invariably southward.

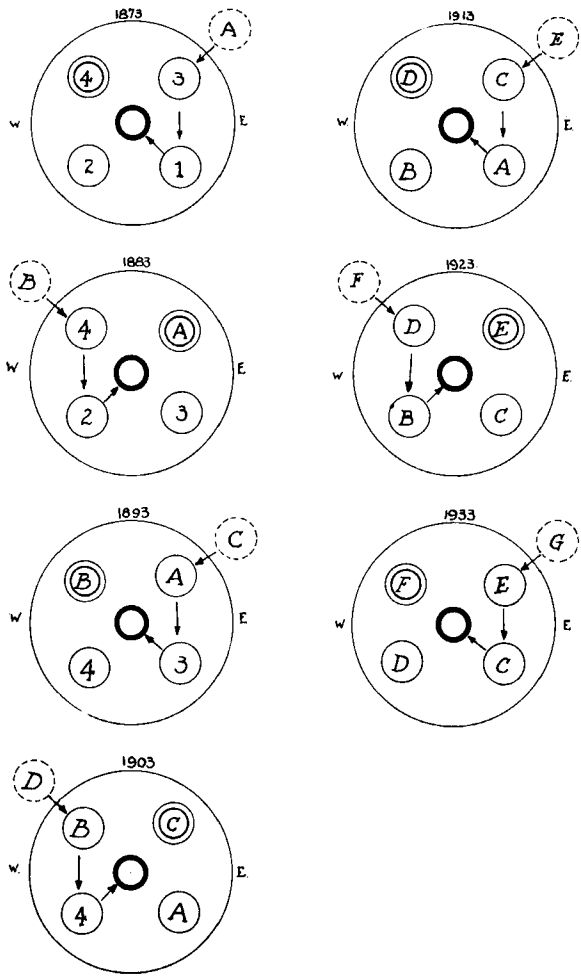

FIG. 1. Diagram showing the successive age-classes occupying positions in the plaza. (Broken circle—prospective initiates; double circle—the group completing initiation; bold circle—the council.)

In the diagram (fig. 1) the prospective initiates are indicated by a broken circle. The age-mates completing initiation in a given year are called Pepye', "warriors;" their position is marked by a double circle. The entrance, shift, and exit of all surviving classes (in November, 1935) are schematically represented; four classes now extinct are designated by Arabic ciphers, their inclusion showing the period of initiation of the oldest men now living. However, the mechanism is adequately illustrated by the last three initiations (1913, 1923, 1933). All dates prior to 1923 are only approximate. In general a cycle lasts ten years, with positive or negative variations of two years.

In 1913 the cycle of age-class D—the Ro'pkama of today—occupying the northwest site of the plaza, came to a close. Accordingly, the hitherto unofficial class E (now called Kapranpoti'kama) entered the scene opposite D, i.e. on the northeast, until then occupied by C, the Kokru'tkama of today. Hence C moved to the site of A (now Kuko'ekama), a class about twenty years older than C and then the oldest of the four racing classes. As a result the survivors of A left the sports association, passing into the middle of the plaza to become councilors.

In 1923 the cycle of class E was completed, hence the boys, F (today Pohiti'kama), entered the section opposite their immediate predecessors, viz. the northwest. This precipitated the shift of D to the site of B, occupied by the Pro'kama of today, men about twenty years older. This time the B men, as the oldest of the athletes, advanced to senatorship.

In 1933, the cycle of F came to a close, so that a new class, G (now Kra'ta'kama) entered on the northeast, causing the shift of E, their seniors by twenty years, to the section hitherto held by the C class, which entered the council.

Thus, the recent situation is as follows, the parentheses enclosing the date of completed initiation, while the number of members is set off by colons:

Active Age-Classes:

East (Ko'i-kateye):	54	West (Hara'-kateye):	57
(a) Kra'ta'kama (initiation incomplete):	31	(b) Pohiti'kama (1933):	36
(c) Kapranpoti'kama (1923):	23	(d) Ro'pkama (1913):	21
	Council: 14		
(e) Kokru'tkama (1903):	8	(f) Pro'kama (1893):	4
(g) Kuko'ekama (1883):	2	(h) ? (1873)	

Girl Auxiliaries. Thus, there are always four official and athletically active age-classes in the plaza; one pair on the west, the other on the east

side. These two pairs are connected with the two Vu'te' girls (see below) and form the opposing teams in the log-races held during the formally inaugurated and closed Vu'te' period, roughly corresponding to the dry, i.e. ceremonial, season. Dances and songs in the circular village street are proper only during this season; otherwise they are confined to the plaza. The Ramko'kamekra annually celebrate one great festival—either one phase of initiation or one of three major ceremonies held in intervening years. During a festival the Vu'te' girls recede into the background, but when it closes, the activities of the age-classes in the houses of their respective Vu'te' at once set in, not ceasing until the approach of the rainy season ushers in special ceremonies formally closing the season.

The Vu'te' are chosen at a secret and unobtrusive session of the council and chiefs, held on a cultivated plot some distance from the village. They primarily select two men with the following qualifications:

(a) Each must have a daughter about 7 to 10 years of age who might serve as Vu'te'.

(b) The fathers must be industrious and sociable in order to play their part successfully, for they—not the girls' maternal uncles—are responsible for the entertainment of the age-class moieties.

(c) One of these men must belong to the Eastern, the other to the Western age-class moiety.

(d) The wives of these men must live in houses diametrically opposite to each other, but the position as to cardinal directions is immaterial.

The girls retain office until they put on a string girdle, i.e. approximately until puberty. Virginity is imperative. If either should lose it before her term is over, she would remain in office until the end of the current Vu'te' period, but when the next ceremonial season opens both Vu'te' would be superseded by newly chosen girls. Usually they serve until the end of the last Pepye', so that the incipient age-class may start their cycle with new auxiliaries. This rule held in 1933, when the Pohiti'kama class completed their cycle.

A Vu'te' girl should be of reserved and staid demeanor; she must not play games in the plaza with girls of her age.

As explained,[6] the age-class dichotomy is distinct from that of the exogamous East and West moieties, each age-class having members of both moieties. Nevertheless, the pairs of age-classes share the term for exogamous moities, viz. mehakra'; they also bear the same specific designations, the Eastern pair figuring as Ko'ikateye, the Western pair as Hara'kateye.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 572 f.

The Eastern age-classes assemble in the maternal house of the Vu'te' whose father belongs to the *Western* age-class moiety, and vice versa. The members of a moiety and their Vu'te' address and treat each other as siblings. The members help their Vu'te''s father construct a dwelling or enlarge it into an adequate meeting place; they also aid him in farming.

The eastern semicircle of the village belongs to the Vu'te' of the Eastern age-class moiety, and vice versa. Victorious racers, arriving at the village ring with their log, always run toward their Vu'te' house and its semicircle, followed by the beaten team. Sometimes the racers continue to run along this ring until completely exhausted. Then the victors' Vu'te' may pity them, step in their path as they get to her house, and with her hand touch their log, which is then at once dropped.

Relay races and the races between two individuals always begin in front of the house of the challenging team's Vu'te'. The former's course is from the Vu'te''s house, along her semicircle, and then onward; single competitors theoretically run from the challengers' Vu'te' house across the plaza to the opponents' Vu'te' house. In the present village the ground slopes southward, hence these latter races invariably take place from the Vu'te' house of the Eastern age-class moiety (on the north side of the village circle) to the Vu'te' house of the complementary pair.

Leaders. The official class leaders are its two mamkye'ti, one representing the Eastern, the other the Western Plaza group.[7] Prior to the opening of the first ceremonial phase, the chiefs and elders carefully select them from among the prospective initiates. To begin solemnities, these two boys are led out of their mother's houses and made to face each other in the plaza. Their badge is an erect fan of arara tail-feathers worn at the back of the head. In the first (Ketu'aye) phase, where the initiates of the Eastern and Western Plaza groups appear separately, each mamkye'ti leads his group, who march in Indian file. In the second (Pepye') phase, for which this dichotomy no longer holds, and after the close of the initiation, the Eastern mamkye'ti takes precedence.

The mamkye'ti form part of a ceremonial aristocracy (see p. 67). It is they who properly govern the age-classes; they are possibly the only authorities who issue real orders among these Indians, and they are trained to do so from the beginning. Only they have the right to call together their classfellows, who must obey the summons and may not assemble without their leaders. Any one having dealings with a class, including the chiefs, must address the mamkye'ti. These are subject only to the chiefs and council

[7] See *op. cit.*, p. 571.

and, during the initiation period, to the mekapo'nkate (commandant, instructor), who belongs to an older class, and his deputy, the mekapo'nkate-kaha'k, the senior member of the class to be initiated.

In case of death there are no substitutes for the mamkye'ti. If both of them die prematurely, the instructor's deputy assumes the lead, but this is always regarded as a calamity for the class. In theory the leaders are equal, actually the abler soon gains ascendancy without, however, completely eclipsing his colleague. In contrast to the chiefs, the mamkye'ti have no authority whatsoever beyond their class.

In former times the mamkye'ti led their class in war and hunting, though always aided by one or several elders. Since warfare has completely ceased and communal hunts have largely lost their importance, the present significance of the mamkye'ti is slight—apart from ceremonial. The present situation is as follows:

(a) The youngest class, Kra'ta'kama, is actually governed by its mekapo'nkate.

(b) The next older class, Pohiti'kama, has two mamkye'ti, who, however, are completely eclipsed by Kapertu'k, the second commandant and actual leader.

(c) The Kapranpoti'kama class has a very able and energetic Eastern mamkye'ti, named Yo'ro; his colleague is no longer living. During the last Pepye' of this group (1923) Čatu' served as instructor, stayed with them after their initiation, and from sheer devotion to his pupils remains as their non-official commandant. Yo'ro still regards him as a superior.

(d) The oldest active class, Ro'pkama, has only one living mamkye'ti, named Koipo'ro.

The term mamkye'ti, manifestly connected with kye, "exogamous moiety," suggests that the leaders originally represented these units rather than the Plaza moieties; or, that their office dates back to a time when these two types of dual division were coterminous.

Exit from Active Sport. When retiring, the Kukru'tkama, men about fifty years old, whose cycle was completed about 1903, had dwindled to eight members. Both their leaders, also the deputy instructor, had long been dead, and as a social unit the group was insignificant; meetings were few, and hardly ever fully attended in the appropriate plaza section; also there was little participation in log-races. On the other hand, several members, who enjoyed a certain prestige, almost regularly appeared in the council. Nevertheless, they had not by any means forgotten their Kukru't-kama affiiliation.

When the Pepye' of 1932 closed the initiation of the Pohiti'kama, the

boys (Kra'ta'kama) entering the northeast of the plaza, the Kukru'tkama yielded their place to the advancing Kapranpoti'kama. Ten days after the end of the Pepye' all the survivors once more gathered in paint and grass decoration in order to run their last log-race, held between the Eastern and Western plaza classes. Thereafter they did not appear as a body except in the council, where they joined the numerically insignificant survivors of two older classes.

Economic Significance. Economic activities are quite subordinate to the socio-ceremonial and sportive functions of these units. No class as such owns property; even the place of assembly into which it transforms the Vu'te''s home belongs exclusively to her mother. At the beginning of each ceremonial season, the class must humbly ask this woman for permission to commence their performances. However, on two occasions the age-classes engage in economic work, though not systematically.

First, they build houses for persons engaged in matters of public concern. Thus, the two junior classes erected the dwelling of a woman whose husband was a tribal delegate in the state capital. Further, men help an age-mate put up his house. In 1935 I witnessed the hurried erection of a house by the Pohiti'kama, whose deputy instructor's wife was looking forward to her delivery in the near future.

Secondly, age-classes assist in harvesting. Since farming is growing more important every year, the classes play an ever larger part at crop-gathering, especially at the formerly nonexistent rice harvest. For meteorological reasons it is essential to expedite the harvest as much as possible, and the prospective beneficiary, often expected at the commencement of a major festival in the village, cannot neglect the harvest in his plantation. For several years it has become customary not to begin the great celebrations in the village before the garnering of the rice, and to obviate delay for the whole village, the age-classes then help those who are behind schedule. Whoever requires assistance appeals to the chiefs and council to draft the younger age-class belonging to his own half. The elders decide whether this is feasible, for the young men may already have been requisitioned for other tasks, and communicate their decision to the class leaders. Soon after this the class members appear as a body at the proper site, with a number of women of their own age for occasional dances. Rarely is there any remuneration, consisting of a small share of the crop, which is subsequently prepared for all members on orders of the class leaders. As a rule, the beneficiary merely feeds her assistants, who, it is true, by no means over-exert themselves, dawdling so that I have often asked myself whether their collaboration was worth while. However, toward the end of the rice

harvest, the workers are constantly occupied. The societies and the King Vultures similarly assist *their* members.

But while the growth of agriculture adds to the labors of the classes, they diminish through the lessening importance of communal hunting and the now complete elimination of war-raids.

The Cycle of Initiation. Initiation embraces two festivals, Ketu'aye (men-tu'a, boy) and Pepye' (pep, warrior). These are celebrated twice by the same group within the span of about ten years, one of them being occasionally held three times. Since a new cycle begins approximately after another decade, the oldest and the youngest members of a class differ in age correspondingly. As a rule several boys are deliberately excluded from their proper age group in order to retain a few more mature lads for the next class.

In short, the boys first assemble for a Ketu'aye when from five to ten years old and close their final Pepye' when about fifteen to twenty-five. These are approximate estimates, for the Timbira have no terms for numbers beyond 4 or 5, and no one knows his age. It is the councilors who decide whether the coming generation is fit to begin their cycle, which may be lengthened by intercalary festivals not at all immediately connected with initiation, but set between the several Ketu'aye and Pepye' solemnities according to demand. That, however, the average duration is about ten years appears from the number of classes and the age of their oldest members.

The three major festivals celebrated according to the elders' judgment in lieu of initiation are: Pep-kaha'k (warrior-like), Tep-yarkwa' (fish song), and Kokri't (water monster = mummers).

I have partly ascertained the sequence of ceremonials from 1923 to 1933, i.e. from the final initiation of the present Kapranpoti'kama to the last Pepye' of the present Pohiti'kama:

1923 Pepye' (end of Kapranpoti' initiation)
1924 Kokri't (observed by H. Snethlage)
1925 ? Tepyarkwa' ?
1926 First Ketu'aye of Pohiti'kama
1927 Second Ketu'aye
1928 Pep-kaha'k (observed by Fróes Abreu)
1929 First Pepye'
1930 Third Ketu'aye (observed by Nimuendajú)
1931 Pep-kaha'k (observed by N.)
1932 Tep-yarkwa'

1933 Second Pepye' (observed by N.; close of initiation of Pohiti'-kama)
1934 First Ketu'aye (beginning of Kra'ta'kama initiation)
1935 Kokri't (observed by N.)

Thus, after the close of the Kapranpoti'kama initiation in 1923, two years elapsed before the incipient initiation of a new class, the intervening seasons being filled with Kokri't and another (not definitely ascertainable) festival. In 1926 the new class, Pohiti'kama, was secluded for the first time, but their initial Ketu'aye was deemed inadequate by the elders, hence its repetition the next year. In the following year, Pep-kaha'k was substituted for initiation, which was not resumed before 1929, when the Pohiti'kama underwent the first Pepye' seclusion, terminating the first half of their cycle. In 1930 the second half began with their third Ketu'-aye. Judged too immature to complete their cycle, they had to postpone the second Pepye' until the third year, Pep-kaha'k being interpolated in 1931 and Tep-yarkwa' in 1932. In 1933 their initiation closed with their second Pepye', a new cycle starting in the following year with the first Ketu'aye of the new class.

Ketu'aye and Pepye' remain each identical in the two parts of the cycle.

Ketu'aye and Pepye'. Both ceremonies involve about three months' seclusion, ended by a three days' celebration for Ketu'aye and a fortnight's for Pepye'. The mode of seclusion, however, radically differs. Ketu'aye novices publicly dance in the plaza every afternoon with their kin; and in exceptional cases they appear singly for fleeting moments. Those of the Eastern plaza groups are housed in a special section of an ample house on the east side of the village, those of the Western plaza groups being similarly domiciled on the west side. The Pepye' seclusion is far more rigorous, outsiders not being meant either to hear or see anything of them and every participant remaining shut up in his own mother's home.

Both terminal rituals share the hunting of perea's, followed by a race; a Para-re race with miniature logs representing the souls of the dead; and the ceremonial killing of a tamed tai-tetu' pig. The Para-re race and probably also the perea' hunt with subsequent race may be secondary transfers

ing on the souls, and recurs in the feeding of the boys with invisible food. The primary conception seems to be that the souls of the dead, lured by their own chants, which are regularly sung by the Ketu'aye, approach and enter the bodies of the boys, who then act like the souls themselves until purged of them by ablutions and flagellation. This also explains the racing with the miniature logs of the souls.

This association of ideas, however, is not wholly clear to any living Ramko'kamekra. Several offer explanations and hints in consonance with the above interpretation; others cast about for all sorts of rationalistic or even therapeutic motivations of obviously secondary character. Honestly convinced that ceremonial exists for its own sake, for the exclusive purpose of being performed, they have not the faintest urge to break their heads over its origin and meaning. The somewhat more religious-minded Apinaye' wholly lack the motif of communion between the novices and the souls.

The Pepye' pursues quite different aims. According to its myth, two boys went into voluntary seclusion in order to grow up rapidly into strong youths, not in order to hasten marriage but to avenge the death of their parents, who had been destroyed by a gigantic anthropophagous falcon. This goal—sudden emergence as a young and handsome man—has not escaped even neo-Brazilian neighbors. Any settler in the vicinity avers that the Indians immure their youngsters in a "chiqueiro" (pig-sty) and stuff them with food so that they may subsequently marry and exhibit great virility; the cramming process is considered a prerequisite to marriage.

Actually, undergoing all the initiation rites is or was essential for matrimony, but by no means implied immediate marriage, the age of initiates fluctuating between 15 and 25 while a young man rarely married before about 20. However, the Pepye' probationers learn about the choice of a wife and a husband's conduct; and the terminal rite of their future mothers-in-law leading the Pepye' youths by a cord drastically represents the prospective marriages.

In short, the underlying idea of Ketu'aye is animistic; of Pepye', social.

THE HAMRE'N

Besides the social units listed above, there is the honorific order of hamre'n, comprising five otherwise unrelated groups that share public esteem and ceremonial eminence: (a) the village chiefs (pa'hi'); (b) the age-class leaders (mamkye'ti); (c) the girls initiated with the boys (pep-kwe'i after initiation); (d) the women's precentresses (me-hokrepu'i); (e) the King Vultures (tamha'k).

Chiefs, age-class leaders, and prospective pep-kwe'i are appointed by

the council because of personal fitness, which also determines the status of a precentress, who, however, is generally selected by the girl's family.

Although the hamre'n enjoy distinction, the term is not coextensive with eminence. The councilors, though the real rulers, and always approached reverentially, are not hamre'n *ex officio*, but only by virtue of individual circumstances. Similarly the precentor, though far more important than his female colleague, is never hamre'n *ipso facto*.

The natives link the concept hamre'n (literally "restored to health") with the idea of something apart, higher, more refined. The head of the King Vultures compared the hamre'n to the "doutores" of neo-Brazilian rustic speech, which applies the term to all intellectuals, higher officials, etc. All other Ramko'kamekra are me-kakra'n-kra, "unripe people"—not because of social immaturity, but because the hamre'n must eat only fully ripened fruits, a restriction that does not hold for others. Further, a hamre'n never eats the first fruits of a crop lest he be attacked by snakes or other venomous beasts. To eat of a green gourd would cause wounds on his body; in gathering honey he must not partake of it directly from the bees' nest, but only after laying it on a gourd bowl, otherwise he would risk injury from stepping on the stump of a tree. He would incur the same danger if he were to fashion clubs, arrowheads, and other implements out of pau-roxo wood when in the central plaza, where the men frequently practice their skills during assemblies. Non-hamre'n are free from these taboos.

Since the King Vultures alone outnumber all the other hamre'n, the term for them often serves as a synonym for the entire order; hence it is not certain how many of their numerous restrictions extend to the four other groups.

Formerly all the hamre'n had a distinctive form of burial, the corpse being feathered with falcon down and interred not behind but in front of the dead person's maternal home, at the inner margin of the village ring. Secondary burial was also confined to the hamre'n, though conceivably the custom originally held for all, but had long lapsed for the me-kakra'n-kra while still preserved for the hamre'n.

The author encountered nothing at all suggestive of this institution elsewhere except among the Kaingang of the Rio Ivahy region, state of Paraná, where at least three classes appear—the pai', voto'ro, and pe'nye. The first, superior to the others, comprises the chiefs; its members enjoy such ceremonial prerogatives as sitting on a white caraguata' blanket. Because they are reckoned peculiarly sensitive to harmful influences, the Kaingang chief gave his naturally frail son a pe'nye rather than a pai'

name: names being allotted by a child's father and determining class affiliation. These classes have distinct duties in the cult of the dead.

The King Vultures were at first mistaken for an ordinary ceremonial organization like the Ducks and the Falcons that was obliged to appear at the Pepkaha'k. Actually they hardly differ in behavior at certain dances and log-races from these societies, but soon their radical distinctness appeared, the King Vultures being *ipso facto* hamre'n, indeed forming the bulk of the order. Further, while the performances of other societies are limited to their appropriate festive periods and are predominantly dramatic, the King Vultures have permanent functions of pronouncedly magical and social character. Finally, they are without the girl auxiliaries (mekuič-we'i) of the other organizations.

Tamha'k is a synonym of kukri-ti, "king vulture" (*Gypagus papa*), with whom members identify themselves, designating him as their maternal uncle. However, they neither worship the bird in any way nor ceremonially use his feathers or other parts of his body. As the king vulture feeds the ordinary black vultures by tearing open carrion which their weaker bills leave unscotched, so the Tamha'k feed ordinary people.

Membership is not essentially transferred from maternal uncle to sister's son, but goes with the honorary chieftainship of an alien Timbira tribe. When one Timbira group visits another, the hosts stick falcon down on one of the guests, preferably a young man, paint him with urucu', and make him present himself before the councilors in the plaza, holding a bowl of food; thereby they create him their me-ho-pa'hi', honorary chief. This ceremony, a great honor, always takes place shortly before sunset, when the girls sing in the plaza and the elders assemble there. At a return visit to their erstwhile guests, the former hosts look up the man thus chosen, who billets them on his mother or wife or both, and charges himself with their entertainment.

In 1930 the chief of the Kraho', who had incurred the animosity of the Apinaye', made an offer of peace and friendship through me. He specifically referred to their having appointed his son their courtesy chief and urged them to visit their me-ho-pa'hi'. In 1931 the Guajaja'ra (Tupi stock) paid their first visit to the Ramko'kamekra, who chose a young Guajaja'ra as their honorary chief, whereupon whole bands of Ramko'-kamekra favored him with continuous and lengthy visits.

In short, the honorary chief's duty to entertain members of the tribe choosing him represents one phase of the King Vulture institution. Of the four tribal groups now in the Ramko'kamekra settlement (p. 51) each has one or more honorary chiefs in each of the others—the more, the better in

the interest of their food supply. All these courtesy chiefs, then, form the King Vultures, who in 1931 numbered 34; and following the pattern of the actual chiefs, they are automatically hamre'n.

This is the only way of becoming a Tamha'k. It happens that a man's electors subsequently adopt his nephew so that he may step into his aging uncle's place, since youth is deemed essential for the fraternity's magical practices. But in one case, a son was taken in to supersede his aging father, and other youths were admitted though neither their fathers nor uncles had been members. This principle applies also to the leadership of the fraternity.

Adopted by a Čakamekra family, I am classed accordingly in the village; my hapi'n, Čatu', a Ramko'kamekra proper, had me initiated to Tamha'k status by his tribal division.

A King Vulture ought to be generous toward his electors and to conform in every way to native standards of conduct. If he returns with game and meets a non-Tamha'k of the initiating group, he deposits the booty before him as a gift and silently departs. All Tamha'k give presents to the groups who chose them as their honorary chiefs. On the other hand, when people at large have killed big game, the King Vultures, with the other hamre'n, receive the first share in the distribution. The ideal behavior expected of a Tamha'k seems to be likewise incumbent on his next of kin: an Indian who had deserted his wife without just cause was reminded of his son's quite recent admission to the King Vultures.

Initiation may occur at a very early age, say, from 6 or 10 years on, so that the fraternity included many lads and no really old men.

Tamha'k magic rests on the belief that members—especially if young and vigorous—beneficially influence activities they inaugurate or objects they handle. This view finds expression in farming, fishing, and hunting ritual. In order to enrich the crop, a Tamha'k is the first to taste of certain fruits. In a communal drive he lights the grass, thereby insuring a big kill. He makes the first cut in the hide of a slain tapir, so that it may prove fat; and he, preceding others, steps into the water to spit drugged fish, since that makes for an abundant catch thereafter.

Many Tamha'k regard their obligations as a nuisance and formally resign in the only possible way. If a King Vulture helps ceremonially destroy a wasp nest during the Pep-kaha'k, he no longer figures as a member and is absolved of all his duties.

As a body the Tamha'k appear solely in the Pep-kaha'k, and only in the last two weeks of that festival. They function as allies of the Clowns, Falcons, and Pep-kaha'k, and thus participate in sundry dances and log-

races, culminating in the ceremonial distribution of food by the Tamha'k to the tribal groups. On this occasion all the King Vultures wear the following identical decoration. On their backs, chests, arms, and thighs maternal kinswomen stick vertical strips of falcon down, three fingers in width, other hamre'n being completely feathered with falcon down for ceremonials. The uncovered parts of the body are daubed red with urucu'. The hair at the back of the head is tied together, and has fastened to it a rattling ornamental bundle of some thirty carefully smoothed bamboo rods, ca. 30 cm. long and of the thickness of lead-pencils. The tuft of the wearer's hair is pulled through a plaited ring at the top of the ornament; two long ara'ra feathers—nowadays rarely worn because in this region the species is almost extinct—are thrust through the ring so as to project obliquely upward and outward.

GOVERNMENT

Except in the age-classes, the leader of any unit is called pa'hi', me-ho-pa'hi'; but only the village chiefs are hamre'n.

For a new chief, the chiefs in office and the senate of elders select a mature man of calm, conciliatory disposition and some oratorical gifts. For the official is not an executive who commands and punishes, but a peacemaker who unites people and at the will of the parties concerned smooths out difficulties. Unbidden, he does not interfere with the private affairs of the families; but if he is appealed to, his decision is binding.

If strife threatens, the chiefs and councilors dispatch some other men of acknowledged capacity to talk a refractory tribesman into docility. Or, especially if the quarrel is among kinsmen, one of the contending parties may of their own accord summon these professional moderators.

The electors gladly confer the chief's dignity on an old mamkye'ti, who, by guiding others from an early age, has acquired experience in leadership. But this is by no means the rule; of the three chiefs in 1931 only the oldest had led his age-class.

Strictly speaking, the chiefs are relieved of political control, because private and public life is restricted by an omnipresent ceremonial, which actually leaves little scope for individual assertiveness. The normal course of economic and social life is assured by conformity to this customary law, which the chiefs and council do not create but merely preserve. Precisely as old survivors from the past they are in duty bound to instruct their juniors about their forefathers' actions, with the inescapable conclusion that the same behavior is obligatory on their descendants. Since the pressure on Ramko'kamekra territory by neo-Brazilians, these latter automatically try to transform the chiefs into officials responsible for the mostly

rather unbearable relations between the citizenry and their Indian neighbors. Naturally, the chiefs almost without exception fail in this task or, almost wholly lacking a clear sense of the common weal, regard these relations as their private affair.

Visiting strangers must present themselves to one of the chiefs—not necessarily the one of senior rank—and explain their intentions, whereupon he either discusses the matter with his colleagues and the council at the next session, or immediately summons an extraordinary meeting in the plaza.

I have never heard of the demotion of a chief, but in one case an old man, Čarca, pleading unfitness, was relieved of the office at his own request.

Snethlage[8] mentions another type of chiefs, men who—only exceptionally by consent of the chiefs and councilors, usually against their wishes—travel to the larger towns as mendicants. There, if sufficiently eloquent, they lay claim to a chief's status, not from ambition or a desire to rule on their return, but merely in order to beg gifts in the name of their tribe. The state government, not suspecting the true condition of affairs, sometimes officially accepts the travelers at their face value. However, among the Ramko'kamekra this pseudo-chieftaincy has not yet been able to establish itself, and as yet none of these mendicants would dare play the chief at home on the strength of a governmental patent.

Nowadays there are three chiefs, of whom the oldest, Rop-ka' (Jaguar-skin), some sixty years of age, takes precedence. He is the mamkye'ti of the Eastern moiety of the Pro'kama, an age-class that graduated about 1893 and is now reduced to four council members. His tribesmen do not consider him a good chief, for he grossly neglects official duties, which he discharges with reluctance in his private interest. Instead of presiding at the plaza assemblies, he spends weeks and even months on the plantations of his wife's extended family, letting the other chiefs and councilors wait for the discussion of important matters since no one would regard a decision made in Rop-ka''s absence as proper and valid. When, however, he finally appears and seats himself in the plaza with the rest, he is every inch a chief. Speaking but little, he delivers his decisions succinctly and energetically, in an impressively strong and deep voice, acting altogether like an old mamkye'ti laying down the law for his age-class. Another grave defect of this man is his drunkenness, which is fostered by the whisky dealers, who regularly seek out the paramount chief and furnish him liquor gratis in return for a free hand. In 1932 I caught Rop-ka' in the act

[8] E. Heinrich Snethlage, *Unter nordostbrasilianischen Indianern* (Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vols. 62–63, 1930–31), pp. 168, 176.

of permitting a Negro, who had constantly presented him with whisky, to settle in the tribal territory.

The two other chiefs, Hak-toko't and Kukrača', are of equal age and rank. The former, by pure coincidence a younger brother of Rop-ka"s, is also a sot. He mostly directs major festivals and ceremonies, not as a prerogative of a second chief, but simply because of his experience and inclination. On such occasions, however, he abstains from alcoholic beverages.

Kukrača' (Bees' Nest) is of Čakemekra descent. Of the trio, he is the least prone to intoxication, the only one with some feeling for the communal welfare, and the center of all opposition to land-grabbers. When I left the village, his last request was that I should exert myself to maintain the tribal domain. No one is so deeply convinced of the exclusive correctness of old Indian tradition and the absolute need for preserving it. At least twice he has been found guilty of cattle lifting, but I am under the impression that he regards this as a meritorious reprisal against the intruders. In general, he is a merry blade given to all sorts of pranks, hence one of the most eminent Clowns.

A fourth man, Čatu' (Fox-belly), is manifestly preparing for the chieftaincy. He is about fifty, remarkably nervous for an Indian, somewhat garrulous, but a keen and brave man. The civilized enemies of his people view him with great suspicion, scenting in him their most dangerous adversary in a possible conflict. He is the age-class commandant mentioned (p. 63) as remaining with his disciples after a lapse of eleven years. Čatu' already sits in the plaza with the council, but though verily not inclined to reticence he still checks himself in discussion, seeing that after all he is not yet a chief.

The chiefs of the Ramko'kamekra lack all badges of authority. On various occasions senators and chiefs get an offering of food in the plaza, but they eat it jointly and in amount no chief is favored above the other elders. Similarly they receive no extra portion in the distribution of food to plaza groups, men's societies, or other social units. They work for their support precisely like any other tribesmen. In the plaza sessions they always sit more or less in the center because decorum forbids any one to turn his back on a chief or seat himself in front of him.

The Timbira display remarkably little individual lust of power with reference to the chieftaincy. I have not observed any great desire for this office or discovered young men who dreamt of some time becoming great chiefs. Nor, could I note any rivalry among the chiefs. Now and then there were moderate complaints about Rop-ka"s defects, but no one ever said, "If *I* were paramount chief. . . . " There were merely invidious comparisons with his far abler predecessor, the defunct Delfino Kokaipo'.

Diverse statements about Timbira chiefs in the literature are not wholly accurate. Snethlage rightly recognized that the influence ascribed to the Kraho′ chief Kokrit by Ribeiro, or by Pohl to the Po′rekamekra chief Romao, was due to a systematic strengthening of their position by civilized neighbors who tried to check the natives through such chiefs. But he errs in identifying the chiefs with the age-class commandants and in assuming that chieftainship has anything to do with exogamous moiety affiliation. The "second" chief, whom he saw direct the women's dances in Ponto, obviously the above-mentioned Hak-toko′t, does not belong to the moiety complementary to the first chief's since the two are full blood-brothers. As it happens, none of the three chiefs, nor even the prospective chief Čatu′, is of the complementary moiety, all four being by sheer chance Easterners. Snethlage's "chief" who apparently commanded at communal hunts was probably the leader or commandant of an age-class. Finally, the chiefs have nothing to with designating the girls as of age. Ignace and Pompeu Sobrinho have also ascribed to Canella chiefs civil functions completely foreign to them.

Froes Abreu certainly goes too far in virtually denying any chief to the Ponto villagers. According to him, Rop-ka′ made no decisions, and no one was responsible to him. As shown above, this is an exaggeration. This author expected a chief who constantly ordered about, punished, and directed his "subjects." That these were quite sufficiently controlled by customary ceremonial law remained completely unknown to Abreu.

BELÉM DO PARÁ, BRAZIL