

# Tõkowiseri: kumuánica, bayaroánica and yaiwánica cosmovivences<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

THIS ARTICLE presents a brief anthropological approach to the Kumuánica,<sup>2</sup> Bayaroánica,<sup>3</sup> Yaiwánica<sup>4</sup> cosmovivences of the originary peoples of the eastern Tukano linguistic family in the northwestern Amazon: Arapaso, Bará, Barasana, Desana, Karapanã, Kubeu, Makuna, Mirititapuia, Piratapuaia, Siriano, Taiwano (Eduria), Tatuyo, Tariana, Tukano, Tuyuka and Wanana.

Each of these peoples has its own origin narrative. Quite simply, the ʔtāpinopona-Tuyuka came from the same ʔtāpino – Canoe Snake – and passed through the same houses of origin, known as Pamuri wiseri and Tõkowiseri. The difference that exists, according to what I learned from my grandparents and specialists, is that we didn't leave the Ipanoré Waterfall, on the Uaupés River, but we left the world of water at the Caju Waterfall – Sunapoea – also known as the Jurupari Waterfall, in Colombia. This is where the Tuyuka ceremonies began and continue to take place to this day. From there they went down the Uaupés River, entered the Papuri River and spread out along the headwaters of the Tiquié River; others stayed on the Colombian side. Today, the Tuyuka have spread to other cities, such as São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Santa Isabel do Rio Negro, Barcelos, Novo Airão, Manaus and even other Brazilian states.

## Tõkowiseri<sup>5</sup>

The word *tõko*<sup>6</sup> literally refers to the sweet juice (buiuiu) extracted from a shrub called *tõgũ* in the Tuyuka language. The word *tõko* is a qualifying and activating prefix of good, of what is good, sweet, tasty, uncontaminated. In Tukano the corresponding prefix is *kāra**ko*. In Tukano, *kāra* is a sweet fruit (buiuiu). This word assumes the same qualifying principle.

The kumua, bayaroa, yaiwa and other specialists use it continuously in ceremonies, mainly to transform matter into matter imbued with the forces of good. Let's look at some examples: *tõko kumurõ* – sweet stool, stool of life, of good, of health, of joy, of knowledge, of enthusiasm etc.; *tõko botari* – (support maloca posts), for its good and safety, which guarantees security, inspires music, speech, guides the circularity of dance; *tõko tiba* – adornment box (dance costumes), box of ancestry, box that holds the music, holds the life of ancestry, the

decorations, the music, melodies, rhythms; *tōko yuiró* – gourd holder of good, life, wisdom, ceremonies; *tōko sopé* – door for the entrance/exit of good, health, beauty; *tōko wai* – fish of life, which generates good health, good physical appearance. Therefore, you can use this qualifying prefix in powers of the good.

It is from this perspective that this article addresses the complex reality of *tōkowiseri*. The Kumua, Bayaroá, Yaiwa and other specialists use this concept to refer to the many meanings of ancestry (past history), its impact on present life and the guarantee of a better life in the future. In the period of ancestry, *tōkowiseri* are the places of origin that anthropologists in the upper Rio Negro-AM region have called houses of transformation. In the Tuyuka language they are called *pamuri wiseri*. Each of these houses has a specific name: *Diawi* (water house), *Senawi* (pineapple house), *Ikima wi* (inajá stream) etc. Each house has a specific story, but they make up the broad trajectory of the *Ŭtāpino*-Water Snake's journey. Each *pamuri wiseri* (house of transformation) in the ceremony is called a *tōkowiseri*. This is said to indicate that in this house some knowledge and some practice that are very important for the life of the *pamuri basoka* – people of transformation – originated. In the understanding of *kumu*, *bayá* and *yái*, these houses must be a source of life. Let's look at the examples: *tōko wi*, *yukurika basori wi*: fruit offering house; *tōko wi*, *wai basori wi*: fish offering house; *tōko wi*, *waikura basori wi*: game meat offering house. The *kumu*, when performing the ceremony in a ceremonial house (*maloca*), establishes a connection with the houses of origin. The use of this prefix is very profound, because when a *kumu* performs a ceremony to protect a residence, school, hospital or community centre, they become *tōkowiseri*. By taking on this name, that house enters into a connection with other *tōkowiseri* on the underground, water, earth, forest, wind and constellation levels. The inhabitants of these levels connect with the inhabitants of this level: humans and other people (of the forest, the waters, the mountains etc.).

According to *Ŭremiri*, my interlocutor, every ritual ceremony that takes place inside the *basawi* connects with all the *basawiseri* of the world on this horizontal level and with the *basawiseri* of the levels (above and underground) on the vertical level. The performance of the *Yukurika basore* ritual ceremony is a fantastic moment of interconnection with the *kumua* and *bayaroa* of other *basawiseri* on other levels of the cosmos.

The *kumua* insert and activate these powers in matter (tobacco, *ipadu*, *ayahuasca*, *caxiri*, pitch, snuff, instrument sounds) by blowing on the ceremonial matter. The *Kumu* use the prefix *tōko*, which should be understood as the principle of activating good effects. These powers are accessed by humans through the taste (bitter, sweet and naughty) of the *caxiri* and *ayahuasca* drink, the smell of tobacco smoke and inhaling the smell of burning *breu* resin; through hearing the sounds of musical instruments; inhaling snuff, eating *ipadu*, licking pepper and salt after ceremonies. Barreto (2018, p.64) says:

The *bahsese* are a vast repertoire of formulas, words and special expressions taken from the *kihti ukūse* (mythical narratives) and spoken ritually by the *yepamahsā* specialists. The *bahsese* enable communication and interaction between the *mahsā* (humans) and the *waimahsā*. It is also a therapeutic practice for the prevention, protection and cure of diseases, based on the ability to verbally activate healing elements and principles contained in types of plant and animal and, finally, to cleanse and de-potentialize food, making it fit for human consumption.

The kumua are the specialists in the basesé, but other sages who acquire the knowledge can also perform the ceremonies, as can women and young people. It is not restricted to men, but it is more common for them to perform these ceremonies.

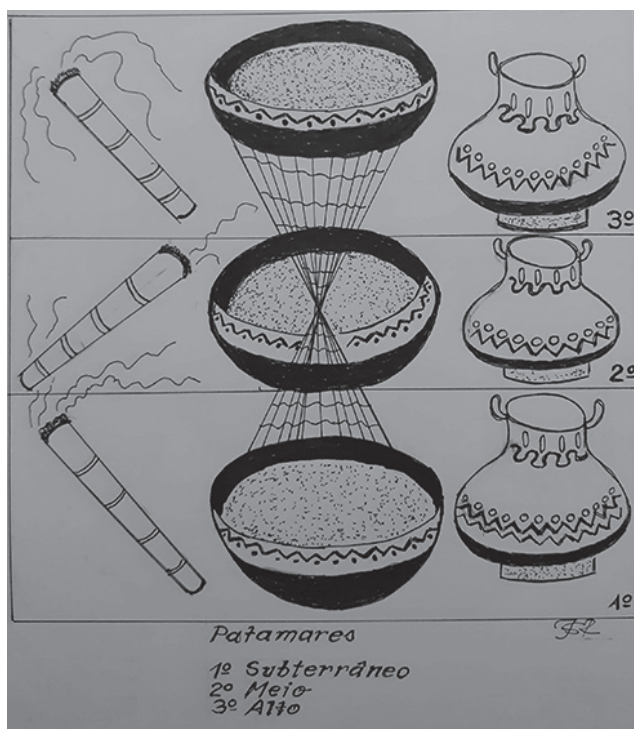
### **Kumua, bayaroá and yaiwa**

The people qualified to activate tōko in materials are the Kumua. They use the kumuánica practice to transform the various tastes (bitter, sharp, sour, sweet) with the activating principle of tōko. In this way, those who access matter transformed by a shaman will become beings of good, tranquillity, taste, sweetness, appetite and friendliness:

*Bahsero* is the ability of a specialist to evoke and put into action the sensitive qualities (bitterness, sweetness, acidity, coldness etc.) that produce a softening effect on pain or illness, elements and healing principles in the various types of plant and animal. [...]. The specialists in this type of knowledge are responsible for mobilizing the *ahpose* through the bahsese: ordering, arranging, directing and balancing the house, the world, so that the *yepamahsā* live well and in a safe and harmonious world. (Barreto, 2018, p.65)

The word *ahpose* used in the quote above explains one of the actions of the Bahsese, known as *bahse ahpose*, which explains that there is a ceremony in which the kumu and other specialists repair, correct and tranquilize beings disturbed by humans. Such actions are justified after a mistake has been made by disrespecting the places of origin (making noise etc.) or by not complying with the required dietary restrictions. They are performed in the same ceremony when it is clear that the expected result has not been achieved.

For the people of the Eastern Tukano linguistic family, these Houses/ Wiseri are present throughout the journey of the Pamuriyukusu (in Tukano), Pamuriyokosoro (in Tuyuka), also known as the Canoe of Transformation or Snake-Canoe. According to the origin story, this long journey began in a place called Opekōtaro (in Tuyuka), Opekōditara (in Tukano), a lake located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, at the foot of Sugar Loaf Mountain. From there, the Snake-Canoe set off along the coast of Brazil, entered the Amazon River and then continued its journey along the Negro River, the Uaupés River and other rivers.



Source: Author: J. S. Rezende.

Figure 1 – Three levels: on all levels there are the same ceremonial materials and specialists on each level. Three elements appear in the drawing: tobacco/ smoke, patu gourd (ipadu) and kapitũ (ayahuasca pot).



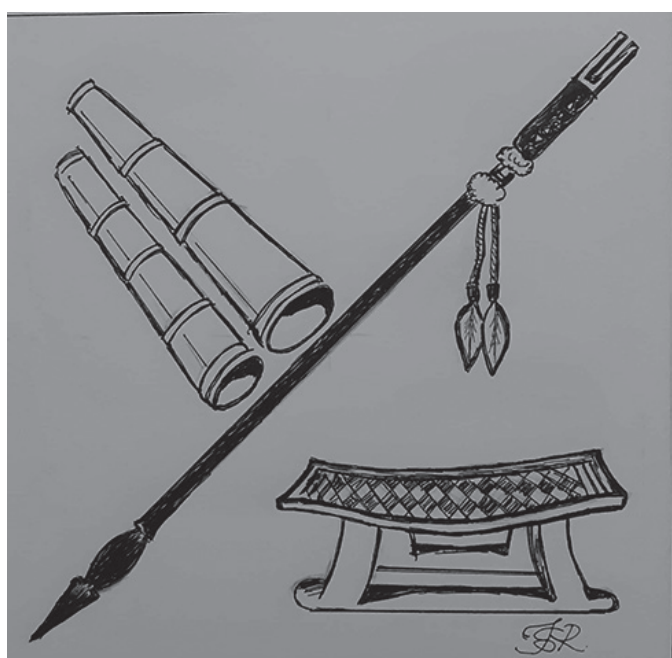
Source: Author: J. S. Rezende.

Figure 2 – Basawi/tökowi (Maloca): represents Tökowiseri - houses of origin, of emergence, of transformation. There are several Tökowiseri on each level.



*Source:* Author: J. S. Rezende.

Figure 3 – Dance instruments.



*Source:* Author: J. S. Rezende.

Figure 4 – Tõkowiseri materials – houses of origin, emergence, transformation: kumu, bayá and yaiwa use them.



At Kumuánico and Bayaroánico levels, this history is present in the memory of the specialists and is narrated by them during the ceremonies. Houses/Wiseri are not simple places: they are tōkowiseri and as such have their owners, who take care of them. One might ask: who are these owners? The answer is simple and relevant: the owners of the tōkowiseri are fish, snakes, birds, monkeys, in short, animal species, plants, minerals, stones and earth of various kinds (yellow, brown, clay...), water of various colours.

From this perspective, Houses/Wiseri should not be understood like the structure of a Western model house. The Kumuánica understanding is that the floor of the house is the diversity of the land in that place, types of water, types of stones; the posts, rafters, vines and roof of the house are the diversity of trees, shrubs and herbs in that place. The owners of the houses are snakes, venomous animals, spiders, maniuara ants, insects, ants, a variety of birds and aquatic beings (small and large) that take care of the House. The length and breadth of the rivers all have their owners who inhabited them before the arrival of the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in these territories.

The ceremonial action of caring for humans and other peoples and their territories is articulated between the kumua, bayaora and yaiwa. In the region of the upper Rio Negro (AM), we have more kumua and bayaroa figures. As such, the care of humans and other peoples is not as well supported as it was in ancient times.

### **Pamurimasa**

The members of the Eastern Tukano family consider themselves to be pamurimasa,<sup>7</sup> which in the Tuyuka language means people emerging from the waters. In the broadest sense it corresponds to the term human as it is understood in Portuguese. Pamurimasa<sup>8</sup> are beings who were led by ʔtāpino, which in the Tuyuka language means Stone Snake. ʔtāpino is also known as Pino yoko-soro (Canoe Snake).

The relationship between waimasa, yukūmasa and būpoamasa is vertical and horizontal. The literal meanings in the Tukano language are: waimasa (wai: fish, masā: people): people-fish/fish-people; yukūmasa (yukū: tree, masā: people): people-tree/tree-people; būpoamasa (būpoa: thunder, masā: people): people-thunder/thunder-people. In my ordering the waimasa are on the underground level, the yukūmasa on the middle level and the būpoamasa on the top level. The understanding of this organizational format predates the scientific understanding of the round earth. Nowadays, the cosmos can be understood in a circular way and in continuous movement, which makes the interaction of knowledge from indigenous science and that derived from advances in scientific research feasible. Traditional indigenous understanding and Western scientific knowledge are not opposed, but complement each other.

According to the Tuyuka narratives, ʔtāpino led the pamurimasa into the territories inhabited by the waimasa, yukūmasa and būpoamasa, introdu-

cing them gradually, not all at once or forever. Through the ceremonies, the pamurimasa continue to show the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa who they are, how and where they want to live in these alien territories. They want to be adopted as sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, grandsons, granddaughters, grandfathers and grandmothers of the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa. Specialists are individuals who know the dynamics of the cosmos and the way of life of its inhabitants. They also know its power to care, and its power to destroy. The kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa themselves are neither superpowers nor possessors of superpowers. They run the risk of being affected by diseases that the kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa of other levels can cause them. They continually need to protect themselves. They are more exposed to acquiring diseases because they are ambassadors for other relatives and cosmic beings. These specialists take care of themselves by complying with dietary and sexual restrictions during certain periods after the ceremonies.

### **Ritual ceremonies**

In Kumuánic and Bayaroánic ceremonies, experts often say that we are *niku paramerã* (grandchildren of the same ancestral grandfather) and *nikuporã nisa mari* (children of the same ancestral father). Through periodic ceremonies, the kumua accompany the members of their people through the various cycles of life, from conception, birth, feeding, first menstruation to departure from this level (death). The pamurimasa carry out the process of belonging to the lives of the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa. In this way they feel that they belong to the territories of the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa. Valencia (2010, p.30) refers to this reality in this way:

In this way, we know that indigenous people are connected to the animal and plant world, including the very space where we live. This is the very method we have for managing our territory. Knowing and practicing our ancestral knowledge (*~kubua baseri keti aka*), for now we say that, as long as the *~kubua* are alive, management will continue. In order for this knowledge to have the security of remaining in force, we are building and strengthening this management with this research work, which is extremely important for future generations.

By practicing ancestral knowledge, they participate in their heritage. Based on this awareness, the pamurimasa follow rules to establish good coexistence. Before farming, fishing, hunting and gathering fruit, they ask the owners for permission and perform ceremonies, inviting them to take part in the festival. At the feast, the kumua specialists ask the owners of a certain place (where there are fruit trees, where there is game, lakes/rivers for fishing) for permission. In this way, the pamurimasa lead a lifestyle that demands respect for the land, forest, water etc. There is no uncontrolled and disrespectful exploitation of the regions where they live, because they know that there is a need for qualified dialogue so that everyone feels respected. If the pamurimasa don't respect the different pla-

ces, the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa cause illnesses, diseases and disasters (major floods, droughts, landslides, overheating...). Rodríguez (2010, p.32), of the Makuna people, recalls:

Many indigenous peoples have preserved their history and practised their relationship with nature for a long time. I am an indigenous Makuna from the lower part of the Pira-Paraná river, so what has nature been for us; what has the forest meant to us? The forest has existed for a long time, in the old days there were not many people, the forest was rather solitary, everything was well preserved according to history, and the people lived in peace. This history came to a new point, to a moment of change in which the indigenous people and the forest began to come into contact with other societies that had a totally different vision, and that is when the interference began, at least in our case.

During the ceremonies, the kumua and the bayaroa tell stories of people's origins and their relationships with the beings in those places, as well as what they experienced in those spaces when they first came. From those stories and in those houses, the bayaroa sing and dance like the first cosmic beings (snakes, humans) sang and danced. In this way, these places become *tōkowiseri* - places, houses and cosmoses that contain in themselves the good flavours (tasty, appetizing, harmonized, tranquil, soothing, sweet), which produce well-being, good-behaviour, good-thinking and good-relationships with all cosmic beings.

The dance movement performed by the bayaroa follows the movement of a river. For members of the Eastern Tukano linguistic family, the river along which the *Ŭtāpino* moved is known as *Opekōdia* (River of Milk). The *Pamurimasa* drank water of various colours (transparent, reddish, dark, muddy, greenish) in the process of their transformation and growth. The *Ŭtāpino*'s journey is interspersed between its movement along the river and the various stops on the way to the land where the specific ceremony takes place.

In the history of the *pamurimasa*, these stops have become narrative traditions within the *Basawi* (ceremonial house). The dance movement expresses the movement of the *Ŭtāpino* carrying the *pamurimasa*. The bayaroa move around the dance floor singing and dancing: in this way they realize the movement of the *Ŭtāpino* upriver. The dancers move like a big snake, dancing on the left, passing the door of the setting sun and then dancing on the right to reach the door of the rising sun. The greater the number of male and female dancers, the more the snake-like movement increases. They go around three times and then stop. Stephen Hugh-Jones (2013, p.70) writes in his work:

The rituals of the community and the contact with supernatural powers that this entails are considered beneficial for the participants, both in the general sense of maintaining the cosmic order and providing special protection for the participants. These rituals are necessary for the wellbeing of the group, although they are also potentially dangerous for the participants, whose care is the responsibility of the shaman.



The stopping time recalls ʔtāpino's stop during his journey bringing the pamurimasa. The stops are for the women and men to drink peyuru (caxiri) and kapi (ayahuasca) to the bayaroa. The kumua circulate mūnoro (tobacco) and patuwa (ipadu gourd) to the bayaroa. They take the opportunity to rest and tell funny stories to get a good laugh. At some stops, they tell stories about some of the Houses of origin. They recount what happened in that House and what was said. These are specific moments for passing on ancestral knowledge. Each people has its own Basawi ceremonies. Luis Cayón (2013, p.33), one of the experts on the peoples of the northwest Amazon, says:

Thought in its deepest form is an exclusive domain of the Shaman, with it something similar to the wisdom of the Apache, because all people have it to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, it cannot be said that the system of knowledge based on thought is exclusive to Shamanism, since it informs and provides people with the references to understand and see their world.

The Kumua, Bayaroa and Yaiwa of the northwest Amazon understand that the world is organized into three levels, as I mentioned above. According to this understanding, similar to what exists on this level, on the other levels there are various tōkowiseri with kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa specialists. They take care of the cosmos through their basese ("blessing") ceremonies. The pamurimasa specialists believe that the specialists of all levels take care of the lives of their beings and their territories throughout the life cycles:

The *Kumua* roll down the other levels (*tūruāburu nukawa*, they reach the well-protected level (*weti patipū*), the cold weather level (*yusase patipū*), become cold breezes (*okotōri yusase buru nukawī*), receive the energy of sweet fruit juice (*kārako űnesami*). They take on the plump shape of a small gourd (*ņasagā kagakā*) and the shape of a halved gourd (*ņasagā yeheka kagakā*). They become sweet juice teeth (*upikari kārako*) and sweet juice mouth (*kārako usero*). They become a large gourd for serving caxiri (*peru diapeori waharo*), a small gourd for serving caxiri (*peru wari waharo*), and a male gourd (*umua waharo*). The *Kumua* take the form of female hands (*numiaye wamokāri pose*) and female energies from other levels (*numiaye katise sītūre kahāse*). (Rezende, 2021, p.196)

The kumua are agents who, being human (tuyuka, tukano...) through their epistemological status (thinking, reasoning...) move through all the levels (middle, subterranean, high...) to dialog, negotiate, convince, consult, create alliances, lend benefits to the kumua of these levels. In turn, they also want the human-beings to grant what the cosmic-beings want. It's a relationship of exchanging benefits, of participating in struggles for and against other beings, in situations that are harmful to the lives of cosmic beings. From this perspective, cosmic beings, including human beings, are co-responsible for cosmic health and complicit in its destruction. In this movement of cosmic displacements, there are various images of movement: rolling, dressing, lowering, falling, flying, cooling, heating, transforming into a smell, an odour. These are language

categories that express what is done on the metaphysical level by a kumu or other specialists who use basese.

The pamurimasa try to carry out their ceremonies each in their own place. The tōkowiseri (ceremonial houses, malocas) are connected to each other. It's very important that those who own their tōkowiseri perform the ceremonies continuously. My Tuyuka relatives say that there are many Tōkowiseri on the three levels. On the level where we stand, some peoples no longer build Tōkowiseri. Some people have their tōkowiseri, but they don't perform their ceremonies. When ceremonies are only held in some Tōkowiseri, the power to connect the elements that ensure the proper functioning of the cosmic and its inhabitants is lost. The number of kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa specialists has also decreased.

With the decrease in the number of tōkowiseri (ceremonial houses, "Malocas") and kumua, bayaroa, yaiwa and other specialists from the middle tier (earth), the cosmos and the lives of all beings are left without the necessary care. The territories of all the levels are threatened and others are destroyed. Their existence is similar to the existence of satellites that send information to specialized centres at all times. With this analogy, I'm saying that the kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa of all the peoples were interconnected: people-humans, people-trees, people-constellations, people-troves, people-fish, people-water, people-birds etc. In Tuyuka understanding, everyone has their tōkowiseri, that is, their malocas where they perform ceremonies to take care of the cosmos. In my analogy, I mean that the tōkowiseri and their specialists are like satellites guided and/or teleguided by beings who capture images of cosmic vulnerabilities. The human specialists made these interconnections with other peoples. Through their keen senses, meditations and dreams, they received information about what was happening at each level. They were able to know who were the specialists promoting good ceremonies in favour of cosmic life, and who were the specialists threatening the well-being of the tōkowiseri of the levels and their inhabitants.

### **Cosmovision and cosmovivence**

From this cosmovision and cosmovivence, the native peoples of the northwest Amazon understand the importance of interconnecting the ceremonies of the tōkowiseri by means of tōkodari, in other words, the threads of good energy that leave and arrive at the tōkowi- seri. Tōkodari are veins that facilitate the good circulation of blood at all levels and guarantee the well-being of the inhabitants of a tōkowi. For each tōkowi, tōkokumupirī (banks of life), tōkoyuiro (support of good), tōkomuno (tobacco of life), tōkopatu (ipadu of life), tōkokapi (ayahuasca of life) must be offered. Cayón (2012, p.169) observes the following:

This raises many questions about the ways in which space is occupied and, above all, the ways in which it is constructed, since there seems to be a regional logic to resolve the contradiction between the real distribution of social units and the idea of a space ordered according to the patrilineal ownership of the territory that defines its ideal occupation. This logic is based on a Shamanic view of space. According to this, the macro-space is thought

of as a maloca that encompasses the universe, containing other small malocas that are the specific territories of each village and the homes of different non-human beings. The maloca cosmos is not only a network of places where all the beings that inhabit the universe live, but also a complex fabric of life forms made up of objects and substances contained in some specific places in the macrospace and which can only be manipulated by Shamen. Therefore, in order to talk about the construction of space in this region, it is necessary to focus on the relationship between Shamanism, space, the notion of person and conceptions of vitality.

The Tuyuka epistemology under the responsibility of the specialists never stops deepening its knowledge, advancing and perfecting itself. They are aware of the durability of the tōkowiseri (“Malocas”) and, before the end of their lives, they are already preparing to renovate or build a new tōkowi. Nobre observes the following about the importance of indigenous knowledge:

Not only are new paradigms of knowledge necessary for global civilization, but we also need a translation of visions and cultures, a dialogue that presupposes humility and receptivity between established knowledges. Science, through technology and engineering, has established itself in the world’s systems of power and has enormous prestige and influence. Indigenous knowledge enjoys cultural respect and projects an important aura of value, but unfortunately it is only perceived and understood by a few people, having almost no influence on the human actions that are transforming the planet. Sam Johnston, from the United Nations University, said at the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change: (2009) “The world has to pay attention to the opinions of indigenous communities and the wisdom of ancestral knowledge. (Nobre, 2010, p.39-40)

Nowadays, among the pamurimasa the concern to keep a tōkowi standing has diminished. When ritual ceremonies don’t take place, it makes it difficult to pass on knowledge and more and more new generations are moving away from this knowledge.

“The fruit festival” is the title of my doctoral thesis in anthropology. In it, I organized the knowledge needed to hold a fruit festival, in every old tōkowi and in new spaces. Anyone who is a member of the Eastern Tukano linguistic family knows that they follow various events in the cosmos: the birth of a newborn child, naming and initiation into youth, a girl’s first menstruation; the cycles of fruit; the time when rivers flood, the time of drought, the beginning of summer, the time of caterpillars, hunting, fish spawning (piracema); the ceremony before starting the swidden in virgin forest and capoeiras; building and inaugurating a new maloca; preparing for the gathering and offering of fruit etc. These are times and spaces that emerge to have a party in which all cosmic beings participate. These times and spaces are important for the specialist agents of each Tōkowi to hold ceremonies to interconnect the Kumuánic, Bayaroánic and Yaiwánic cosmovivences. According to Cayón (2012, p.177),

The practical and shamanic interaction between humans and non-humans depends on the characterization of each part of the jungle. Places transformed by human activity, after a chaotic negotiation with the spirits who own the trees, cease to be *hoa* (death) and become *masã ye* (people's place), i.e. the *maloca*, crops and trails, all of which return to being *hoa* when the forest has completely regenerated. On a broader level, sacred and non-sacred sites alternate in the jungle and rivers, i.e. places where resources can and cannot be taken; this defines a person's behaviour with respect to each place: each individual knows where they can and cannot hunt and fish for their daily sustenance.

When the sons and daughters of the *pamurimasa* are born, they are given names related to their places of origin, the names of fish, birds and fruit. Based on these names, the *kumu* activates the effects of *tōko* (good) to guarantee the *pamurimasa*'s health, wellbeing, good speech and good behavior: *tōkowabe* (beiju of life), *tōkowi* (fish of life) etc. When a member of the *pamurimasa* becomes ill, the *kumu* returns there to diagnose the cause and type of illness. The *kumu* selects a formula to cure the illness. Cosmic beings live in the midst of various dangers. The *Ŭtāpino* knew of the existence of *waimasa*, *yukumasa* and *bupoamasa* in the territories of the northwest Amazon. Entering the rivers that run through other people's territories meant running the risk of being attacked and killed by the *waimasa*, *yukumasa* and *bupoamasa*. When you listen to the narratives about *Ŭtāpino*'s journey to emerge from the water at the Ipanoré Waterfall, at the Caju Waterfall for the Tuyuka and other places for other peoples, you realize that *Ŭtāpino* faced many cosmic beings (snakes, piranhas...) who wanted to exterminate him, but with his strategies he escaped and continued his journey up the rivers. When a person becomes ill, the *kumu* uses this analogy at the time of his ceremony, because human life is like the path of *Ŭtāpino*, there are many beings who want to attack and kill. That's why the *kumu* or other specialists need to make a person capable of facing problems in order to achieve their goals.

The *Ŭtāpino* used his strategic intelligence to escape and divert through other river channels (*paranás*), holes and paths. He doesn't face them head-on, but performs various ceremonies to calm the fury of the *waimasa*, *yukumasa* and *bupoamasa*. So he led the *pamurimasa* with care. Whenever he sensed that a certain region posed a risk to his life and that of his children, he would stop, go ashore and perform ceremonies to protect his journey, himself and his children. He would reassure the *waimasa*, *yukumasa* and *bupoamasa*, talk to them and ask for permission to continue his journey.

They took care of the *pamurimasa* to prevent them from falling victim to disease and dying before they reached their place of origin. From the outset, the *Ŭtāpino* used ceremonial materials for their sustainability, self-protection and to tranquilize the *waimasa*, *yukumasa* and *bupoamasa*: *muno* (tobacco), *patu* (*ipadu*), *kapi* (*ayahuasca*), *upé* (rosin/beeswax). Through the ceremonies, *Ŭtāpino* managed to establish understanding and respect between the *pamurimasa*, *wai-*

masa, yukumasa and bupoamasa. He convinced them of this, arguing that we are all brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, in-laws, sons-in-law, cousins and brothers-in-law. This kinship is not physical-material: it takes place on an epistemological, metaphysical, “spiritual”, immaterial level. Those who are indigenous will understand this cosmic kinship more easily, as many indigenous personal names are for birds, fish, fruit, colors etc. The muno (tobacco) smoked by all cosmic beings made them grandchildren of the same ancestral father. The same happened when they ate patu (ipadu) and drank kapi (ayahuasca). By inhaling the smell of rosin/beeswax smoke, all cosmic beings became members of the same cosmic family. Nowadays, the ceremonies have the same original meaning, and it is important that ceremonies are held in many tōkowiseri. It can’t be the ceremonies of one Tōkowi, but of many Tōkowiseri. Cayón (2012, p.170) also presents this understanding:

These peoples claim that the universe is made up of invisible villages that are connected to each other by paths that only the chimpanzees know about. The malocas are on the earth, the subsoil, the river and on the different cosmic levels, and are considered to be “sacred places” inhabited by different beings and spirits; these places are conceived as the foundations of the universe.

The ceremony performed in a people’s tōkowi is not only aimed at achieving their individual/localized good, but also at achieving the sustainability of the balance, harmony and tranquillity of the tōkowiseri and the cosmic inhabitants of the three levels. Tōkowiseri are the ceremonial centres par excellence of the kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa. Tōkowiseri have a meaning related to the “sacred places” that spread along the rivers where the Țtāpino followed, places that are significant to this day for those who know them. Those who know them best are the experts. That’s why their dialogues are well-founded. This is how they are able to argue adequately when petitioning the Waimasa and Yukumasa about the use of portions of their territories and patrimonies to make a swidden. They are not asking for an entire territory in order to deforest and disrespect it. The territories of the upper level, the land and the underground have their ancestry and their histories, in other words, they have their owners who look after them, look after the fruit trees, the existing fish, the diversity of birds. They can’t be thought of as spaces without owners, as spaces belonging to nobody: they have their original owners. Each type of water, lake, riverbend, riverbank, mountain range, mountain, beach, quarry, black earth forest, sandy earth forest, clay earth forest, with its variety of vegetation, has its owners. There are all kinds of birds, monkeys, bush pigs, macaws, toucans, parrots, turtles, agoutis, pacas, tapirs etc. They all walk in their territories, from time to time going to other territories to return at a time that is suitable for the sustainability of their lives. To master this knowledge, the kumua, bayaroa, yaiwa and other specialists know the flowering cycles of the trees, when the fruit grows and ripens. The life cycles of insects, ants, birds and other animals also depend on these cycles, as do fish and other



aquatic beings. They also know the cycle of the constellations. This is not compartmentalized knowledge, there is an interconnection between various areas of knowledge. They learn this knowledge by observing the cycles of life, by participating in cosmic life itself, by celebrating, making narratives, performing ceremonies, meditating and exchanging knowledge between the different knowers.

With this in mind, the native peoples of the northwestern Amazon hold ceremonies to negotiate how the fields will be planted, asking permission from the forest because their sons and daughters (trees) will be cut down. In exchange, they will yield other granddaughters (manioc, yams...). They negotiate feasts to offer fruit, fish and game; they will sit down with the kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa to talk, negotiate and establish agreements for good coexistence.

The languages used in these moments are sensitive, tasty, audible languages: smelling the smoke of pitch/beeswax, smoking/feeling the taste of smoke, eating the sweetish/bitter taste of ipadu, drinking sweetened caxiri, drinking ayahasca with a bitter/sharp taste, feeling the sting of snuff in the nose, blowing the dance instruments, dancing, running, sweating; hearing and seeing the dances of the bayaroa; listening to narratives of the origin stories of each people and hearing them interpreted for the demands of current times and spaces. Understanding a spoken language is not the only way to access indigenous knowledge, but also through attention to what is happening, to feel the atmosphere of laughter, to be funny, to be silent, to dance to the rhythms, to listen to the sounds of musical instruments, to sweat, to drink, to feel drunk, to smoke tobacco, to inhale snuff, to follow the established diets. In short, there are many different paths that lead an individual to access different types of knowledge.

During the feast, the waimasa, yukumasa and bupoamasa beings participate as special guests for the kumua of a tōkowi. Women's specialties are important for a tōkowi party to take place. Women are specialists in preparing drinks, food, paintings, songs and dances at tōkowi ceremonies. Caring for the wholeness of cosmic life is based on cosmovivence, as it leads us to understand that not only those who consider themselves human inhabit and care for the cosmos. Earth-humans, water-humans, forest-humans, waterfall-humans, air-humans, bird-humans, fish-humans, snake-humans, lake-humans, sun-humans, moon-humans, star-humans, rain-humans, thunder-humans etc. also take care of the cosmos. They, more than the pamurimasa humans, know the cosmic dynamics.

## **Conclusion**

In the context of major global changes, climate change, severe floods and droughts, extensive deforestation for monocultures, large plantations, heavy pesticide usage, mining and associated deforestation, large excavations and the pollution of water with mercury that kills fish and other animals, Amazonian peoples become victims of these climate changes that affect human traditions. Life cycles no longer follow the same pattern as they did in the past, they are disorganized: what used to be flood season is now drought season; the fish don't

know when to spawn nor the spawning season; the life of the fruit trees and the animals that feed on the fruit is out of control.

From the pamurimasa's perspective, this destruction happens because of a lack of respect for the life of the territories and their inhabitants. The ceremonial practice of protection, appeasement and reassurance becomes fragile in the face of the use of supermodern machinery to destroy territories. Our kumuánica and bayaroánica formulas are unable to neutralize the destructive force of mercury, agrochemicals etc. Some Amazonian territories continue to exist because of the existence of the original peoples, who resist and fight so that ambitious men don't wipe out what for them is like a house that they own.

It's very worthwhile for native peoples to have other types of tōkowiseri. The traditional tōkowiseri (malocas) alone are not enough these days. Nor are the kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa, traditional specialists in ritual ceremonies, enough. Nowadays, indigenous peoples have to travel to the embassies of countries that want to defend the cultures of peoples all over the world, defend their territories and fight deforestation. New tōkowiseri are the new headquarters of indigenous organizations spread across the Amazon territories that connect with the headquarters of international indigenous parliaments. Indigenous peoples alone will not be able to defend their territories either. Today, defending the various territories scattered across the earth produces sustainability for global life. While traditionally the Pamurimasa peoples travelled on three levels, today they need to travel across six continents in order to gain local, regional, national and international strength. They need to connect and interconnect with institutions that defend the same interests as the small people, the forests and the rivers. When I say this, I'm not saying that traditional ceremonial practices should be left out: on the contrary, they should be the main forces for us indigenous people. The kumua, bayaroa and yaiwa are the guardians of the philosophies, anthropologies, theologies and spiritualities that ensured our emergence as pamurimasa. Ortiz (2010|, p.223-34), speaking of the importance of the Environmental Management Plan (PMA), says:

The research has also helped to revitalize the collective memory of the origin stories of the different human groups that inhabit this river, strengthening cultural identity by involving a process of reconstructing their own knowledge, which has been taking shape in the reactivation of traditional knowledge transmission circuits. In this way, mechanisms have been created for new generations to acquire the knowledge to live well and look after the land, providing social, spiritual and economic opportunities for young people in the area.

To help in the fight for our rights and those of humanity, we need specialists who can engage in equal dialog with other specialists. We need indigenous people who can articulate their ancestral knowledge, who know their originary cultures well and who, at the same time, are trained as lawyers, philosophers, anthropologists, archaeologists, ecologists, social scientists, specialists in international law, specialists in other languages.

## Notes

- 1 Translated by James A. Fraser (Lancaster University, UK)
- 2 Developed this concept to explain how the kumua specialize in activating powers to protect, calm, pacify, tranquilize, hide, free... cosmic beings (humans and people from other levels) so that they can live well, unaffected by powers that harm their health, using munó (tobacco/smoke), patu (ipadu), uhpé/sikāta (white pitch), kahpi (ayahuasca), peyuru (caxiri/fermented drink).
- 3 The concept captures the bayaroa specialty in activating powers to protect, calm, pacify, tranquilize, hide, free... cosmic beings (humans and people from other levels) so that they can live well unaffected by the powers that harm the health of beings, singing and dancing.
- 4 This concept explains how the yaiá/yaiwa specialize in diagnosing the origins of illnesses caused by beings of the forest, water, earth, thunder/lightning, wind; illnesses caused by other human specialists etc. They employ the okó sistasé ritual (throwing prepared water to detect the origin of illnesses and the causes of illnesses); they also practice uhusé (sucking the illness where it hurts); along with munó puhtiré (puffing cigarette smoke).
- 5 *Tôko* means fruit juice from a shrub called *tô*. In the Tuyuka language we say *tôko* (*ko* means liquid). *Wiseri* (plural) refers to “Houses”, in the sense of *cosmos*. *Tôkowiseri* means *houses of sweet fruit*, i.e. houses of life, houses of health, good living, well-being, good doing and good relationships with all cosmic beings that can be known as human.
- 6 *Tôko* (pronounced with the open) is a word written in the Țtâpinopona-tuyuka language.
- 7 Among the peoples of the original Tukano language family, people are called pamurimasa (in Tukano) or pamuribasoka (in Tuyuka). The literal translation of pamuribasoka is people who emerged from the waters, people of fermentation.
- 8 In this article I’m going to use the term pamurimasa in the Tukano language; it has the same meaning as pamuribasoka.

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- ABSTRACT** – This article, written by an author from the Tuyuka people, presents a vision of the Amazon territory as a tōkowiseri – a ceremonial house that makes life bubble. This vision is based on the millenary understandings of the Kumuánica, Bayaroánica and Yawánica cosmovivences, that is, the specialists (Kumua, Baya and Yaiwa) who look after the cosmic levels and all their inhabitants. The indigenous peoples and the Amazon as a living being maintain a relationship of mutual respect and interdependence. The beings of the forest, land, water and air are like their grandparents, brothers-in-law, cousins, brothers and nephews. It's a cosmic family that encompasses many beings in continuous connection. The specialists of the north-western Amazon, when faced with any action that is going to affect the inhabitants of another house (forest, water, air...), ask for permission by performing ritual ceremonies in order to obtain fruit, fish, game and to offer protection, tranquillity, understanding and favours for the ceremonial feast.
- KEYWORDS:** Tuyuka, Tōkowiseri, Ritual ceremonies, Amazonia, Cosmovivence.

*RESUMO* – O artigo, elaborado por um autor do povo Tuyuka, apresenta a visão do território amazônico como tōkowiseri – uma casa cerimonial que faz borbulhar a vida. Essa visão resulta-se das compreensões milenares das cosmovivências kumuánicas, baya-roánicas e yawánicas, isto é, dos especialistas (kumua, baya e yaiwa) que cuidam dos patamares cósmicos e todos os seus habitantes. Os povos originários e a Amazônia como um ser vivo mantêm uma relação de respeito recíproco e interdependência. Os seres da floresta, da terra, da água e do ar são como seus avós, cunhados, primos, irmãos e sobrinhos. É uma família cósmica que abarca muitos seres em conexão contínua. Os especialistas do noroeste amazônico, ante qualquer ação que vai afetar os habitantes de outra casa (floresta, água, ar...), pedem a permissão através da realização de cerimônias rituais no intuito de obter frutas, peixes, caça e oferecer proteção, tranquilidade, compreensão e convites para a festa cerimonial.

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE:* Tuyuka, Tōkowiseri, Cerimônias rituais, Amazônia, Cosmovivência.

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