



## Myths and legends of the Sanema

Collected and translated by  
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To Kito Wanapanai

### Introduction

The Sanema constitute one of the four major distinct linguistic sub-groups that together are generally known by the term Yanoama.<sup>1</sup> The other three major language groups are the Yanomami, the Yanam (or Ninam), and the Yanomam (Migliazza 1972).

Like the Yanomami to the south of them, the Sanema are a group of cultivators, hunters and collectors who have emerged from the stone-age into the harsh glare of occidental civilization in the last 150 years. The area that they have traditionally inhabited is one of highland hill country in the

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extremely eroded uplands that divide the Upper Orinoco and its tributaries from the Negro and Branco rivers which flow down to the Amazon. The major part of this area is covered by dense tropical rain-forests that receive between 2.5 and 4 metres of rainfall a year, and the majority of Sanema settlements occur between 300 and 1,000 meters above sea level. Their habitat is thus one of streams and swiftly falling rivers interrupted by innumerable small rapids, making navigation impracticable; of steep valleys and mountains whose summits sometimes shake clear of the enclosing vegetation to reveal their worn and stoney heads; and, above all, of dense, cool jungle broken now and then by small clearings that the Sanema have cut from the forest: in these hot, bright spaces the Sanema sow their crops and make their simple huts.

Before the Sanema and other Yanoama groups came into this highland country, in some previous era that must have been prior to the arrival of the 'whites' on the continent (or, at least, in the Yanoama area), it may be that the Yanoama used to dwell east and south of the Parima divide in territories abutting the Tupi, nearer to the Amazon and the Lower Rio Branco; for Migliazza (1972) has pointed out that the lower, right-bank tributaries of the Branco appear to have Yanoama names and Lizot (1975) has noted a smattering of Tupi words in the Yanomami language. It is tempting to suppose that, in speaking of an original era of creation down by the 'great river' before they were 'chased up into the highlands,' the Sanema recall through their myths such an era.

About 75 years ago the entire Sanema group was apparently localized in the Parima highlands south and east of the uppermost tributaries of the Matakuni river that finds its way down to the right bank of the Upper Orinoco. Since that time the Sanema have moved, sometimes over great distances, to the north and west entering, as they did so, the lands that had come to be inhabited by the Yekuana over the preceding century. Understanding of Sanema life, and appreciating the differences that the Sanema present to the, better known, Yanomami who live to the south of the Sanema, requires a knowledge of the influences that this vigorous, riverine Carib people have exerted over the Sanema invaders.<sup>2</sup>

As far as one may guess from the accounts of early explorers who passed through Yekuana territory before the Sanema entered it (Schomburgk 1931; Koch-Grünberg 1979) the first contacts between the Sanema and the Yekuana were hostile ones. Sometime early in this century some Sanema established themselves peaceably among the Yekuana of the Upper Matakuni (Koch-Grünberg 1979: 378) but remained in a state of constant hostilities with other Sanema/Yanoama neighbours. These hostilities escalated to the extent that the Yekuana permanently abandoned this locality, just as they had abandoned other communities further south-east

about half a century previously. As they withdrew so the Sanema followed them.

In the next twenty years the Sanema penetrated deeply into Yekuana and, presumably, Macu (on the Auaris) territory and the Sanema's contacts with the Yekuana were by no means always peaceable. The Sanema's penetration of Yekuana territory was not only motivated by fear of their hostile neighbours south of them (Yanomami, Kobali<sup>3</sup> and Sanema) but also by their new-kindled interest in industrial products with which the Yekuana were well supplied owing to their far-ranging trading expeditions. The Sanema traded arrows, bows and cotton with the Yekuana for these modern goods but when they could not achieve their ends by peaceable means they turned to violence. After a period of flight the Yekuana rallied under the unusually effective leadership of a single *kajichana* (chief), called 'Amudeka' or 'Calomera.' The Yekuana turned on their pursuers and their shotguns easily outclassed the Sanema's bows. Many Sanema died in the subsequent battles.

Since that time the Sanema have maintained a hierarchical relationship with the Yekuana, a relationship that is reinforced by the Sanema's ever-increasing dependence on industrial products and the Yekuana's military superiority. Moreover the Yekuana have come to rely on the Sanema, to a certain extent, as providers of cheap labour; a 'symbiotic' relationship (Coppens 1972) that the Yekuana have encouraged. Consequently the Sanema now co-inhabit virtually the entire Yekuana territory in the Caura and Ventuari, and, in recent years, have moved to more distant areas beyond the Yekuana (e.g. into the Caroni). Nevertheless, in spite of this fundamental dependence on the Yekuana to maintain their economy the Sanema retain a very important degree of autonomy. The Yekuana, living always by the larger rivers, do not directly interfere with the doings of the myriad of small settlements (average 34 inhabitants) that the Sanema have established in the upland interflaves. As the Sanema begin to make their own contacts directly with the outside world, as they have recently started to do, their independence of the Yekuana is liable to increase.

If the major outside influence on the Sanema in the last century has come through their contacts with the Yekuana, the major threat to the survival of their culture now comes from the *sednabi*, the whites. The first contact between the whites and the Sanema must have come early in the 20th century when rubber-gatherers moved up and down the Matakuni (Koch-Grünberg 1979). But the Sanema's first intimate experiences of the *sednabi* date from the establishment of the missions in the last twenty years.<sup>4</sup> Apart from two Catholic missions, that primarily serve Yekuana interests, at the towns of Cacuri and Sta. María del Erebató, there are three Evangelical missions run by fundamentalist Christians in the Sanema

territory; these are located on the Auaris in Brazil, at Carona on the Upper Caura (Merevari) and on the Upper Chajura in Venezuela. Acculturation is proceeding apace.

As far as I know, with the exception of a brief summary of a few myths of Sanema and Yanomamɨ origin noted by Wilbert (1963) and Barandiaran (1974), this is the first attempt to present the Sanema's mythology. However, a considerable number of publications have presented elements of Yanomam(ɨ) mythology (including Chagnon 1968; Lizot 1974, 1976; Becher 1960, 1974; Zerries 1964; Zerries and Schuster 1977; Polykrates 1969, 1974) of which the collection made by Lizot (1974) is of outstanding quality and breadth.<sup>5</sup>

A brief comparison of Sanema and Yanomamɨ mythologies immediately reveals a great deal of similarity. Perhaps the majority of the myths, in broad outline, are held in common by the two groups but nowhere are the myths identical and even the most similar myths, such as the "Origin of fire" and the "Opossum's blood," show intriguing, possibly important, differences.

At a broader scale it is probably not wise, without first carrying out an in depth comparison with Amazonian and Guianan mythological collections, to seek to relate the Yanoama culture by its mythology to other better known linguistic groups. But, since such comparisons may be the only method we can use to answer the difficult question "Where have the Yanoama come from?," perhaps it is worthwhile noting a few of the more striking differences and similarities that are noted from a superficial overview. Is it only because Wilbert (1963) has suggested that there are cultural and genetic links between the Warao and the Yanoama, that one is struck by the similarity of their myths concerning the "Origin of women" (p. 38 and Lévi-Strauss 1973: 215). Is it merely a product of sampling error that a reading of the *Mythologiques* (Lévi-Strauss 1970, 1973) suggests that there are many more similarities between Yanoama mythology and that of the northern Tupi, than between Yanoama and Carib tales?

What is much more obvious from the Sanema material presented here is that the mythologies of Indian groups can undergo rapid and dramatic transformations as they are involved in contact with different societies. Much of the evident differences between Sanema and Yanomamɨ mythologies can best be explained as resulting from the Sanema's contacts with the Yekuana. For example, while, amongst the Yanomamɨ, the significance of the anaconda as the provider of yuca is given little emphasis (Lizot 1974: 36), this myth among the Sanema is the only one explaining the origin of crops,



and the acquisition of tobacco from the opossum (Lizot 1974: 18) and bananas from the carnivore 'Poré' (Becher 1974; Lizot 1974: 17) seem to have been completely forgotten. And here we should note that the Yanomami gain only 7% of their caloric needs from cassava (Lizot 1978: 99), whereas the Sanema, like the Yekuana, have made of yuca a staple - that even replaces bananas almost completely in some areas. What is actually needed to pursue this analysis of Yekuana influences in the Sanema mythology is a fuller collection of Yekuana myths than the valuable but introductory collection made by Civrieux (1970; see also De Cora 1972; Thomson n.d.; Colchester and Lister 1978, for other Yekuana myth fragments). On the other hand, the dramatic influence of occidental culture on the Sanema material barely requires comment, even though I have not here included myths recounted by the Sanema that were virtual copies of biblical tales that they had heard at the missions.

If the structuralist analysis of Amerindian myth and ritual has given some the (unfounded) impression that "cold" Amerindian societies can only shatter immediately they come into contact with the "hot" societies of the 'west,' this Sanema material, no less than that of the Canelos-Quichua, demonstrates that Amazonian societies are capable of making rapid adjustments to such contact (Whitten 1978; also cf. Goody 1977: 24): though whether such adjustments are sufficiently "adaptive" to ensure cultural survival remains to be seen. If the history of the majority of Amazonian societies is anything to judge by, such expectations are somewhat optimistic.

All the myths presented here were collected in a single Sanema settlement on the Upper Eretrato from seven informants. Although I overheard or was told about half these myths during the general course of fieldwork carried out between March 1979 and November 1980, the versions presented here were collected, using a small tape-recorder, during formal sessions with informants in the last four months in the field.

Once I had tape-recorded the myths, I transcribed them word by word into my notebook and then made careful, very literal translations. In the course of translation I would inevitably come on words, phrases, sometimes even short passages that I was unable to translate. To clarify these parts of the myths I would return to the same informants and ask them to make clear through circumlocution the meaning of these pieces of the myths, reminding the informants of their exact words by using the tape-recorder's quick 'cue and review' function. The results are, I feel sure, accurate translations of the originals: no translation at all was done by Sanema

conversant in Spanish, for in the area that I was working there are none.

Although the myths as they are presented here are far from the literal word-for-word renditions that I first made, they were nevertheless all made while still living with the Sanema and I have sought above all to maintain the oral, indeed theatrical, spirit of the originals as far as possible. For this reason I have omitted almost none of the onomatopoeic words that are such a characteristic part of Sanema myth-telling and have translated very few. Whether this literary device succeeds or not in bringing out something of the flavour of Sanema myth-telling and oratory, the readers must judge for themselves. At least I can fall back on the excuse of maintaining ethnographic accuracy.

Equally important to the reader and analyst, I hope, are the rather detailed footnotes that I have included. I have sought to draw attention to comparable mythical material in other Yanoama groups and included certain observations regarding other Amerindian mythical material. The context of some Sanema behaviours has been elaborated, rather minimally, and certain key terms and concepts are given in the glossary.

As for the scientific identifications, all those of plants and cold-blooded animals were made by taxonomists on specimens collected by me during the course of fieldwork. These should be rather accurate. The birds have not been identified professionally; but using the excellent work of Schauensee and Phelps (1979) I have been able to put Latin binomials, with some degree of confidence, on the majority of the species mentioned. Being few in number, large and distinctive, the mammals are much easier to identify on the whole; the major source was Cerda (1976) and Taylor's monograph (1974) was a useful start. Further details of identification have been discussed in my dissertation (Colchester 1982).

Apparently in contrast to the Yanomami, who still tell their myths frequently, especially during collective shamanism (see for example the films of Asch and Chagnon and of de Pedro; see also Lizot 1974: 7-8), the Sanema tell their myths very rarely. On the few occasions that I witnessed myth-telling, when I myself was not the main audience, it was always in informal contexts, for example when a number of men crouched about a fire during a rainy morning. It seems likely that this decline in myth-telling is a consequence of culture contact as the Sanema have come to depreciate their own lore. This sense of cultural inferiority is manifested very clearly in two myths in this collection. 'The origin of modern goods' (p. 67) and the first part of 'The death of Samonamaniapada and the Opossum's blood' (p. 138).

The myths have been presented with arbitrary headings which have been invented mainly as an aid in locating material and which in no sense indicate the paths of future analysis. Although it is not true to say that the

Sanema conceive of *no* sequence to their myths, neither is it true to say that there exists a *proper* sequence. In ordering the myths I have tried to keep together groups of myths that, it seems to me, the Sanema tend to relate one to another, but I have also attempted to place the myths in a sequence that suggests a logical chronology of creation. This practice, it must be understood, only reflects the imposition of occidental concepts that have arisen within the context of a 'hot' historical society. For the Sanema, the myths are not just a record of the past, they are an explanation of the present and future, and provide the metastructure to dreaming and shamanism. The *hekula* spirits that occupy the chests of Sanema shamans today are closely related, in the Sanema mind, to the figures of these myths, to the extent that it is almost true to say that the beings in these myths *are* the *hekula*.

If the reader can see the influence of Lizot in these methods of presentation then I will be content, for in processing the Sanema material the exemplary lead provided by "El hombre de la pantorrilla preñada" has never been far from my mind.

### Orthographic note

The transcription of Sanema words is here made using the system adopted by Ramos (1972: vii) with respect to vowels. The usual vowel sounds /a, e, i, o, u/ are pronounced more or less as in Spanish. The /i/ symbol indicates a high central vowel that approximates the vowel in the English word *bird*. A tilde over a vowel indicates nasalisation.

### The myths

#### T 44. *The birth of the culture heroes and the death of the original jaguar*<sup>6</sup>

This story is really about Omao and those people.

Curare-woman lived with the Sanema ancestors; and the original jaguar,<sup>7</sup> he also lived in that house. This jaguar had killed all those Sanema. Any Sanema that he saw he killed immediately. He was so meat-hungry, that's why - *glun! glun! glun! glun!*

In that house there was a large canoe suspended in the rafters. *Waipili* the frog<sup>8</sup> lived in the canoe. The canoe also contained a smaller vessel in which there were many tadpoles. One tadpole had climbed out, it fell to the floor. The jaguar tasted it. It was nice and salty.

"This is really good!" he said to curare-woman. He pulled the big canoe down, heave! - *Blo!* Then he looked inside; there were many little *waipili* tadpoles swimming about. He ate them all up, one by one - *glun!*

*glun! glun! glun!*

He then turned to eat the mother *waipili*. It was pregnant.

“Do the guts!” he said. So curare-woman then prepared the guts. She took two small tadpoles and popped them into a calabash without the jaguar noticing - *to! to!* Just two little tadpoles, Omao and his brother. The jaguar then ate the mother *waipili* and all the guts.

“Is that the lot?” he asked.

“Yes! That’s all there is,” lied curare-woman. The jaguar was still meat-hungry.

So the next day the jaguar went out hunting deer.

“Mummy, mummy! I’m off hunting. Mummy!” he said.

“When you come back, as you approach, you bang on the ground - *to! to! to!* so you don’t give me a fright,” said curare-woman.

“Right!” said the jaguar and he went off hunting deer.

While the jaguar was out hunting, curare-woman took little Omao and Soawe out of the calabash and being cold they sat by the fire. Curare-woman gave them sweet potatoes to eat.

Shortly the jaguar returned. *To! To! To! To!* he went. Little Omao heard the jaguar coming; little Omao laughed. Curare-woman popped Omao and Soawe back into the calabash and, just as the jaguar was returning, spat on the remains of the sweet potatoes.

The jaguar returned. He saw the marks left by Omao and Soawe in the ashes of the fireplace.

“*Wii!* Mummy! Look!, people have left their marks in the ashes,” said the jaguar.

“No! It’s just me, where I was sitting,” said curare-woman. “I was cold so I sat by the fire.”

“Who’s been eating these sweet potatoes then?” asked the jaguar.

“No! It’s just me,” lied curare-woman. The jaguar tasted the sweet potatoes’ remains lying on the ground, they were very bitter.

“I’m meat-hungry,” said the jaguar, “I had no luck hunting.”

“Eat a piece of my neck then,” said curare-woman. He tried a piece of her neck. It was very bitter. *Gla!* He spat it out.

“Definitely not,” said the jaguar.

Little Omao grew up fast. Down by the river by the water’s edge he called out,

“*Aaaaaaa! ululululu.*” The jaguar overheard.

“Mummy. I’m going to have a look, mummy!” said the jaguar.

“You go and look then,” replied curare-woman.

“Right!” said the jaguar. He went off to look, down by the banks of the river. But when he got there he found only blowflies - *dene! dene! dene! dene! dene!* they buzzed.

“O!” said the jaguar, and he tried to clap the flies in his hands as they buzzed about his head. “O!”

Then downstream again he heard people. “*Talau! aaaaaa! ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*” they went. The jaguar went quickly downstream. But when he reached the spot he again found only blowflies - *dene! dene! dene! dene! dene!* they buzzed.

“O!” said the jaguar. He tried again to clap them in his hands. “O!” The jaguar returned home to his mother’s house.

Next day Omao went out to collect *asmada* fruits.<sup>10</sup>

“Right now there are *asmada*, mummy!” said Omao. The jaguar overheard.

“Where! Where!” he asked.

“This way,” called Omao.

“Let me come too,” said the jaguar. Then under his breath, “Very interesting! Over there, is it?” The jaguar followed after Omao who kept well ahead of him.

“This way! This way!” Omao called.

Quickly climbing up into an *asmada* tree he again called the jaguar over.

“Which way?” asked the jaguar.

“Climb straight up the trunk,” replied Omao. The jaguar began to climb up. But as he passed the waist of the tree Omao ran his hands down the trunk from above. The trunk swelled up into a bulge.<sup>11</sup> The jaguar could not get past.

“Which way?” asked the jaguar again.

“Climb up that *ashkada* palm<sup>12</sup> over there,” pointed Omao.

The palm grew close to the *asmada* tree and its top was bent over into the tree’s branches by a vine. The jaguar climbed up.

As the jaguar reached the top of the tree, Omao cut the vine. The palm tree sprang upright flinging the jaguar through the air. The jaguar fell on his back against a rock. *Gla!*

“*Aa! aa! aa! aa!*” went the jaguar and so he died.

#### T 53. *The origin of curare*<sup>13</sup>

The Sanema like to kill tapirs.<sup>14</sup> In their hearts<sup>15</sup> they are extremely fond of tapirs; but they do not try to kill many tapirs at a time, just one singly. So it was with Omao.

One day Omao decided to hunt tapir; as he left the house he said to his mother, *curare*-woman,<sup>16</sup>

“Mummy! I’m off to kill tapir. Stay where you are, mummy!”

So the mother stayed behind, while Omao went off hunting. Shortly he came on some tapir tracks. He followed them and came on a tapir lying on the ground. Omao drew his bow. He was just about to shoot the arrow at the tapir, when, close by, a little bird<sup>17</sup> sang,

“*Isbi ek! ek! ek! ek! ek!*” (penis, the glans revealed). Omao lowered his arrow. He did not shoot the tapir, unlike Sanema who would have done so.

“My penis is about to peel back!” said Omao, and rather than kill the tapir he ran off home.

He soon approached the house where curare-woman was.

“Mummy! Mummy! The little bird said my penis was about to peel back!” said Omao. “Mummy! Why will it do so?” he asked urgently.

“Go and jump into the river!” said curare-woman.

So Omao and Soawe went and jumped into the river. - *Kopu! Kopu!*<sup>18</sup> Curare-woman then turned into the curare vine.

The Shamatali know of this vine. Over here there is none; they use the juice of the vine to put on their arrow points. They have many such arrow points. And that is why the vine is called *maakoli*.

T 51. *Lalagigi provides the crops*<sup>19</sup>

At this time the ancestors did not yet exist at all, any of them. They were all yet to be created. The one original one, Omao, he alone existed and it was Omao who created the Sanema.

But Omao did not know of yuca, he was very hungry. Omao obtained yuca from Lalagigi<sup>20</sup> and Omao also took Lalagigi’s daughter.

It was Lalagigi who knew all about yuca, he it was who conceived the yuca. He hadn’t obtained it from anyone, he just knew all about it. His soul-space<sup>21</sup> conceived the yuca and so Lalagigi understood.

“*A ai! a ai!* you must give me your daughter to be my wife,” said Omao to Lalagigi in a longing tone. And Lalagigi gave Omao his daughter in reply. So it was that Omao took Lalagigi’s daughter away from him.<sup>22</sup>

“You must acquire yuca from your father,” said Omao to Lalagigi’s daughter.<sup>23</sup> “Give us yuca to take with us, you must say.” The girl agreed.

“Daddy! Daddy! There is tapir meat sitting here on the grill,” she said. Omao had killed some tapirs. He had stacked them to grill over the fire in order to give it to Lalagigi. So Lalagigi came to visit to collect his share of the meat; for Omao ate the tapir also. As Lalagigi approached, Omao became frightened and he transformed into a cricket<sup>24</sup> and hid among some *nimo* palm<sup>25</sup> leaves in the roof. He sat there, still, among the rubbish. Soawe turned himself into a walking stick.

And Lalagigi didn’t notice them. In payment for the meat he heaped



Photo 1: The hearth. Cassava, a coarse bread prepared from yuca is the Sanema's staple.

the yuca cuttings on the floor.<sup>26</sup> He gave yams too<sup>27</sup> and a basketful of cocoyams<sup>28</sup> and maize seeds<sup>29</sup> and plantain peepers<sup>30</sup> and banana peepers: all the crops he heaped on the floor. It was in exchange for all the tapir meat.

"Well thank you," said Omao (to himself). "Tell him to go home quick!" said the cricket to Lalagigi's daughter, "*Ke ke ke ke ke.*" The girl understood the message and relayed it to her father.

"Daddy! You go on home now!" she said and so Lalagigi returned home. At which point God<sup>31</sup> changed himself back into a man. "Well much thanks, and that's that!"

Yuca, yams, bananas, plantains, maize, all the crops had been heaped on the floor as payment for the meat.

And thus it was that, in time, the Sanema acquired yuca from Omao and thus the Yekuana also received their crops.

"And we'll get really full up!" said the Yekuana.

If it hadn't been for Lalagigi, if long ago he hadn't given these crops to Omao, we'd still be without yuca and we'd be very hungry.

#### Verbal I. *The wives of Omao*<sup>32</sup>

Omao went fishing in a river where the crab people and the *shuli*<sup>33</sup> people lived. Omao fished out *shulishuma* from the waters with a fishhook.

“Well thank you!” exclaimed Omao and he proceeded to copulate with the girl - *gloso! gloso! gloso! gloso!*

“Me too!” said Soawe, Omao’s younger brother. “Let me copulate too!” and so he too copulated - *sokā! sokā! sokā! sokā!*<sup>34</sup>

“No! Not like that!” said Omao. “That’s really bad! You must do it like this!” and he copulated again with the girl - *wanai! wanai! wanai! wanai!*

They returned home and Omao stored his wife in a basket. He said he would go downstream to catch another wife for his younger brother. So he went off far downriver.

While he was out, the younger brother began to feel lustful again. He tried to copulate with the girl through the basket. The girl squirmed about to avoid the penetration as Soawe tried several times to insert his penis into her through different gaps in the basket weave. Eventually the girl leapt out and fled back to the river.

When Omao returned he saw that his wife had fled.

“*Wiii!* My rotten younger brother has been all lustful and my wife has fled back to the river,” he exclaimed. But Omao fished out another wife from the river, *Hulalishuma*.<sup>35</sup> Omao and Soawe both had children by that woman, one each.

One day Omao went out hunting far downstream. Omao’s little son was fishing by the bank of the river shooting small fish with palm-frond arrows.<sup>36</sup> Soawe came up behind him and thrust him underwater and drowned him.

When Omao returned he saw that his son was missing.

“*Wiii!* that Soawe has killed my son!” he exclaimed. He knew what had happened.<sup>37</sup>

Soawe slept. He slept deeply. Omao went far downstream. Far, far downstream he went in the night while Soawe was sleeping. Omao was a great shaman. He went far, far downstream to the very edge.

When Soawe awoke he saw that his brother had gone. He chased him downstream in a canoe; when he came to the house of some people he asked them if his brother had passed by.

“He passed by, yes, but many days ago,” they replied, holding up two hands to indicate the period.

Omao came to the place where the waters reach the heavens. He came to the house of the otter people.<sup>38</sup> He climbed into the canoe with them. The canoe closed right over and they went off downstream underwater very swiftly; swiftly they swept on downstream and so went up into the sky.

Later when Soawe arrived he found that Omao had gone. They talked to each other across the sky. Omao is in the sky but Soawe remained below separated from his brother, all by himself.



T 48. *The origin of Sanema*<sup>39</sup>

It was long, long ago that the great curassow cried, during the time of the ancestors. And before that the ancestors did not exist at all. A single ancestor there was only and that was Omao: and Omao was about to create the Sanema. These *Shamatali* (Southern Sanema), these *sedenabi* (foreigners), these too Omao was yet to create and it was we Sanema that Omao was just about to create.

Down by the big river Omao went to collect *poli* trees.<sup>40</sup> Having collected a single tree he went on downstream, far downstream, to find another. Returning with the single tree that he had collected he came on his younger brother Soawe.<sup>41</sup>

"Go and collect me more *Sbidishina*,"<sup>42</sup> he said to Soawe. Then Omao went off again to collect more himself. The tree people accompanied him, and again he collected a single tree.

"O dear! My elder brother will expect me to collect this wood very quickly, I'm afraid," said Soawe from where he sat. So he went out and hastily collected many lengths of *kodalinase*<sup>43</sup> wood. Once he had collected these, Omao returned. He saw all the *kodalinase* lying on the ground.

"*Ga!* really bad."<sup>44</sup> That younger brother of mine he's really bad, I'm afraid," so said Omao angrily. The Sanema were made from the *kodalinase*. Omao made us from the *kodalinase* wood.

"*Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!*" so laughed the *hanakasa* weasels,<sup>45</sup> the reflections of women, when they saw all the *kodalinase* that Soawe had collected. And so it was that we Sanema became really feeble.

"That bad younger brother of mine, he's made me really angry," said Omao. "It was snakes that I was going to make all feeble. I was going to make that *bedugigi* anaconda<sup>46</sup> die just as soon as he had had a child. And those children to die as quickly. And it was the Sanema that I was going to make from *poli* trees so that they could cast their old skins. They could dive into the river - *kopu!* and, lying on the sand, they could peel off their old skin - *gledididi!* They would thus become fresh and new as the inside was revealed. Once they had become really elderly both husband and wife, they could have dived into the rivers and stripped off their old skins - *gledidi!* and so become beautiful again."<sup>47</sup> That was what I had wanted to do!" so said Omao. But instead Soawe had gone and collected a load of trash and Omao became really angry and made us Sanema from that. And so because these weak trees had been collected the Sanema die really quickly. We were created from that *kodalinase* wood. So we became weak. So we die. So we mourn, instead of being able to peel off our skins when we become really old, as we would like.

And because Soawe had collected those weakly trees, Omao became



Photo 2: Adult male Sanema.

really angry. Omas left the world; way, way, way downriver he went to the bottom of the sky. But Soawe he did not go there too; he went off elsewhere.

T 54. *The origin of women*<sup>48</sup>

Long ago, far over there, lived the first Sanema whom Omas had created. Way over there beyond them there were the bat<sup>49</sup> people. Although the bat people had no women, although little Waso<sup>50</sup> had no wife, they copulated a lot. Being only men and having no wives they copulated on the calves of other men. Their calves became pregnant and that way they had children.

It was the *koli*<sup>51</sup> people who created women. They knew all about women. They came to visit the bat people and noticed them copulating on the calf.

"K!" they said. "That's bad, that's wrong, you shouldn't copulate on the calf," they said. They looked about, everyone had a penis!

"There's no woman! That's why they do it. Look, if you copulate on the calf and then, with a pregnant calf, you chase after the spoor of animals, you may kill the child," they said.

The *koli* people pulled off a penis - *tan!*

"Look!" they said. They pierced a hole where the penis had been and thus made a vagina. Further down, round here, they made another hole, the arsehole.

"Here!" said the *koli* people. "This hole here is where to copulate, not the calf," they said indicating the vagina.

So the bat people began to copulate - *glos! glos! glos!* — "Yes, *mmm!* Thank you," they said.

Those *koli* people were chiefs, those ones with the red beaks. That red on the beaks is the result of them piercing the vagina; it's the women's blood.

It was from the bat people that the Sanema took their women. They already knew all about penises. And so they copulated and had children. That's how the Sanema came to be as they are today, as the men created more children.

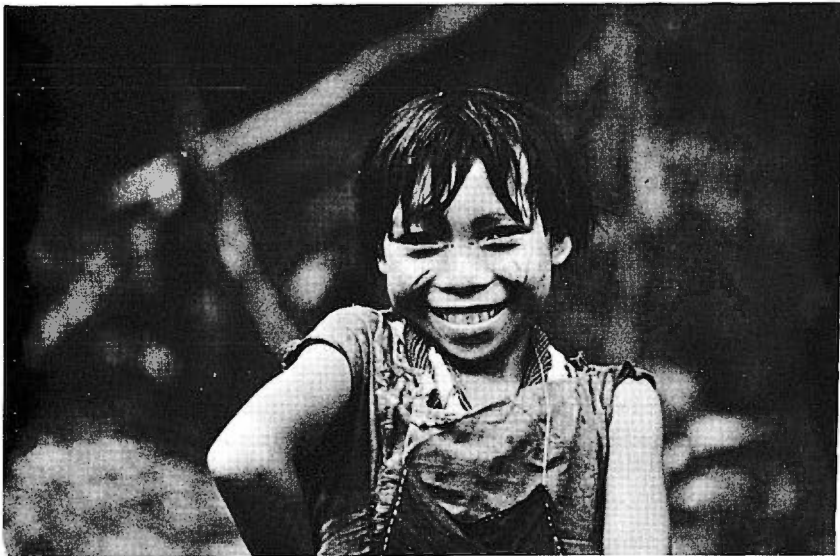


Photo 3: Young girl. Sanema girls are married by the age of six to ten years.

T 49. *The origin of day and night*<sup>52</sup>

Once the ancestors had been created it became night. It was night and the great curassow cried,

"*Hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!*" cried the curassow. "There is the great peccary mountain so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!*"

there lies the long-lips mountain<sup>53</sup> so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* there the great forked mountain so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* there the Kanadakuni<sup>54</sup> mountain so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* there the great tapir mountain so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* there the great Paru mountain so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* there the great Merevari so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!*” so cried the great curassow.

And the Sanema heard the great curassow’s voice in turn, as the bird named the great rivers of the foreigners - Kanadakuni, Merevari, Cacuri, the Paru mountain, the tapir mountain and so on. So the Sanema in turn took these names from the great curassow.

And the ancestors collected *palalaisi* arrowpoints<sup>55</sup> and the great curassow went on crying. And dawn did not come, dawn did not come, dawn did not come. The *honamawan* tinamou called “*hona! hona! hona! hona!*”<sup>56</sup> The Sanema cried. The shamans chanted: and still dawn did not come. It did not dawn. It did not dawn. It did not dawn. And the curassow continued mourning, mourning, mourning. People became hungry. The firewood ran out. People shivered with cold.

The Sanema became vexed.

“It’s that curassow,” they said, “that’s the trouble!” they said angrily and they in turn mourned. So they collected the *palalaisi* arrowpoints.

“*Hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* the *musamai*<sup>57</sup> tree forest *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!* so we called it *hmmm hmmm! hmmm hmmm!*” continued the great curassow naming all the forests in turn.

“Let us really kill this one good and proper,” said the Sanema<sup>58</sup> and then they shot it with the *palalaisi* arrow - *glos!* It stuck in. “*Uuuuuu! bu bu bu bu bu bu!*” went the great curassow and the feathers scattered from it. The tail feathers became curassows,<sup>59</sup> the small feathers became song birds, the wing feathers became the Spix’s guans, the primaries became the piping guans, so all the feathers came out and the white down became all the raptors. High up into the sky they flew.

“*Koi! koi! koike!*” they cried. And high up into the trees flew the other birds, all the little birds fluttered about: they were really the great curassow’s feathers.

It became day.

#### T 61. *How the monkeys got their colours*

Long ago there was a long, very long, night. Dawn did not come at all. People became hungry, the fires went out.

Being cold, howler monkey<sup>60</sup> rubbed himself all over with anatto and then he climbed into the trees. Spider monkey was also cold. He crushed

charcoal and then rubbed himself all over. He painted himself all black and then he too climbed up into the trees. The capuchin monkey did the same, painting himself all black and climbing into the trees. White monkey rubbed himself with wood-ash all over and so he too climbed up into the trees.

Once they'd climbed up, still dawn did not come. Some other people climbed up too, but not all of them. Then after these had climbed up the lesser tinamou cried "*hona! hona! hona! hona!*" and the people also cried. The great curassow, the source of the night, mourned "*mm! mm!*" and people also mourned.

They shot the curassow with specially tipped arrows - *sek!*, the bird fell - *u bu! bu! bu! bu! bu!*

All the feathers became birds. Curassows, piping guans, Spix's guans, all the song birds.

And it became light. Some of the people climbed down again from the trees.

#### T 18. *Copulating in the smoke*<sup>61</sup>

It was very light. The tamandua<sup>62</sup> ancestors were going to copulate. They lit termites nests.<sup>63</sup> Termites nests here, more there, more over there. Many termites nests. The termites nests burnt. There were clouds of smoke.



Photo 4: Sanema men painted up with charcoal (left) and annatto (right).

People began copulating; all over the place people were copulating, copulating! copulating! Although it was daylight people were copulating hugely. The ancestors copulated amongst the clouds of smoke.

T 81. *Before the bow and arrow*

Long ago the ancestors did not know about bows and arrows. And instead of bamboo points<sup>64</sup> they used a point called *palawa*.<sup>65</sup> None of them knew about arrows at all, not even the younger men.

When they were out in the forest hunting and came on some spider monkeys,<sup>66</sup> they would climb up into the trees. One here, another here, another here, another here, another here, another here and another here, so that they completely surrounded the monkeys. Then when some men chased the spider monkeys, others, lying in wait up in the branches, would kill them with their spears - *gloso!* So the monkey would fall to the ground - *salo!* and another one too - *gloso!*; for the monkeys were surrounded, so another - *gloso!* Since they didn't know of arrows at all that was the way that they killed spider monkeys and curassows.<sup>67</sup>

Then going on they might come upon a jaguar.<sup>68</sup> The jaguar would run off - *hoooo!* but they would run after it - *huuu!* *boo!* And they called out to each other across great distances.

"Aaaaaa! Over here! aaaaa!"

"Aaaaaa! It's already run by here! aaaaa!"

"It's running fast aaaaa!"

The ancestors ran really fast and over very long distances; finally they would come up to the jaguar, quite exhausted, and kill it - *gloso!* and they would carry it home to eat.

While going home a deer<sup>69</sup> might get up - *huu!* The deer would run off like a streak, up and down over the hills and doubling back on itself. The ancestors would call out to each other for they were many all about - *aaaaaaa!* - and they'd kill the deer - *gloso!* while it was still running along - *wa tili!* They would carry that home too.

So it was that in one house there would be a jaguar's head, in another a deer's head, in another a spider monkey's head, in another a tapir's<sup>70</sup> head.<sup>71</sup>

That's what the ancestors were like.

T 52. *The menstruating girl and the herd of peccaries*<sup>72</sup>

Just as the female ancestors menstruated for the first time, so the Sanema today also celebrate a girl's first menses.<sup>73</sup> And the ancestors also hunted peccaries.<sup>74</sup>

One day a young man decided to go out hunting.

"I'm off to kill peccary", he said. Then, because no-one had said that people who are celebrating their passage into adulthood should not go out,<sup>75</sup> he said to his young wife who was having her first menses,

"You too! Come on!" and so she accompanied him.

After going some way they came on a large herd of peccary.

"Quick! Climb high up into a tree and sit there," said the husband, and she climbed up into a *musamai*<sup>76</sup> tree. As soon as she was up the tree the husband went and chased the peccaries.

"—*Na! na! na! nananana! blululululululu!*" went the peccaries as they ran. But the husband did not kill any.

The peccaries came running by the tree in which the wife was sitting.

"Come on!" they called to the girl.

"Right," she replied and climbed down.

The husband returned.

"No kill!" he said. "But this is where I told my wife to climb up. 'You sit here,' that's what I said. But where has she gone?"

The wife was not there.

"She must have run off with the peccaries, but where to?"

He searched about for a while and then gave up, and returned home in the dusk.

"My wife is lost, I'm afraid. I told her to sit in a tree while I went hunting. The peccaries came running by and my wife climbed back down; she ran off along the peccary track. It seems that she's run off to accompany them."

The girl's mother cried. She cried and cried and so turned into the *solagimus* bird<sup>77</sup> which calls "*sola kō kō kō kō kō*." That bird's voice, it is the mother crying.

"Tomorrow, we'll go after her as quick as we can. But tomorrow it must be," said the fathers.

So the next day. "Right. Like we said. Quick, wrap some cassava," they said. As soon as the cassava was wrapped they asked the husband,

"Which way?" The men went off following the husband.

"Here, this is where I chased the peccaries. They went off this way!" So along the trail they went, a great distance. Farther on they saw where the peccaries had eaten and gone on. Later, again, a place where they had eaten and gone on.

They came upon a tinamou<sup>78</sup> sitting by the trail.

"Friend.<sup>79</sup> Did people come running by this way?" they asked.

"Yes! It was yesterday evening that they passed," replied the tinamou.

"Really! Friend," they said. "In that case I think we'll sleep here."

So they lay down for the night, in the tinamou's company.

In the night the tinamou said:

“We’re cold. I’ll blow on the fire.”

He blew on the fire - *pff! pff! pff! pff!* But the fire did not catch at all.

The tinamou flew off into the forest - *hududududududu!*

The flecked white feathers of the tinamou they are the ash of the fire. Trying to warm himself in front of the fire, the tinamou became covered in ash. That ash became his feathers. Now he walks alone in the forest.

The others went on further and further. They came on a place where the peccaries had slept; they had gone on further, so they followed. Still further on they came on a place where the peccaries had ripped up small *mana* palms.<sup>80</sup> The husband mourned seeing where his wife had eaten and gone on. He was very fond of her.

Later they came on some felled firewood, lying on the ground. Nearby there was a jaguar.<sup>81</sup>

“What are you doing?” enquired the jaguar. “What’s up, friend?”

“My wife has run off with the peccaries. I am following after her,” replied the husband.

“Yes! Peccaries have come by this way,” replied the jaguar from where he was seated. “This meat here, lying on the grill, they are peccaries that I have killed. That’s my firewood over there to grill them.”

The jaguar then suggested that he accompany them, and went off leading them after the peccary.

“This way,” he said, sniffing along the ground.

“The people fled this way,” he carried on, sniffing as he went. Further and further on he led them.

“They went home this way, by this trail,” called down some capuchin monkeys.<sup>82</sup>

“Come, friend,” said the jaguar, “they went this way.” Still further on the jaguar led them.

“Here the tracks are really fresh,” he said. The peccary had ripped up *mana* palms and eaten them. The small palms lay about broken at the waist.

Further on they descended into a stream. The water was all soiled by the peccaries’ crossing.

“Look. People have gone by very recently,” said the jaguar.

The husband looked all about.

“You’re right,” he said.

The jaguar ran all about and then led them up over a hill. They came on very fresh spoor.

“Right now they’ve gone by, friend,” said the jaguar: and, as they came up to the top of the hill, they heard the peccaries collecting firewood - *to! to! to!*

“The people are down there,” said the jaguar. The husband and his



relations looked all about.

“Yes! You’re right. You go over there beyond them, then we’ll chase them towards you,” they said to the jaguar.

“Right,” he replied. The jaguar then went and sat down beyond the peccaries.

“Right! Give chase,” said the jaguar.

The Sanema immediately gave chase.

- *Ka! blululululululu! na! na! na! nanana! blulululu! eu! eu! eu! eu!* went the peccaries.

The jaguar caught the Sanema woman. The peccaries, furious, grunted fiercely at the jaguar - *eu! eu! eu! eu!*

“Right,” called the jaguar to the hunters. So saying, he grabbed the woman by the nose and ripped off her skin, drawing it back over the forehead and all down the back - *gledidididi!* He completely stripped the outer skin from off her. He set the skin down on the trail. It ran off after the peccaries - *na! na! na! na!*

The husband then kept from looking at his wife, while the jaguar prepared her properly. He put cotton armbands on her, and attached curassow<sup>83</sup> feathers to the bands. He put bead bandoliers, crossing her shoulders to her waist; he threaded tanager<sup>84</sup> skins to hang from her ears, he painted her body and face with anatto.<sup>85</sup> He cut off all her hair. For she was celebrating her passage into adulthood.

“Right,” he said to the husband.

The husband looked at his wife, all painted up and beautifully prepared.

“Thank you,” said the husband.

### T 37. *The menstruating girl and the bats*

Over there there was a huge mountain. The ancestors used to kill bats<sup>86</sup> by that mountain. There were many, many bats hanging there among the rocks on the mountain.

One girl was in confinement during her first menses.

“Don’t eat bats!” people had said. But a little boy came and visited her. He gave her a bat. She ate it. The girl got diarrhoea. Then her arms changed into wings and she turned into a bat. She flew off towards the mountain - *se! se! se! se!*

Her brother was out hunting bats with his blowpipe.<sup>87</sup> He shot a dart through her wing - *bloto!* Then he returned home. They ate the bat. Those ancestors had terrible diarrhoea.

T 65. *The menstruating girl and the bats*<sup>88</sup>

A young girl was just celebrating her first menses. Others had gone to a large mountain to collect bats. They climbed up and collected the bats in baskets. *Tolo! Tolo! Tolo! Tolo! Tolo! Tolo!* They plucked them down from the ceiling of the caves.

Later the girl who was menstruating ate one of the wrapped, cooked bats.

“Give me mine!” she had said so they gave her one and she ate it.

Once she had eaten it with great enjoyment she wanted very much to chant. Her soul-space wanted to sing a song.

“*Na-bi di na-bi di na-bi di na-bi di.*”  
 (a Yekuana a Yekuana a Yekuana a Yekuana)

Such was the song she longed to sing. She flapped her arms and flew off flapping - *la hu! la hu! la hu! la hu!*

“Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!”

So she sang, and she flew off towards the mountain singing

“Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!  
 Yekuana!”

Her brothers went out to look for her. They clambered up the mountain.

One of them blew a dart from his blowpipe - *bloto!* It stuck in her wing - *se! se! se! se! se! se!* The bat fell to the ground.

The brother ripped off her skin - *gledididididi!* and chucked it away. It was a bat and flew off - *lahu! lahu! lahu! lahu!*

T 66. *The pubertal boy and the bats*

One boy was just about to celebrate his passage into adulthood.<sup>89</sup> It was

after that girl had already turned into a bat. The boy went with many other Sanema into a cave in the big mountain to collect bats. One after another they crept into the cave. Once they had collected the bats they squeezed out again one after another. But just as it came to the young boy in the *padashibi* age group,<sup>90</sup> he was just about to celebrate his passage into adulthood, just as it was his turn the cave's mouth closed shut!...

Back at the house a youth who had just learnt how to shamanize was taking *sakona* snuff<sup>91</sup> and chanting. As he chanted, he danced to and fro, to and fro.

The others returned and told him what had happened; how they had been collecting bats and putting them into their back-baskets and had all left but one when the cave's mouth closed.

"Really!" nodded the youth and then he continued with his chanting.

The cave's mouth opened! and the boy came out. The *hekula* spirits had done it; because that youth had chanted the boy had come back.

T 15. *A menstruating girl goes dancing*<sup>92</sup>

Far over there is the house of the *Waikia*<sup>93</sup> people. The ancestors of the *Waikia* said "Everyone is to dance!"

"Really!" others replied and so all the people who had been out *wāshimo*<sup>94</sup> returned. Many many people came over to have the dance. There were people all over the place. The new arrivals got painted up. Then one by one they went into the central compound. One girl was just about to celebrate her first menses. She accompanied the men, who danced in the central compound. They began to return to their shelter. The girl accompanied the elders. As they reached the house the men played their flutes - *bi!* Everyone cried out - *aaaaa!* The girl who was accompanying them also exclaimed

"*Aaaa!* look at all the people, they are all over the place. Everyone is decorated in their down!"<sup>95</sup>

As she said that all these people, those newly arrived, turned into a huge mountain. So when others called to them they couldn't hear anything. Nothing at all. People came over to investigate. They stared on. They stared at the huge mountain all covered in down.

T 5. *Tinimisoma*

*Tinimisoma*<sup>96</sup> was a woman though she had very long fingernails.

A Sanema woman asked her to hold her baby.

"Right," said *Tinimisoma* and took the baby. With her long fingernail she sliced the baby's side wide open. She ate the child's liver.

Then she gave the baby back to the mother. The mother cried. People came to look. The whole side had been laid wide open.

After that, her brother went off hunting. *Tinimisoma* accompanied him. In the jungle she killed him. Once he was dead she cut out his liver and put it into her small back-basket on some leaves. Being a young girl she only had a small basket.<sup>97</sup> The liver filled it to the brim. She returned home. She ate some of it after cooking it wrapped in leaves at night. But people looked in the basket and saw a human liver in it.

“This girl is really bad,” they said.

They collected firewood, made up a big fire and fanned it up. They threw *Tinimisoma* onto the fire and heaped firewood on top of her. *Tinimisoma* was completely burnt.

T 68. *Tinimisoma*<sup>98</sup>

The girl who became the *tinimi* armadillo was in confinement celebrating her first menses. She had fingernails like a *waka* armadillo<sup>99</sup> but she kept them hidden in her clenched fists. When her husband went hunting she accompanied him. They went some way into the forest.

“Let’s play around here,” suggested the husband.<sup>100</sup> But she killed him with her fingernails - *gloso! wa tili!* Then she ate her husband - *glun! glun! glun! glun!* She got really full and then put some *pishia* leaves<sup>101</sup> in her small back-basket. She put the liver on top. Then she returned home and slipped back into her leafy confinement, and she sat down.

“Where’s your husband?” people asked her.

“I don’t know. I lost him and came back alone,” she replied.

So when her brother went out to look for his brother-in-law, her husband, she accompanied him too. When they reached the place where she had killed her husband *Tinimisoma* said,

“This is where I lost my husband.” Then she killed her brother and ate him too. She carried his liver home in her back-basket as before. When she got back.

“But where is your brother?” people asked.

“I don’t know; he told me to go on home so I did,” she replied.

So she lied about those others being lost. Later on she accompanied another Sanema into the forest and killed him too and ate him like the others.

She was pretending to be in confinement for her first menses and she kept her fingernails concealed in her clenched fists, but the blood on her fingernails dripped out and the Sanema found the livers in her back-basket so they knew it was her.

“She’s the one who’s killed those Sanema,” people said.

The Sanema tried to throw her into the fire but she got up out of it. They threw her into another fire but she got out of that. They all threw lengths of palm-wood<sup>102</sup> onto her but she snapped them in her arms - *ta! ta! ta! ta!* With her strong fingernails she ripped the pieces of wood apart —*gledididi! gledididi! gledididi!* Eventually she was properly crushed by the weight.<sup>103</sup>

T 77. *The ancestors' wasamo*

The ancestors had recently cremated a Sanema in a fire. They were carrying out *wasamo*<sup>104</sup> by the fireside.

*"Sapa sapa we ee—ee—ee—ee—ee (Throw! throw!)  
sapa sapa we ee—ee—ee—ee—ee."* (Throw! throw!)

So sang one man. Then he flung his companion sideways so that he fell in the fire. .



Photo 5: *Wasamo*.

T 8. *The moon on a fireless night*<sup>105</sup>

Way over there the Sanema had gone into the forest *wāshimo*.<sup>106</sup> A single Sanema came to visit them but since the others were out he found the house empty. So he sat in the house alone and fanned at the fire. It did not catch. Under the fireplace the Sanema had buried an old man, the visitor did not know this at all. He lay in his hammock all alone. Then he took out his firesticks<sup>107</sup> and twirled them. But no fire emerged. Not at all. He lay down again. Although it was nighttime it became very bright. The moon climbed down from the sky and then came into the house where the Sanema lay in his hammock.

—*Blo! Blo! Blo! Blo!* The moon dug under the hearth. The Sanema was terrified. He overheard the moon pull the corpse from out of the ground - *pli*. The moon broke a hand off the corpse - *glo'ai!*

—*Ka'u! ka'u! ka'u!* went the moon's mouth as he ate.

"O! I wish dawn would come quickly!" said the man.

T 38. *A childeating ogre*<sup>108</sup>

Those people they lived far over there. In that season there were many "Inga" fruits.<sup>109</sup> People had gone out to collect "Inga". In the house a young girl was in confinement during her first menses. She, an old woman and the children were the only ones in the house. All the others had gone out.

An evil being, a *hasakoli* woman, approached the house.

"Where have the people gone?" she asked the old woman.

"Gone to collect 'Inga' fruits," she replied.

"I haven't seen those people," said the evil being. "And where have the other people gone?" she asked.

"Gone off in canoes," replied the old woman.

"I've not collected *those* people's blood, I don't know them," said the evil being menacingly.

The menstruating girl overheard, she fled terrified.

"Go and draw some water," said the evil being.

"Right," replied the old woman. She put the calabashes<sup>110</sup> in her back-basket, all the children accompanied her. Then they ran off to where the menstruating girl had fled. The evil being lunged at the leaves<sup>111</sup> to catch the confined girl. But the leaves were empty.

"O!" said the evil being. Meanwhile the others had fled. The evil being went after them. She laughed mockingly. *G'lai!* - she killed the old woman. She put the old woman into her huge back-basket. She killed a child, another, another, another. She put them all into the basket. She then

put three live children on top.

She went off, *wā!* As the evil being stooped under a low branch one of the live children grabbed it and pulled himself up into the tree. The child sat on a branch up in the tree.

“*Ksch! Kschuwi! Ksch! Kschuwi!*” went the evil being to attract the child.

But the child did not climb down at all. He fled. The evil being went on home to her large rock,<sup>112</sup> *tolo!* She went inside. She then ate the old woman, and ate all the dead children. The live ones remained.

Meanwhile the fathers returned. The little boy was sitting there all by himself.

“Where are they?” they asked. The little boy explained.

“Gone over there,” he said.

The fathers went over there to the big rock.

“This is the house of an evil being,” they said. They collected together chilis,<sup>113</sup> toasted tobacco,<sup>114</sup> and termites nests.<sup>115</sup> Then they fanned at the fire and blew the smoke into the cave. The smoke was intensely acrid.

“*Aaaaaa!*” called out the children. “It’s very hot, the smoke is really stinging hot! *aaaaaa!*” they cried. The children died<sup>116</sup> but the evil being did not.

So people have said.

#### T 9. *The origin of a honey*<sup>117</sup>

A girl was about to have her first menses. She said to her brother, “Go and collect me some honey.”

He went into the forest to collect it. First he bound up some burning leaves, and then he climbed up the tree. He was about to start chopping when he looked down at the ground. He began to transform. His tongue became the honey comb, his skin became the honey and his mouth became the bees.

His sister cried greatly, for she had liked him very much.

#### T 19. *Hemadoi people*

The *hemadoi* people lived far over there in a huge house. A very large house by the edge of a small lake. The girls of the house, those ancestral girls, they were about to celebrate their first menses.

The whole house fell. It disappeared into the ground - *ta!* An old woman who had been sitting outside, she turned into the *kunamgoshi* toad.<sup>118</sup> Other Sanema arrived.

“We’ve arrived” they shouted.

“We’ve arrived!” they shouted.  
There was no-one there.<sup>119</sup>

T 34. *The fall of the sky*

Long ago, very long ago the sky fell down on the ancestors. Nearly all the ancestors were killed. The few that were left took up spider-monkey bones<sup>120</sup> and howler-monkey bones<sup>121</sup> and dug a hole up above them.

They dug their way up through the sky - *gle! gle! gle!* They dug their way back to the top. There on top of the sky we are also. So the elders have said. So the elders who lived there in the uplands passed the story on.<sup>122</sup>

T 62. *The origin of the obinani*<sup>123</sup>

Long ago the ancestors fell down underground. For whenever a young girl was menstruating people took no notice.

“Mummy. I’m menstruating! Mummy!” the girl might say, but people paid no attention. So they fell underground. In that way many people fell underground and these people became the *obinani* people.<sup>124</sup> They fell underground because they ignored their girls’ first menses.

The huge Sanema falling from up above would be chopped up by the other *obinani* below into many pieces. The pieces became many more little *obinani*.

“*Obinani! obinani! obinani! obinani! obinani!*” they shouted, they were all over the place.

The *moka*<sup>125</sup> frogs on the surface they were hopping about in the bog where the people had fallen underground, amongst the marsh people.<sup>126</sup> And these frogs copied the sound of the *obinani* shouting underground.

“*Ai ai! ai ai! ai! ai ai! ai ai!*” call the frogs.

In this way the *Shamatali* people also fell underground. Omao hearing the clamour of the people underground lifted up the roof and looked down. He saw lots of really fierce people running about in the hole. He replaced the covering.

He heard another bunch of people also shouting from a different place. He opened that hole too and peered in. There were many little *Waikia* people rushing about all over the place. They were really fierce and always shooting arrows so he replaced the top on them too.

Omao didn’t help these people to climb back to the surface because they were so fierce and were always shooting off their arrows. He would look into the hole.

“No! Definitely not them! This lot are really fierce. I’ll put the top back over them. They’re always shooting off their arrows,” he would say,



and he would put the top back over them.

T 80. *The origin of the foreigners*

Long ago it was that Omao let out the Sanema.<sup>127</sup> There were no tracks in those days. Omao came upon a big rock, he opened it and many foreigners were inside. They looked out at him. They were very friendly. They had aeroplanes, and clothes and books. They had hats on. So Omao left that one open.

He came on another rock and he opened that one too. There were many fierce foreigners in that one. They were killing each other with big spears - *gloso! gloso! gloso!* He closed the rock on them.

Further on there was another rock. He opened it. These people were really fierce too, shooting off arrows all the time. He closed the rock on them too.

Those foreigners were called the *holema* people.<sup>128</sup>

T 74. *The origin of the moon*

Long ago the Sanema went out hunting. They killed a tapir.<sup>129</sup> While they were cooking up the liver they reminded screaming piha<sup>130</sup> that he mustn't eat meat. For screaming piha was passing into adulthood and had taken off his cotton armbands.

"Don't eat meat," people said.

But screaming piha got really annoyed. He grabbed the liver and flung it up into the sky. The liver became the moon.

T 73. *The source of the big river*<sup>131</sup>

Long ago there was no big river. The big river did not exist at all. By the place where the big river was to be, a small child cried and cried. The baby cried for water because it was thirsty. It cried so much that it became thin and wasted.

"Don't do that," said an elder. He took a stick and dug a hole. The water poured out and became a river. The elder drew water and gave it to the child. The baby drank and drank! He became that small bird that goes - *swiii!*<sup>132</sup>

Now whenever that bird goes - *swiii! swiii! swiii!* it is a signal that a child is dying.

T 22. *Ghost woman*<sup>133</sup>

A Sanema's wife had died. The child was very thirsty. The man and his child were alone in the house, everyone else having gone away. The house was practically empty. The father gave his child a mush of *nimo* palm fruits.<sup>134</sup> A ghost woman approached in the night.

"A *Waikia*, a *Waikia* man!" the ghost woman said.

T 26. *The deer and the peach-palm fruits*<sup>135</sup>

The deer was the original shaman. He snuffed a lot of *sakona* snuff.<sup>136</sup> This original deer<sup>137</sup> was the father-in-law of *Asbekonomai*.<sup>138</sup>

"Girl,"<sup>139</sup> said the deer, while sniffing his *sakona* all by himself. "Girl, go and collect my peach-palm fruits."<sup>140</sup>

"Right!" replied *Asbekonomai* and with his wife, the deer's daughter, he went out. They collected the real peach-palm fruits. They carried them home. They cooked them up. The deer then ate a lot of the fruits.

"Mummy! Mummy! these peach-palm fruits are really delicious," said the deer.

"On the contrary. They're from a different palm altogether. That *Asbekonqmai* brought back a different fruit!" said his daughter.

"Really!" replied the deer. "Well you chuck that fruit right out!" he said.

"Now! Where's my peccary tooth?"<sup>141</sup> he asked. Taking the peccary jaw he scraped his lower legs - *ho'oni! ho'oni! ho'oni! ho'oni!* The calf became all thin and misshapen. Then he rubbed himself with anatto - rub! rub! rub! He stuck a bunch of cotton in for a tail. *Hwww! hwww!* - he ran off into the jungle.

That's how he turned into an animal. The deer ran off!

T 71. *The first shaman*

A Sanema ancestor chanted for the first time. The *hekula* chanted for the first time.

"*Se! se! se! se! se! se! se! se! se! se! se! se!*" said the ancestor *hekula*.

"Here drink a little of this gruel,"<sup>142</sup> said the man's wife.

"Definitely not! I'm full up. I'm already full with the *hekula's* food," said the man.

"*Se! se! se! se! se!*" he chanted. Day after day passed; one day, two days, another, another, another, another ... till the tenth day.<sup>143</sup>

"Drink your gruel", said the wife again.

“No! I’m already full,” he said. The wife cried.

“*Se! se! se! se! se! se! se!*” he went on chanting.

The ancestor jaguarized,<sup>144</sup> he carried a large back-basket and he leapt right up into a *monama* tree and landed on the branch - *gudi!* He put the *monama* fruits<sup>145</sup> into the back-basket - *tolo! tolo! tolo! tolo!*

Then he flapped his ears - *dadadadadada!*<sup>146</sup>

#### T 58. *The original shaman*

The deer<sup>147</sup> was the original shaman. Other Sanema didn’t know about *sakona*<sup>148</sup> at all. The deer was the first to chant. He sniffed *sakona*. The deer said to the ancestors,

“Rip down my *sakona*.”

“But where from?” they asked. So the deer showed them. And then they learnt how to rip down the *sakona*. They made *sakona* for the deer. And the Sanema also tried the snuff. So they learnt of *sakona*. Since then they have always used that tree.

Once they had taken the *sakona* the dream people arrived, and the Sanema ancestors began to chant for the first time. It was using the deer’s snuff that the Sanema learnt to do so. The ancestors from upstream learnt of the *sakona* from the deer.

#### T 43. *Diseases in the forest*

Everyone had gone *wāshimo*. Everyone had terrible fever.<sup>149</sup> The elders all had diarrhoea. One child had been taken, then another, another, another, and another. But one old man he had not gone with them.

In the night he went and sat at the bottom of a tree.

A hawk above him cried out - *koo! koo!* The old man chanted.<sup>150</sup> “That one it said ‘I am the tree’.”

Much later the others all returned home. They found the old man still at the bottom of the tree. He was dead. He was crouched there all stiff and hard.

#### T 39. *Poodoli people*

A man and his wife had gone *wāshimo*. The *poodoli*<sup>151</sup> people came night-raiding.<sup>152</sup> From the house they could hear a machete snicking through the undergrowth - *gli! gli! gli!*

“Wake up! Wake up!” said the husband. “An armadillo is walking by!”

“Really?” she replied.



Photo 6: Shamans dancing to and fro' during collective curing.

The husband crawled off towards the noise. The *poodoli* people looped a vine about his ankle. Then they dragged him off - drag! drag! drag! drag!  
 "That's right! That's right! That's the way," said the wife. So people said.

T 20. *The reluctant old woman*

Far over there some Sanema had gone *wāshimo*. They had been out there for many days. People then decided to return home.

The next day they got ready to go. One old lady sat on the ground very firmly.

"Off we go," they said. The old lady was reluctant, very reluctant. People grabbed hold of her arm and tried to pull her up. They pulled very hard. But the old lady stayed firmly where she was.

"Enough of that!" people said giving up. The old lady turned into a termites nest.<sup>153</sup>

T 25. *River music*

People had gone *wāshimo*. They went far, far, far, into the forests. One woman collected *kwali*<sup>154</sup> leaves and stuck them into the bands 'round her

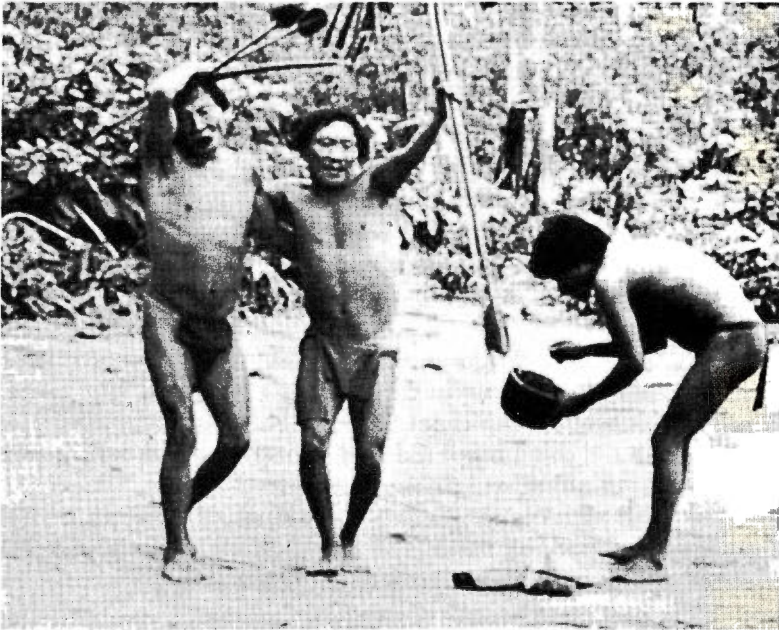


Photo 7: Collective shamanism and *Virola* snuff drug-taking.

upper arms. They went on and came to a large river. They crossed the river on a fallen tree one by one.

The woman with *kwali* leaves slipped and fell into the river. The others on the bank watched. She went deep down and did not reappear. Deep down underwater she sang a song, during the night. The great river sang her song too - *tui! tui! tui! tui!*

T 56. *Shinanidawawan*<sup>155</sup>

A man had gone *wāshimo* by himself. The husband went off hunting and the wife went to search for firewood. Shinanidawawan approached, he had killed a curassow.<sup>156</sup> He gave it to the Sanema's wife and she ate it.

When the husband came back he noticed the bones in the fire.

"Who killed the game?" he asked.

"A hawk killed it," she lied.

Next day the husband went off again, and while the wife was again collecting firewood, Shinanidawawan came back to the shelter and gave the woman another curassow.

“When your husband gets angry tell him I’ve got these bands ’round my arms,” he said pointing to his cotton armbands.

Later the husband returned carrying another curassow. He saw more bones lying in the fireplace. The husband got really angry.

“My wife is copulating with another Sanema; it’s he who gives her these birds!” he said. He became furious.

“I’ll strike him; I’ll beat him,” he threatened.

“He’s got cotton bands around his arms,” she told him. So he knew who the visitor was.

“I’ll beat him on the head,” he shouted. Shinanidawawan approached. He whistled as he came. He came into the house. He was very short.

“I’ll strike him on the head,” the husband had threatened. Shinanidawawan came and sat in the husband’s hammock. The husband was holding his agouti-tooth chisel.<sup>157</sup> He jabbed Shinanidawawan in the upper arm with the chisel but it snapped. Shinanidawawan had very long fingernails - *di! di! di! di!* He pinched the Sanema all over.

“*Ipa! ipa! ipa!*” exclaimed the husband in pain. Then Shinanidawawan ripped all the skin off the Sanema’s body - *gledididididi!*

In the middle of the trail he hung up the empty skin; the wife fled back home. There were many Sanema there.

“Shinanidawawan! He’s killed my husband,” she told them. The Sanema set to make rope, huge lengths of rope from silkgrass.<sup>158</sup> Then they set off towards Shinanidawawan’s house. As they came near they found the empty skin hanging in the trail.

“Keep going!” they said. “We’ll beat him to death!”

“Right.” They arrived at Shinanidawawan’s house. Some of the Sanema went and sat in Shinanidawawan’s hammock. - *Di! di! di! di!* he nipped them all over. The Sanema were all around him. They bound him up with the rope. But - *di! di! di! di!* - he cut his way out. The Sanema grabbed any vines<sup>159</sup> that came to hand and tried to bind him with that but - *di! di! di! di!* - he cut his way out.

“*Lebus* vine,<sup>160</sup> I suppose,” they said. They pulled down some *lebus* vine and bound Shinanidawawan right up. Then they tried to shove an arrow up his arsehole but his arsehole was really hard. So, instead, they pushed the fresh end of a *lebus* vine up him. Then the Sanema beat him furiously, and so Shinanidawawan died.

Once he was dead they chopped the body up and left the pieces hanging from the trees.

Much later when they came back to look, there were only curassow bones hanging there.

So people said, elder brother.

T 67. *Honey magic*

Some people had gone *wāshimo*. There was a girl with them who was just about to celebrate her first menses. Since they were *wāshimo* the people were hungry.

“Boy! Collect some honey,”<sup>161</sup> the girl said to her brother. So the brother went off down the hill. He bound a liana about his waist and climbed up the tree, with a bunch of leaves hanging down below him. He was going to burn the leaves to smoke out the bees.

The bee-people pulled at his lower leg and turned him upside down. The boy turned into the honey.

His sister mourned,

“O boy! O boy! O boy! my little one! Come back down alright! O boy! O boy! O boy!”

So she mourned.

Much later on that tree died and fell down.

Later still people again came *wāshimo* in that place. The people installed themselves on the other side of the stream right near where that tree had been. That one who had climbed the tree long ago he began to chant. The song came down from up above where the leaves had been.

Song:

“B - b - b - b - b - b - b - b - b - b -  
*su-ni na-gi wasu ha-sa-ha po-le-mo - se*  
 (*alawali* leaves really strong I’m really jaguarizing)<sup>162</sup>  
 B - b - b - b - b - b - b - b - b - b!”<sup>163</sup>

Those people who were *wāshimo* they heard the song.

“There are people nearby,” they said.

“Long ago a Sanema climbed that tree and never came back down. That’s who it must be,” said one of them.

Sanema nowadays are able to take in all these *bekula* and the Sanema chant. That Sanema, who climbed up the tree, he first chanted. The Sanema of today chant a lot because that one who transformed sang from where the leaves of that tree had once been.

T 14. *Koshiloli*<sup>164</sup>

Koshiloli,<sup>165</sup> his wife and her brother lived at some distance from the rest of his wife’s relations. One day Koshiloli went hunting a great distance. On returning with his wife’s dog and his brother-in-law, his brother-in-law

killed a parrot.<sup>166</sup> But the arrow lodged in the branches.

"Climb up and shake the arrow down," said Koshiloli. The brother-in-law climbed up and managed to shake the arrow back down. Koshiloli lurked by the foot of the tree. The brother-in-law climbed back down; Koshiloli killed him, striking him angrily with a stick - *to! to! to! to!*

Koshiloli returned to the house carrying the dead Sanema. He reached the house and laid the Sanema on the ground. He approached his wife.

"Butcher the game!" he said to his wife. She, seeing her dead brother lying on the ground, mourned for him.

"It's heavy," she said. She cut open the belly and pulled out the guts - *wi! wi! wi!*

"No spoor?" she asked Koshiloli.

"No, nothing," he replied.

Once she had prepared the game, she went over to her people.

"My husband has killed my brother," she reported.

"Really!" her people replied. "Right. Make him sit outside and pretend to pick out his lice, bend his face back, like this!, so he faces into the sun."

"Yes!" she said.

Returning home she cooked up the liver.<sup>167</sup> The child ate it.

"Come and sit here! I'll do your lice," she said to her husband.

"Yes," he replied. He came and sat down in front of her. She bent his head back to face into the sun, while her people, come raiding, approached. She held Koshiloli's face up towards the sun. The others killed him with a blow of the machete - *ka!* So Koshiloli died.

### T 13. *Solamani*

A man and his wife had gone *wāshimo*. In the evening the man went out. Solamani<sup>168</sup> approached, he was carrying his blowpipe. The Sanema shot him - *glos!* The arrow stuck in Solamani's back. He fell down dead.

The sperm poured from the dead man's genitals. - *Blio! Blio! Blio!* The Sanema collected *pishia*<sup>169</sup> leaves. He laid them on the ground to collect the sperm which poured out. - *Blio! Blio! Blio!* Then he wrapped it all up like a wood quail.<sup>170</sup>

He returned home. "Your wrapped wood quail," he said.

"Eat it!" he said to his wife. "Eat your Sanema." The wife ate it up. It was delicious, the sperm tasted like cassava. After she had eaten it all up the wife disappeared into the jungle.

"Solamani! solamani! solamani!" she called out.



T 72. *The origin of pendare*<sup>171</sup> - fruits.

The *hekula* people<sup>172</sup> went raiding. They were Sanema *hekula*. They went far across the forest. As they arrived they were shouting,

“*Ai! ai! ai! ai! ai! ai! ai! ai!*” and they clashed their arrows - *dau! dau!* They loosed their arrows - *daia! weeeee!* and transfixing other *hekula* - *gloso!*

One *hekula* loosed his arrow - *daninininini!* it flew quivering and transfixing four *hekula* in turn<sup>173</sup> - *gloso! gloso! gloso! gloso!* - the hummingbird *hekula*,<sup>174</sup> the *moka* frog *hekula*,<sup>175</sup> the *waika* tanager *hekula*<sup>176</sup> and the *Shamatali* tanager *hekula*.<sup>177</sup>

The enemy got up again and shot their arrows in turn at the raiders - *gloso! gloso!* The spider monkey grabbed his staff, the *sua* vine, that is called the spider monkey vine, the original vine, the *hekula* vine. The spider monkey struck at the raiders - *pa!* and ripped them apart - *gledididididi!* he struck their shoulders and so dismembered them - *pa tu! gledidididididi!* People were shooting off arrows all over the place.

When the raiders returned home they came to a big, clear<sup>178</sup> river and they plunged into the river to wash - *koolu!* Downstream the *kaimani* tree<sup>179</sup> had fallen into the river - *gloo!* The *hiuliuna*<sup>180</sup> tree too, and the *asmada*<sup>181</sup> tree they had all fallen across that river.

The *hekula* washed their wounds and the blood poured out, into the water. As the blood flowed through their branches the trees sprang back up, upright! - *pau!*<sup>182</sup> The *kaimani* tree bore much fruit, the *hiuliuna* tree bore much fruit, and the *asmada* tree bore much fruit. The fruits were the Sanema's blood. And the bird that goes - *ta ke! ta ke! ta ke! ta ke!*<sup>183</sup> that is the signal of the blood.

T 76. *The pinadu*

The guan people<sup>184</sup> had gone *washimo*. They were eager to eat *apia* fruits.<sup>185</sup> So all of them climbed high up into a huge *apia* tree.

While they were up the tree evil shamans<sup>186</sup> came raiding; they were the *pinadu* mice people.<sup>187</sup> They blew their *alawali* up at the tree - *bloto! glashi!* so that it struck the tree where it branched. And another blew his *alawali* at another point where the tree divided - *bloto! glashi!* The branches ripped away from the great tree - *gledididididi!* and crashed down below. Many of the guan people were killed.

Three of the guan people noticed what was happening, they climbed slowly down and jumped down into the branches of another tree - *wisa sili!* - *wisa sili!* - *wisa sili!* They were the guan people.

T 82. *The evil being*

Far over there an evil being went out and came near to a Sanema settlement. A Sanema went out hunting and the evil being killed him - *gloso!*

After binding the corpse up into a bundle the evil being laid the Sanema on a grill and roasted it. Then once the corpse was properly smoked the evil being went off homewards again carrying the dead Sanema on his back. The corpse had been gutted and bound up. The mouth had tightened up to reveal all the teeth.<sup>188</sup>

The evil being approached the Sanema settlement. All the men were out hunting. There was only an old woman there. It was light and the old woman could still see quite clearly.

Far down the trail she heard a call:

“*Kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwātoto!*” and then again much later:

“*Kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwā kwātoto!*”

The evil being approached. He came down the trail and then came up to the house. He was still carrying the dead Sanema.

“Go away! *Aaaaa!* I’m really frightened!” said the old woman.

“Are you frightened?” asked the evil being in a sinister, sympathetic tone.

“Yes! O! I’m frightened!” she replied.

The evil being went off with the smoke-blackened corpse still slung on his back. The evil being carried the corpse far away.

Then again from over there came the call:

“*Kwā kwā kwā kwā kwātoto!*”<sup>189</sup>

T 40. *Hasakoli-woman and the caterpillars*

It was long ago. There were many caterpillars in that part of the forest. Early one morning a Sanema went out and collected a cocoon of caterpillars.<sup>190</sup> He bound a vine round it and carried it slung on his back, he returned home. The women went out to collect firewood, and then after cooking the caterpillars they all ate them.

A *hasakoli*-woman, an evil being, appeared.

“Come and collect more caterpillars,” she said to the man.

“Really,” he said. “Right off you go.” The Sanema accompanied her.

It wasn’t nearby. They went a very long way. A startled tinamou<sup>191</sup> flew off - *bududududududu!* The *hasakoli*-woman had disappeared. The man found he was in a part of the forest he didn’t know at all. He collected some caterpillars. As he returned home he called out “*Aaaaaa!*” “*Eeeee*” the

others replied. So he followed the call home. Finally at very dusk he arrived.

"*Hii!* I went off with an evil being," he explained. "An evil being lured me away."

T 3. *Hasakoli-woman and the honey*

A man went out hunting leaving his wife and single son at home. In the forest he began to chop for honey - *glo! glo! glo!* He gave some to his wife which she ate - *waliki! waliki! waliki!*<sup>192</sup> The husband then let fall the honey comb<sup>193</sup> - *salaaa! tu!* it went as it fell.

The wife sniffed at the comb - *nff! nff! nfnff!* She was not his real wife but a *hasakoli*-woman. The husband then climbed down and wrapped the comb in leaves. He then killed a porcupine.<sup>194</sup>

"Off you go home," said the husband to the *hasakoli*-woman whom he thought was his wife.

"What have you done with the baby?" he asked.

"My father-in-law is looking after it," she lied.

"Right," he said.

"Off you go home then and take the porcupine and the comb," said the husband.

"Right," she lied; she went off. The husband followed and went on home. The *hasakoli*-woman went off to her home, leaving the comb lying on the ground. The husband made his own way home, approached the house. When he arrived his wife said,

"But you've not collected any honey!"

"But I gave you the honey," he replied.

"No, you didn't," she said.

"I wrapped the honey up," he insisted, "and told you to take it and the porcupine home with you."

"Nothing of the sort!"

"What? most strange!" he said.

Next day the husband returned on his tracks. He found the honey comb still properly wrapped lying on the ground. He picked it up.

"*K#!*" he exclaimed angrily.

So he carried it back home.

The people had been very hungry.

T 29. *Snake lover*<sup>195</sup>

A husband and his wife went *wāsbimo*. Once they were installed, the husband went out hunting. While he was out an *iskolem* snake<sup>196</sup> approached the house where the girl was alone. He carried a kinkajou<sup>197</sup> and

an olingo<sup>198</sup> on his back. He was very handsome.

“My husband it seems,” thought the woman.

“Let’s copulate,” said the snake.

“Yes!” she replied. “My husband won’t come back. He’s gone into the forest.” The snake fucked<sup>199</sup> the woman - *glos! glos! glos! glos!* In copulating he had messed up her cunt, her labia were all extended. He left the kinkajou on the ground.

“Sit easy!” said the snake.

“Where do you live?” asked the Sanema girl.

“There, upstream, away upstream beyond the stand of *pishia*<sup>200</sup> leaves,” the snake said.

“Right!” said the Sanema girl. She sat on the ground.<sup>201</sup> The husband returned carrying a guan.<sup>202</sup>

“Pluck the guan!” he said. But the girl was very scared and reluctant.

“Whatever for?” asked the husband. “Pluck that game and quick!” he said. The wife stayed where she was sitting on the ground. The husband turned his wife over and looked at her cunt. Ugh! It was all shitty! It was all messed up by the copulation of the snake.

“*Kiii!* Right this is it! Where to?” said the husband.

“Over there ‘just beyond the stand of *pishia* leaves is where I live’ that’s what he said.”

“Right!” said the husband.

The husband went raiding. He came on a tiny little house. Looking inside he saw a single snake lying in his hammock. The snake was asleep. The husband struck the snake, he hit it in fury and so killed it.

That’s the story that has been passed on.

### T 31. *Worm love*<sup>203</sup>

The *holema* snake<sup>204</sup> once fucked a Sanema woman. It was over there; the Sanema woman had gone into the forest. The *holema* snake was up in a tree eating, he was eating *asmada* fruits.<sup>205</sup> The Sanema woman approached.

“Sit down<sup>206</sup> on some fresh leaves,” said the snake.

“Right!” she replied. The snake threw down two branches of fruit and then he climbed down. He was very beautiful and wore many beads. She ate the fruits - *glun! glun! glun! glun!*

The snake burrowed down under the ground under... under... under... under. He came up in her vagina - *gloso!*

The Sanema girl then returned home with the snake still inside her. In the night the Sanema girl laughed - *hi! hi! hi! hi! hi! hi!* She laughed a lot.

Come daybreak the girl pretended to be ‘sitting.’ She put the *holema* snake into a pot. Then she covered her new ‘husband’ with the lid.

“That’s mine, don’t you touch it or I’ll be angry,” she said to her real husband. The girl was about to go out into the forest, the husband was shaping a new bow.

“That’s mine, don’t you look or I’ll be angry,” she said again.

“Alright! Alright! I’m just making my bow,” he said. He went on shaving his bow to the right shape.

“I wonder why my wife said that?” the husband said. He looked, there was a *holema* snake in the pot!

“Ugh! How horrible!” he exclaimed. He cooked up some *maigoshi*<sup>207</sup> in a pot and then poured the boiling resin over the *holema - salulo*! So the husband burnt the snake.

“Oooo! But my wife was so nice!” said the snake. So he died.

#### T 41. *Lalagigi and his Sanema wife*

Once, long ago, Lalagigi took a Sanema girl as his wife. She was one of the ancestors.

“You come back girl,” the mother had said. She became lost by the river. Lalagigi took her for his wife.

“Let my mother come too!” said the girl.

“Alright,” Lalagigi had replied. So the mother followed them. Nearby the water was very deep. It was there that Lalagigi had his house.

“Aaaaa! But I may drown!” cried the mother. She returned home. The girl went on alone to Lalagigi’s house.

Later the girl returned to her mother’s house, she was carrying her baby.

“Go and weed my garden,” the mother said to the girl. She went to the garden, carrying her baby and began to do the weeding. It was very hot in the garden. The little baby panted - *baaaa*! The mother suckled her baby which was Lalagigi’s child. As the child suckled the mother noticed the baby had many tongues. One, two, another, another, another...many little tongues!

#### T 36. *Lalagigi eats a child*

Children were bathing. Lalagigi ate one of the boys. He didn’t chew him but swallowed him alive; the boy was holding a knife. The mother cried and cried. She sat by the river catching fish and crying. The Sanema boy he cut his way out of Lalagigi. He came back and sat by his mother. He was all slimy. That is what the elders said of those children.



Photo 8: Sanema boy.

T 35. *Lalagigi eats a man*

“Daddy, daddy! There’s honey over there, daddy!” said this man’s son. The father went to collect the honey which was on the other side of the river. The tree was by the river. The father looped a liana about his ankles and prepared to climb.<sup>208</sup> He had his axe slung on his back and was sucking his tobacco. He had only climbed a little way up when the huge snake, *lala-gigi*, ate him all up. Ate him completely. So, that morning he died. The snake had swallowed him whole, axe, tobacco and all. So downstream that *lalagigi* he also died. So the elders have said.

T 47. *The Yekuana learn of hammocks and house construction*

Originally the Yekuana ancestors did not know how to make big houses. It was the *koli* people<sup>209</sup> who originally knew all about house construction. Their houses were the *wanimegi* trees<sup>210</sup> and the great spreading branches were the rafters. When the Yekuana looked up and saw the huge houses of the *koli* people they wanted to have houses like them.<sup>211</sup>

Now the *koli* people became really lazy and instead of making really big houses collected bunches of *asakus*<sup>212</sup> leaves to live in. But the Yekuana

did not become lazy at all. So the Yekuana and the *koli* people exchanged houses so that now today the Yekuana make very large houses and the *koli* just make small nests.

"It's really smokey in these little huts," the Yekuana had said, so the *koli* people gave them their big houses.

After giving the Yekuana their huge houses made of the branches of the *wanimegi* tree, the *koli* people also gave them the long scale lines to their hammocks. Originally the *koli* people used to weave their hammock's scale lines really well; it was from them that the Yekuana learnt how to weave them in that dividing fashion.<sup>213</sup>

Originally the Yekuana made really small houses but the *koli* people became really lazy so the Yekuana made the large houses instead of them.

"We work really hard," said the Yekuana, so the *koli* people gave hammocks and big houses to them.

Now originally the Yekuana had been really numerous like the *koli* are today, spread out all over the forests and living high up in the small branches. The Yekuana used to be as numerous.<sup>214</sup> Now they have changed roles with the *koli*. It is the *koli* today who make simple nests of *askadus*<sup>215</sup> leaves, that are dispersed all over the forests, and it is the Yekuana who work really hard.

#### T 42. *Sipinapada provides baskets*<sup>216</sup>

A *sipinapada*<sup>217</sup> was carrying a huge satchel.

"Come here! Come here!" the ancestors said to the monkey friendlyly.

"Alright," the monkey replied.

The ancestors killed the *sipina*. They shot him with many palm pointed arrows - *sek! sek! sek! sek! sek!* The *sipina* fell, he was dead - *tii!* He was carrying a big satchel.

They looked in the satchel. There were many small baskets inside. There were many manioc presses<sup>218</sup> and other baskets.<sup>219</sup> The Sanema did not know how to use them. The Yekuana they took many baskets and a manioc press. The Sanema then took one basket, too.

#### T 45. *The origin of modern goods*

In the time when Omao killed off the jaguar there were still no Sanema. Omao was yet to create them; there was just Omao and Soawe.

It was way downstream that Omao created the original Sanema. He created many of them. He created the *Shamatali* people and also the *sedenabi*.<sup>220</sup> He created many groups of Sanema, all speaking the same language. Omao also originally created us too. It was other people who

chased us into the highlands from there beyond.

Once Omao had created the Sanema he thought to himself, "Now that I've really created these Sanema people, these incomplete<sup>221</sup> Sanema, I must introduce them to aeroplanes, and pens and paper so that they can live like *sedenabi*." For Omao knew all about all these things - like aeroplanes and shotguns.

So it was that Omao offered books to the Sanema.

"Here! Take this book! With this book you can be like a foreigner, really properly so. Learning to say 'A', 'E', 'U', in the way of these foreigners, you can become like the missionaries."

But they did not accept the gift.



Photo 9: Finishing a hammock before inserting the long scale lines.

"*W#!* But what should we do with a book! How does one work this pen? We don't know how to write at all!" Thus replied our ancestors.

"What about this shotgun?" asked Omao. He fired the gun - *to!* "It kills game really efficiently, taken!<sup>222</sup> Do you like this? Take it!" said Omao.

"This thing? It's stupid and heavy!" they replied. "How does one work it? This shitty, black thing; it's really fiddly! And you might hurt yourself firing it! It's enough to make you run away!" That was how our ancestors replied.

"O dear! This is really bad. These Sanema don't want to be like Yekuana at all I'm afraid." So said Omao. "Not yet it seems. I think it must wait until later."



“What about an aeroplane then. I’ll give them this now I think, but not a big plane just a little one,” said Omao.

“What about this thing that flies? This is the tail that waves about. Here are the wings sticking out. You pull this little switch - *gli! eeeeeeeee!* then this other switch - *gli! eeeeeee! krrrrr!* Then the Sanema climbs in - *tolo!* and another one can sit here. In front of you is a little radio. You fly off.”

“ ‘Where to?’ you ask.

‘This way!’ a foreigner replies.” So said God.<sup>223</sup> That is what Omao said. But our Sanema ancestors didn’t accept it, they didn’t like it at all.

“*Wii!* People clambering about like that high up, in this flying tree. That’s really nasty!” replied we Sanema.

“What about this? Do you like this?” said Omao putting a cloth hammock and rolls of cotton cloth on the ground - *blo! blo!*

“Oh no! We don’t like it at all. This hammock it’s all close woven. We’d be cold in this!” they said.

“No! It’s not cold at all. You can wrap yourself in a sheet and thus get warm. You don’t need to fan the fire at night because you are enveloped in this sheet and blanket. When you wake up in the morning you aren’t cold at all. And if you’re a little cold you can put on a shirt.” Thus explained Omao.

But the Sanema did not take them, the ancestors accepted none of these things.

“O! My turn it seems,” said Soawe. He pulled down some lianas<sup>224</sup> - *selulo! selulo! selulo!* He waxed some hammock bindings and bound them on. Then he bundled up the hammock and slung it on his back.

“Right! Arrows! They didn’t like guns,” said Soawe. So saying he collected some arrow canes<sup>225</sup> - *pliki! pliki!*; straightened the arrows carefully; made the arrow notches<sup>226</sup> - *pakeke! pakeke!* ripped down the *shitokolia* bark<sup>227</sup> - *gledididi!* and spun it for a bowstring - bound on the arrow bindings, stuck in the *laka* arrowhead<sup>228</sup> - *gloso!* stuck in the *arali* tenon<sup>229</sup> - *gloso!* attached the bone point<sup>230</sup> - *gloso!*

“Dogs next I think. They didn’t like cows,” continued Soawe. He collected a *kasha*<sup>231</sup> mouse, a *kasna* mouse, a *kashtali* mouse and an arboreal opossum<sup>232</sup> and dragged them after him. He painted his face black with charcoal and painted his arrow heads red with anatto.<sup>233</sup>

Omao had decided to prepare the Sanema really slowly. “Later on I think,” he had said.

Soawe clashed his arrows - *da’u!*

“*Heu ho! heu ho!*” he called out fiercely, then he pulled at the leashes of his little dogs.

“*Wa! wa! wa! wa! wa!*” the dogs barked.

Thus it is that when the Sanema come visiting they cry out "*Heu bo!*"<sup>234</sup> And the dogs bark at them. Soawe made it so. He painted one dog black, one white, one red; so it is that the Sanema have lots of thin dogs all over the place. These dogs the Sanema received instead of cows. It was the *sedenabi* who received those. And they *Shamatali*, they too had been sitting by and looking on.

"Give it to me!" said the *Shamatali* people ancestors. "I'm really hungry."

"And this book?" said Omao.

"O yes! me too," they said, "all that strange writing, though I don't know how to write at all!"

"And this little aeroplane? you too?"

"Yes. Me too! though if we try flying in that plane we'll probably crash!" they said.

"And this shotgun?"

"O yes! Though I don't know about guns at all, all these shitty bits and fiddly operations!" so said the *Shamatali* people; and so replied the *sedenabi* also.

High up in the sky - *m m m m m m m!* they go flying by. Things, things they go by! go by! go by! And here are we, us children below.

"O! woe! My ancestors they really make me *angry!*" that is what we say now. "Walking slowly along on the ground - over mountains, along the trails, crossing rivers! - it's all really tiring. And all the while those others go swiftly flying by. And all thanks to our ancestors." That's what we say now, and we are really angry too.

### Verbal III. *The cannibal*

A long time ago a *Walma*<sup>235</sup> had gone to visit the foreigners.<sup>236</sup>

"Who are you?" asked the foreigner. "Do you speak Spanish?"

The *Walma* who understood Spanish and was somewhat accustomed to living among the foreigners, pretended that he was also a foreigner and said that he did.

Shortly a *Waikia*<sup>237</sup> also arrived.

"And who are you?" the foreigner asked him.

"*Waikia sa,*"<sup>238</sup> the *Waikia* replied.

"*Wiii!* Long ago the *Waikia* killed all my relations and only I escaped as a young boy," the foreigner confided to the *Walma*. He killed the *Waikia* with a blow on the head and he began to butcher the body, cutting out the guts and arranging all the flesh on a griddle to smoke the meat.

He cooked up the liver and began to eat it. He offered some to the *Walma*. The liver made a strange noise - *glî! glî! glî! glî!*

The *Walma* refused to eat it but the foreigner was insistent. Being very afraid of the foreigner the *Walma* finally accepted and then hastily ate some of it, feeling nauseous as he did so. Then he pretended that he was going out for a shit and he vomited up all the meat.

Next day the *Walma* bid his host farewell. The foreigner cut off a leg from the roasted flesh and gave it to the *Walma* to eat on the journey. The *Walma* was very afraid and chucked the meat into the river.

So the *Walma* told me.

#### T 79. *The origin of dogs*

This one concerns the Yekuana. Far upstream on the Merevari<sup>239</sup> the Yekuana ancestors went to collect dogs,<sup>240</sup> they were my ancestors.<sup>241</sup> Upstream they made a long trail through the jungle - *ta! ta! ta! ta! ta! ta! ta!* They cut a trail across the forests.

And they killed many tapirs. They killed them and roasted them and then left the roasted meat on the grill. They did the same with many tamanduas and with many peccaries, spread out at different points along the trail.<sup>242</sup>

Then further on they came on a great mountain. They cut down a tree and made a ladder. They climbed the ladder up the face of the rock to a place where they could look down into the cave where the dogs had their house.

Looking down they could see the little dogs; there a little white blobbed one, there another all red. The Yekuana let fall a piece of meat and a little puppy rushed forward to eat it. Letting fall another piece of meat another puppy also ran forward. The Yekuana quickly clambered down into the cavern and grabbed the little dogs - *pliki!* He gave them to another Yekuana who popped them into his basket - one dog - *tolo!* another dog - *tolo!* Then they rushed back along the trail, passed all the grilled meat.

Sometime later the big carnivore<sup>243</sup> father came back and found his puppies gone! He searched about and then gave chase. There were two of them, the father and mother carnivores they ran off after the Yekuana. When they came to the first stack of roasted game they stopped and ate it all up - *glun! glun!* Further on they came on more roasted meat and they ate that too - *glun! glun!* They came on more roasted meat again, further on, they ate that too - *glun! glun!*

Then being so full of meat the carnivores gave up the chase.

"Enough!" they said. "We've already taken payment."<sup>244</sup> So the Yekuana acquired their dogs, the ancestors have said.<sup>245</sup>

T 32. *The young Sanema visits the sun and moon.*

A long time ago, but long after Omao had created the Sanema, a young Sanema went to visit the original otter people<sup>246</sup> who were Yekuana. And when the otter people went downstream in their canoes he accompanied them. So together downstream in their canoes he plunged underwater. The otter people went on downstream underwater, only to resurface further on, but the Sanema did not plunge down with them, he stayed on the surface of the water and climbed out on top of a rock; and there he sat.

While he was still sitting on the rock the tinamou girl<sup>247</sup> approached.

“Who are you?” she asked.

“I’m a Sanema,” he replied.

“Come on! Come with me!” said the tinamou girl. “I’m feeling really randy. He’ll be my husband!” she continued to herself. So the youth accompanied her.

She had a huge, big hammock and they lay in it till it became dusk.

“I think I’m falling ill!” said the tinamou girl.

“You getting ill?”

“I think I’ve got diarrhoea,” she said.

“Well I’ve not!” he replied. So night fell, and it became very dark. He was pleased it was dark and the girl pleased him greatly. And so he got an erection because the tinamou girl was so beautiful. He was ready to copulate. But just as he was about to penetrate<sup>248</sup> her the tinamou girl farted - *u! dudududududu!* she flew off!

“What did you fart for?” he asked.

“No! Wait! Wait another three days then you can copulate with me,” she said.

“But you’re nice and fresh now! You’re ready to copulate, now!” he replied.

“Wait! Later on we’ll really do it,” she said. She was shy, being so young that’s why. She farted and flew off.

But the youth didn’t lie all alone in the hammock, instead he went and lay by himself on the branch of a large tree. And the moon came down the trail below the tree, he was carrying a sieve. Being very meat hungry he had come down to the river for food.<sup>249</sup>

“I’m going to scoop out some shrimps,” he said to himself and so he scooped them from the water with his sieve. Looking in the water he noticed the reflection of the youth’s face. Seeing the face in the water he tried to scoop it out but caught nothing.

“But where is it? Deep down I suppose!” but when he tried to scoop it up he only scraped up a lot of sand.

Then the Sanema's spit fell into the water. It fell right in the middle of the sieve - *tai*! The moon looked up and saw the youth sitting on the branch.

"Well! What a laugh!" he said. "Interesting! My game!" he said. "Climb down!" he said to the youth. So the Sanema boy climbed down.

"Come on! Follow me!" he said and they returned to the moon's house.

"Quick! Quick! Bake some cassava," said the moon and the wife did so.

"Grill your meat quick! And I'll make the cassava," she replied.

"Right! Quick! quick! lay the firewood. I'm going to grill some meat," said the moon to his son. The son lay some firewood and went and cut some more.

But the moon's little son said to the youth,

"This firewood of daddy's; this cassava that my mummy's baking. It's because my daddy's going to grill you!" said the little boy following the Sanema youth around.

"Yes, of course! Well what a laugh!" said the youth. He had come into the clearing all unwary: "All this firewood's for grilling me, is it?"

"So which is the trail to the star people's house?" the youth then asked.

"Well, this is the trail to the star people's house, and this is the trail to the vulture people's house.<sup>250</sup> And this one is the trail to the sun's house."

"Ah! Right!"

"But those star people are a fierce lot. They're a different people altogether."

So the youth ran off down the track towards the sun's house. Then the moon's younger son scattered sand on the trail and obscured the tracks.

"Wasps! *aaaa*! Wasps! *aaaaa*!" he shouted out.<sup>251</sup>

At the sun's house the sun was lying in his hammock. The youth ran in.

"Who are you?" asked the sun.

"It's me," the youth replied.

"Really!" said the sun.

"I'm a Sanema boy," he replied.

"Come in! Come in! Come in! I really like you," said the sun. "Come in! I'll make a pet of your. Sling your hammock here."

When the moon realized that the youth had fled he ran along the track to the star people's house.

"Have any Sanema come this way?" he asked.

"No! Nobody," they replied. So the moon returned and went off along the trail to the vulture people's house.

"Have any Sanema come this way?" he asked them.

"No! Nobody," the vultures replied.

So the moon then raced along the trail to the sun's house.

"Has a Sanema arrived, elder brother?" he asked.

"No! Not at all!" replied the sun. The moon went off again, searching, but shortly came back.

"Well, we've arrived," said the moon. The sun became really angry, he turned his face and stared at the moon.

"Oooooo!" he shouted fiercely.

The moon was scorched by the fierce heat of the sun.

"*Eu! eu! eu! eu!* alright! alright!" cried the moon and he returned home. And that is why the moon's face is blotched, because the sun scorched him in the glare of his face.

"Go and kill me some game!" the sun said to the Sanema boy and he gave him a blowpipe to hunt with. So the youth went off and killed some game. When he returned home they ate it, with chilis. And the youth ate some too.

Next day in the morning the sun sent the Sanema youth out hunting again.

"But don't look down the mouth of the blowpipe!" he warned the boy.

"I'll not look," he replied. And he went off hunting small birds.<sup>252</sup> "I wonder what is in there?" said the youth to himself. And he looked down the blowpipe. As soon as he looked in, down the length of the pipe the boy himself went. He was blown out like a dart - *bloto!*

The mother of the youth, at home, had cried. She mourned for him.

"My son had gone visiting. But he never returned. That's that I'm afraid!" So she mourned. She had loved him dearly. The mother was baking cassava at home. The dart came back home through a hole in the roof, having followed the smoke rising from the baking of the cassava. Blown out of the blowpipe, like a dart, the youth had been returned home, and landed in his hammock.

Once she had made the cassava the mother painted up her face with anatto.

"This one! I'll eat him up now!"<sup>253</sup> she said to herself, taking the returned youth for a stranger. She was about to playfully chuck the cassava scrapings at the youth when he said.

"No! Mummy! Don't chuck that at me!" She stared at him open-eyed. It was her son!

"*Wiii!* My son! The one who went off to visit the Yekuana. He's come back. Hooray!" said the mother.

T 33. *The origin of fire*<sup>254</sup>

This one is about the ancestors, but they were not the ancestors of the Sanema, not our ancestors, they were the original ancestors of the animals. For the tapirs, the marbled wood-quail, the alligators, they were all humans (Sanema) then.

Omao had been about to create the Sanema from hard wood. But Soawe had been asked to help and had done the work badly. So instead of being tough, as we might have been, we became weak.

The marbled wood-quail people<sup>255</sup> ate caterpillars<sup>256</sup> and it was they and the alligator people<sup>257</sup> who went to collect them. The marbled wood-quail people had produced<sup>258</sup> the caterpillars and so they went out to collect them. But they didn't know about fire at all. None of the animals knew about fire, at night they were very cold and their food was very chewy. Only the alligator, all alone among them, knew about fire while the others, the cold ones, slept without fire.

The alligator had said to the wood-quail people,

"Let's go and collect caterpillars to eat!"

"Right," the wood-quail people had replied and so they had gone out to collect them, and the alligator went too. In the forest the alligator elder wrapped the caterpillars in leaves and then cooked them in a termites nest. So that, when the wood-quail gave him their raw, wrapped caterpillars, they wouldn't know that he had lots of cooked caterpillars, the alligator wrapped the cooked caterpillars in a further layer of fresh leaves:

And so the wood-quail people returned home; their houses were all about, surrounding the central house of the alligator. The children of the wood-quail people scratched about on the ground searching for scraps of food because they were hungry. Then they saw the alligator returning, he was carrying the cooked caterpillars. Then the wood-quail people gave their raw caterpillars to the alligator and he returned them to others of them, having wrapped them in a different sort of leaf.<sup>259</sup> So the wood-quail people ate their raw caterpillars and the alligator ate his cooked ones.

Next day they all went again into the forest at dawn in order to collect more caterpillars and the alligator went too. Meanwhile the little children at home again scratched about on the floor looking for food, but there wasn't any. So they went over to the alligator's house to look there. The alligator's son was lying in his hammock all alone and they began to scratch about looking for food under where he was lying. There was a charred piece, a tiny fragment, of leaf lying on the ground. The alligator's son noticed it. He stared at it aghast. Then the little wood-quail boy saw it, he grabbed it. Little alligator jumped down from his hammock.

"Where is it? Where is it? Me too! I want to look too! Gimme!

Gimme! Gimme!” but the little wood-quail boy kept hold of it and examined it.

When the wood-quail elders returned home in the evening the boy ran up to his father.

“Daddy! Daddy! look at this charred leaf I found,” he said.

“Where? Where? Where? Where is it?” replied the father, then he examined the leaf carefully.

“*Wiii!*” he said expressing great interest.

Meanwhile the alligator’s father also returned to his house. On seeing his father return, the son said,

“Daddy, young children were over here! A young boy found a piece of charred leaf lying on the ground! That’s what’s happened, daddy!”

“Really! So it’s happened!” replied the father, then he opened a parcel of cooked caterpillars and ate them. Many of them.

And meanwhile people were saying,

“In the old man’s house over there, there were some charred leaves lying on the ground. People have just seen them!”

“Yes! That lot are really selfish, it’s because they have fire that we found burnt leaves lying on the ground,” added the wood-quail people.

“We must organize a dance and have many people come,” they said. And they invited many people to come over. The tanager people,<sup>260</sup> the *hama* cotinga people,<sup>261</sup> the *wagoga* pigeon<sup>262</sup> people, the *ashekono* cacique people,<sup>263</sup> the *pishakami* people,<sup>264</sup> all these and many others thus came visiting.

“People are to dance in the central compound!” said the wood-quail people.

“Right!” the alligator agreed heartily and so all the animals began their festival. They danced; the *solagamusu* trogon<sup>265</sup> people, the *kul kul musu* people<sup>266</sup> all began to dance their *bili* dance. People laughed, they laughed hilariously but the alligator did not laugh at all.

“*Mm! mm! mm! mm!*” The alligator went as he kept his mouth shut.

“The old anteater<sup>267</sup> she must dance too!” people said. So the old anteater also came into the central compound carrying a bunch of *nimo* palm leaves on her back like a tail.

She had just come back *washimo* with the little *waso* bat<sup>268</sup> who was her classificatory son. He came back with his mother. Little bat and the old anteater had been just about to copulate. They had been camped nearby. The little bat had pretended that it was smokey and itchy in his part of the shelter. He pretended that tiny ants<sup>269</sup> were falling onto him.

“Mummy! I’m all itchy! Let me sit in your lap!”

“You lie down in my hammock then, we’ll share it end to end,” she replied.



“Mummy! It’s all smokey here at this end!” he then said. So he had got to sit in her lap. Little *waso* bat was happy sitting in the lap.

“Ah yes! So now I’m about to copulate!” he said.

Just as he was about to copulate, people began dancing in the central compound nearby. Little bat’s penis had become all enlarged and shiny and was sticking right up.

“Now’s the time to return,” the old anteater had said.

“We must dance into the central compound,” she said, so they entered the central compound. Little bat kept his hands over his genitals, because his penis was all large and shiny and he had such a small loincloth; his penis was dandling about.

“Oh dear! What shall I do!” he wondered.

Other people were still dancing and they came dancing over towards them.

“You dance too!” they said to the anteater. So the anteater danced first carrying a bound bunch of *nimo* palm leaves<sup>270</sup> on her back like a tail. As she danced people laughed uproariously, but the alligator did not laugh at all. He kept his mouth closed.

“*Mm! mm! mm! mm!*” he went.

“Little *waso* bat! What about you?” people said, so the little bat also danced his penis bouncing about hilariously.

“*Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!*” people said but the alligator didn’t laugh.

“*Mm! mm! mm! mm!*” he laughed behind his closed mouth.

Because he still had not laughed the others wondered who they could get to make him so. The alligator was sitting down; by his side sat the long-tailed tyrant,<sup>271</sup> next to him the tree-creeper, next to him *sokimusi*<sup>272</sup> and next *kul kul musi*. They sat near to the alligator’s mouth ready to grab the fire. The elders were seated while the young men were fooling about.

Everyone had really laughed at the little bat’s huge penis. He became shy and transformed, so he flew off - *se! se! se! se!* He flew off all alone into the jungle, all by himself.

“I think we must also invite the antthrush people,”<sup>273</sup> people said and so the antthrush people also came to visit.

“Right! They must dance too!” people said. So the antthrush people came into the central compound, one old woman was carrying a back-basket like a pretence tail.

“You too! You must dance too!” they said to her.

So the antthrush carrying the back-basket began to dance - *ta! tik! tik! tik!* - then she squirted shit into the crowd’s faces - *tish! shiiii!*

“*Aaa! aaa! aaa! aaa!*” everyone laughed, and the alligator laughed too. His huge mouth opened right up, he gave a huge guffaw.

“*Ha! ha! ha! ha!*” he laughed, and as he did so, the tree creeper

grabbed the fire and flew off very low - *tchip! tchip! tchip! tchip!* - he sat on the waist of a tree. In turn *kul kul musi* grabbed the fire from him - *krr! krrr! krrr!* - he flew off very low. The alligator's wife, the *bwii bwii* frog,<sup>274</sup> was sitting nearby and was about to jet a stream of urine at the fire - *shiiii!* The piss was just about to reach the fire when the long-tailed tyrant grabbed it. With the big fire in his mouth he flew high up, right to the top of a *pooloi* tree.<sup>275</sup>

"*Mai mai mai pio,*" sang the long-tailed tyrant.

"*Mai mai mai pio.*" The birds' tails had all been burnt in the fire. The *kul kul musi*'s tail was burnt, the tree creeper's tail was burnt, the *soki-musi*'s tail was burnt by the big fire and the tail of the long-tailed tyrant was really burnt.

The fire was placed there high up in the tree - and it came to be in the heart of the bast trees<sup>276</sup> also. The bird had climbed right up into the upper branches of the *pooloi* tree. Now it is that when the Sanema dig holes deep in the ground they find deeply buried cinders, this is because the long-tailed tyrant took fire from the alligator.<sup>277</sup> It is because the long-tailed tyrant put the fire high up in the *pooloi* tree that the Sanema also got their fire. And the foreigners, who know all about fire, this is how they acquired it too.

So the animals had taken the fire, they grabbed it in anger from the alligator. And the alligator was furious.

"You, all of you! Your eyes will become all cooked!" he exclaimed.

"And you! When you are cooked, the soup will be all black," the wood-quail people shouted back angrily in turn.

"You! You! All of you! You will all be cooked up in my fire. All you Sanema looking on, your eyes will turn white when you are cooked." So cursed the alligator.<sup>278</sup>

#### T 50. *The death of Samonamaniapada and the Opossum's blood*<sup>279</sup>

This is about Samonamaniapada.<sup>280</sup> Samonamaniapada and Opossum and Kashtali<sup>281</sup> they were all of them ancestors and they were making gardens. But while Samonamaniapada did the job very well, Opossum did it really badly - he was argumentative and smelly. Opossum was making a very small garden and chopping down *abilinase*<sup>282</sup> trees - *ta! ta! ta! ta!*

"*He he heeee!*" called out the Opossum, as the tree fell. Meanwhile Samonamaniapada was making a huge garden and was chopping down the huge *wanimar*<sup>283</sup> trees - *ta! ta! ta! ta! Boooo!*

"*Haa haa haa hoooo!*" shouted Samonamaniapada. He had learned to speak Yekuana properly while the Sanema, Opossum, who just cut down little *abilinase* trees to make tiny gardens, didn't know Yekuana at all. The Sanema do not call out "*Haa haa hooo!*" they just make tiny gardens, like



Photo 10: Young Sanema woman.

Opossum was making. Samonamaniapada making his huge garden was working very hard.

While these two were working, the wood-quail irls<sup>284</sup> came to fool around. Kashtali lay alone in his hammock though all the others were out working. Many of the wood-quail girls had come to visit, they decided to tease Kashtali who was feigning sleep lying in his hammock. They fanned up the fire and put a little twig of liana<sup>285</sup> in to burn. Then with the twig they poked Kashtali over the eye. Kashtali pretended to wake, rubbed his eye and then relaxed into sleep again. But the girls lit the twig again and poked him over the other eye.

"Mm! Don't do that!" said Kashtali, but being so shy of the girls he hastily ran off to where his elder brother Opossum was working making gardens with Samonamaniapada.

“Many girls have arrived,” he reported.

“What girls?”

“The dove girls<sup>286</sup> and the wood-quail girls and they’ve come all by themselves,” said Kashtali. Hearing this Opossum decided to return home to see.

“Get my curassow feather ornaments, my comb, my beads, my nose stick, my ear bars, my toucan skin, my white down, my armbands, my new loin-cloth, my coin-necklace, my anatto; go and get all that and come back here,” said Opossum to his younger brother.

Samonamaniapada had a large, clean, cotton hammock which the girls were at that moment examining in the house.

“I wonder whose hammock this is? It looks like a young man’s hammock,” so said the wood-quail girls. Kashtali quickly collected the anatto and all the other things and went to give them to Opossum. Opossum bathed and then decorated himself, vigorously rubbing his body with anatto like a Sanema. Once he was painted up he took leave of Samonamaniapada and made off home.

“Go on then!” he said to Kashtali, and they returned to the house. Opossum went immediately and lay in his hammock. He hooked down his hammock and lay down in it.

“Phew! What a smell,” people exclaimed but many of the girls came and sat ‘round about him on the ground. But Opossum lay in his hammock ignoring them. The girls pulled out his nose-stick and it fell to the ground.

“Give that to me!” said Opossum angrily. So the girls wrapped the stick in a leaf and gingerly gave it back. They were having fun and trying to tease Opossum but Opossum really stank and just got angry so nobody laughed.

“You’re really nasty! You’re no fun at all!” jeered the dove and wood-quail girls.

Then Samonamaniapada returned carrying his axe. He put the axe away and then exhaled a soft breath at the girls - *pppff!* The air became very fragrant. Samonamaniapada hooked down his hammock and lay down in it; the girls all came over and sat all around him, not on the floor but in the hammock.

They fooled around and teased him. Everyone began fooling around and laughing uproariously.

“*Hahahaha!*” they went and Opossum became furious as a result.

“*G!* Whatever for!? They didn’t play around with me at all! I’ve been really badly treated,” said Opossum looking on. He became really angry and began bad-mouthing.

“*W!* I’m really furious - I’ll do that ugly one!” said Opossum and he bound up his liana hammock.<sup>287</sup>

“Stay cool,” he said, “I’m off, I’m going out to visit the *Waikia* people,” and he left.

It was the *sisali* lizard people<sup>288</sup> that he went to visit and he found them still at home.

“Give me my *alawali*,”<sup>289</sup> said Opossum. “That Samonamaniapada was fooling around with the girls and they did not fool around with me at all. They just poured all over him. As a result I’m really furious. Give me my sedge tubers!” said Opossum to the *sisali* lizard people.

“Right. The little angry tubers, is it?!” they replied to Opossum. So said the *Waikia* people and they gave him the *alawali*.

“And now I’m off!” said Opossum and he returned home. Samonamaniapada and all the others were still fooling around as ever when Opossum returned. Opossum blew his *alawali* darts<sup>290</sup> - *gle! gle! gle!* and so Samonamaniapada died with all the girls still laughing and tickling around him.

The wood-quail girls mourned as they returned home.

“A Sanema has just died. My husband has just died!” they said.

“Really!” replied the *wimi* snake people,<sup>291</sup> the brothers-in-law of Samonamaniapada. “But I must find out why. I am off to investigate,” so they said and they went off to look around.

Opossum had fled immediately. He had run off into the forest and hid himself in a weedy patch where he feigned mourning.

“He was my real brother-in-law, *boo hoo! boo hoo! Shuwa’u!*”<sup>292</sup> mourned the Opossum, and his nose became white and upturned as a result of feigning to mourn. And the *wimi* snake people they overheard.

“That one! He’s lying!” they exclaimed and they told people to go and keep an eye on him which they quickly did - they were<sup>293</sup> the *lulina* people, the *nagishma* people, that medium-sized white one that bites - those people, the *asuama* people, the *amoroshili* people, those hard ones that scurry about on the ground, those people, they all went to keep an eye on the Opossum; and *kola ha’u tomawai*,<sup>294</sup> he went too, for the *wimi* snake had returned and told everyone to go and keep an eye on the Opossum.

“Come on! This way, he’s still there,” *wimi* snake said.

“Interesting! What a surprise!” said all the stinger people.

“Right now to it!” said the *lulina* people, and having done with their mourning led the way.

“Over there! This way! This is where he is! We must surround him!” they said and they all began to encircle him. But the Opossum fled; up, along a tree’s branch and down - *blo!* He went off at a run there being so many of them all around him. Once he was tired he hid again in a patch of weeds, but the others came after him. He hid again among some rocks, but the others like the *lulina* people chased after him. He hid in a burrow but

they still came after him. So, finally, he climbed up a huge *shindei*<sup>295</sup> tree and, high up, he sat down among the leaves.

"You're a really bad lot!" they shouted up. "Just you wait! We are really numerous. We'll exact payment<sup>296</sup> for Samonamaniapada." But the *lulina* people did not climb up.

"No! Wait. Over there, there are the *dedemi* people,<sup>297</sup> the *shikumai* people, the *kulikasa* people, the *anima* people. They know all about machetes like the *shinanida* palm-worm people, they've got lots of machetes," people said and so all these Sanema ancestors began to arrive from over there. The palm-worm people came to chop down the great *shindei* tree and the wood-quail people, the *holeto* dove people, the *bosa* dove people - many many people - the macaw people, the *pishakami* people, the *dedemi* people - all the birds came to chop down the tree.

And the palm-worm people began to chop at the tree - *ta! ta! ta! ta!*

"*Shinitooo!* my axe has broken and that's what I say!"

"My machete's broken, *okola'u! okola'u! okola'u!* that's what I say!" said the wood-quails.

"My axe has snapped, *aa! aa! aa!* that's what I have to say!" said the macaws.

"My axe has gone wrong, *dedede de de!* that's what I have to say!" said the *dedemi* people.

"My machete's broken, *kili! kili! kili!*" said the *shikumai* people. That's what happened to those people who knew so much all about machetes. From over there came the *muspi* people, the *penipenimi* people, the *alu alu* people, the *kedoni* people - they all came over to join the others. All the birds came with their machetes and sat around the great tree.

"Our machetes have broken. *Hoo! hoo hoo hoo!* we say!" said *holeto* dove people.

"Our machetes have broken too! *Mm mm mm!* we say!" said the *wagoga* people.

"Our machetes have broken too! *Pishakā! pishakā! pishakā!* we say!" said the *pishakami* people. That was what these people all said. The palm-worm people had not felled the tree; the *dedemi* people had not felled the tree; the *anima* people had not felled the tree; the macaw people had not felled the tree. The great *shindei* tree still stood. They had all only cut a small notch.

"It's just as I said. That's what I said would happen," said *kola ha'u tomawai*.

Then the white monkey people came, the jaguar people, the ocelot people, the sloth people, the tamandua people, the squirrel people, the pygmy anteater people, the small sloth people. All of the animals arrived.

Above, all alone, sat Opossum - no-one sat with him - everyone else was

furious with him. The ancestors were angry and seeking revenge for the death of Samonamaniapada. Samonamaniapada had been really beautiful but the Opossum was not beautiful at all. He was bad, and he had an ugly nose.

"You are horribly ugly," the girls had said. "Phew! what a stink! Chuck him out!" they had said.

But the animals had only made a small mark in the tree's trunk.

"Right now that's done!" said the *muspi* people as they prepared to start chopping.

"What about you?" people said to *kola ha'u tomawai*.

"Right! Me!" said *kola ha'u tomawai*, he had his tomahawk<sup>298</sup> slung on his back.

"I'll kill him," he said and he climbed up the tree - *kudi! kudi! kudi!* he reached the tree's waist. Opossum began to talk to him from where he was seated.

"You are a smelly one!" shouted *kola ha'u tomawai*. "You are a really ugly, smelly one!"

"You are a fat-arse!" Opossum shouted down from where he sat.

"Bash down that stinking one!" replied *kola ha'u tomawai*.

"You are a fat-arse!" said Opossum again.

"Stinking one, I'll knock you!" replied *kola ha'u tomawai* shouting back.

"And you really make me angry," returned the Opossum.

"And I'm furious too! I'm really going to do you in," said *kola ha'u tomawai* and he climbed up really fast.

Opossum had moved from where he had been talking.

"Where has he fled to?" said *kola ha'u tomawai*: they were high up in the tree from where they might fall. *Kola ha'u tomawai* was frowning fearfully. He pulled out his tomahawk. - *Glo!* he struck him in the face. - *Glo!* he struck hard. Opossum had no club, he merely sat where he was; though furious he remained where he was. *Kola ha'u tomawai* beat him with his tomahawk - *glo! glo! glo!* all over his body - *glo! glo! glo!* and on his head - *gli! gli! gli!* Opossum died completely but *kola ha'u tomawai* continued beating - *gle! gle! gle! gle! gle! gle!* Exactng a proper payment for Samonamaniapada. And the blood poured and poured and poured from all the wounds.<sup>299</sup>

"*Mahahaha!*"<sup>300</sup> said *kola ha'u tomawai*. "There, just as I threatened and that's what I'd do to anyone who makes me angry!" he said and he climbed down. "Right, let's paint up in anatto right away!" he said.

The *pishakami* people, the macaw people, the cock-of-the-rock people, they had all already arrived.

"Right, try and knock it down now!" people said. But though the tree

was cut right through and creaked and snapped, it did not fall. The huge tree was being held up by a tiny vine, the sunvine. And it was the smaller sloth who wanted to free the snagged tree and cause it to fall.

“*Ga!*” some said.

“No wait,” said others for the squirrel people had all arrived.

“Hold on! Let him try! Let him try!” cried others - and the smaller sloth began to climb up.

“Wait though,” others called. “Once you’ve cut the vine, how are you going to get back down? Are you really fast?”

“Not half! Really fast, there’s no one faster,” replied the sloth.

“Right then! Have a go!” they said and sloth climbed up in the tree. He cut at the vine - *de! de! de! de!* and then slid down - *sa! selulo! selulo! selulo! blo!*

“There you are just as I said,” said the sloth.

“Right!” said some.

“I don’t know, you seem a bit slow really,” said others.

“What about you?” they asked the larger sloth.

“Yes! Me!” and he too tried. After chopping a little at the vine - *sau! sau! seludo! blo!* he returned.

“There! Just as I said.”

“*Ga!* not at all, you haven’t cut the vine at all,” said people and so they said to the white monkey,

“What about you?” they asked. “Once you’ve severed the vine what will you do?”

The white monkey climbed up - *kudi! kudi! kudi!* he cut at the vine and then fled back down - *takidi po! kudiki! salu! blo!*

“There you are, just like I said! O! has the tree not fallen? I’ll go again, I’m not tired at all!”

“*Kiii!* You are really strong,” people remarked.

“What about you?” they asked the *kalushi* squirrel.

“Right. Me!” he replied and climbed up to the vine, cut at it and .... - *sali! sali! blo!*

“Just as I replied,” said the *kalushi*.

“And what about you?” they asked the *wasoshibi* squirrel.

He whisked up the tree - *selili!* chopped at the vine and - *sak! sili sili sili!* he was already back walking along the ground.

“There you are, just like I said I would,” said the *wasoshibi* squirrel.

“What about you then, jaguar?” said the puma.

“You first,” he replied. The puma climbed up - *gudi! gudi! gudi!*

“Now you watch carefully, see if you can see me there at the bottom of that tree,” said the puma. He cut at the vine and sprang down - *glak! glu! glo! selulo! Blo!* Then he tried to run by unseen, he was like a red streak in



the bushes - *hasu! hana! hasu!*

"All red like that you're easily visible," jeered the jaguar, "and what about you?" he said to the ocelot.

The ocelot climbed up and slid down the other side - *sili sili blo!* But they still saw a small flash as he rushed by.

"Well, what about you?" they said to the jaguar.

"Yes! And you look on very carefully," he replied. The jaguar climbed up not a long way and then came down - *glu! glu! solo! Blo!* and then slid through the vegetation. Not a sound, not a twig snapped! And before they could spot him approaching there was his face before them.

"Even though you were looking on! Even though you were watching you couldn't see me at all, you Sanema!" said the jaguar.

That's what the jaguar did to the Sanema.

"Right. That's that," said the *kalushi* people, "they are real sluggards all of them."

Meanwhile the screaming piha people arrived. They assembled below the tree with all the other birds.

"Right, like you say, we must cut that vine!" said the smaller sloth.

"You go then. You made the original cut," they replied and so the sloth climbed up. Very slowly he cut at the vine, little by little he chewed his way through.

"Like this - *piiüüü!*" he whistled. Then again much later, "like this - *piiüüü!*" he whistled again. "I'll get through it this way," he said.

"What about you?" they suggested to the larger sloth.

"Right! Me!" he replied and climbed up. "Like this - *piiüüü!*" he whistled and again later, "like this - *piiüüü!*" he whistled.

"*Gah!* They're no good at all," people said.

"Me then!" said the squirrel. "I'm really swift" and he climbed up. "You're really lazy!" he said to the sloths who were still up in the tree.

"Well you have a go then if you like. We've already had enough!" The *wasoshibi* squirrel cut through the vine and as the vine snapped - *doooooo!* he was flung high through the air to the ground. But the sloths were carried away with the tree. The tree fell across the smaller sloth's waist - *aaaaa!*

"Are you alright?" people asked.

"*Piiüüü!*" the sloth whistled in reply. It was because the great tree fell across the sloth that he is the shape he is. His arms and waist were all squashed by the fall of the tree.

With the tree fallen the birds began to paint themselves up in the Opossum's blood - painting themselves as if with anatto. The macaw dived in - *kopu!* The snake warner dived in - *kopu!* the *pishakami* - *kopu!* the cock-of-the-rock - *kopu!* the *dedemi* bird - *kopu!* The piping guan painted his eyes, his legs and his throat. All the birds got painted up. The wood-

quail, laughing, painted his eyes. The toucans came over - *bwuw!*

“Oh, no!” the paint was already running out. Quickly they painted themselves. *Kedoni* painted himself a little. *Penipenimi* painted his beak, his legs, waist and hair. *Asupa*, he too painted his beak and head a little, and so on. So all the toucans painted themselves up and all the other birds too.<sup>301</sup>

T 46. *The fall of the peccary*<sup>302</sup>

It was when many of the ancestors were climbing up a vine that they transformed into animals.<sup>303</sup> The peccaries and spider monkeys that Omao was about to create, these animals climbed up a large liana.<sup>304</sup>

It was the spider monkeys who climbed up first with the howler monkeys, white monkeys and kinkajous. They climbed high up the vine, high, high up. All those animals with grasping hands, it was their ancestors who first climbed up the vine.

Following them came the agoutis. The pacas then climbed up also, then the collared peccaries, and the white-lipped peccaries; and finally the huge tapir began to climb up too.

The vine snapped - *selulo! blo!* The peccaries crashed back down to the ground.

-*Nanananananana! blublululululu! eu! eu! eu! eu!* they went as they rushed off in all directions. And in another direction the deer all ran off *bwuw! ba! ti! ti! ti! ti!* they had become deer! Then the picture ran off too - *buku! ku! ku! ku! kube! kube! kube! gli! gli! gli! gli!* they went. And the mice also fell down to the ground, transformed they rushed about all over the place. The collared peccaries and the white-lipped peccaries they all scattered in all directions near to all the places where the Sanema now live. They all ran off on all fours to all parts of the forest.

The spider monkeys and all the others that had remained up above they also transformed. They became clambering animals. And all these the Sanema kill for the pot; they are found in areas where the Sanema live, just as the peccaries and tapirs on the ground went off to areas where the Sanema live and became game.

It was the huge tapir that snapped the vine. Thus the peccaries became transformed: from being Sanema they became peccaries.<sup>305</sup>

T 78. *The mice-jaguars*

The jaguar<sup>306</sup> did not always have a big voice. Originally it was the *kasna* mouse<sup>307</sup> who used to growl. So he growled

“*Au! au! au! au! ao! oo! o! o!*”

The ancestors crawled forward to look.

"But whatever is that?" they wondered. They looked and saw the *kasna* mouse's head sticking out of his hole, growling

"*Au! au! au! au! oo! oo! o! o!*"

Thus the *kasnawai* used to say. And the real mouse<sup>308</sup> went

"*Wu! wu! wu! wu! wu! wu!*"

The jaguar got his voice from them, so it is said.

T 60. *The tamandua and the anteater*<sup>309</sup>

The tamandua and the anteater were having a row. The anteater struck the tamandua on the arm - *do!* The tamandua then struck the anteater on the arm - *do!* In turn, the anteater struck the tamandua's other arm - *do!* And the tamandua hit the anteater on the other arm - *do!*

Their arms swelled up. The bruises became all swollen and painful. They swelled up enormously.

T 75. *The tamandua and the anteater*

The anteater<sup>310</sup> sat by himself in the tamandua's<sup>311</sup> house while the tamandua went out to collect termites.<sup>312</sup> Once the tamandua had collected the termites he returned home. The anteater had been sitting down there all the while.

When the tamandua unwrapped the termites the anteater dipped his hand in to eat some. The tamandua got angry.

"*Wa!* pushing your ugly hand into my food as well! Collect your own termites your-ugly-self!" he said; so the anteater got angry in turn.

"I'm only taking a little! I'm not going to stuff myself! Nothing worth a payment!"

"Don't do it!" said the tamandua. He grabbed his tomahawk<sup>313</sup> and struck the anteater on the arm - *ba! to!*

So the anteater struck the tamandua - *ba! to!* and the tamandua again struck the anteater - *ba! to!* and the anteater again hit the tamandua - *ba! to!*

Their arms swelled up huge. That's how the tamandua and anteaters' arms became all swollen.

T 70. *The paca-jaguar*

There was a jaguar<sup>314</sup> who had a beautiful daughter, she was a young girl. There were three of them, the jaguar, his wife and the daughter.

One day a Sanema arrived to visit.

"Girl, make gruel for the visitor. The visitor needs filling up," said the jaguar.<sup>315</sup>

Once the visitor had been fed the jaguar told his daughter to accompany the visitor, helping him to find a paca.

"Let's go and kill a paca," suggested the daughter to the visitor.<sup>316</sup>

"Right! Off you go," said the visitor. The jaguar gave the visitor a really good stave.

"Kill a paca then!" encouraged the jaguar, so the visitor and the daughter went off down to the river.<sup>317</sup>

As soon as they had gone the jaguar rushed off and hid himself in a hole in the river bank - *tolo!* After a while the girl led the visitor to that spot. They descended to the mouth of the hole.

"Here's the place," called the girl, "dig the animal out!" The girl poked the stave into the hole while the Sanema tunnelled and crawled in.

"The footprints are really fresh," she said, but the jaguar leapt out and killed the man - *glun!* and then carried him home to eat him.

Whenever Sanema came to visit, the jaguar ate them. The girl would pretend that she was about to copulate with the visitor and take them to that paca's earth.

Now the giant anteater was the jaguar's wife.<sup>318</sup> One day two women came visiting from where they were *washimo*. The jaguar killed them too and ate them - *glun! glun!* One of the women was pregnant. The jaguar ripped her open and gave the child to his wife.

The baby cried and cried and the anteater comforted it.

"Hush! *ooooooooo!* hush *oooooooo!*" said the jaguar-mother nursing the baby.

#### T 64. *The tanakami bird*

A Yekuana ancestor was making a canoe. He became that bird<sup>319</sup> that calls - *tana tau!* It was that ancestor who was making a canoe. He was chopping at the sides of the canoe to shape it - *talo! talo! talo! talo! de! de! de! de! de! to! tana! tau!*

He was chopping at the canoe with his axe - *de! de! de!* so he transformed into the *tanakami* bird.

#### T 63. *The original deer*

Long ago some Yekuana, the *koli* people,<sup>320</sup> went to chase deer.<sup>321</sup> While some of them went beyond the deer others lay in wait by the river. Here one lay in wait, here another upstream, here another downstream.

The people chased round the side of a large hill, a deer ran down to



Photo 11: Canoe construction.

avoid them. But the deer running down that hill was an *ilalaiapada* cricket,<sup>322</sup> which have very thin calves like deer. That cricket was the original deer, it broke from cover. It was the original Yekuana deer ancestor. Breaking cover it flew down the hill ... - *kalo!* It landed by where the Yekuana were lying in wait, - *watau!* it began to swim across the river.<sup>323</sup>

The Yekuana shot at it - *gloso! gloso!* so the cricket was killed - *titi!*  
That cricket was the original deer.

T 10. *The origin of the komdim lizards*

The ancestors used to be very numerous. The tapir too he used to be a Sanema.

One day all the fathers had gone hunting. Many of them. The tapir boy stayed behind with the other children. The tapir sent the others off hunting.

"Go off and hunt!" he said to them.

All the children went off, leaving the house empty except for the tapir. He remained there alone lying in his hammock. The fathers all returned.

"Where are all the children?" they asked.

"Gone out to catch some game," replied the tapir.

"O dear!" The ancestors went out to search for them. It was dusk. They searched everywhere but the children had all turned into *komdim*<sup>324</sup> lizards.

So people have said.

#### Verbal II. *The bo-bo being*

A woman and her daughters had gone crab collecting.<sup>325</sup> After they had finished collecting and had just wrapped the crabs in leaves they heard a noise - *bo! bo! bo! bo! bo!* The children ran off scared but the mother refused to go saying that she was too tired.

The children reached home and told their father what had happened, he ran back to find his wife. But when he got there he only found his wife's empty skin. For the *bo! bo! bo!* being<sup>326</sup> had grabbed the old mother and sucked the life out of her.

#### T 57 (B). *Bwobwomane*<sup>327</sup>

The husband had gone off hunting in the forest and killed an armadillo.<sup>328</sup> He then returned home and set to cooking it up by himself; for, meanwhile, his wife and daughter had gone out.

"Girl! Let's go and collect crabs!" the mother had said. So the two of them, mother and daughter, had gone off crab collecting. Once they'd collected the crabs they returned home. Their way took them by their cultivated plot, where the track went by the bottom of the garden. There was a lot of maize planted there.

"Girl! Wait here, I'm just off to collect some corn cobs so we can eat them with the crabs!" said the mother to her daughter. So while the daughter waited the mother went into the corn. She went further and further into the clearing and then disappeared into the forest on the other side. The daughter looked on aghast. She called out to her mother, to call her back.

"Mummy! Mummy!" she cried.

"*Bwo! Bwo! Bwo! Bwo Bwo!*" a voice replied.

"That's really bad, how frightening," exclaimed the girl and she ran

home to her father's house. She arrived to find him cooking up the armadillo.

"Daddy! My mummy's lost! In the forest something's making a noise - *bwo! bwo! bwo! bwo!* like that. Go and look!" she cried.

So the husband ran off to look for the wife. But just as his wife had changed into a *bwobwomane*<sup>329</sup> so he did too. Now those birds that you hear in the forest going - *bwo! bwo! bwo!* that's them.

T 59. *The incestuous monkey*

The white monkey<sup>330</sup> flirted playfully with his sister. They played and played. They played endlessly.

"That's your sister!" said the boy's father.

"That's your sister," he said again.

"Yes! You've said so already!" replied the white monkey. He went on flirting with his sister. And he copulated with her.

So it is said.

T 44. *Posposmane*<sup>331</sup>

Over there the ancestors, the *salisalimus*<sup>332</sup> people, had gone to collect caterpillars. *Posposmane* went out to kill a tapir. Once he had killed the tapir he wrapped the tiny thing in some leaves. He carried the tiny wrapped game home. Once home he laid the package down. The tapir lay on its back with its feet pointing into the air. The tapir grew enormous! They cut it up and laid the meat on a griddle.

T 21. *The jaguar's eyes*

A crab<sup>333</sup> was plucking out his eyes. He pulled them out, threw them into the river, went and collected the eyes and put them back. Then he would pluck them out again, chuck them in the river, collect them and put them back in their sockets. A jaguar<sup>334</sup> arrived.

"Oh! Me too! Do that with my eyes too! Go on!" said the jaguar.

The jaguar pulled out his eyes and the crab chucked them into the river. The crab went after them and then went deep down underwater. The jaguar swept his paw angrily through the water to catch the crab but not being able to see he only scratched the crab's back - *gledididi!* The crab ate the eyes.

"Oh dear!" said the jaguar. "You vulture people<sup>335</sup> give me my eyes!"

"When I kill game then we all eat." said the jaguar. "That's why you'll give me my eyes."

“Right,” replied the vulture people. They gave the jaguar some new eyes.

So it is said.

T 17. *The greedy agouti*<sup>336</sup>

The original agouti went out collecting. People were very hungry. The agouti collected *senhendi* fruits.<sup>337</sup> Then in the night the agouti could be heard doing something - *bli! bli!*

“What are you eating, mummy?” asked the agouti’s son.

“No, I’m just squeezing the gut contents out of caterpillars,” she lied. That agouti was very selfish. She ate *senhendi* fruits in the night, when everyone else was very hungry and her son was hungry too.

“No, I’m just squeezing the gut contents out of caterpillars,” she lied!

T 24. *A deceitful jaguar deceived*

Many people had gone *wāshimo*. A girl separated from her relations cried - *wa! wa! wa! wa!*

The father-in-law got angry.

“I’m really annoyed at that girl!” he said. Being so vexed he went off into the forest to get away from her. A jaguar<sup>338</sup> killed the man in the forest and ate him.

Then, pretending to be the Sanema, the jaguar returned to the house at night. He handed a packet of wrapped *moka* frogs<sup>339</sup> to the woman and climbed into the liana hammock over her.<sup>340</sup> She was the wife of the Sanema that he had killed.

The woman could feel his hairy body rubbing hers as he lay slung in the hammock above her.

“*Wii!* My husband’s all hairy tonight,” she said.

“It’s not your husband, it’s the jaguar!” people replied.

When it became light the jaguar still lay in his hammock.

The woman pretended to cook up cassava porridge but really boiled up resin<sup>341</sup> - *kopo! kopo! kopo!* She pretended to stir the porridge - *sako! sako! sako!*

She told her daughter to flee. The daughter fled putting her back-basket into her hammock as she left. Everyone else fled leaving baskets in their place. Once the boiling betun was ready she offered it to the jaguar.

“Here, drink your porridge,” she said.

As the jaguar prepared to drink it, she poured the boiling betun all over him - *salulu!* She poured it over him as he looked up. She then fled too. The jaguar pounced on the hammocks. There was nobody there, only



baskets: they had all fled.

That's what happened to the jaguar.

T 16. *The agouti and the paca wasamo*<sup>342</sup>

The agouti and the paca engaged in *wasamo*.

“Yekuana head

Painted up red,

You wide skin!” chanted the agouti.

“Your *Waikia* head

It's all long!” retorted the paca. So they did their *wasamo* angrily.<sup>343</sup>

T 23. *The angry paca*

The paca<sup>344</sup> had planted a lot of manioc by himself. But the paca was very selfish. He only unearthed a single plant. The agouti<sup>345</sup> took it being very thievish. The agouti ate it. The paca was angry and struck the agouti with a stick.

T 12. *Kokopilima*

Kokopilima<sup>346</sup> had married *anedema's* daughter, she was called *anedeshuma*.<sup>347</sup>

Kokopilima told his wife to grate the manioc tubers. She grated and grated.

“Your wife is covered in sores,” said his elder brother. It was true, she was covered in boils, sores and pus.

Kokopilima he returned home. “*Pila! pila!*,” he said, “that finishes that.” He transformed into the bird that goes - *koko koko koko koko pila pila pila pila!*<sup>348</sup>

So people have said.

T 11. *The tapir's diarrhoea*

The tapir<sup>349</sup> used to be a Sanema. He and his elder brother had gone visiting, way over there - *op!* The tapir slept below the others for he had terrible diarrhoea - *tish! tish! tish! tish!* He became very thin. Being so thin, the other ancestors said to his elder brother,

“Your younger brother has got very bad shits, he might die!” they said. So the two brothers returned home.

The elder brother lay in his hammock. “Why has my brother got the shits?” he wondered.

“You sleep here in my hammock,” he said to his younger brother. So the tapir lay down with his elder brother in his hammock. They shared it.

The tapir shitted - *tish!*

“Don’t *do* that,” said the elder brother angrily. He grabbed a spear and thrust it into his brother’s anus - *glos!* He left the spear sticking in the body.

Next morning his son, the *shuemawai*,<sup>350</sup> said fearfully,

“Daddy! Daddy! Wake up! Wake up!” but the father had completely died, he was white. People came to look. They looked at the anus. The spear was still sticking in it. The little boy cried “*Sala kā kā kā!*”

#### T 7. *The wild cat and the jaguar*

The wild cat<sup>351</sup> painted himself up with circular spots.

“Right! You’re properly painted up now. So try and run by!” people said.

The people looked on as carefully as they could. They saw nothing. He had run by without them noticing, because he was spotted like that.

They turned to the mother jaguar.<sup>352</sup>

“What about you then?” they said. “You run by too!”

Being spotted she too ran by without being seen.

#### T 6. *The sloth and the white monkey*

People told the sloth<sup>353</sup> to climb a tree. “Climb up!” they said.

“Right,” replied the sloth and he began to climb up.

“Is here alright?” he asked.

“No, further on,” they replied.

“Here?”

“No further on! Keep moving!” they said.

“Here?” he asked.

“No. Keep moving.” So, gradually, he climbed further and further. He came to a dense area of entangled vines.

“Here?”

“Yes!” they said.

“You too!” they said to the white monkey.<sup>354</sup>

The monkey climbed right up and sat right at the end of a branch, high up in the tree among fresh leaves.

“Here?”

“Yes!” they said.

The monkey climbed down but the sloth stayed where he was.<sup>355</sup> So people said.

T 4. *The hummingbird and the tapir*<sup>356</sup>

The hummingbird<sup>357</sup> used to be very large, about the size of a toucan. The tapir<sup>358</sup> on the other hand had grown *very* big.

“How did you grow so big?” the hummingbird asked the tapir.

“You have to cook yourself in a fire,” the tapir replied. “That’s how I grew so big.”

So the hummingbird set to collecting firewood - *to! to! to! to!* Once he had collected a good lot, he lit the fire and fanned it up into a blaze.

“Hee hee! This way I’ll grow really big,” said the hummingbird and jumped into the fire. He burnt...burnt...burnt...burnt. The hummingbird became tiny. So the tiny, wee hummingbird flew off - *se! se! se! se!* and dived into a river - *kopu!* - *senenene!* he sizzled.

That is how the hummingbird became so small.

T 2. *Bird song*

People were punting a canoe upstream. They were Yekuana.

“Cut a punt-pole,” said one.

“Right!”

“This pole’s really short, cut me a good long one.”

One of the Yekuana climbed ashore, he went into the trees. But he never came back. He had transformed.

A little bird sang - *toti toti! toti toti totiii!* his voice sang from the jungle.<sup>359</sup>

T 1. *The alligator's angry son*

One day, long ago, the little tamandua<sup>360</sup> cried,

“My father’s gone to collect termites, boo, hoo!”

“What a nuisance,” said the alligator’s<sup>361</sup> son.

“My father’s gone collecting honey, boo, hoo!” cried the tayra’s<sup>362</sup> son.

“What a nuisance,” said the little alligator.

“My father’s gone collecting palm grubs, boo, hoo!” cried the woodpecker’s<sup>363</sup> son.

“What a bad one!” said the alligator’s son.

So the children bickered amongst each other.

T 27. *The tortoises and the tapir*<sup>364</sup>

The tapir<sup>365</sup> was walking by over there and the tortoises<sup>366</sup> were wandering by a lake. There were two of them and they were pretending to

be Yekuana. The tapir approached.

"I wonder who those people are?" said the tapir to himself, when he saw the two little tortoises wandering by pretending to be Yekuana.

"*Wiii!* Who are you?" asked the tapir.

"We're Yekuana women," they replied.

"Really! Where's your father's house then?" he asked.

"Over there in the part of the forest where there are many *pishia* leaves;<sup>367</sup> that's where our father lives," they replied.

"O! Really! and where are you going?" he asked.

"Over there," they replied and they went off towards a boggy piece of drowned ground. They descended and began to cross the bog. That tapir followed and he stamped on the tortoises forcing them far underground so that they were stuck in the mud with their arms up above them like sloths. They were truly stuck.

The tapir returned into the distant forest - *wa!* - a long way from them. He went high up the hill and then, later, began to come back down again.

"Hang on! Hup! That's the way," gradually the tortoises worked their way back to the surface. Then they waited by the deep slot left by the passage of the tapir going by.<sup>368</sup> The tortoises hid under some leaves at the edge of the track and they waited there until the tapir, thirsty after feeding, should return.

Shortly the tapir returned looking all about him for the tortoises.

"Wait a bit! Wait a bit!" they said, and they sat still. The tapir stepped down and came by them.

"Right! Now!" One of the tortoises grabbed the bottom end of the tapir's penis and the other bit into the top end. The tapir ran off, in pain and anguish! But the tortoises held on below and were carried off. The tapir ran off as fast as he could, then plunged into one river - *kopu!* and submerged under water. But though he sat there the tortoises still did not let go. The tapir went off again, crashing through the undergrowth and the tortoises; held on tenaciously. So the tapir died, bitten by the tortoises; he was completely weakened, and thus he drowned.<sup>369</sup>

"Right! So that's that, he's dead!" they said.

"Right! taken!"

#### T 28. *The tortoises and the jaguar*<sup>370</sup>

Once the tortoises had killed the tapir, the tortoises released their mouths.

"Right that's that," said one.

"Just as I said then!" said the other.

"Right! Do the guts," said one. "Let's gut it and then grill it," so the

other set to butchering. But with his tiny little teeth he couldn't cut it at all.

"My knife's no good!" said the tortoise. The other laughed hugely.

"*Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!*" he laughed, like a Yekuana.

"Well, you try then!" said the first; but he was no more successful than the other. So they both laughed loudly like Yekuana.

Then from the forest a jaguar came down to them.

"What is it, children?" he asked using a Yekuana voice. "Give me my tapir."

"No! There isn't any!" they replied.

"Really! What a laugh!" said the jaguar coming near. "O! I see! What a laugh!"

The tortoises were being greedy. Yekuana, they are selfish when they have tapir and do not give to the Sanema. "Can't you see?" the Sanema say. So the tortoises were being selfish too, for that is how Yekuana are and the tortoises were pretending to be Yekuana. They were putting on a Yekuana voice. But they hadn't been able to butcher the tapir.

So the jaguar came down to where they were.

"Where is it? Here let me help!" he said and so he did the guts - *we! we! we!* pulled out the liver, cut off the big belly flap, pulled out the big liver - *ble! ble!* The tortoises sat down and they didn't say "Right. That's enough," so the jaguar made a grill and laid all meat on it. He began to look about for firewood and the tortoises became angry.

"*Gah!* The rotten old woman is really making me angry!" said the tortoises from where they were sitting. The jaguar laid all the meat on the grill.

"Fan the fire!" he said to the tortoises.

"Really!" they replied.

"I'm off to get more meat," said the jaguar. Then the tortoises got really angry, for the jaguar had given them only very small portions of meat, so they said,

"Yes! Get yourself some more meat. We'll care for the grill," and the jaguar went off.

The tortoises immediately set to making a hole, not a very large one, a small hole like crabs make. They dug it a little way off from where the grill was. Then they dragged the tapir's corpse over there in basketloads and put it all down the hole.

Later the jaguar returned and came back down to them. The huge griddle was completely bare!

"*W!!!* People really make me furious! They've eaten all my meat! But where did they take it off? By what track?" and he looked about all over for the track. There was no sign. No sign of any Sanema footprints.

"That was my meat! I'll beat whoever I find has taken it," but he

couldn't discover its whereabouts.

"O no! We haven't taken it away!" said the tortoises.

"Wait a bit then," he replied.

The tortoises then also hid in the hole, the meat was just beyond them. The hole looked really small but that's where they were.

"It must be in this hole, I think," said the jaguar. Then he pulled down several lengths of liana<sup>371</sup> - *selulo! selulo! selulo!* He pushed an end of a vine down the hole and twirled it 'round and 'round - *sokedi! sokedi! sokedi!* It bound up around the tortoise's back. It bound him up completely. Then with another vine he bound up the other tortoise - *sokedi! sokedi! sokedi!* The shell of the tortoise, it's the result of the jaguar binding them up with liana.

#### T 69. *Homicidal sloths*

A *henapoi* man went out to kill a sloth. Once he had killed the sloth<sup>372</sup> he returned home. Next day he killed another sloth. He was really good at killing sloths. His name was Hepoia and he was also called Palali'a.

"O! How I wish I could kill a sloth too!" said another Sanema.

So next day he and Hepoia went off hunting together. Hepoia put an *alawali* - a sloth charm<sup>373</sup> - on the branch of a tree - *kff! kff! kff! kff!*

"Later we can come back this way," said Hepoia and he went off hunting. The other man went off only a little way before doubling back. When he got to the tree he saw a sloth so he climbed up into the tree to kill it.<sup>374</sup> As soon as he was in the tree sloths attacked him. They struck the man all over - *gloso! gloso! gloso! gloso! gloso!* So the man died still hanging in the tree over the branch.

When the *Henapoi* man returned he looked up and saw the dead Sanema hanging in the branches.

"O, but why couldn't you have waited?" he groaned.<sup>375</sup>

He returned home.

"A Sanema has been killed," said Palali and he told them what had happened.

Palali went off again. He killed one sloth, that one had bloody nails. He went further on and killed another sloth, that one had bloody nails too. He killed another sloth, that one also had bloody nails. Once he was far away he killed another sloth, that one's nails were not bloody. He came on another sloth, that one had bloody nails, and another that had bloody nails too. That's what he found.

*Glossary*

*Alawali:* a large number of plants, all cultivated in garden plots, are referred to as *alawali*, which may be glossed as 'magical' plant, though we prefer to avoid this word. Their properties include combatting illness, aphrodisiac effects, hunting charms that lure animals near to the hunter, charms that make dogs grow, charms that make dogs hunt well, charms that stop pets returning to the jungle and charms that cause rapid sickening and death.

*He'an:* the term refers to the complex relationships that obtain between different animal species. Insect and bird songs all carry messages, according to the Sanema, even if they do not understand all of them. Thus the tapir's *he'an* is said to sing when the tapir is nearby. Other birds warn of the snakes' presence, etc. In some cases the relationship between *he'an* and the signalled species is described as father-in-law to son-in-law.

*Hekula* (or *hikula*): the *hekula* are the spirits of animals and other beings that shamans may incorporate in their chests and which give them the power to control natural forces including particularly the spirits that cause disease and sickness. The *hekula* are very numerous and immortal. When not incorporated in the shaman's body they dwell in prominent natural features such as rivers, waterfalls, mountains and rocks.

*Hokolominase:* literally 'being surrounded.' The verb describes the passage of a girl from childhood to adulthood signalled by her first menses. As soon as a girl notices her first blood she returns home and signals the fact to her mother (or elder sister, etc.). She sits on the ground while the mother surrounds her with a curtain of branches from the bush known as *sapulimai* or shaman fruit (*Sorocea guyanensis* W. Burger). She is strictly prohibited to wear clothes or any decorations, touch cotton, eat any meat or vegetables apart from a little cassava, talk, etc. After her period of confinement she is shorn and decorated as beautifully as possible - except for the wearing of clothes. Very strict food prohibitions continue until her hair grows long again.

*Lalai:* a number of *hekula* spirits have the ability to vomit up small articles that are evidence of the shamans' long journeys in time and space. *Lalai*, *lalipalo*, *lalimo*, etc. are verbs that describe this process.

*Manogoshiminase:* the equivalent period in a man's life cycle to a girl's *hokolominase* (above). Apart from confinement and sitting on the ground, which boys need not observe, the practices are similar to girls' initiation to adulthood. The ritual is however more abbreviated and less strictly observed.

*Ōshi*: hollow of tree, core of object, the soul-space in any being associated with the heart and blood. The Sanema do not think, dream or feel their emotions in their head but in their *ōshi*, their heart and chest. When a Sanema dies his *ōshi* becomes a ghost, *hena pole di*.

*Wāshimo*: an integral part of the Sanema economy - the word corresponds to the *wayumi* of the Yanomami (for a good description of which see Fuentes 1979). The Sanema, in family groups, leave their permanent shelters including the vicinity of their gardens and install in a different part of the forest. During *wāshimo* the Sanema's dependence on the forest is greatly increased not only because hunting yields increase but also because unvisited streams and forests can be intimately explored and exploited for their fruits, crabs, caterpillars and so on. While *wāshimo*, honey can again be found near to the shelters.

## Appendix

At the request of the editors I here present two Sanema myths, transcribed directly from the tape recordings made in the field. Word by word translations into English are presented alongside the original Sanema text (presented phonetically, not phonemically) to illustrate the translation process.

The first myth is told by a young man of about 20 years old and his inexperience in story-telling can be discerned in the shortness of the sentences, the lack of connecting phrases and the rather confusing order of events. The final version is found on page 63.

The second myth is told by a more experienced orator of about 35 years old who speaks much more fluently, with longer sentences, more connecting phrases and much more detail. As is typical of Sanema oratory there is a great deal of repetition, much of which is eliminated in the final version (found on page 78) because it makes tedious reading. Only the first part of this myth is presented, sufficient to illustrate the difference in narrative style.

### T3. *Hasakolishumawan*

Sui di kuma. Woman-one said.	Sui di kuma Woman-one said	''walikili! ''walikili!
walikili! walikili!	walikili!'' walikili!''	sui di kuma. woman-one said.
Penipā Husband	ulu ' a tapaloma, child-one had made,	ī ulu this child



oshti very young	loa sat	hīshoma. alone.	Penipā Husband	namo hunting		
asuloma. went.	Penipā Husband	pu ula honey	tusima chopped			
“glo! “glo!	glo! glo!	glo!” glo!”	tama did	di. it.		
Pusipā Wife	walima ate	“walikili! “walikili!	walikili! walikili!			
walikili!” walikili!”	kuma. said.	Di That	kui being	ki, so,		
penipā husband	pu ula honey	pu alugu comb	kemanima, let fall,			
“Sala tu!” “Sala tu!”	kumā. went.	Kamani His	puspā wife			
alugu comb	wama ate	“nfff! nfff!” “sniff! sniff!”	tamama. did.			
Hasakolishuma di bi. Hasakoli woman-one-things.	Penipā Husband	ido climb down.				
Kō pakoni, returning,	i do pakoma. climbed down back-downed.	ī di That one				
pu alugu honey	halo wrapped	tapaloma. made.	ī That	haloa wrapped	hī this	tagima, done,
a hobi a he porcupine	sidoma. killed.	Hobi Porcupine	si kill	di it	la so	da, done,
“a “you	hu go	kō back	pai alí!” first!”	ī na so	penipā husband	kuma. said.
Penipā Husband	kuma. said.	Hasakolishuma Hasakoli woman	di one	kidini, being,	penipā husband	
ī that	ki. that.					
“ī “So	widina where	ulu ' a child one	takili ke?” done - recent past?”		kuma. said.	
“Swase ta “Father-in-law	na with	ipa my	ulu ' a child one	sa I	ta kili done	
ke” recent past”	ī na so	puspā wife	kuma. said.	ī na So	sui ku woman say	ī na ki. that things.
“Igi!” “Right!”	holishi lying	kuma, said,	hasakolishuma hasakoli woman			

holishi lying	kuma. said.	Kō Back	ō going	na gi, so,	ki there	hamo towards	penipā husband
hu walk	kō ō back	asulo going	ma. did.	Ī That	pu honey	halo hasakoli wrapped hasakoli	shuma di woman one
pu ula honey	hi this	li lu pa ki ni, left lying,	hasa pass	soko other	hamo, directionwards		
haakolishuma hasakoli woman	di one	hua went off	kō ō na back home	asulo going	ma. did.	Ki There	
hamo towards	penipā husband	hu go	kō ō back	taso overland	ma. did.	Penipā Husband	
kua having	kō ō back	kidini, being so,	sai a house	na to	penipā husband	lisha approach	paso doing
ma, did,	lisha approach	kō ō paso return doing	ma. did.	Puspā ni Wife - subject-			
"Ai "Other	pu ula honey	tama done	ma not	apa very	Ī ni ki" so being"	Ī na so	puspā kuma. wife said.
"Kau na "You to	pu honey	sa totoki I give	kupī, -recent past-,	ni ki" being"	Ī na so	penipā husband	kuma said.
"Ma!" "No!"		puspā wife	kuma said			"ma!" "no!"	
"Pu "Honey	halo wrapped	ku was	kupī" -recent past-"	Ī na so	kuma said	"hi "this	hobi a, porcupine,
pu honey	halo wrapped	na ki, ones,	pu ula honey	di, one,	'a kōpoli' 'you return home'		
sa I	ku say	kupī, -recent past-,	ni gi" being"	penipā husband	kuma. said.		
"Ma!" "No!"		kuma. said.					
"Wiii!" "Wiii!"		penipā husband	kuma said		"wiii!" "wiii!"		
Henada . Next day	penipā ni, husband,	dimi going down	hua went off	kō ō return	asulo go	ma. did.	
Ī This	pu honey	halo wrapped	Ī this	ta done	toti ipa properly	sua ma. collected.	Pu Honey
halo wrapped	kai squashed	pagoma. lay.	Pu a Honey	halo wrapped	Ī this	di one	sua ma. collected.
"Kiii!" "Kiii!"		a kuma. he said.					

Kamani	hasa	shi	a	kō ō no ni	a	kōpoli ma,	a
His	passing	carry	he	returning	he	returned,	he
kōponi.	Dibi	ohi	ibi	ma.	Ī na	kui	
returning.	People	hungry	very	had been.	So	was	
	di kupili,		hebalai!				
	long past,		o elder brother! <sup>376</sup>				

T 50. *The death of Samonamaniapada and the Opossum's blood*

Samonamaniapada	pasia	li gwi, <sup>377</sup>	nyi pada bi	di,			
Samonamaniapada	really	-about-	ancestors	one,			
nyi pada bi	di	Samonamaniapada,		Pubmudamawai,			
ancestors	one,	Samonamaniapada,		Opossum,			
Kashtaliawan	ī na	di	ku	hudoma.	Ī na	kili	ku
Kashtali mouse	that	one	was	replied.	That	many	were
	ki	ni gi.	Hikelia	tama.	Hikelia	ta ni gi.	
	ones	being.	Garden	made.	Garden	doing.	
Ī	Samonamaniapada	li gwi,	ī	a	toitapa	ma,	
This	Samonamaniapada	-about-,	that	one	good-very	did,	
a	toitapa	ma,	a	pada	toitapa ma.	Pubmudamawai	
he	good-very	did,	he	big-one	good-very did.	Opossum	
pasia	li gwi	a hilabi	wanishila	pasio	totia	pasia	
really	-about-	he angry-very	bad	really	very	really	
gel,	hidani apa	pasia	gel;	ī	dibi	tarapama.	
is,	smelly-very	really	is;	these	people	worked.	
Hikeli	tusi ma.	Hikelia	"ta! ta! ta!"	tama.		Abilinasewai	
Garden	felled.	Garden	"ta! ta! ta!"	did.		Abilinasewai tree	
"tau! tau!	aaaaaa!	blo!	a	salulai!"			
'tau! tau!	aaaaaa!	blo!	it	pour down!"			
"Heeee	heeee	heeee	ho!"	pubmudama	kuma.		
"Heeee	heeee	heeee	ho!"	opossum	said.		
Samonamaniapada	li gwi,	wanimaike	pada	titima	asa	ma	
Samonamaniapada	-about-,	ceiba tree	big-one	chopped	very	did	
	"ta! ta! tai! ta!"		kuma		"boooo!"		
	"ta! ta! tai! ta!"		went		"boooo!"		
"haa haaa haaa ooooo!"			Ī na		Samonamaniapada		
"haa haaa haaa ooooo!"			So		Samonamaniapada		
kuto	asa	ma.	Hi	Samonamaniapada	kuto	ī, ī	
say	very	did.	This	Samonamaniapada	say	so, this	

nabi Yekuana	dibi people	kai language	ĩ so	a he	kai language	sua collect	soa lo originally
bi, ones,	ĩ so	Samonamaniapada Samonamaniapada	ku say	pasia really	ma. did.	Nabi Yekuana	dibi people
ni	kai language	sua collect	soa originally	li bi. ones.	Samonamaniapada Samonamaniapada	ku say	
pasia really	ma. did.	Hi These	Sanema Sanema	dibi people	pasia really	li gwi -about-	
pubmudamaini opossum	abilinase abilinase tree		tusi fell		pasia really	wi, so,	
hikelia garden	wani small	ibi very	hada <sup>378</sup> ---		pasia really	bi. ones.	
Hi This	pubmudamiwai opossum	hikelia garden	ta do	pasiama. really did.	Hikelia Garden	tusima. felled.	
“He “He	he he	he he	aaaaa!” aaaaa!”		Sanema Sanema	dibi people	
ku say	mi	pasia really	mi not	ibi. very.	ĩ This	Pubmudami opossum	kai language
ĩ this	Sanema Sanema	dibi people	kai ni language		Sanema Sanema	dibi people	
ni	ĩ this	pubmudami opossum	pi <sup>379</sup> -being-	sua collect	pasia really	lima, did,	
ĩ this	pubmudami opossum	pi -being-	ĩ this	a he	Sanema Sanema	dibi people	
hikelia garden	osewan tiny	ta do		pasia really	gel. are.	Nabi Yekuana	
dibi people	ni	hikelia garden	pe big	ebi very	tadani, making,	ĩ this	
Samonamaniapada Samonamaniapada	pi -being-	pada great	ni	hikelia garden	sua collect		
soa originally	siloma, did,	ĩ this	a he	kai language	pi -being-	ĩ this	
nabimo Yekuana-being	pa lay	laso ai, down,		di kō ō it returned	do asai, done,	ĩ na this	
di it	kua was	ni gi, being,	ĩ these	Sanemani Sanema	dibi people	li gwi, -about-,	ĩ these
dibi people	tara pamo working	di laso away	digi. ones.	Samonamaniapada Samonamaniapada			

tarapamo working	digi. ones.	Pokolali Quail	dibi people	li gwi, -about-,	pokolali quail	dibi people	
moko girl	li gwi, -about-,	ī these	dibi people	hole fool	pu around	hī shama. alone did.	
Kashtaliai Kashtaliai	pilia lay-in-hammock	hī shadima. alone did.	Sami ibi One - very	ai other			
pilia lay-in-hammock	hī shapasiama, alone really did,	ai other	dibi people	tarapami working			
mai ki, not-withstanding,	sami ipi one-very	pilia lay-in-hammock	hī shapasiama. alone really did.				
Sami ibi One-very	pilia lay-in-hammock	hī sha alone	pasia really	di ni gi, being,	pokolali quail		
dibi people	moko girl	hole pu fool around	hī shama. alone.	Sate Many	epi very	moko girl	
dibi people	shinomoī only-ones	hole fool	palo around	hī shama. alone did.	Kashtali Kashtali		
pilia lay-in-hammock	hī shadima, alone did,	a he	pilia lay-in-hammock	hī sha alone			
di ni gi, being,	dibi people	inamopalo teasing	hī shama. alone.	Kwadakiwai Fire-little			
imi make-fire	gel... are...						

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Other terms used: Shiriana, Yanomama, and Waika.
- <sup>2</sup> The reasons for, and course of, the Sanema's recent migration have been discussed in detail in Colchester 1982. (See also Colchester and Lister 1978).
- <sup>3</sup> The Kobali are the southern Sanema who currently inhabit the Upper Matakuni.
- <sup>4</sup> Some other explorers also visited the Sanema in the period after the second world war and prior to the missions, including Cardona-Puig who first entered the Upper Caura - Auaris area in the 1930's (Cardona-Puig personal communication; see also Cocco 1972: 71-72; Vinci 1959; Liedloff 1975; Gheerbrant 1956).
- <sup>5</sup> Chagnon and Asch have made a number of films of Yanomami myth-telling which are noted in Chagnon (1974: 260 ff.). A remarkable film produced by Manuel de Pedro in 1980, "La iniciación de un shamán," also carries a number of Yanomami myths that have been translated by Lizot.
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 23; Chagnon 1968: 46; Wilbert 1963: 232.
- <sup>7</sup> The term used is *ila*, which is most accurately translated as 'feline,' or alternatively *pole'a* which embraces all the felines and a number of evil beings. The gloss 'jaguar' is thus an approximation, the true jaguar being referred to by the terminal taxon *tuluia*.
- <sup>8</sup> *Waipili* (*Leptodactylus* sp.); in some versions of this myth the *waipili* frog is said to be pregnant and the children actually pulled out of the womb. Cf. Reid 1979: 335.
- <sup>9</sup> *Hologoda*, gourds of the species *Lagenaria siceraria*.
- <sup>10</sup> *Asmada* (*Pseudolmedia laevis* [R & P] MacBr.): red cherry-like fruits that are available during a short season late April - early May.
- <sup>11</sup> The myth refers to the bulges in trees caused by tree cancers, *kalabi umnagi*.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ashkada amo* (*Acrocornia* sp. ?).
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Lizot 1971; 1974: 21; 1976: 19.
- <sup>14</sup> Tapir - *sama* (*Tapirus terrestris*).
- <sup>15</sup> The Sanemas' spirit and the location of their feeling and thoughts is centred in their chest, the heart.
- <sup>16</sup> *Maakoli-shumawan* - curare-woman. See above p. 31.
- <sup>17</sup> *Sadodomiwai* - the warbling antbird (*Hypocnemis cantator*).
- <sup>18</sup> Discussing this myth with a different informant I was told that Omao took the bird's call as a signal that his penis would peel back and that correspondingly a girl's labia would open, so he dived into the river. He did so because Lalagigi's house was in the river and he wanted to take Lalagigi's daughter (see following myth). The *sadodomi* bird does not signal the presence of the curare vine; it is the call of the *kwādodomi* bird that reveals the *maakoli* vine (see p. 59 and glossary p. 99).
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 36; Chagnon 1968: 46; Reid 1979: 350 ff.; contrast Chagnon 1968: 45.
- <sup>20</sup> *Lalagigipada* - the cosmic anaconda.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ōshi* - soul, core, middle, hollow, spirit, etc. (see glossary).
- <sup>22</sup> This sentence has the sense of almost removing a part of the father's body - literally 'So Omao from this Lalagigi his part-of-the-body-daughter took.'
- <sup>23</sup> Between father-in-law and son-in-law the Sanema practise an avoidance relationship. Although bride-service is generally carried out, while the husband must live in his father-in-

law's hut and provide him with game, the son-in-law almost never speaks to his father-in-law - all communications are mediated through his wife. As the Sanema explain: 'We are frightened of our fathers-in-law.'

<sup>24</sup> *Kusma* - cricket (not identified).

<sup>25</sup> *Nimo amo* (unidentified small palm).

<sup>26</sup> *Nasi isi* - *Manihot esculenta*, yuca.

<sup>27</sup> *Kabalumo* - *Dioscorea trifida*, yams.

<sup>28</sup> *Oinamo* - *Xanthosoma cajacu*, cocoyams.

<sup>29</sup> *Shinimo* - *Zea mays*, maize.

<sup>30</sup> *Kolata*, *tilgima*, *hishomani*, *pinigigi*, *palshima*, *tabutabulemigigi*, *labaigigi* are the most common plantains and bananas cultivated by the Sanema (varieties of *Musa paradisiaca*). Peepers (or 'suckers') are vegetatively propagated pseudostems that are cut from the parent plant and transplanted into new garden plots: *okma isi moko* (lit. banana girl).

<sup>31</sup> *Dios*. The informant who told this myth considers Omao and God to be identical.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Chagnon 1968: 46; Lizot 1974: 36; De Cora 1972: 181; Reid 1979: 350 ff.; Wilbert 1963: 232; Civrieux 1970: 59 ff. Especially in view of the fact that very few Sanema know the second part of this tale (i.e. from where Omao goes hunting downstream), it is plausible to suggest that this second part is a cultural borrowing from the Yekuana.

<sup>33</sup> *Shuli* is a species of fish (not identified); *shulishuma* means *shuli* woman.

<sup>34</sup> Another brief version notes that there is a little bird that has copied this noise; it is probably the pygmy tyrant (*Colaptes auratus*).

<sup>35</sup> *Hulali*, another species of fish (not identified); *hulalishuma* means *hulali* woman.

<sup>36</sup> This is a common occupation for small boys. The palm used is *managa amo* (*Euterpe* sp. ?). The bow may be made of any flexible wood that comes to hand and for a bowstring the boy's waist-string may often be used. The lengthy arrows are manoeuvred up to near the fish and released over a short range, e.g. six inches. Young Sanema boys often take such extempore bows with them when accompanying adults on fishpoisoning expeditions using the poisonous vine called *shilashiladodo* (*Lonchocarpus* sp.).

<sup>37</sup> That is, he 'knew' due to his shamanic powers.

<sup>38</sup> *Hadami* - giant otter (*Pteroneura brasiliensis*).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Wilbert 1963: 232. This myth is not known among the Yanomami it seems. The theme of explaining the brevity of human life as due to an accidental association with perishable natural phenomena is however widespread in S. America - cf. Lévi-Strauss 1970: 147-163.

<sup>40</sup> *Poli* - a tree with very hard wood (not identified), that has a fine peeling bark. The trees are rare and widely dispersed.

<sup>41</sup> It is probably quite significant the fact that the Sanema consider Soawe as the younger brother of Omao, whereas the Yanomami express them as having the opposite relationship (e.g. Lizot 1974: 23 ff.) and also contradictorily call them 'twins.' (There is no term meaning 'twins' in Sanema). It may be that this fact is related to the Sanema's emphasis on patrilinearity which, apparently, is not common to all Yanoama groups (Ramos and Albert 1977).

<sup>42</sup> *Shidishina* - the term used by the Yekuana to refer to the Sanema.

<sup>43</sup> *Kodalinasé* - a very soft-wooded tree found commonly along river banks (*Trema micrantha* (L.) Blume).

<sup>44</sup> In two other versions Omao exclaims "*Sibalusi koni!*" or "*Sibalusi toni!*" a phrase whose meaning is not clear even to the Sanema. *Sibalusi* means 'metal' in Sanema; *toni* means

'one' in Yekuana. Perhaps Omao is crying 'only that which is hard (metallic).'

<sup>45</sup> *Hanakasa* - (*Mussella frenata*). The Sanema believe that all human beings have a *nonosbi*, a term that means literally 'shadow' or 'reflection,' and which Ramos (1972) has translated as 'alter ego spirit.' Most women's *nonosbi* are said to occur in the form of this weasel, which it would be folly to try to kill for the snake *nonosbi* of particularly tall women - *nonosbi gi' apada* - would take revenge. Men's *nonosbi* occur in the form of harpy eagles (*Harpia harpyja*).

<sup>46</sup> *Lalagigi* and *bedugigi* are the two species of anaconda recognized by the Sanema.

<sup>47</sup> In another version the informant specifically mentions that snakes were created from the *poli* trees. It may be noted that the Sanema say that the *hekula* spirits (see glossary) are able to rejuvenate themselves in exactly this way.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 13; Chagnon 1968: 48; Zerries 1964: 273.

<sup>49</sup> The term *hiwi* refers to all the species of bat.

<sup>50</sup> *Waso* is a term applied to a number of small bats including the vampire bat.

<sup>51</sup> *Koli* refers to at least two species of birds, the caciques (*Psarcolius viridis* and *Gymnostinops yuracares*).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 64. Curiously the myth amongst the Yanomami is inverted: the killing of the *paluli* brings night for the Yanomami and day for the Sanema.

<sup>53</sup> *Kaslbigigipada* - the *Kaslabai* (long lips) are a ferocious group of Yanomam on the Lower Uraricoera.

<sup>54</sup> Kanadakuni, Merevari, Paru; these names have been introduced to the Sanema by the Yekuana. But they are Arawak, not Carib, in origin. Before either the Sanema or the Yekuana expanded northwards from the Orinoco area (the Yekuana from the Casiquiare - Padamo area, the Sanema from the N. Parima), the Ventuari and Caura were inhabited by Guinau. Arawaks. The Erebató used to be a Karifña (Carib) area until very recently. Cf. Koch-Grünberg 1979:248.

<sup>55</sup> *Palalaísi* refers to the seeds of the tree *Anadenanthera peregrina*. Well known to the Yanomami as an hallucinogen it is rare in Sanema territory, though Taylor reports it being traded into the Auaris area from the Matakuni (Taylor 1976). Like the hallucinogen prepared from the *Virola* tree which the Sanema also employ as an arrow poison, *Anadenanthera* seeds contain powerful tryptamines. According to the Sanema, the Yanomami used this snuff for an arrow poison as well. The practice has not been previously recorded but is quite plausible.

<sup>56</sup> *Honama* - *Crypturellus variegatus*. This small tinamou calls at all times of day and night. In another version the people laugh, the story is followed by T 18, p. 41.

<sup>57</sup> *Musamai* - a small tree (*Amphirox longifolia* [St. Hil] Spreng in L.).

<sup>58</sup> In another version the Sanema first light flares to light their way. Commonly when this myth is told the curassow is speared, not shot with an arrow. One informant mentions that the curassow was speared with the wood of *palapalaidada* (not identified).

<sup>59</sup> The species mentioned are *paluli* - curassow (*Crax alector*), *kulemi* - Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*), *manashi* - the piping guan (*Pipile pipile* and *P. cumanensis*), *kokoi* - raptors, a term covering eagles, hawks, falcons, etc.

<sup>60</sup> The following species are mentioned: *ilo* - the howler monkey (*Alouatta seniculus*); *paso* - the spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*); *wisha* - the capuchin monkey (*Chiropotes satanas*); *washi* - the white monkey (*Cebus albifrons*); *honama* - lesser tinamou (*Crypturellus variegatus*); *paluli* - black curassow (*Crax alector*); *manashi* - blue-throated piping guan (*Pipile pipile* and *P. cumanensis*); *kulemi* - Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1970: 85. One informant incorporated this myth as directly following the myth (see p. 49) of the origin of day.



<sup>62</sup> *Soko* (*Tamandua tetradactyla*), the climbing anteater.

<sup>63</sup> *Anepoko*. Tree termites' nests. These termites, *anepa*, are the exclusive food of the tamandua. The nests made of dry compacted termite faeces are frequently used by the Sanema to light small fires, especially after heavy rain. The termites are edible.

<sup>64</sup> *Laka* - not, strictly speaking, a bamboo (*Guadua longifolia*).

<sup>65</sup> *Palawa* - not identified; see p. 108, footnote 58.

<sup>66</sup> *Paso* - spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*).

<sup>67</sup> *Paluli* - curassow (*Crax alector*).

<sup>68</sup> *Tului'a* - jaguar (*Felis onca*).

<sup>69</sup> *Hasa* - forest deer (*Mazama americana*).

<sup>70</sup> *Sama* - tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*).

<sup>71</sup> The reference is to the Sanema custom of hanging up the skulls of game (or the breastbones in the case of larger birds) over the fire as hunting trophies.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Wilbert 1963: 234. Lizot has not recorded this myth among the Yanomami, but see Lizot 1976: 104 ff. for a description of the ritual surrounding a girl's first menses.

<sup>73</sup> As soon as a girl has her first menses, she must take off all her clothes and, within the house surrounded by a curtain of branches of the small tree *sapulimai* - shaman tree (*Sorocea guyanensis* W. Burger), sit silent for three or four days. At night, within the leaf curtain, she sleeps on a simple bast hammock. All meat is forbidden her, and she may drink only a little cassava gruel. During the day (and during all subsequent menses) the girl (or woman) sits on the ground, by the fireside. After about six days, her hair is shorn and she is prettily decorated; major food prohibitions continue until her hair grows long again (see glossary).

<sup>74</sup> (*Dicotyles torquatus*) - the white-lipped peccary. The myth gives a good account of a typical peccary hunt.

<sup>75</sup> The term *manogoshi* refers to the equivalent period in a man's life when he celebrates his reaching adulthood. In this instance, however, the word is being applied by extension to the girl's condition. Husbands observe sympathetically their wives' food prohibitions during menstruation (and pregnancy): these restrictions do not extend to their hunting.

<sup>76</sup> *Musamai* (*Amphirox longifolia* [St. Hil] Spreng. in L.); the transformation (right, in house, on ground → wrong, in forest, up in tree) must be an important lead in analysing this myth.

<sup>77</sup> Four birds are said to be *waligigi be'an* - including the lesser tinamou, and the trogons - *solagimusiwai* (*Trogon melanurus*/*T. collaris*) and *kulukulumusiwai* (*Trogon viridis*). The fourth is the marbled wood-quail (*Odontophorus guianensis*) (see glossary).

<sup>78</sup> The lesser tinamou (*Crypturellus variegatus*); see note 77.

<sup>79</sup> *Ense*, an address term with no kinship implications; very rare.

<sup>80</sup> Small palms whose delicate fresh leaves are commonly eaten by peccaries.

<sup>81</sup> *Felis onca*.

<sup>82</sup> *Chiropetes satanas*.

<sup>83</sup> *Crax alector*.

<sup>84</sup> *Mosa osewai*, a term applied to a large number of *Tanagra* and related spp.

<sup>85</sup> *Bixa orellana* L.

<sup>86</sup> *Hiwí*, a general term that includes all species of bats; some species are edible. For more on bats and blood see Lévi-Strauss 1973: 182.

- <sup>87</sup> The Sanema have acquired blowpipes from the Yekuana.
- <sup>88</sup> See previous myth and notes.
- <sup>89</sup> *Manogoshiminase* - at the same age approximately that girls have their first menses young boys are ritually received into adulthood. Apart from the sitting, and the screening behind leaves (not necessary for boys), the ritual is similar to the girls' (see glossary).
- <sup>90</sup> That is the age group just prior to passage into adulthood. For a description of Sanema age grades see Taylor 1974: 62 ff.
- <sup>91</sup> *Sakona* or *sakina* - snuff prepared from *Virola* spp. resin.
- <sup>92</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 74. Also see Lizot (1976: 205 ff.) for an excellent description of a festival. All the essentials apply equally well to the Sanema.
- <sup>93</sup> One of the many terms the Sanema use to designate other Yanoama is *Waikia*. The Sanema call the Yanam of the Paragua *Palawa* people. The Yanoama of the Lower Uraticoera are known as *Walma* people and *Kaselabe'ai* people (wide-lipped people). Those Yanoama immediately south of the Auaris are called *Kobali* people. The Yanomami of the Padamo are known as *Labadili* people. *Waikia* is a vaguer term but may represent a memory of the Yanomami whom Smole 1976 identifies as Barafiri. *Shamatali* is a more contextual term, which may be glossed as 'fierce neighbours to the south.' The western Sanema may refer to the Sanema of the Auaris as *Shamatali*.
- <sup>94</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>95</sup> The down taken from raptors. This white fluff is stuck in the hair and on the body during festivals.
- <sup>96</sup> *Tinimisoma* - armadillo woman. The *tinimi* is the smallest of the five species of armadillo recognized by the Sanema. Unlike the other four it is not edible. It may indeed be one of the numerous 'imaginary' animals that people the Sanemas' jungle.
- <sup>97</sup> The back-basket carried by women - *wi* - is of a different shape to the basket used by both sexes for carrying harvested garden products. At about seven years young girls are given such a basket, but of a small size, to carry to the gardens and into the jungle on foraging expeditions.
- <sup>98</sup> Cf. previous myth, and footnotes.
- <sup>99</sup> *Waka* - armadillo (*Priodontes giganteus*).
- <sup>100</sup> It is common for Sanema men to take a wife from the age of about eight to ten years old. Older wives, after their first menstruation, commonly accompany their husbands hunting. This is not so much in order to help carry the game as to find privacy for copulation.
- <sup>101</sup> *Pishia* - (*Calathea altissima*).
- <sup>102</sup> *Hoko amo* - the seje palm (*Oenocarpus/Jessenia* sp.).
- <sup>103</sup> Cf. the fight with Siroromi, Lizot 1974: 94.
- <sup>104</sup> *Wasamo* - a ritual speech held by the Sanema when visitors arrive. The hosts and visitors pair off and, arms clasped about each others' necks, crouch down on the ground. Friendly relations may be consolidated and trade exchanges negotiated by medium of the fierce exchange of short phrases.
- <sup>105</sup> Cf. Chagnon 1968: 47.
- <sup>106</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>107</sup> *Po'oloi di*, firestick made from branches of the tree (*Coussapoa affin. labifolia* Aubl.) *po'oloi*.
- <sup>108</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 95; Lévi-Strauss 1970: 69 and 152 n.; Colchester and Lister 1978.

<sup>109</sup> There are numerous *Inga* species. All, and a number of related leguminous vines, have pods containing seeds coated in a cotton fluff containing sugar. This fluff is sucked but the seeds are inedible. The species mentioned is *labai* (*Inga* sp.).

<sup>110</sup> The Sanema cultivate numerous varieties of the vine (*Lagenaria siceraria*) to make gourds and calabashes *hologoda* for collecting water. The Sanema do not cultivate *Crescentia cujete*.

<sup>111</sup> Menstruating girls during their first confinement are curtained from society by the leaves of the *sapulimai* tree (see glossary).

<sup>112</sup> Large eroded blocks of stone are common in hilly parts of the jungle, commonly of exfoliated granite. They provide low-roofed caves with sandy floors, used by the large cats as lairs.

<sup>113</sup> *Pagidi* - chili (*Capsicum frutescens*). Chilis do not play so prominent a role in the Sanema diet as among Carib Indians (cf. Gheerbrant 1956: 224). It is conceivable that they are a relatively recent acquisition of the Yanoama.

<sup>114</sup> (*Nicotiana tabacum*) - *pini*.

<sup>115</sup> *Anepoko*, tree termites' nest.

<sup>116</sup> Literally 'drowned.'

<sup>117</sup> Of the 40 or so species of honey known to the Sanema, this honey *oi-ola* is one of the more common. The bees, though stingless, are relatively fierce and tangle in one's hair.

<sup>118</sup> *Kunamgosbi* (not identified).

<sup>119</sup> The informant stated that these people who fell underground became the *obinani* (see following myth). Cf. Wilbert 1963: 234.

<sup>120</sup> Spider-monkey - (*Ateles belzebuth*), *paso*. The bones of the spider-monkey are favoured for making the arrow points to shoot birds.

<sup>121</sup> Howler-monkey - (*Alouatta seniculus*), *ilo*. The use of howler-monkey bones for digging is mentioned only in two of three versions collected. *Sama* - (*Tapirus terrestris*) bones are included in a third version.

<sup>122</sup> The informant says that those below who were killed became the *obinani* people of the underworld. Cf. Zerries 1964: 277.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 20.

<sup>124</sup> The *obinani* are the people of the underworld. They are commonly supposed to have originated because a piece of the sky fell on a lot of Sanema and cast them underground (see preceding myth). The term *obi-nani* is derived from the words *obi* for hungry and *nani* - crazy. They are crazy with hunger, about three foot or six inches high (depending on informants), immensely strong, and ugly. In the underworld they have dogs, houses and (very small) cultivated clearings, like the Sanema above. They have very large machetes and use earthenware cooking pots. The underworld is otherwise much like this world. The *obinani* are immortal.

<sup>125</sup> *Moka* - frog (*Osteocephalus* sp.?). About June, that is in the middle of the wet season, these frogs congregate in ponds and pools to copulate; their croaking is particularly noticeable during the day.

<sup>126</sup> *Kostoliuidibi* - marsh 'spirits.' One people amongst the myriads who inhabit the Sanema's world.

<sup>127</sup> This myth should be compared with that in Civrieux 1970: 43.

<sup>128</sup> *Holema gigi* - giant earthworm.

<sup>129</sup> *Sama* - tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*).

<sup>130</sup> *Haĩhai' omi* - the screaming piha (*Lipaugus vociferans*). The bird is said to signal thunder, *sandi he'an*. Thunder is the noise made by Sanema ghosts as they dance to celebrate the arrival of a new member (i.e. it signals death).

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Lizot 1976; Chagnon 1968: 47.

<sup>132</sup> *Suii kudamiawai* - a flycatcher (*Myiarchus swainsoni* ?). The signal that a child will get ill and die. One informant said: "It is Omao's *he'an*, an evil spirit; so my father used to say." Another told me: "Long ago there was no water. Omao's son made a hole in the ground. That is where all the water comes from."

<sup>133</sup> When a Sanema dies his core or soul, *õshi*, becomes a ghost, *hena pole di*. Generally feared as evil spirits, it is probably accurate etymologically to note that the term *pole* refers to jaguars and like evil beings.

<sup>134</sup> *Nimo amo* - a small palm (not identified); the fruit is notably hard.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 57; Chagnon 1968: 46; Zerries 1964: 275.

<sup>136</sup> *Sakona! sakina* - a dark red snuff containing tryptamines prepared from the resin of *Virola* trees.

<sup>137</sup> *Hasa* (*Mazama americana*).

<sup>138</sup> *Asbekonomi* - oropendola (*Cacicus uropygialis*).

<sup>139</sup> The address term applied to most women, *nagai*, means literally 'little vagina.'

<sup>140</sup> Peach palm, *lasa amo*, (*Guilielma gasipaes* or *Bactris gasipaes*) - a cultivated palm bearing red and yellow fruits of notable nutrient value. The deer is however referring to *managa amo* which he has mistakenly called *lasa amo*.

<sup>141</sup> The jaw of the peccary is used as a small plane in the shaving of bows.

<sup>142</sup> *Nashkoi* - cassava gruel.

<sup>143</sup> The Sanema do not have numbers beyond two, they count on their fingers. Ten days means 'a long time' to the Sanema.

<sup>144</sup> *Ilamo* - not the usual word *polemo* which means to become intoxicated; here the word means to actually incorporate jaguar-feline spirits.

<sup>145</sup> *Monama* (not identified), black olive-sized fruits common during August - October at the end of the wet season. The basket mentioned is a *wi* that is one usually used by women. The association of *wi* and shamans (cf. Lizot 1976: 176 ff.) distinguishes them from ordinary men.

<sup>146</sup> Lévi-Strauss (1973: 386 n.) notes that jaguars make a cracking sound when they flap their ears!

<sup>147</sup> *Hasa* - forest deer (*Mazama americana*).

<sup>148</sup> *Sakona* - (*Virola* spp.). This common tree occurs throughout the Sanema area. The Sanema rip down the bark and use the red resin that it contains to prepare a hallucinogenic snuff containing tryptamines. This is the only drug commonly taken by the Sanema (see Colchester and Lister 1978).

<sup>149</sup> The lack of resistance Amerindians show for epidemics of viral infections is now well known. Such epidemics, mainly of the viral infections that originated in the Old World, still decimate the Sanema. Rumour of such an epidemic often is enough to precipitate the Sanema away from their permanent settlements into the forest. Cf. Ferraroni and Hayes 1977.

<sup>150</sup> *Okamo* - shamanic chanting.

<sup>151</sup> *Poodoli* has no particular meaning as far as I know.

<sup>152</sup> Taylor (1972) has translated the term *õka dibi* as 'night raiders.' Lizot (1974: 111) has translated the equivalent term in Yanomami as 'brujos' (witches). The term applies to raiding

using *alawali* to kill (see glossary), rather than physical violence. Such raiding is imagined to occur especially at night, but can occur at any time of day (see myth of Samonamania p. 78 and glossary). The only other suitable term in English is 'sorcery.'

<sup>153</sup> *Nishmoko* - ground termites.

<sup>154</sup> *Kwali nagi* - "the night-monkey's herb." This small acanthaceous herb (*Justicia longifolia*) occurs both wild and in cultivated plots. The sweet smelling leaves are worn ornamentally by women in their earlobes or tucked into the bands about their upper arms. The same leaves may be heated and crumbled to a fine powder; mixed with *Virola* resin snuff, it is said to enhance the drugs' hallucinogenic properties. Cf. Chagnon *et al.* 1970.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 93; Wilbert 1963: 227. The name Shinanidawawan is derived from *shimani*, the word for cotton. Lizot has suggested that the Yanomami hero's name Siroromi is derived from the word for 'sores.' The Sanema say that a girl who is menstruating for the first time must not sleep in a cotton hammock for she would get sores - *sululu* - all over.

<sup>156</sup> *Paluli* - (*Crax alector*).

<sup>157</sup> Made from the upper incisors of the agouti (*Dasyprocta agouti*). These chisels are used for honing arrowheads.

<sup>158</sup> *Samadodo* - silk-grass (*Ananas comosus* var.).

<sup>159</sup> In another version, *magamdodo* - (*Heteropsis integerrima*).

<sup>160</sup> *Lebus dodo* - the hanging roots of epiphytic Araceae (*Philodendron* sp., *Monstera* sp. etc.). The root tips are bright red as they hang in the forest before lengthening to root in the ground. The red is Shinanidawawan's blood. The important point is that while silk-grass and *Heteropsis* are very strong bindings, *lebus* is very weak.

<sup>161</sup> As for the myth above the honey mentioned is *oi-ola*.

<sup>162</sup> *Suni nagi* - a type of *alawali* (not identified). *Polemo* - to become jaguars or jaguarize. The verb is used to describe intoxication with drugs (including alcohol).

<sup>163</sup> This sound is made by vibrating the lips while humming.

<sup>164</sup> The story of the lice picking to dispatch the man-eater is found in Lizot (1974: 24).

<sup>165</sup> *Koshilo ola* is a variety of honey. The name may be derived from this.

<sup>166</sup> *Kulikasa* (*Amazona* spp., *A. amazonica* and *A. farinosa*).

<sup>167</sup> Large kills once butchered are generally grilled on a griddle over a fire. The meat so smoked is gradually eaten over the following days. Guts and the liver are cooked and eaten separately. If some meat is to be immediately cooked up, the liver and spleen are boiled in the pot with a liana looped round them. They are drawn out after a short while and eaten while the flesh gradually softens.

<sup>168</sup> *Sola* - blowpipe. Solamani, or blowpipe man, is an evil being.

<sup>169</sup> *Calathea altissima*.

<sup>170</sup> When on trek, when *wāshimo* and when a house has been set up in a new part of the forest, Sanema characteristically hunt the immediate vicinity at dawn and dusk for marbled wood quail (*Odontophorus guianensis*), tinamids and Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*).

<sup>171</sup> *Pendare* is the Venezuelan term for *kaimani* fruits, see note 179.

<sup>172</sup> *Hekula* - see glossary.

<sup>173</sup> A rare shot attempted when killing quail.

<sup>174</sup> *Teso* - all hummingbird not including hermits.

<sup>175</sup> *Moka* - frog (*Osteocephalus* sp. ?).

- <sup>176</sup> *Mosa isi* - tanagers (*Tanagra* spp.).
- <sup>177</sup> *Mosa isi* - tanagers (*Tanagra* spp.).
- <sup>178</sup> *A 'usbi* - the adjective can equally mean 'white.'
- <sup>179</sup> *Kaimani* - pendare (*Couma macrocarpa*).
- <sup>180</sup> *Hiuliuna* - edible fruit (*Clarisia affin. ilicifolia* [Spreng] Lang. & Rossb.).
- <sup>181</sup> *Asmada* - edible fruit (*Pseudolmedia laevis* [R & P] MacBr.).
- <sup>182</sup> According to another informant, when the trees sprang upright they sprayed the entire forest with blood which is why they all bear fruit. The blood became the red resin of the *hiuliuna* and the red fruits of the *asmada*. The *ōsbi* (see glossary) of the *hekula*'s bones, and the white hairs on their heads became the white latex of the *kaimani*.
- <sup>183</sup> *I'ibi be 'an* or *hiuliuna he 'an* or *take kudamiawai* (not identified).
- <sup>184</sup> *Kulemi* - Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*).
- <sup>185</sup> *Apia* - edible fruit (not identified).
- <sup>186</sup> *Ōka dibi* - see p. 112, note 152.
- <sup>187</sup> *Pinadu* - imaginary mice that are said to live in the top of trees in entanglements of lianas, etc. They have spines in their armpits which are particularly potent as *alawali* darts.
- <sup>188</sup> The description fits exactly the customary way of grilling monkeys. Once gutted the tendons are cut at the knees, and the wrists, ankles and neck are all bound together. The body is then smoked and becomes blackened; the skin tightens and in places splits so that the muscle protrudes. The tightened skin opens the mouth into a rictus of a smile.
- <sup>189</sup> The call is that of the bird *kwādodomi* - antshrike (*Thamnomanes* sp.), whose call is said to reveal the presence of the latex-bearing vine *kwātoto* (not identified) and also to signal the approach of evil beings (*sai dibi*). Some Sanema consider that the bird's call also signals the presence of the curare vine (*maakolitoto*).
- <sup>190</sup> *Kasa* - an edible species of caterpillar that occurs only in certain areas of the forest, early in the wet season. The caterpillars congregate on the stems of small saplings and weave a cocoon to protect them during metamorphosis.
- <sup>191</sup> (*Tinamus major*) - *hashimo* (the term includes the rarer *T. tao*).
- <sup>192</sup> This is not the usual sound to accompany a description of eating honey.
- <sup>193</sup> The larvae in the honey comb are eaten by the Sanema. The wax has many applications.
- <sup>194</sup> *Hobi* (*Coendou insidiosus*).
- <sup>195</sup> Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1970: 124.
- <sup>196</sup> *Iskolemgigi* (not identified).
- <sup>197</sup> Kinkajou, *haso* - (*Potos flavus*).
- <sup>198</sup> Olingo, *hela* - (*Bassaricyon gabii*). Both animals are active only at night and are very rare game.
- <sup>199</sup> There are many circumlocutions to describe copulation: in this case the snake is described as penis-eating the girl; screwing might be a more appropriate translation. Men frequently refer to copulation using an aggressive vocabulary: eating, stinging, swallowing, etc.
- <sup>200</sup> Stands of *pishia* leaves (*Calathea altissima*) occur commonly on poorly drained soils.
- <sup>201</sup> It may be relevant to note that women sit on the ground during their menses. Except for a girl's first menses, menstruation is always referred to by the term 'sitting' - *loa*.

<sup>202</sup> *Kulemi* - Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*).

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 99.

<sup>204</sup> *Holemagigi* - in fact a giant worm that is eaten by the Sanema. The Sanema classify worms with the snakes. In telling this tale, significantly just before mentioning the snake's beauty, the teller of the tale accidentally says *ibimagigi* (*Anilius* sp.), a snake with many coloured bands. In another version, otherwise virtually identical, the snake is the *ibimagigi* throughout.

<sup>205</sup> Tasty red fruits like cherries, *asmada* (*Pseudolmedia laevis* [R & P] MacBr.).

<sup>206</sup> It may be significant that snake-lovers are always associated with sitting (see note 201, p. 114). Sanema always sit on leaves in the forest and not directly on leaf litter - which may result in an intensely itchy skin rash. In all the three versions that I recorded of this myth, *fresh* leaves are always mentioned.

<sup>207</sup> *Maĩgoshi* - resin collected from trees such as *Manilkara* spp. and used as a fixative.

<sup>208</sup> In order to gain purchase on the tree trunk the Sanema loop their ankles together. They then move up the tree alternately reaching up with their arms and legs in the manner of a geometrid caterpillar.

<sup>209</sup> *Koli* - the term refers to at least two species of birds, the caciques (*Psarcolius viridis* and *Gymnostinops yuracares*) which build "meter long purse-shaped nests, many of which hang from the outer branches of high trees" (Schauensee and Phelps 1979: 309).

<sup>210</sup> *Wanimegipada* - the ceiba tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), a forest giant, with wide spreading branches and large buttressed roots. The down of the seeds is used to make blowdart pistons.

<sup>211</sup> The huge houses of the Yekuana are the most spectacular constructions in the Venezuelan Amazonas, reaching over 60 ft. in height and being as much as 120 ft. in diameter (cf. Barandiarán 1966, and Colchester and Lister 1978).

<sup>212</sup> *Asaka* (not identified).

<sup>213</sup> The Sanema have recently learnt to weave their hammock's scale lines in the Yekuana fashion.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Arvelo-Jiménez 1968: 94.

<sup>215</sup> *Askada* - (*Acrocomia* sp.?).

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Colchester and Lister 1978.

<sup>217</sup> The *sipina* is a mythical monkey said to have once been a howler monkey. Some say it is black, others that it is red. They are very fierce, have enormous strength, and not only eat other howler monkeys but even Sanema. In the Yekuana version of this myth (see note 216) the monkey is identified as a spider monkey, not a *sipina*. Other Sanema in telling this myth speak of the *paso* (*Ateles belzebuth*) as the provider of basketry.

<sup>218</sup> *Kotoma* - the manioc press is a relatively recent acquisition by the Sanema. There are many Sanema who still cannot weave them.

<sup>219</sup> A single term *sode* applies equally to sieves and the close-woven tessellate baskets known as *guapa*.

<sup>220</sup> *Sedenabi* - foreigner, as opposed to *Nabi* - Yekuana, and *Sanima* - human.

<sup>221</sup> The word, here translated as 'incomplete,' usually refers to the larval forms of butterflies, i.e. caterpillars and young fledgling birds. The sense is of unformed, unfinished.

<sup>222</sup> *Tili* - literally 'taken,' an exclamation that accompanies the killing of a game animal for the pot.

<sup>223</sup> The particular informant who tells this myth considers God and Omao as synonymous. He has had contact with the evangelical missionaries for at least 15 years.

<sup>224</sup> *Magamdodo* - strong woody lianas of the species *Heteropsis integerrima*. The term applies to the simple hammock made from the liana.

<sup>225</sup> *Gynerium sagittatum* - *shilaka isi*, a cultivated cane that also occurs wild on the banks of certain rivers.

<sup>226</sup> *Shilaka nagai* - usually made from a small tree (not identified).

<sup>227</sup> *Shitokolio* - (*Cecropia* cf. *metensis* Cuatr.); the fibrous bark of young trees is preferred to the fibre obtained from *samadodo* (*Ananas comosus* var.) for making strong bow strings.

<sup>228</sup> *Laka* - *Guadua* sp. A lanceolate arrowpoint is fashioned to kill larger game.

<sup>229</sup> The tenon is made from the *arali* tree (not identified) to hold the bone point.

<sup>230</sup> The bone point is made usually of the long leg bones of *paluli* (*Crax alector*) and preferably *paso* (*Ateles belzebuth*).

<sup>231</sup> *Kashawai*, *kasnawai* and *kashtali'ai* are three different species of mouse, usually arboreal in habit - not identified.

<sup>232</sup> *Wanapanaima* - the arboreal opossum (Didelphidae) is, like the above-mentioned mice, considered inedible. It is a particularly unattractive animal in Sanema terms, but is as often associated with the arboreal mice as with the common opossum *pubmudami*.

<sup>233</sup> *Nana* - (*Bixa orellana* L.).

<sup>234</sup> In fact the ferocious *heu ho!* warcry of the Sanema is very rarely uttered these days. Visitors are more likely to make the high pitched call of the Yekuana *bi bi hiiiii! bi bi hiiiii!*

<sup>235</sup> The *Walma* people live downstream from the Sanema on the Auaris-Uraricoera. They are Yanoama speaking the Yanomam or Yanam language. The Sanema maintain equivocal relations with this group but have exchanged women with them. The *Walma* were in contact with the Evangelical Mission on the Middle Uraricoera before it closed, and presumably made visits to Boa Vista downriver. The mission was described briefly by Montgomery (1970).

<sup>236</sup> The Sanema refer to all the 'whites' (and, recently, to various acculturated Indian groups on the lower rivers) as *sedenabi*, which is the term used in this context. The Brasilians are sometimes distinguished from the real *sedenabi* by the term *kadai*. The Yekuana are denoted by the term *Nabi*.

<sup>237</sup> *Waikia* is a term used by the Sanema to refer to hostile Yanomami groups to their south. The Sanema no longer maintain contacts with these people. See p. 108, note 93. (*Waikia* is also the name of a descent group localized on the Upper Caura between Carona and Caño Guaña).

<sup>238</sup> I.e. 'I am a *Waikia*.' (The *Waikia* cannot speak Spanish).

<sup>239</sup> *Merevari* - Arawak name for the Upper Caura.

<sup>240</sup> *Pole* - the term for dogs is the same as the term for evil carnivorous spirits in general (cf. Yanomam(i) - *bore*: Lizot 1976: 24ff.; Becher 1974; Biocca 1971: 163, 380). Dogs are a relatively recent acquisition of the Sanema.

<sup>241</sup> This particular informant is the grandson of a Yekuana, he is culturally a Sanema however.

<sup>242</sup> *Sama* - tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), *soko* - tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) and *wali* - white-lipped peccary (*Dicotyles labiatus*).

<sup>243</sup> *Ila* - a term usually used to embrace the felines; another informant used the term *poleapada* (big evil-carnivore-spirit).

<sup>244</sup> *No'a* - the term also means revenge.

<sup>245</sup> The myth shows many similarities to the tales the Yekuana tell of the risks of collecting blowpipe canes in the mountains; cf. Civrieux 1970 and Colchester and Lister 1978.



<sup>246</sup> *Hadami* - giant otter (*Pteroneura brasiliensis*).

<sup>247</sup> *Hashimo* - great tinamou (*Tinamus major*); the term includes the rare *T. tao*.

<sup>248</sup> Literally 'strike her below.'

<sup>249</sup> The episode of the amusing cannibal who mistakes a reflection for a chance of game is common in South American mythography. Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1970: 273.

<sup>250</sup> The vulture people were only mentioned in one of the two versions of this myth noted. There was no other significant difference in the two versions. *Wada* - vultures (the following species occur in the Sanema area: *Coragyps atratus*, *Sarcoramphus papa*, *Cathartes aura*, *C. burrorianus*, *C. melanotus*).

<sup>251</sup> Commonly the Sanema lay vegetation across a trail where there are wasps, to protect other wayfarers.

<sup>252</sup> The blowpipe is not a traditional Sanema weapon, but is now commonly used by young boys to hunt small birds in the immediate vicinity of the house. The blowpipe, and, I suspect, this myth, are cultural borrowings from the Yekuana (cf. Civrieux 1970: 229; Wilbert 1963: 233).

<sup>253</sup> I.e. 'copulate with him now.' Playful, sometimes quite violent, aggressive behaviour between the sexes is taken as flirting among the Sanema. Flicking water, chucking scraps of food, the playful exchange of blows, always have a sexual implication.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 14; Becher 1960: 114; Barandiarán 1974: 240.

<sup>255</sup> *Pokola* - (*Odontophorus guianensis*), the marbled wood-quail.

<sup>256</sup> *Kasa* - a species of caterpillar that makes large collective cocoons.

<sup>257</sup> *I'udami* - (*Caiman crocodylus*), the alligator (the term probably includes various *Palaeosuchus* spp.). The Sanema say the alligator has no tongue.

<sup>258</sup> The term *laliama* refers to the shamanic vomiting up of material. Sanema concepts concerning caterpillars are extremely complicated (see glossary, *lalai*).

<sup>259</sup> The leaf species are not given but, discussing the myth, the same informant suggested that *shilakasi* leaves (*Heliconia* sp.) were substituted for *pishia* leaves (*Calathea altissima*).

<sup>260</sup> *Mosa* - refers to numerous tanagers (*Tanagra* spp.).

<sup>261</sup> *Hama* - cotinga (*Cotinga cayana*).

<sup>262</sup> *Wagoga* - pigeon (*Columba* sp.).

<sup>263</sup> *Ashekonomi* - cacique (*Cacicus uropygialis*).

<sup>264</sup> *Pishakami* - tanager (*Piranga flava* & *P. rubra*).

<sup>265</sup> *Solagamusi* - trogon (*Trogon melanurus* & *T. collaris*).

<sup>266</sup> *Kul kul musi* - trogon (*Trogon viridis* & *T. violaceus*).

<sup>267</sup> *Tibi* - the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*).

<sup>268</sup> *Waso* - a term referring to many small species of bat.

<sup>269</sup> *Kashdi* - tiny ants that cause an intense itching rash. See Lizot 1974: 67.

<sup>270</sup> *Nimo amo* - (not identified).

<sup>271</sup> *Maipuma* - the long-tailed tyrant (*Colonia colonis*).

<sup>272</sup> *Sokimusi* - woodcreeper (*Dendrocivula fuliginosa* ?).

<sup>273</sup> *Hiomanigoshi* - the anthrush (*Formicarius colina*).

<sup>274</sup> *Bwii bwii kudamawai* - a frog (*Otophryne* sp.).

<sup>275</sup> *Pooloi* - (*Coussapoa affin. latifolia* Aubl.). This forest tree provides the wood traditionally used by the Sanema for firesticks.

<sup>276</sup> *Taintara* - bast trees (*Anaxagorea* spp.).

<sup>277</sup> Sanema tell of two great fires that gave rise to the ash and cinder layers that may be found underground. One such fire resulted from the long-tailed tyrant placing fire in the *pooloi* tree, much of the jungle was burnt as a consequence. The scorched leaves became the soil. Another tale recounts that the Sanema had become angry as a result of the depredations of a large number of *poleapada* (carnivorous beings including felines); they set fire to the forest to take revenge on them.

<sup>278</sup> The informant explains that the animals consequently became game. The curses refer to the fact that these animals became the Sanema's food and are cooked in fire. There is no implication that the Sanema's fate to be cremated after death is a consequence of the stealing of the fire. Cf. Clastres and Lizot 1977; Lizot 1976: 38. Another informant explains that after losing the fire the alligator went to live in the rivers and turned into 'a sort of fish.'

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 80; Taylor 1974: 108-109; 1976: 42.

<sup>280</sup> It is tempting to treat the initial part of this myth as another version - or 'inversion' - of the 'Story of the girl made about honey' (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 104-150). Samonamaniapada is clearly the master of honey (*samonamo ola* is a fragrant honey), while the dove girls being crazy about him are obviously versions of the girl mad about honey. The stinking wicked fox has become the opossum (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 107) but the major inversion is that the husband does not kill the opossum but vice versa; nevertheless the seducer (the opossum is only successful in a Yanomami variant, Lizot 1974: 80-89) meets his doom in the end.

That the figurative madness about "honey," the man, is a transformation of the literal madness for honey proper is agreed by Lévi-Strauss (1973: 163-164), but the Sanema and Yanomami versions disprove Lévi-Strauss' theory that the *literal* sense occurs when women are seduced by men. In the Yanomami version we have the seduction of a woman who is later *figuratively* attracted to honey (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 164).

<sup>281</sup> *Pubmudami* - opossum (*Didelphys* sp.), *kashtali* - a small mouse both inedible and said to be related to *pubmudami*. In other versions the mouse mentioned is *kasnawai*, a mouse with the appearance of a doormouse with large (burn-like) marks over the eyes. Nevertheless, taxonomically *pubmudami* is considered something of an anomaly by the Sanema.

<sup>282</sup> Small, weak soft-wood tree (*Urera caracasana* [Jacq.] Grand & Griseb.).

<sup>283</sup> Large forest giant with buttressed roots (*Ceiba pentandra*).

<sup>284</sup> *Pokola* - marbled wood-quail (*Odontophorus guianensis*).

<sup>285</sup> *Magamdodo* - a liana (*Heteropsis integerrima*).

<sup>286</sup> *Holeto* - white-tipped dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) and/or the grey-fronted dove (*L. rufaxilla*).

<sup>287</sup> A hammock made from the liana mentioned in note 285, p. 285.

<sup>288</sup> *Sisali* - a lizard (*Plica* sp.) said to be an evil spirit.

<sup>289</sup> *Alawali* - cultivated sedges of the species *Cyperus*; are raised by the Sanema for a number of 'magical' purposes, including 'sorcery' (see glossary).

<sup>290</sup> *Alawali* - can be used in numerous ways, the most common being to anoint a small dart with the powder and blow this at the enemy through a short tube.

<sup>291</sup> *Wimigigi* - a snake (*Chironius* or *Dendrophidion*).

<sup>292</sup> *Shuua'u* - an exclamation meaning 'I don't mean it really!'

<sup>293</sup> They are all various species of ant. The term 'stingers,' which includes ants, also includes wasps, and biting and stinging insects of all kinds. Rarely the same term is even applied to snakes.

<sup>294</sup> *Kola ha'u tomawai* - another ant. His name means 'wide-arsed little agouti,' the origin of which name the myth explains.

<sup>295</sup> *Shindei* - huge hardwood forest giant (Leguminosae).

<sup>296</sup> *No'a* - a term meaning consequence, payment, exchange, revenge.

<sup>297</sup> The following animal species are mentioned in the rest of the myth: *dedemi* - the parrot (*Pyrrhura picta*); *shikuma* - the parakeet (*Brotogeris* spp.) and possibly the parrotlet (*Touit purpurata*); *kulikasa* - the parrot (*Amazona amazonica* and possibly *A. farinosa*); *anima* - the blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*); *shinanida* - the palm worms (not identified); *bosa* - ruddy quail-dove (*Geotrygon montana*); *ala* - macaw (*Ara chloroptera*); *pishakami* - tanager (*Piranga flava & rubra*); *muspi* - term including toucans and toucanlets, etc.; *penipenimi* - aracau (*Pteroglossus* spp.); *alualu* - toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus calorhynchus*); *kedoni* - toucan (*Rhampastos vitellinus*); *wagoga* - pigeon (*Columba* sp.); *washi* - white monkey (*Cebus albifrons*); *tuluapada* - the jaguar (*Felis onca*); *managa* - ocelot (*Felis pardalis*); *kitania* - the puma (*Felis concolor*); *shimi* - 3-toed sloth (*Bradypus* sp.); *soko* - tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*); *kalushi* - squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*); *olasumi* - pygmy anteater (*Cyclopes didactylus*); *saulemi* - 2-toed sloth (*Choloepus didactylus*); *eoni* - cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola rupicola*); *wasoshihi* - smaller squirrel (*Sciurus gilvularis?*); *hai hai'omi* - screaming piha (*Lipaugus vociferans*); *alam bean* - seed finch (*Oryzoborus* sp.); *manashi* - blue-throated piping guan (*Pipile pipile* and *P. cumanensis*); *kulemi* - Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*); *ansupa* - toucan (*Rhampastos cuvieri*).

<sup>298</sup> *Pohawi'a* - tomahawk. Nowadays these tools are rare; made from fragments of machete blades, they must have been common when the Sanema had little access to new metal tools.

<sup>299</sup> One version mentions that the Opossum had been very fat.

<sup>300</sup> Literally 'No ho boo!', the Sanema's exclamation on taking revenge.

<sup>301</sup> In another version the birds also acquire their white markings from the Opossum's fur.

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 60; Taylor 1974: 107-108.

<sup>303</sup> The animals mentioned are the following: *paso* - spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*), *ilo* - howler monkey (*Alouatta seniculus*), *washi* - white monkey (*Cebus albifrons*), *baso* - kinkajou (*Brassaricyon gabii*), *tomi* - agouti (*Dasyprocta aguti*), *amoda* - paca (*Cuniculus paca*), *pose* - the collared peccary (*Dicotyles torquatus*), *wali* - the white-lipped peccary (*Dicotyles labiatus*), *sama* - tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), *hasa* - forest deer (*Mazama americana*), *shialana* - picture (*Myoprocta pratti*).

<sup>304</sup> The vine is known today as *walidodo* (*Bauhinia* spp.) and is a frequent one found in all parts of the forest. Cut and broken into coarse fibrous strips the vine is occasionally used as an extempore binding for overnight shelters. The leaves of the vine resemble a cloven hoof. Pointing to the vine itself one informant remarked: "and here you can see peccaries' footprints." Indentations on the vine do indeed resemble, somewhat, peccary spoor.

<sup>305</sup> One informant on ending the myth remarked: "And if the vine hadn't snapped, the tapirs and peccaries would all be in the trees with the monkeys."

<sup>306</sup> *Ilapada* - literally 'feline,' but obviously the jaguar in this context.

<sup>307</sup> *Kasnauai* - small ground mouse, not identified.

<sup>308</sup> *Tolobo sai* - a small ground mouse, not identified.

<sup>309</sup> *Soko* - the tamandua or climbing anteater (*Tamandua tetradactyla*); *tibi* - the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*).

<sup>310</sup> *Tibi* - the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*).

<sup>311</sup> *Soko* - the tamandua or climbing anteater (*Tamandua tetradactyla*).

<sup>312</sup> *Anepo* - tree termites. They are edible.

<sup>313</sup> *Pohau'i'a* - small axes made with fragments of metal from broken machetes, in the form of stone-axes.

<sup>314</sup> *Ilapada* - a more accurate translation would be 'feline.' This 'jaguar' was also a paca.

<sup>315</sup> *Nashkoi* - cassava gruel. Visitors always receive some kind of drink from their hosts shortly after arrival.

<sup>316</sup> To invite a visitor to accompany her in the forest is tantamount to an invitation to have sex.

<sup>317</sup> *Amoda* - the paca (*Cuniculus paca*). Paca live in holes in the banks of rivers.

<sup>318</sup> *Tibi* - giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*).

<sup>319</sup> *Tanakami* - not identified.

<sup>320</sup> *Koli* - caciques (*Psarcolius viridis* and *Gymnostinops yuracares*).

<sup>321</sup> *Hasa* - forest deer (*Mazama americana*).

<sup>322</sup> *Ilaipada* or *kusma kitanani'a* - which mean respectively the 'big feline cricket' and 'cricket-puma' (not identified).

<sup>323</sup> Hunting technique for chasing deer and tapirs (see Colchester and Lister 1978).

<sup>324</sup> *Komdimgigi* - (*Anolis* sp.).

<sup>325</sup> *Oka* - fresh-water crabs. These are common in the small stoney streams that course down towards the big rivers. Collecting crabs is a typically female occupation.

<sup>326</sup> This being is sometimes identified as *bwobwomanean* - antpitta (*Grallaria* sp.).

<sup>327</sup> Cf. Lizot 1974: 69; Biocca 1971: 164.

<sup>328</sup> *Obo* - armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*).

<sup>329</sup> *Bwobwomane* - antpitta (*Grallaria* sp.).

<sup>330</sup> *Washi* - the white monkey (*Cebus albifrons*).

<sup>331</sup> Cf. and contrast Lizot (1974: 109) and see p. 90. *Posposmane* is a bird (not identified).

<sup>332</sup> *Saliselimusi* or *sensenmusi* - the terms apply to a number of species of woodcreeper.

<sup>333</sup> *Oko* - a freshwater edible crab that is said to eat fruits. The carapace bears two long indentations that the Sanema say the jaguar made. The crab has eyes on short stalks that can be moved in and out of their sockets.

<sup>334</sup> *Felis onca*.

<sup>335</sup> *Wada* - the term includes the following species: *Coragyps atratus*; *Sarcorhamphus papa*; *Cathartes aura*; *C. burrorianus*; *C. melanbrotus*.

<sup>336</sup> *Tomi* - (*Dasyprocta aguti*).

<sup>337</sup> *Senbendi* (not identified). Though this term may be applied to describe *Dioscorea* tubers, in this case it applies to a forest fruit that agoutis commonly eat on the forest floor. Sanema also eat this fruit but cooked in the fire.

<sup>338</sup> *Ila* - a term including all the felines.

<sup>339</sup> *Moka* - small edible frogs (*Osteocephalus* sp.?).

<sup>340</sup> *Magamdodo* - the term applies both to the liana (*Heteropsis integerrima*) and the simple hammock made from it. Men sleep in such hammocks slung over their wives once the wives have children.

<sup>341</sup> *Maĩgoshi* - a dark solid resin prepared from boiling the resin excreted by the *maĩgoi* tree (*Manilkara* spp.). It turns liquid on heating.

- <sup>342</sup> *Wasamo* - see p. 110, n. 104.
- <sup>343</sup> The Sanema and Yekuana are not only culturally, but also physically very distinct, cf. Layrissé and Wilbert 1966.
- <sup>344</sup> *Amoda* - (*Cuniculus paca*).
- <sup>345</sup> *Tomi* - (*Dasyprocta aguti*). The word for thievish is *tomi* also. Agoutis (and to a lesser extent pacas) steal food from Sanema gardens.
- <sup>346</sup> *Kokopilimi* - a small bird, not identified.
- <sup>347</sup> *Anedemawai* - the smaller woodpecker (*Venilornis* sp.?).
- <sup>348</sup> The pun is on the words *koko*, meaning manioc tuber and *pila*, meaning 'that's that.'
- <sup>349</sup> *Tapirus terrestris*.
- <sup>350</sup> The bird *shuemawai* (*Piaya cayana*/P. *melanogaster*) is one of two birds that are described as *sama he'an*.
- <sup>351</sup> (*Felis tigrina*) - *sakoli*.
- <sup>352</sup> (*Felis onca*) - *tuluia*.
- <sup>353</sup> The larger treeshloth (*Bradypus tridactylus*) - *shimi*.
- <sup>354</sup> The white monkey (*Cebus albifrons*) - *washi*.
- <sup>355</sup> The myth, of course, explains the chosen habitats of the animals.
- <sup>356</sup> Compare Lizot 1974: 104.
- <sup>357</sup> *Tesa* applies to all the hummingbirds (not including hermits *tesa buma*).
- <sup>358</sup> *Tapirus terrestris*.
- <sup>359</sup> The bird which may be known as *totiawai* is not identified.
- <sup>360</sup> (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) - *soko*.
- <sup>361</sup> There are two genera in the Sanema area to which the term *i'udami* may apply: *Palaeosuchus* spp. and *Caiman crocodylus*.
- <sup>362</sup> (*Tayra barbara*) - *wali*.
- <sup>363</sup> (*Campephilus* spp.) - *tesami*.
- <sup>364</sup> Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1973: 290; Tastevin 1910: 248-249; Reid 1979: 382 ff.
- <sup>365</sup> *Sama* - tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*).
- <sup>366</sup> *Totoli* - tortoise (*Geochelone denticulata*).
- <sup>367</sup> *Pishia* - (*Calathea altissima*).
- <sup>368</sup> Cf. Goldman 1963: 57.
- <sup>369</sup> There are many circumlocutions to describe death. 'Drown' may here be read figuratively.
- <sup>370</sup> Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1973: 291; Tastevin 1910: 265; Baldus 1958: 186.
- <sup>371</sup> *Magamdodo* - (*Heteropsis integerrima*).
- <sup>372</sup> *Shimi* - (*Bradypus tridactylus*).
- <sup>373</sup> *Shimigigi mamó* - cultivated plant (probably *Cyperus* sp.) used to attract sloths.
- <sup>374</sup> It is almost impossible to kill a sloth with a bow and arrow or a shotgun, they are tremendously resistant.
- <sup>375</sup> *Palahalimo* - to groan. The hero's name may be a contraction of this word (or it may be

derived from the verb [*palua*] meaning to lead or go first). A pun may be intended.

<sup>376</sup> The informant had developed a fictive kinship relationship with the autor by the time this recording was made.

<sup>377</sup> *Li gwi* - a term meaning "concerning" or "about." Probably a contraction of the terms *li* (which implies continuity), *gi* (pluralizing suffix) and *i* ("that one who").

<sup>378</sup> *Hada* - I cannot translate this word.

<sup>379</sup> *Pi* - the term indicates emotional state, thought, knowledge, as in *pi wāshio* (to cover, to desire). Samonamaniapada has learned to think and act like a Yekuana. The equivalent term in Yanomami is *pubi*.

### *Abstract*

*This contribution is a presentation of some myths and legends collected among the Sanema Indians of the Upper Erebató. The material is presented accompanied by detailed footnotes and a short glossary which explains some pertinent but less obvious terms in the Sanema vocabulary. The myths show interesting similarities to and differences from the Yanomami material; the author suggests that these differences are partly a result of recent interethnic contacts between the Sanema and the Yekuana. The material also shows how the Sanema have accommodated the experiences of culture contact with occidental society into their mythology, showing clearly that mythologies are not immutable but rather that they are capable of rapid change.*

### *Resumen*

*En esta contribución se presentan algunos mitos y leyendas de los Sanema del alto Erebató. El material viene acompañado de notas explicativas y de un breve glosario donde se aclaran algunos términos del vocabulario Sanema. Estos mitos se asemejan mucho a los mitos de los Yanomami, pero también hay muchas diferencias entre ellos. Según el autor, parte de las diferencias vienen dadas por el contacto interétnico de los Sanema con los Yekuana. El artículo muestra la manera como los Sanema han incorporado a su mitología las experiencias de sus contactos con la sociedad criolla. Todos estos cambios ponen de manifiesto que las mitologías no son inmutables. Por el contrario, pueden cambiar muy rápidamente.*

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