

# Espíritos da Terra: Um Encontro no Cerrado *Spirits of Earth: An Encounter in the Cerrado*

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(translation by Coletivo de Tradutores Berkeley-Brasil)\*

## Introduction: The journey of a young Xucuru Kariri

This text is a vibrant celebration of the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the Indigenous peoples of Brazil. Through the harmonious confluence of the *caatinga*<sup>1</sup> and the *cerrado*<sup>2</sup>, the work aims to strengthen Indigenous ethnic groups and to preserve the biodiversity of these sacred territories.

Immersed in the vastness of the cerrado, where nature reveals itself in all its majesty, we follow the inspiring journey of Aranã, a young and fearless warrior of the Xucuru-Kariri ethnic group. Aranã is determined to unify a great nation, intertwining ancestral traditions and Indigenous wisdom, in a mission that transcends generations and borders.

Throughout the pages, we are transported to a world where the past and the present are intertwined, revealing ancient wisdom of the ancestors and the unshakable strength of a people who resist adversity. Aranã, our protagonist, is more than just a warrior; he is a symbol of hope, renewal, and unity. His deep connection with nature and his burning desire to preserve the traditions of his ancestors are a reflection of the struggle of many Indigenous peoples who seek to keep their cultural identity alive.

This book is an invitation for us to reconnect with the roots of our own existence and with the wisdom that nature offers us. Through Aranã's eyes, we are invited to reflect on respect for the land, the importance of unity and the need to keep alive the stories that shaped us.

May Aranã's journey inspire every reader to value and respect cultural diversity, to seek harmony among peoples, and to protect the rich heritage that has been entrusted to us.

*Ynatekié!*

Ana Maria Kariri

## The Breath of Ancestors: The Walk of Aranã

In the vastness of the cerrado, an enchanting scenario unfolds, where the whisper of the leaves and the song of the birds compose an ancestral symphony, Aranã lives. About to come of age, the young warrior of the Xucuru-Kariri ethnic group, known for his unwavering determination and incessant curiosity, prepares for the grand celebration in the village.

\* Derek Allen, Luiza Bastos Lages, Mônica Carvalho Gimenes, Gabriel Lesser, Ana Claudia Lopes, Isaac McQuinn, and Liam G. Seeley.

<sup>1</sup> Semi-arid biome.

<sup>2</sup> Tropical savanna.



Illustration by Kaxowari'i Tapirapé.

Aranã is a being deeply connected to nature. Each of his steps, light as breeze, respects the sacred ground of his ancestors. His eyes, with an intense glow, reveal the ancient wisdom of the Xucuru-Kariri and the burning passion for their cultural roots. His entire family came from the Xucuru village of Iorubá in the state of Pernambuco, his mother had married a Kariri from Alagoas, coming to Minas Gerais to participate in a rematriation and never returning Aranã was born in Minas Gerais, but carried the blood of his ethnicities in his veins.



Illustration by Kaxowari'i Tapirapé.

Since he was little, Aranã has dreamed of becoming a great spiritual and cultural leader for his people. Inspired by the teachings of his elders, he seeks knowledge in ancient stories, sacred rituals, and the secrets of the forest. Determined, he tirelessly dedicates himself to learning and practicing traditions, with the hope of one day guiding his people with the same wisdom and strength as his ancestors.

Aranã is a symbol of hope and renewal for the Xucuru-Kariri. His restless spirit and deep connection with nature make him a respected and admired figure by all. Every dawn, he rises with the mission to honor his people and preserve the rich cultural heritage entrusted to him.

Thus, Aranã follows his path, balancing modernity with ancestral traditions, always with the vision of a future where the Xucuru-Kariri can flourish and prosper, keeping the flame of their identity and spirituality alive.

The landscape is immersed in a mixture of light and shadow, a harbinger of something grand. The rising sun illuminates the scene with a golden glow, while the moon, like a silent sentinel, remains in the sky, witnessing the beginning of the sacred ritual.

For the young man, each element that surrounds him carries a deep symbolism. The *toré*<sup>3</sup>, with its

<sup>3</sup> A song and percussion-driven circle dance and sacred ceremony.

resonant chants, reverberates in his heart, as if connecting his soul to his ancestors. The sacred jurema tea, prepared by the elders, is both an elixir and a key to a world beyond the tangible.

When drinking the tea, he feels a lightness that transports him to the plane of dreams. It is an internal journey, a confrontation with his fears and hopes. The sounds around him become distant echoes as he surrenders himself in a trance, seeking the wisdom and courage needed to become a warrior.

Each moment is filled with expectation and reverence, a celebration of his ancestry and the path that lies ahead of him.

The young man, upon awakening from his deep sleep, feels a sense of peace and inner renewal. The sight of the moon guiding him to a sacred encounter fills his heart with purpose and spiritual connection. He feels serene, as if he has received a divine message, a call to honor and celebrate life and nature.

As he walks through the forest, the lightness of his spirit is reflected in the dance of the leaves in the wind. Each sound and scent of the forest intensifies his feeling of being fully alive and in harmony with his surroundings. The songs of the insects and the gentle breeze create a magical, almost dreamlike atmosphere, which envelops the young man in a natural symphony.



It is as if nature itself is celebrating his spiritual journey and welcoming him to his sacred path.

With each step, he feels the earth beneath his feet, reminding him of ancient traditions and the importance of keeping the connection with the land and spirits alive. The young man is invigorated and determined to follow the call of the moon, knowing that his journey is just beginning and that he is destined for something greater and deeper.

In short, nature is not just a backdrop, but the very fabric that weaves together all facets of the young Indigenous man's life, offering sustenance, spirituality, culture, identity, and wisdom.

Upon arriving at the clearing where the ritual will take place, he finds members of various ethnicities gathered in harmony. Xakriabá, Pataxó, Krenak and Tupiniquim, Kariri, Maxakali, Puri, a beautiful gathering where ethnic diversity is coming together, this moment strengthened the desire to honor and keep their ancestral traditions alive. The environment is filled with songs and dances, while bonfires crackle and illuminate the faces of those present.

Every movement, every gesture, carries with it centuries of history and wisdom. The *pajés* (men shamans), the *majés* (women shamans), the spiritual guides, lead the rituals with devotion, invoking protection from ancestral spirits and thanking Mother Earth for her offerings. The aroma of sacred herbs mingles with the air, bringing a feeling of peace and connection with the universe.

As the night goes on, the moon gives way to the sun, which begins to illuminate the sky with vivid colors. Birds greet the new day with their songs and nature awakens to another cycle of life. In the heart of cerrado, the young Indigenous man feels deeply connected to the land.

As the sunlight bathes the clearing, he sees a young Kariri woman. Her eyes reflect her ancestral wisdom and the strength of nature. She participates in the ritual with a grace and intensity that catches the attention of the young Xucuru-Kariri.

As the sunlight bathes the clearing, he sees a young Kariri woman. Her eyes reflect her ancestral wisdom and the strength of nature. Her long black hair falls over her shoulders, flowing freely like the waters of the few creeks that cut through the vastness of the *sertão* (backlands), contrasting with her brown skin that shines under the moonlight.

The beauty of the young Kariri woman from the *sertão* is a true ode to nature and to the culture of her land. With her deep, expressive eyes, she holds histories of generations and the strength of her people. Her brown skin shines like the arid soil under the scorching sun. Her serene smile and her confident posture reveal a profound connection with the land and its traditions.

With a sweet smile, she says that her name, Anahí, means the flower that came from the sky and fell at



Illustration by Kaxowari'i Tapirapé.

the feet of the lord of the land. The smile of the young Kariri is a reflection of the simplicity and serenity from the countryside, bringing to light the tranquility and resilience of those who live in harmony with the land. She carries with her the grace and elegance of traditional dances and rituals, moving with a lightness that seems to defy the harshness of the environment around her.

The young Indigenous woman from the *sertão* is a symbol of strength and beauty, a living representation of the profound connection between human beings and nature. Her presence illuminates the arid landscape and reveals a hidden poetry in the driest and most forgotten corners of *sertão*.

Anahí and Aranã continued their conversation, each word bringing them closer together. Their mutual respect and admiration become evident. They shared their passion for their roots and for safeguarding and advocating for their cultures. They felt they were fulfilling a greater purpose, a mission that transcended individuality and became a commitment to their people.

As the ritual continued, both participated in the dances and sacred songs, immersed in a spiritual



Illustration by Kaxowari'i Tapirapé.

trance that connected them even more with nature and their ancestors. The young Xucuru-Kariri realized that this union symbolized a collective force, in which differences dissolved in favor of a common goal: the strengthening of their ethnic groups and the creation of a great nation of the Northeast.

As the days went by, the friendship between them turned into a deep fraternal bond. They decided to work together to unify various ethnicities in the region, organizing cultural gatherings, festivities, and ceremonies that celebrated the diversity and richness of each people.

The young Anahí Kariri became a strong and influential voice in her land, inspiring young people to reconnect with their origins. The young Aranã Xucuru-Kariri, in turn, led a movement of resistance and cultural preservation, teaching the values of their traditions and the importance of keeping the flame of ancestry alive.

The collaboration among different ethnicities grew and became stronger. The Indigenous people of the Northeast, motivated by the example of the young couple, created a network of support and solidarity, sharing knowledge and resources. Together, they

faced challenges and fought for their rights, always guided by ancestral wisdom and love for Mother Earth.

As the Indigenous youth continued their initiatives, their influence reached new heights. They became ambassadors for their cultures, travelling to other regions of Brazil and the World, sharing their histories and knowledge in conferences, workshops, and cultural events. Each place they visited, they left a lasting impression on the importance of safeguarding Indigenous traditions and respecting nature.

In the community, they instituted an annual assembly to celebrate the cultural diversity of the northeastern ethnicities. This festival not only provided an opportunity for different Indigenous peoples to show their art, music, dance, and cuisine, but it also served as a space for reflection on the challenges faced and the victories achieved. The assembly attracted visitors from all over the world, promoted sustainable tourism, and generated economic opportunities for local communities.

During the celebrations, Kariri led the spiritual ceremonies which connected the participants to their ancestral roots. Through sacred songs and dances,



she called the spirits of the ancestors, reinforcing the importance of honoring the memory and wisdom of past generations. Xucuru-Kariri, in turn, taught traditional agriculture techniques, natural medicine, and crafts, transmitting the ancient knowledge that ensured the sustainability and self-sufficiency of their communities.

In parallel to the festivities, the young couple worked tirelessly to create a network of schools that offered bilingual education, respecting and integrating Indigenous knowledge with the formal curriculum. These schools became centers of excellence, where the youth could learn both modern skills and the values and practices of their ancestral cultures. The education provided prepared students to face the challenges of the contemporary world without losing sight of their cultural roots.

The story of young Anahí Kariri and young Aranã Xucuru-Kariri was not only about resistance, but also about renewal and prosperity. They showed that it is possible to create a future where progress and tradition go hand in hand, and where love for the land and ancestral culture is the driving force for a more just and harmonious world. Their legacy inspired generations.



Illustration by Kaxowari'i Tapirapé.

