

# TAKĀRA: Epistemological Center and Cosmic Communication System for the Cultural Vitality of the Apyãwa World

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## MARAGETĀ MAATOREJXEĀWA

Ā te'omara a'era mō xexema'eaparapy, maira xema'eājpe, a'e ekwe axe'eg Apyãwa xamaxerekakatoãwa re. Ā kwee a'era mō ākwaxiāt wexemiexāka, marygato mī xixama'e awã ramō. Kwewiwe ra'ẽ xane xiroty nyn xeraxama'eãwa ranō, ima'ewo mī ta'yri wi we xerekyra gỹ xerexeka re. Xexe'apeãwa a'era mō inogatogotowo xema'ãwa ramō aranowa takāra re, axekwe akoma'e xeapaãwa re ranō. Marygato mī xane Apyãwa ramō xixama'e. Te'omara ywypyete a'era mō Awa'yawera ma'eãwa Takaripe, ikome'owo ma'era mō aoxekatoete xanewe Takāra. Takāra a'era ma'eixe'i e'yma xanewe Apyãwa ramō, a'epe akoma'e ixama'e mī ma'e kwaapãwa re. Iapamatāta kwee axegenopy awaxewetekwera gỹ, marywykãwa kwaapãra gỹ, maragetã kwaapãra gỹ, marama'eãra gỹ, ata'ywa gỹ mokōj tajpe. Amowera xowe kwee apyyk gỹ marymaryn kaajpe, tarywa re ka ramo, te'omaājpe, xema'eājpe, axekwe takawyeripe ranō. A'eete ramō mī a'epe gỹ ix'e'egi ma'ema'e re, xereywy paapara re, mī ma'e ireekwe re. Ewī a'era mō ityni xama'aranopãwa, xamagetaãwa, xamaxerekakatoãwa. Emanyn a'era xexe'apeãwa, wete'omaparepy ipyyrowo gỹ xe'apeãwa re, ma'era aoxekatoete xanewe takāra awa'yawera ma'eãwa ramō.

## My Journey/Trajectory as a Researcher

My name, as it appears on my identity document, is Gilson Ipaxi'awyga Tapirapé. However, currently, I go by the name of *Tenywaawi*, and my first name was Warakaona. This is because, culturally, we change our names according to our stage of life, as I explained in my article (cf. Tapirapé (2016).)

I was born on December 19, 1983, in the Indigenous village of Orokotãwa, literally, 'village of annatto', in the Tapirapé/Karajá Indigenous Land, located near the city of Santa Terezinha-MT. I spent my childhood and early adolescence there.

I do not remember much about my childhood, I know I was a restless child, xey 'and my 'mother' always told me that. I remember that I loved playing with my little friends in the backyards, it was customary to play with bow and arrow. Sometimes we would shoot birds around our house or we would go to the lake to shoot fish. After all, the lake was about 500 meters from our houses. There we would bathe and play

*xapie'ema* (tag). Other good memories I have of those times are collecting wild fruits, because this place was rich in fruits and we didn't have to go far to collect them.

When night would fall, at that time, everyone would gather in front of their houses, where the adults would chat and we children would make a lot of mess. We would play *mani'akawỹ*, literally 'merry-go-round', *xapakanĩ* (hawk), and other games. The games were more fun when there was a full moon, the Indigenous village would be all lit up and we would have fun. At that time, we didn't have the infamous television in the Indigenous village yet. Therefore, our childhood was free and full of joy, fun and a lot of cultural learning.

My school life began in 1990, at the Tapirapé State Indigenous School, in the same Indigenous village where I was born. I was enrolled at the age of seven, which was when I had my first contact with school and the world of writing. I remember that I struggled a lot in the beginning, it was very difficult for me to understand, because I had to stay there, in that place, for half of the day, unlike

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before, when I spent the whole day free to do what I liked. I felt trapped and forced to do something that was not usual, the “writing.”

The world I knew was the world of my family, my friends, and freedom, the one in which I interacted and learned naturally, without the need to write and stay alone in that place. The classroom bothered me, in fact, not only me, but all the children I studied with at that stage of my life. At that time, school was of little importance to me, because I learned more with the world I experienced, through symbolic communications of nature, such as bird songs, the movements of rivers, of trees, of winds and many others.

As time went on, the teacher perhaps began to realize this. Then he adopted a pedagogical practice that I have never forgotten, the “field trip.” This deserves a special mention, because it made and makes sense for teaching Indigenous children in general.

As the word itself says, the “field trips” took place outside the school in different spaces and moments, many times, in the center of the Indigenous village, where the teacher taught us stories of the people, of the Indigenous village, of the Takāra and other knowledge related to us, without the need to use writing. At other times he would take us to the river where we would learn about fishing, sacred and specialized places, with regards to *ma'eaiwa retyma* (place of animals), he would take us to the *Cerrado*, where we would collect fruits and learn their stories and rules of consumption, etc. It wasn't every day, but there was an immense relevance, because it brought our learning closer to the traditional nature of our learning.

Above all, because what we learned and experienced during the field trips allowed us to draw pictures and form names in the classroom. From these names, we learned how to form other similar words, and so on. In this way, the classes began to make sense to me, because I first experienced and learned real knowledge and then learned how to represent it in writing. Honestly, in this way, I quickly discovered the secret of writing and learned how to write and read. I also learned how to count numbers.

When I remember this, I miss it, especially Ronaldo Komaoro'i Tapirapé, who left us in 2000, struck by lightning. This teacher was very important in my student life. I miss the beautiful moments of classes, especially the field trips, until

then, the only teacher who dedicated himself to teaching Apyãwa children in this way, that is, with field trips.

Up until the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school, I only learned how to write in my native language and I also knew a little about basic mathematical operations. From then on, I started the challenge of learning Portuguese in different subjects such as Portuguese Language, History, Geography, Natural Sciences and other subjects.

At that time, from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> grades, we also studied with non-Indigenous teachers who worked at the school. Their teaching practices were completely different, each one applied content within their own subjects, obviously taken from textbooks that were outside the context of my reality. That was because the school received many books from all subjects offered by the State. Therefore, they were very difficult for me, because I barely understood Portuguese and all the content was strange. This made my learning very difficult, in the beginning.

I remember that only three Apyãwa teachers taught us at that stage: Paroo'i, who taught Geography; Orokomy'i, in Mathematics; and Ieremy'i, in Mother Tongue. I don't remember, if this was due to a lack of teachers or a lack of training to teach other subjects.

One thing I know for sure: I learned more with the Apyãwa teachers, because they spoke the same language as me, although they also used content taken from books. The Mother Tongue class was easier, after all, all the activities were done in that language and the content developed were in the context of our reality. As for the other subjects, the challenge was greater, because, in addition to writing, I had to learn how to speak Portuguese to communicate with the non-Indigenous teachers. And that was not easy at all. As we know, Portuguese, for us Indigenous people, is not only a second language, but also a foreign language, as they say, it is the language of another world. Therefore, it was very difficult to learn, especially at that age.

I remember that at that age my father was already demanding a lot from me, he didn't like me to miss class. And every time he received the Porantim newspaper, from CIMI, he would ask me to read it in front of him and out loud. Even though I didn't have much reading in this language, I never refused. His request was an order to me and it was sacred, since this is part of the process of forming

an Indigenous leader in the current scenario. He was demanding and always did this with me, and my mother loved to see me reading. Sometimes I would make her emotional with my reading, because it was not common to see children of my age reading (take reading) in this language, because not all parents did this type of exercise with their children.

My father always wanted me to be a great leader, a defender of Indigenous rights, and he spoke to me a lot about the struggle of Ailton Krenak, Mário Juruna, Daniel Kabixi and other important names of Indigenous leaders. So, he tirelessly demanded that I learn more Portuguese, other things mattered little to him, without knowing that this would distance me from cultural values. Of course, no one was yet very familiar with school education, and so the expectation of many parents was for their children to become proficient in the Portuguese language. As I mentioned, to be defenders of rights guaranteed in the legislation. What I see today, is quite the opposite, learning to speak Portuguese without having cultural knowledge is synonymous with getting lost along the way. Because the power to defend Indigenous rights is built on cultural knowledge, I only realized this after a long time, when I was already in college.

That being the case, since 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I developed a taste for reading, exclusively in the Portuguese language, which little by little led me to dislike Apyãwa epistemology.

In 1997, we moved to the Majtyri Indigenous village, the year in which the Orokotãwa Indigenous village was abandoned and the school was moved to the Majtyri Indigenous village. There I finished my elementary school studies in 1998. At that time, the school had not yet implemented high school. So, even though I had finished elementary school, I continued studying with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class so as not to stall out. As I have already emphasized, the purpose was unique, to deepen my knowledge of Portuguese, not only in writing but also in speaking this language, as my father wanted. So, I participated more in the classes taught by non-Indigenous teachers. I sought, in this way, to immerse myself in the area, on the other hand, also distancing myself from the cultural knowledge that I so much loved in my childhood.

I got married in 1999 and had my first daughter in 2000, which was when I moved away from my parents and school. That year, I had to accompany my wife's family who had moved to the Tapi'itãwa

Indigenous village, in the Urubu Branco Indigenous Land. I went through a difficult experience there, far from my parents, I did not have the same success. During that year, I did not attend classes; my responsibility became something else, to support my family.

At the end of the same year, I moved to the Wiriaotãwa Indigenous village, where I still live with my family. There, I moved away from school for a few years, because I did not have my colleagues to study with. But I had not forgotten my father's advice and guidance, therefore, whenever I could, I would read at home. At the time, there was only one room attached to the Wiriaotãwa State Indigenous School functioning in this Indigenous village, which served a "multi-sequenced" class composed of children from the 1st to the 6th grades.

In 2003, I joined the first class of the Aranowa'yao - "*Novos Pensamentos*" ("New Thoughts"), as the high school course is called, at the Tapi'itãwa State Indigenous School, which I completed in 2006.

I confess that I made many mistakes during that period. I was so conceited that I did not like studying in and about my mother tongue, as well as knowledge of my culture that was and is so often covered in the course. Unlike the experiences I had in elementary school, at that time, Aranowa'yao had and still has a fantastic proposal, which I had not yet realized at that age. I did not yet realize whether the activities related to our own knowledge and the problems that existed in our Indigenous villages were intended to find solutions to these problems. Nor did I understand the importance of research and recording knowledge that is directly aimed at rescuing and strengthening the wisdom of our people.

I remember that, at that time, the Apyãwa wise ones were already very concerned with the transformation of youth culture, of wanting to be 'white' Maira, which I call the process of *mairização*, the interest in being Maira, because many had the same purpose as me, to learn the white culture and, therefore, no importance was given to the own knowledge covered in the course.

The Art and Cultural Practices classes, for example, which were taught by the Apyãwa masters, were considered to be something of no value. Until then, these were the only two subjects that worked on real-world knowledge, where it was not about orthographic writing, but rather

the symbolic writing of the Apyãwa experience. Where learning is not about writing and talking about, but rather about knowing knowledge, touching and feeling knowledge and doing what is in fact knowledge.

Greater importance was given to subjects such as Portuguese, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, history, sociology, anthropology and others, where non-Indigenous teachers worked. After all, the project brought many teachers trained outside to teach us, on the course, because there were still no Apyãwa teachers with training to work on it. Few had teaching training and some were starting their higher education course in the intercultural degree offered by *Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso* (UNEMAT, State University of Mato Grosso).

The funny thing is that these subjects, in most cases, also covered Apyãwa knowledge and, of course, there was never any complaint, obviously, by the fact that it was taught in Portuguese. It is clear that in these subjects, reading and writing were only done in Portuguese, because the teachers did not speak our language. So, they considered these to be opportune moments to learn how to speak this language so desired by the Apyãwa youth. And it was in these moments that I actually began to use Portuguese during presentations.

And so, I missed out on a lot of important things, culturally speaking, not only at school, but also in social matters. I also confess that at that age I did not like to participate in the rituals practiced by my people, thinking that this was a thing of the past, as I still see in the attitudes of many young people today who act in this way.

The same year I started high school, I also started working as a geography and history teacher in the adjoining classroom of the Wiriaotãwa Indigenous village, hired by the state of Mato Grosso. I believe I got this job only because of my little knowledge of Portuguese, since I had no experience in the area or any other qualifications. These are other sad memories of my career that I keep.

If, as a student, I made so many mistakes, imagine as a teacher. Everything I taught in class was taken from geography and history books. I didn't even work with Apyãwa knowledge, in fact, how could I work, if I myself didn't give importance to this knowledge? For me, school was a place solely for teaching written knowledge and according to its disciplinary limitations. And, since I worked in

disciplines, in which nothing is written about our knowledge, so, I understood that our knowledge was not to be studied in them.

As I have already mentioned, for me, being a teacher meant teaching what was in the textbooks, according to the subjects, because that was what usually happened at my time, in elementary school. School was very discipline-based. Each teacher made a point of fulfilling their obligations, according to the subject they taught. Thus, the idea I had of teaching was to copy what was in the textbook on the board and then give my students exercises. And only students who managed to achieve or come close to the answers in the textbooks were given a good grade. It is sad to say this, but that is what happened in my classes, before I graduated in college.

In 2007, I entered college, in the Intercultural Education Course at Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG, Federal University of Goiás), it was my first experience of living and studying outside of the Indigenous village. I also had experiences of studying with different Indigenous peoples, with different linguistic and cultural realities, occasions when Portuguese was the language of interaction between us. Since it was my first experience outside the Indigenous village, I faced several difficulties in terms of studies, which I gradually overcame. I began to enjoy reading more, and I received a lot of support from my family, especially from my friends, who helped me in every way they could.

This experience led me to understand the reason why the Apyãwa never allowed their children to go outside the Indigenous village to study. At several moments I witnessed regrettable scenes being played out against us, by non-Indigenous people, everywhere we went. After all, prejudice and discrimination against Indigenous people is still strong in our country. The difficulty of the university in also dealing with great diversity, but we always faced it with great determination and, of course, to show that our country is constituted by pluri-diversity.

Another common practice which occurred amongst my classmates, who came from different peoples, was the involvement with alcoholic beverages, which the Apyãwa people were and are most afraid of when young people leave the Indigenous village. But it's understood that you just have to be careful and try not to get involved in these things and avoid going out with

people who are used to this practice. That's how I try to keep myself out of these situations.

But what most called my attention in the course and what made me reflect a lot about my personal attitude in relation to the cultural universe of my people were Tapuia relatives who, by no longer speaking their original language, also lost other cultural practices, with regard to songs, dances and other traditional practices. And, because of this, were moved when they saw cultural presentations by student colleagues, which were and are highly valued by the course. That's why it was difficult for them to talk about culture without getting emotional, because they remembered the sad trajectory they had gone through and were going through in the face of oppressors.

Upon seeing this sad reality, I realized that my personal attitude and my professional posture greatly contributed to this fact, with cultural loss. Since then, I sought to be self-critical, reflecting a lot about everything that I had done in my school teaching practice, as well as in my place of living and, of course, in relation to the cultural values of my people. It was when my vision of the world of my culture began to open, as well as the concepts of Indigenous school education, the role of the Indigenous teacher, that helped me to understand the errors that I had committed all these years.

There, I also met teachers with enormous background knowledge about Indigenous school education, as well as Indigenous cultures and languages. Teachers who made me realize and abandon once and for all the colonialist view I had of myself. Especially Maria do Socorro Pimentel da Silva, Mônica Veloso Borges (Koxamy) and André Marques do Nascimento, among others.

I want to register here, that in the beginning, I was surprised when I arrived at the course, as I was blindly in love with white culture, especially with the topics covered in the course, which generally were and are knowledge related to Indigenous issues and knowledge. I remember that I wasn't the only one surprised with this, I saw many student colleagues complain about this. So much so that many thought of quitting, just as I had also thought. All that, because we were all mentally colonized by the disciplines. I remember still today the speech of one friend: "The course is boring, I came here to learn about biology, but we're just discussing our culture. I left the Indigenous village to learn new things!"

Sincerely, it was very common to hear conversations like that one, in the apartment hallways where we were housed and during breaks. Until then, we didn't have the minimum amount of knowledge about Interculturality and Transdisciplinarity, which are the pedagogical principles of the course. It wasn't easy, but little by little I dedicated myself to the course, understanding its objectives, including the concepts of these two words which were greatly discussed in the first two years.

I highlight here, especially, Transdisciplinarity, simply a word, but capable of breaking with the border-making idea that is discipline. What I learned is that Transdisciplinarity has a different way of thinking which seeks absolute integration between knowledges, in a way that no longer has borders between the disciplines. From my point of view, this seeks to break not only the idea of discipline, which has always dominated school education, or rather, the division of knowledge into categories, but also seeks to break with the coloniality of knowledge. It is important, in this sense, to emphasize that understanding the concepts led me to realize that the "disciplinary" view only contributes to threatening the organizational structure of our people, since it does not allow for dialogue between knowledges.

On the contrary, Transdisciplinarity is close to the model of our Indigenous teaching and learning, precisely because it has a vision of collectivity. A model that I now defend and recommend for Indigenous schools. Because only this principle can rid us of the practices that lead us to make serious mistakes in school teaching.

I also highlight moments during the course when I did extra-curricular projects and internships, occasions when I learned to enjoy researching knowledge about my culture, as well as enjoying teaching about it. These moments made me understand that school is not the only place to teach. Therefore, I learned to use different spaces of knowledge, involving the participation of the wise ones in the activities, according to the knowledge being worked on. Undoubtedly, these strongly contributed to understanding and strengthening the idea of Transdisciplinarity, in other words, knowing how to deal with the epistemological whole.

After all, there are two extremely relevant moments for our training as Indigenous

teachers. The first seeks to explore the people's own epistemic spaces for the development of activities and involves the participation of the whole community. Therefore, it's not just a time to record knowledge, but also a time for social interaction, where we try to feel and live our knowledge. In this case, learning doesn't come from the written word, but from the nature and symbolism of our experience. The second is the period of study and individual research of teacher training. It seeks, in reality, the construction of new educational practices that may contribute, certainly, to the learning of the students. Therefore, it is also the period to evaluate our pedagogical practices, in the sense of creating new possibilities of teaching in the context of our people's own experience, in a way that school education may contribute, in fact, to the education of students. In this sense, we research and articulate knowledge for the organization of a new pedagogical practice.

Another important moment during the course, that greatly contributed to changing my attitudes towards linguistic and cultural knowledge, was the research of the "Observatory of Indigenous School Education", in which I was a scholarship recipient for two years, working on word formation in the Apyãwa language. It was the opportunity which led me also to enjoy studying my maternal language and which was decisive in my choice of major, Language Sciences.

Since then, I've tried to develop work in line with what I learned in the course, articulating knowledge, as well as seeking links between the school and the community, in order to strengthen the strategy of encouraging young Apyãwa to know, protect and value cultural knowledge, especially linguistic knowledge. Today, I always use the term *des-mairi-zar* or *des-mairi-zação*, which is the opposite of *mairi-zação*, to say that I no longer have the same thought of wanting to be *maira*.

I finished my undergraduate course in 2011 and soon afterwards I had the opportunity to take a specialization course at the same institution. This took place between 2012 and 2013. At the time, I was already working in secondary education, in my area of concentration, Language Sciences, in which my teaching project was no longer the same, because I can no longer think about teaching without a transdisciplinary methodology. As it happens, I worked very little

as a teacher, because in the same year I took on the position of coordinator of the "More Education Program." Between 2014 and 2015, I was the pedagogical coordinator of the Tapi'itãwa State Indigenous School. And, in 2016 and 2017, I became director of that same school.

It's interesting to highlight that, during these years, I have continued to develop activities related to cultural issues, with the aim of valuing, strengthening and multiplying the knowledge and traditions of the people, along with the children and adolescents, students from the Apyãwa schools, in dialogue with the community. At the end of each semester, the students would give cultural presentations like the Apyãwa dance, the dramatization of stories and myths, body painting, and the practice of traditional sports like bow and arrow. All the activities that took place during these periods undoubtedly contributed to the conception and development of everyone who was present at the activities.

It also deals with the continuation of the work that I do in education in favor of the community, seeking to discuss possibilities for cultural sustainability within the Apyãwa territory, considering the current debate on linguistic epistemology. Work that also aims to train young people so that they can be protagonists and thus defend and seek alternative means of sustainability for each recurring situation in the Indigenous villages. After all, this is a central concern of the Apyãwa parents and people.

I still highlight that, today, the Apyãwa themselves may tell, write, register their history, being the protagonist of their history and their culture, no longer merely a spectator. Being able to participate actively and with a holistic view of reality, of the world internal and external to the Indigenous village. Knowing how to transition and dialogue in these two universes: of scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge. This has been my search, since I learned the concept of Transdisciplinarity.

In this sense, we promote many debates surrounding transdisciplinary practice, in the sense of updating the practice that had been done in the education of our youth. Debates that certainly contributed to and strengthened the interests of the Apyãwa communities, since they motivate action upon reality and everyday life, as well as on the practical experience of the people.



A *Takāra*, a central structure in an *Apyāwa* village. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

## *Takāra* and *Takawytera*

*Takāra* is the denomination for a large house that is constructed in the center of an *Apyāwa* Indigenous village and possesses an oval structure, with two doors on each of its sides. It is a home with a different standard than other *Apyāwa* constructions, since, I see that, even today, it is made in the traditional way, both in terms of its shape and the material used. Its position in the center of the Indigenous village is related to the rising and setting of the sun. The two doors are turned toward the *Kwarapaāwa* (sunrise), an *Apyāwa* expression regarding the east side, which are used more, and it is through them that people and spirits enter and leave in the various rituals. It is on this side that the *Takawytera* is located.

*Takawytera* is the designation for the *Takāra* courtyard, where the majority of the *Apyāwa* rituals and nocturnal meetings take place. It's worth pointing out that the totality of the *Apyāwa*'s ritual life is dependent on the existence of the *Takāra* in the Indigenous village, seeing that otherwise there would be no rituals. That is, the whole ritual cycle should only exist continuously, from the beginning to the end, from the *Takāra*. Only in the case of death of a member of the Community may it be interrupted, since the *Apyāwa* maintain

a bereavement rule lasting up to more than five months. Thus being, the *Takāra* is known, popularly, as a ceremonial house or as a center for performing *Apyāwa* ceremonies and rituals, since its courtyard, *Takawytera*, is the place where the largest part of the ceremonies and rituals of the people take place. There are some rituals that take place within the *Takāra*, *Xaneramōja*, for example.

According to the people's cosmological explanation, the *Takāra*, first and foremost, is the home and living space of the *Axyga* (Spirits), as the wise ones say, the place of concentration of the *Xane'yga* "Our Spirits", who are represented by the people in rituals. According to our cosmology, they are those with whom we interact and coexist, especially during all ritual periods. However, it's important to stress that when the *Apyāwa* say *Xane'yga*, they don't just mean human spirits, but all cosmological beings, since, according to *Apyāwa* statements, the place is inhabited by all the invisible people in the universe, including the spirits of birds, animals, fish, etc. Among these invisible people are the *Axyg maryjxe* "Dangerous Spirits", those for whom the people have the most respect, like *Iraxao* and *Tawā* "spirits of adversarial warriors killed by the *Apyāwa*", like *Xyreni* and *Topaxo*, considered very dangerous, since a historic narrative exists



*Takawytera* is the ritual of *O'yarakã*. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)



*Tawã*, "spirits of adversarial warriors killed by the *Apyãwa*." (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

in which they appeared as responsible for the death of two children.

In this way, according to Inamore, a young *Paxẽ* (Shaman), 33 years old, from the *Wiriaotãwa* Indigenous village, affirms to us that:

Xagato pe panẽ Takãra towoho ranõ, axe tanã xemĩmi i'arimoho, awa'ixe retyma mõi pawã. Niwaxãj mĩ ewĩ yna axyxyga ipype kwĩ. A'e mĩ ewĩ axamanyypãp ota tarywa rereka ramõ, aka mĩ a'egỹ tarywa re ranõ kwĩ.).

In real life we see that *Takãra* is an enormous house, but spiritually it's much more enormous than we know, because it doesn't belong to just one person. Many different spirits live there. And when we perform our rituals, they all join us, because they also participate in rituals. (Narrative told by Inamore Tapirapé, in family reunion, 12/04/2019)

In this way, from the point of view of the *Paxẽ* we understand that the *Takãra*, despite being a very large house, physically, is still considered a very small space, since in other dimensions of life, the world inside it is much larger, as it is a space that supports the numerous dwellings of the *Axyga*, where all supernatural societies, according to Inamore, live collectively, without the need for space limitations. As Inamore says, "*A'e mĩ ewĩ axamanyypãp ota tarywa rereka ramõ, aka mĩ a'egỹ tarywa re ranõ*". In a way, this is the





*Iraxao*, another "spirit of an adversarial warrior." (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

affirmation that life in this dimension is full of joy; everyone interacts and communicates with each other in a single language, which we can call "cosmological monolingualism", because it is a communicative pattern dominated only by invisible communities.

As we know it, in fact, they are communication systems centered around spirituality, around that which occurs through signs and symbolic manifestations of nature, interpreted by us as cosmic languages. Thus, this is the communicative dialogue of nature and the universe, which can only be understood by the *Paxë*, given their spiritual forces capable of mastering supernatural worlds, in addition to the cosmic languages through which they (*Paxë*) interact with the Spirits of nature and with the universe itself. All of this demonstrates that for the *Paxë*, nothing in the universe is unknown.

According to Inamore, in the cosmological perspective, in terms of communication or language capacity, all beings, humans and non-humans, are equal, nevertheless, spoken languages are different. In this context, according to Inamore, the *Paxë* (Shaman) communicates with cosmological beings in

the same language we speak. This means that, in the cosmological perspective, the *Apyãwa* society and the invisible society are intrinsically related. Thus, in the *Takãra*, in the same way that interaction occurs between the *Axyga*, we, humans, when attending this space, we also interact and share in existence with them, in a very special way, in all periods of the rituals, in a cosmic and dialogical relationship.

In this way, we understand that the *Takãra* is essential and vital for the continuous relationship and harmony between our people and the cosmological world. It matters, therefore, to emphasize that the absence of the *Takãra* can directly impact this relationship and reduce the connectivity between these beings, obviously, because the nature of harmony and connection between the *Apyãwa* and the *Axyga* depends on the *Takãra*.

Since it is the home of the *Axyga*, according to the wise ones, the *Takãra* has a defined pattern and regulation, it can never be built in a place other than the center of the Indigenous village, as explained by the *Apyãwa* elder and



The Indigenous village Tapi'itāwa and the *Takāra* in its center. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

ritual master Oropē'i, 67 years old, who lives at the Indigenous village Tapi'itāwa:

Takāra a'era mō awyrixē'i e'yma kwi, ma'era tā niratyrykawi, maryjxe xanewe. Emanyn raka'e itori kwewiwe, a'era ekwe ewi emanyn ika. Marygato mō ro'ō xika eratyryka, Xane'yga retyma kwi.

Takāra is not your everyday home, for this reason its place, form, and position can't be changed. Since its origin it has been built this way and it is this way it should remain, given that it would not be good for us to change it. I don't know what could happen to us if it would be changed, because it is the home of our Spirits. (Oropē'i Tapirapé, interview 05/21/2019).

This way, the *Takāra*, for us *Apyāwa*, is not simply a home, but a sacred symbol, regulated and patterned according to our relationships to the world of the *Axyga*. Or we can call it a center of connections with the diverse worlds and knowledges, since it is there that we coexist and sustain connections with different cosmological beings.

Aware of this, for a long time, we *Apyāwa* attempt to respect the laws and demands of this home, through the knowledge of the *Paxē*, a very respected person in our society. It is important to remember that the *Paxē*, besides knowledge

of daily life, also masters spiritual knowledge and the invisible dynamics of the world, as well as the power to heal and to trigger death with his supernatural force. This way, it is he who does all the intermediation between the *Apyāwa* and the *Axyga*, in the *Takāra* as well as in other specialized spaces that are socially visited.

Thus, it is our responsibility to take seriously what they say about the *Axyga* and to make them join in the visible world. This way, all the rituals of our people are representations of invisible beings with whom the *pajés* keep in permanent contact. This is a worldview that we begin to learn and to recognize from early on, comprehending the wisdom it holds. Its cosmological lesson, which comes to us through shamanic words, is very valuable, in the sense that it holds the understanding of the cosmic communication system for the balance of the *Apyāwa* world through the *Takāra*.

According to Tapi'iri Tapirapé, a 54-year-old *Paxē*, who lives at the Wiriāotāwa Indigenous village:

Xane'yga a'era xanererekajxajryn Takāra re kwī, Takare'yjme tanā ikaay xaneree. Emī ramō mī amō ramō xanerekaway kwī, i'ywyteray paraygop pamī wā. Axekwe

ipakaki ata'ywagỹ re kwĩ, tarywa kwaaparagỹ re. Ma'era tã mĩ i'ywyteray? Nixetygãwi a'era mō, a'eete ramō mĩ nakaraj ranō.

We only sustain harmony with *xere'ygã* 'our spirits' through the existence of the *Takãra*, otherwise we would live in contradiction with them, for they get angry and can cause serious problems in society, especially for the Indigenous village and ritual leaders. Do you know why they get angry? It is because, without the *Takãra*, they don't have a shelter, they stay under the sun and rain, and at the same time, without any food. (Narrative told by Tapi'iri Tapirapé at a family meeting, 04/12/2019.)

In regard to food, it is relevant to mention that the *Axyga* feed from food offered in rituals. So there are a set of rules to be followed, before eating begins. In fact, these are rites and gestures that materialize, in some way, the demand that feeding be, first, experienced by them, the *Axyga*. This way, we eat the food, but the food is for the *Axyga*, who in some way join the eating. It is important to highlight that each *Axyga* receives their own food, given that each has their favorite, which during the ritual cannot be replaced for

whatever. For instance, in a *Tawã* ritual, we can't miss *taxao* (big pork meat), *tatã* (banana), *kawĩ* (porridge), *matãwa de taxao* (big pork gravy), and *o'ĩ* (cassava flour). In other words, without all this food there is no *Tawã* ritual.

The same way, there can never be the *Iraxao* ritual without the *Taxao* (big pig), *Kawĩ* (porridge), *matãwa* (gravy) e *o'ĩ* (flour). In case *Taxao* cannot be found, we can offer *xawaxi* (tortoise), since both are among *Iraxao's* favorite foods.

According to the *Paxẽ*, if for some reason rules are not followed, the *Axyga* feel belittled and can use their evil to strike ritual participants. This form of interaction, as a kind of homage, leads us to understand that, in the *Takãra*, in regard to rituals, we only follow rules determined by them, the '*Axyga*.' What, in fact, proves that it is a *Xane'ygã* universe in there.

Yet, according to the Tapi'iri, the *Axyga* not only get together in the *Takãra*, but live among us all the time, accompanying us in all ritual activities, and, in case a ritual does not develop well, spirits considered dangerous can push us or run us over,

Food for the *Tawã* ritual. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'ĩ Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)



in a way, making us stumble. This is true and it is common to take place in our rituals. Which leads us to understand how beings from the universe are, in fact, integrated in our culture, providing deep meaning to our mode of being and living, through the *Takāra*.

I witnessed, in various ritual occasions, occurrences such as these in dances and meals in the *Takāra*. When this takes place (stumble), the wise one or the *Paxē* usually say: "*Mawej kwĩ are'ixe'ã araka pexe pawã*"! 'Take it easy, do you think we are the only ones here?!'. Indirectly, they are referring to the *Axyga*. These are things that common people — the ones who are not *Paxē* — can't see, but comprehend and perceive it through the explanations of the *Paxē*.

It is important, thus, to reassure that in the *Takāra* there are existent things that can only be said and done or comprehended by the *Paxē*, with whom the *Axyga* communicates, as I said before. This becomes clear when the *Apyãwa* master says, "I don't know what could happen to us because this is the home of our Spirits." This way, not only we try to follow their rules, but we also attempt to understand the secrets of communication and interactions with the supernatural world in space, especially in the *Takāra* and *Takawytera*.

A while ago I also witnessed rare incidents that impacted our ceremonial leaders whilst we took some time from doing our rituals. While working crops, Wario, a master ritual leader, wounded his

thumb, by stepping on a dry stick, which led him to lose his thumb. This was not a deep cut, however, since it was ordered by the *Axyga*, even though it was treated with hospital medications, his thumb rotted. Right after this, another incident happened to Korako, also a ritual leader. During the *taxao* (big pork) hunt, he got bitten by a snake, which almost killed him.

Facts such as these, according to the *Apyãwa* cosmology, are synonyms for notices and warnings, a reason to worry. In this case, the wise ones who master cosmic communication usually say: "*Xane'yga i'ywyteray xanewe*" (Our Spirits are mad with us). For they know these are signs of the spiritual code, sent by the *Axyga*. At the time, the *Paxewera* (the shamans) of the Indigenous village claimed that these incidents were caused by the *Axyga* for they were feeling belittled and disrespected. According to them, the *Axyga* were tired of waiting for *temi'o* "food." So, with urgency they requested the *Wyrã* (male groups that will be introduced in the following pages) to make the *Xepaanogãwa*. Literally, this is a 'food ritual,' interpreted as an offering to cheer up the *Axyga* and restore our good relationship with them, or better said, a food offering to appease the *Axyga*.

For the *Xepaanogãwa*, usually, we make the *kawĩ* (porridge), which can be prepared out of peanuts, corn, or rice. Often made by the community or ceremonial leader's wife, it is consumed in the *Takawytera*, where the

*Takawytera* and *Xepaanogãwa*. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)



participants, exclusively the men, while eating *Xepaanogāwa*, ask the *Xere'ygā* for our well being and safety, in a very special way they say: *Hyyhỹ, ie tanã ma'eaiwa pa'opa'õ ropi taka ne!* Literally: 'Protect me, I ask that those who wrong me stay away from me!'

I see and feel that this, in fact, is a kind of cosmic negotiation, since, in exchange of food, the *Axyga* calm down and don't cause more problems in people's lives. This happens, in a way, with the *Axyga* attending to the requests made by the *Apyãwa* men, which reveals the dynamics of a communicative relationship between our people and the beings of the universe, which we call cosmic dialogy, which encompass certain symbols and signs as notices and warning messages.

The most revealing of it all, is the way in which these histories tell us about the importance of the *Takãra* and *Takawytera* for our system of interaction with the world of the *Axyga* and for our mechanism of cosmological communication. It is up to us, however, to know how to interpret these relationships to remain in harmony with the *Axyga*. In this way, historically or symbolically, the *Takãra* is understood as a space of interaction among humans and the supernatural world or the universe itself. Thus, its relevance is profoundly sacred, and, as I have highlighted, its absence in the Indigenous village can cause spiritual conflicts between the *Apyãwa* and the *Axyga*, in spiritual terms. For this reason, its rules are kept in place and rigorously followed.

In terms of rules and its use, it is important to highlight that the *Takãra* is an exclusively male space. Access to its interior is prohibited for the *Koxỹ* 'woman', a ban explained in a mythological narrative about the disrespect of an *Apyãwa* ancestor towards one of the Spirits, which caused a great fire in which almost all the people were exterminated (Paula (2014), p. 52.)

Another more common explanation about this among us *Apyãwa*, is that, by entering this space a woman can turn into a *koxymene'yma* (prostitute) and be taken by all men in the Indigenous village. In order to avoid such a occurrence, when women need to talk or share some information with a man who is in the *Takãra*, they send a message through a *konomĩ* (boy) or *Xyre'ii* (young man), who forwards her message to the person with whom she wants to talk. Or, if this is not the case, they can come close to the *Takãra* and shout out to the people she wants to talk to, asking them to come out for a conversation.

About this, since *kotataĩ* (girlhood), *Apyãwa* women receive advice from their families not to disrespect the rules of the *Takãra*. This reveals a very defined social rule established through the *Takãra*. It also shows, through the prohibition, even though women don't go into that space, important factors in the formation of how to be a *Apyãwa* woman.

Despite the norm of entry in the interior of the *Takãra*, women have indispensable roles in our rituals for they hold plenty of responsibilities in their realization. After all, most of the adornments used in the rituals, by men and by women, are made by women. It is they who, most often, make

*Apyãwa* women. (Photo courtesy of Axawaj'i Arnaldo Tapirapé (2019).)





Woman painting.  
(Photo courtesy of Daniela Ikatopawyga Tapirapé (2019).)

the paint and the paintings, besides preparing all the food needed for each ritual.

At least among us *Apyãwa*, painting is a task exclusively done by women, to whom this activity becomes a rightful habit, such as any other daily task such as cooking or taking care of the children. Most women know how to paint and, thus, the quality of being a painter is considered inherent to feminine nature. As a continuous activity, women always have one blackened hand and one skin tone hand. So, they carry in their own bodies, beyond paintings, the lasting mark of being painters.

In this way, women take on fundamentally important roles, which, in one way or another, provides a way to live in harmony with the *Xere'ygã*. Besides, they are the protagonists of a few rituals such as *Iraxao* and *Axywewoja*, in which they own the Spirits. For this reason, the women who own the *Axyga* receive these Spirits and talk with them to ask them for protection, in the moment they come close to their homes, during the rituals.

Besides being the center of spiritual and ceremonial life, the *Takãra* and the *Takawytera* hold other fundamental principles for our people, since these spaces have various other important social functions. Among them are the social organization of our people, as a group of *Wyrã*, the division

*Iraxao* and women's dance. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)



of men into two big groups. Another function is the education of the youth in terms of the development of the body and the management of responsibilities with regard to familial and social needs. Besides that, they are spaces of political decision, since it is there that all the decisions of people's universe are taken. In that, there are also other significant practices which allow the sustaining of our own epistemologies.

The elder Korako, specialist in *Apyãwa* culture and rituals, 89 years old, and a resident in the *Tapi'itãwa* Indigenous village, in one interview, highlights this aspect as follows:

Ma'era mõ tã xireka Takãra, tãwa arona. Tãwa maka'apypoãwa, a'era mõ mi xireka Takãra. Naxikajxej Takãra wi, mygã raka'e mi nakajxej Takãra wi. Ma'era mõ ta'e, wyrã ramõ xanexemaxerekakatoãwa, tarywa apaãwa, xe'exe'gãwa, ma'ere xemaxerekakatoãwa. Xepaanogãwa ramõ ewi ityni Takãra. A'era mõ mi xireka Takãra, kwewi we raka'e xireka. Ma'ema'e apaãwa Takãra, ywyrapãra, o'ywa apaãwa. A'era ewi ityni Takãra. Ma'e'i apaawe'yma xe Takãra. Ewi ityni xanereka ywypy. Takãra apa'e'yma ekwe ipawi xanereka, xipãp ekwe.

Do you know why we have the *Takãra*? She is the beauty of our Indigenous village. She is the joy of the Indigenous village, for this reason we have the *Takãra*. We never lack it, no one lacks it. You know why? She is our place of organization as *Wyrã*, birds' groups. She is the place to celebrate, to chat, to organize (meeting) and prepare our demands. She exists for us to live in peace with the Spirits. For this reason we have the *Takãra*, for a long time. The *Takãra* is the place to do many things such as the manufacturing of the bow and arrow, for this reason she exists. We do not only do a single thing in the *Takãra*. She is the center of our cultural life. If we don't build the *Takãra*, our culture will disappear, we will end. (Korako Tapirapé, interview 05/20/2019).

In the statement by Korako, when he says "Takãra is the place to do many things (...) She is the center of our cultural life. If we don't build the *Takãra*, our culture will disappear, we will end," it is noticeable that the *Apyãwa*, without the *Takãra*, would not be the same people.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that the *Takãra*, beyond a universe of connections with different worlds, is the key element for the *Apyãwa*'s epistemological survival. For, I see

The interior of the *Takãra*. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2018).)



that, without her, it would not be possible to keep our epistemological set, in regard to ritual knowledges, sacred narratives, mythological secrets, cosmological knowledges.

In the same way, it would not be possible to sustain communicational patterns, 'spiritual languages' that allow us connections with different supernatural worlds, as well as to keep our organization called *Wyrã*, through which, historically, the *Apyãwa* people passes its traditional knowledges to the Youth, through the myths, ritual songs and other activities, a sharing that happens, in a special way, in the *Takãra*, as well as in its courtyard.

Obviously, these knowledges are directly connected to such spaces and have been shared in living memory, thanks to the *Wyrã*.

*Wyrã* is the organization system of the *Apyãwa* which divides the men in two big halves in the *Takãra*, considering that *Wyrã* is a bird designation. According to Oropé'i, this organization is associated with birds that live in flocks. According to this *Apyãwa* master, given that the *Apyãwa* (men only) coexist collectively, in this space, one group is called *Wyraxiga* ('white birds', herons), which are commonly seen in flocks, and the other group is called *Araxã* which refers to parrots, another species of birds that is also commonly seen in flocks. These are traces that, indeed, reveal the intrinsic relationship

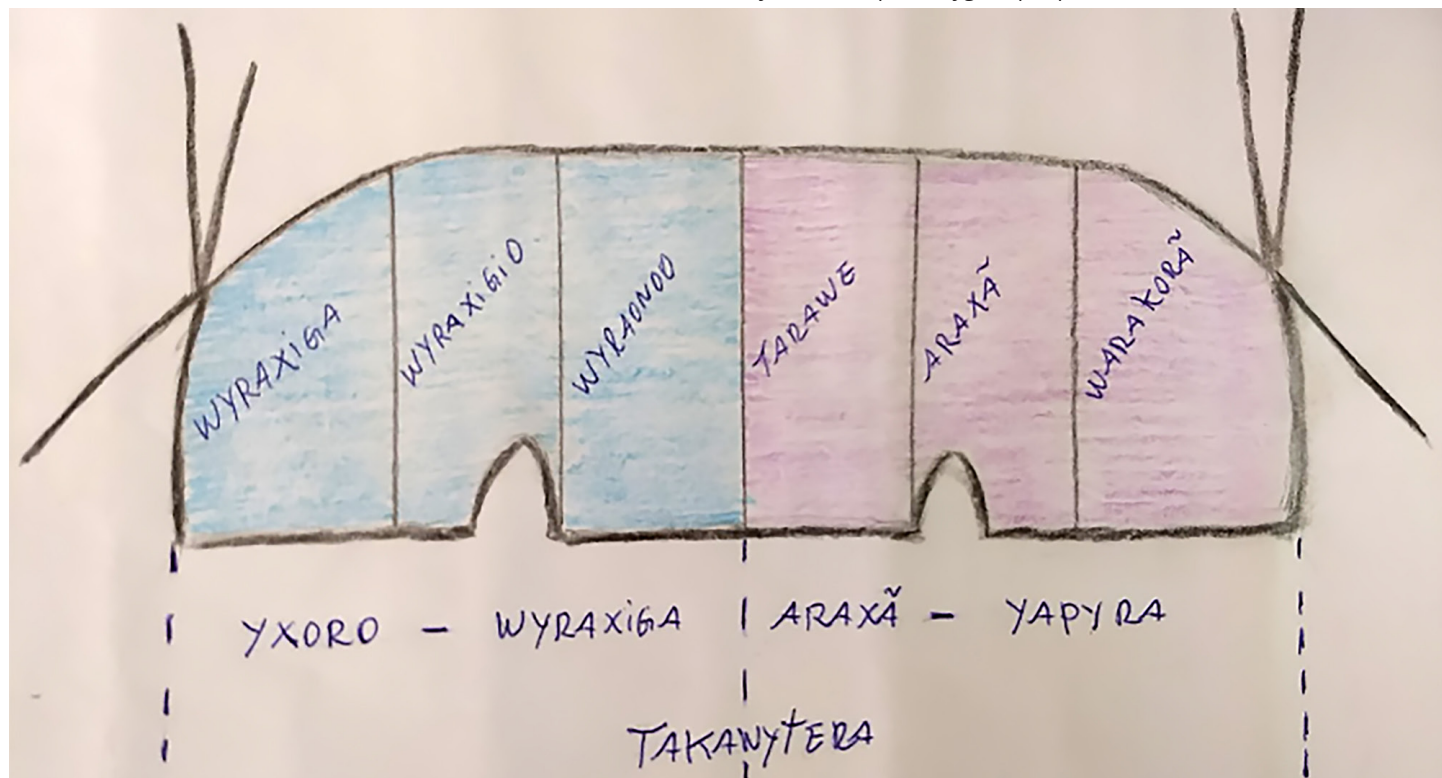
between the *Apyãwa* and the beings of the universe, present in this territory.

These halves are made of three subgroups to which the men belong according to the stage of their lives. The half named *Wyraxiga*, formed by the groups *Wyraxiga* (youth), *Wyraxigio* (mature and adult men) e *Wyraonoo* (elderly and ancient men), takes up the *Takãra* in the side *Yapyra* 'end of the river', *Apyãwa's* expression that refers to the south side, or the direction of the Araguaia River's spring. The half *Araxã*, formed by the groups *Warakorã* (youth), *Araxã* (mature and adult man) and *Tarawe* (elderly and ancient man), takes up the *Takãra* besides the *Yxoro* 'river's mouth, expression that refers to the north side, which is the mouth of the Araguaia River. A man joins the bird society of his father, and, as he grows up, he passes to the next age group in the same half that to which his dad belongs.

There is no physical division of this space, in the interior of the *Takãra*, but the *Wyrã* know which space is destined to each group and subgroup, as can be seen in the image below.

As one can see, the ends of each of the halves of the *Takãra* is reserved to the youth, to the *awa'yaweri* or *xyre'i'i* (the young man), in the saying of the *Apyãwa*, 'those who haven't yet married.' The middle part of each half of the *Takãra* is the place of the *atyma'ekwera*, mature men or those who already got married and have children. And

Subdivisions inside the *Takãra*. (Photo courtesy of Gilson Ipaxi'awyga Tapirapé (2019).)





lastly, the center of the *Takāra* is the place of the *marykweri*, the ancient or elderly,' those who have grandchildren and great grandchildren. This way, there are six subdivisions in the *Takāra*, three for each of the ceremonial halves. Nonetheless, people circulate freely, keeping this division in a more overt way during the rituals.

According to Paula (2014):

The designation of the halves and their three subdivisions involves an intricate symbolic complex, as the names are doubly metaphorized. Thus, *Wyraxiga*, 'heron' in the referential sense, when it names one of the halves and the subgroup of young people from this same half, loses this connotation to then mean *Xexoo ipexiga ma'e* 'those who are *pirarucu* with white skin'. The *Wyraxigoo* subgroup, which brings together the oldest men of this half, are the *Wyrā*, *Wyraxiga towoho ma'e* 'those who are the great herons'. The ones who are even older, aged 80 or more, the *Wyraonoo*, are the *Tare'yra*, 'the *tra'ira* fish'. The *Wyraxigio*, who are the adult men of the *Wyraxiga* half, are called *Wyrā wetepe*, 'all the birds' or 'all the men of this half'. Similarly, the *Araxā* half and the subgroup of this half that corresponds to adult men mean *Wyrā wetepe* 'all the birds' or 'all the men of that half'. *Tarawe*, the subgroup of the oldest men from the *Araxā* half are the *Xexo*, 'jeju fish', as "the jeju is the leader of the fish, the ones that come out first". The *Warakorā* subgroup, which brings together young people from the *Araxā* half, in the referential sense is the water hen, and here it means *Xexoo ipepiryga ma'e* 'those who are red-skinned *pirarucu*'. Fish and Birds, thus, lend their physical attributes to name the halves of Apyāwa society and its subdivisions. It is possible to see some analogy between the jeju fish and the ritual function intended for the men of the *Araxā* half, as they are the ones who take the lead in the rituals, similarly to the jeju fish who take the lead during *piracema*. (Paula (2014), pp. 51-52.)

According to Ikaikā, a 75-year-old Indigenous leader who lives at the Indigenous village Wiriaotāwa, this *Apyāwa* mode of organization, is understood as the principle of the set of norms of conduct to be followed by a person or group, in that space, since each person and group has a big responsibility in this space. As Ikaikā claims: "*Wyrā a'era mō xanexama'aranopāwa, xane xemaxerekakatoāwa* (Wyrā is our mode of guiding ourselves through the world, it is our mode of being in regard to our commitments.)"

This claim, in fact, leads us to understand that this organization aims at dividing, not only the space, but also the commitments and responsibilities during rituals. In the same way, it also aims for a mode of education that provides us with our way of being as well as

with the possibility that our culture continues in following generations. What I have seen is that this organization allows traditional knowledges to be transmitted to younger generations, according to their stages of life. For example, when a *konomĩ* (boy) gets into the initiation ritual of *xyre'ii* or *awa'yao'i* (young man), usually, he will receive many advice and orientation from the wise ones, who are protagonists of culture, mostly in terms of behavior, since, from this stage onwards, he will need to behave well in relation to others, both in the *Takāra* and with his family. Since, being no longer a *konomĩ*, he will have other commitments and responsibilities in society.

Thus, he will no longer be allowed to be with *konomiwera* (group of boys) and much less with *kotataiwera* (group of girls.) At last, from this moment onwards, he starts to spend more time in the *Takāra*, where he will be educated, mostly by the *Wyrā*, about the life of a man in society. This refers both to the knowledge of the commitments and responsibilities to other social groups as well as to practices and activities done by men in the day to day.

These knowledges, usually, are transmitted or communicated through mythical narratives composed of symbolic language, which are frequently ritualized. These knowledges or modes of education contribute efficiently in the formation of an Apyāwa man, for his management of responsibilities in regard to social and familial needs.

Nonetheless, I see that the youth learn knowledges for life's social reproduction not only necessary in the *Takāra*, but also in their family space. I understand that, with that, the youth always gain new experiences, taking part and observing, for example, the way in which the *Wyrā* organize themselves in the *Takāra*, including in rituals. At the same time, they learn how to deal with different attitudes and behaviors, in regards to whom they can speak with, to whom they can speak to, and the way they should speak.

In this way, the participation of all *Wyrā* is imperative in and for the making of all rituals, from the building of the *Takāra*, to the ending of a whole ritual cycle.

After all, these are assuredly guaranteed moments to relive the ancient culture of a people, in which diverse modes of interacting and of speaking to the *Axyga* take place, through specialized use of the *Apyāwa* language. As *xeropy*



Building the *Takãra*. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2018).)

'my dad' Oropé'i usually says, it is through lived experiences in these spaces that we go deeper into our linguistic and epistemological knowledges.

This is because the cultural tradition of the people, in regard to sedimented knowledges, to the education of younger generations, to the beliefs, to the symbolic representations, the political organizing, the social cultural reproduction, etc are, absolutely, manifested through the diverse and specialized use of our people's language. *Xanexe'ega*, our language, is the medium through which, in a very special way, in the *Takãra*, the wise *Apyãwas* discuss the ancient ancestral culture and the recent history of our people, explain our mythical origin and the invisible dynamic of the world, besides describing the attributes of our social organization.

Thus, we constantly renovate, through the *Takãra* and *Takawytera* the capacity to comprehend and perceive complex systems of thought and proper modes of expression, transmission, assessment and re-elaboration of knowledges and conceptions of the world, in regard to the human and the supernatural world.

It is important, in this sense, to reaffirm the *Takãra* and *Takawytera* as places of linguistic and epistemological resistance, since, through rituals, they keep a preserved set of knowledges and ancient important words, which are only used in

these spaces. There are many ancient words that only the rituals keep alive through their songs.

Nivaldo Korira'i Tapirapé, who graduated in Social Sciences at UNEMAT, offers the following reflections, made this year in a slide presented at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro):

If the ritual didn't exist, many words could entirely disappear in time. When one analyzes words by words, one can understand what our people spoke that way, and, with the passage of time, these words or even the name of objects or other things change. There are words in our language that have changed so much and only the rituals keep them alive in all generations. Most words are not recognizable such as the ones from the song *Ka'o*. The ritual tells the story of the people, such as, for instance, the origin of the people, of the songs, of the conflicts. There are various songs that speak directly about the Indigenous village of the birds, in which they sang, and which were passed down generation after generation, and which we sing until today. This is incredible for the *Apyãwa* people. If we analyze all the songs of *Ka'o*, we will notice that in the versions there are always birds such as, macaw, green parrot, water hen, *xexéu*, heron, *inhuma*, etc (...).

In this light, we can claim again that our rituals and their songs are directly connected to mythical narratives, in this way, keeping and preserving language and its histories. We see, thus, that rituals, besides enriching language, also transmit



The *Marakao* ritual. (Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

wisdom and the meaning of things. Given that they express cosmology, epistemology, and symbolic values of our people's culture.

The *Takawytera*, besides serving all the ritual functions, is the space where the *Wyrã* (only the men) congregate, every night, to chat among themselves, sharing themes of daily life, such as fishing, hunting, and work on the crops. Or even, on the occasion of rituals, to discuss aspects of their accomplishments, as well as their organizing and participation in the *Wyrã*.

When necessary, they also discuss controversial topics, such as alcoholism and drug use, as well as the government project which has drastic impacts on land, health and educational issues. It is the space where, indeed, all discussions and decisions about the social life of the *Apyãwa* take place. Thus, all appropriate and necessary measures are taken there for each situation that requires attention.

These occasions also guarantee, in some way, that symbolic use of *Apyãwa* language keeps on existing, as we can see in the testimony of Ieremy'i, who is an *Apyãwa* language teacher:

Takawyterawyrãxamanyykãwa, axaopeope'egãwa, maragetã kome'oãwa. A'epe a'era mō xane awa'yawera ramō xikwaagato axaope xe'ega, ma'e xe'ega aoxekato, marygato wãra aoxekatoe'ym. Xanexamawiteãwa a'era Takawytera. Emiwera ropi kwee mi aenop wekawo

maryn xãwa, weparanopa wexemipoenowe'yma re, emany ikwaãpa imota irekawo xerexe'ega.

*Takawytera* is the space for man to get together, it is a space of conversation and of storytelling. It is in this space that we, the youth, learn how to properly speak to others. *Takawytera* is the space of respect. It is where we learn not to use bad words and where we learn respectful words. It is in the *Takawytera* that I learned how to respectfully address others, how to ask the wise ones about this. And, thus, I learned to correctly speak our language. (Ieremy'i Tapirapé, interview 05/12/2019)

Thus, it is evident that, the *Takawytera*, besides being a space of rituals and discussions, promotes ongoing interactions between *Apyãwa* wise ones and youth, through which one learns not only how to debate and discuss *Apyãwa* issues, but also how to correctly use one's own language. We can, thus, say that *Takawytera* is a well suited epistemic space for *Apyãwa* training in linguistic terms. This is the reason why, as the teacher said: "it is in this space that we, the youth, learn how to correctly speak to one another."

On the other hand, we can also define it as a space of respect, as the above-mentioned *Apyãwa* teacher said: "it is in the *Takawytera* that I learned how to respectfully address others." It matters, nonetheless, to emphasize that this is also the space in which one can learn greetings,



An evening meeting in the *Takawytera*.  
(Photo courtesy of Waraxowoo'i Maurício Tapirapé (2019).)

which have a respect mark among us *Apyãwa*, as said by Júnior Okario'i Tapirapé in his high school graduation work:

Xaapexe'egãwa ro'õ aoxekato Apyãwa we. Kwewiwe ro'õ itori akawo xaapexe'egãwa. Iparaxigo ma'e e'yma xe ro'õ Apyãwa reka pe naparaapexe'egi.

lpyy ramõ apara ma'e ro'õ ewĩ aa 'yna aparaapexe'ega. Pa erexat! axãwo yna aparaapexe'ega. Emanyn xepe ro'õ epe itowi apata axaapexe'ega. A'ere ro'õ epe itowi aparagetãwo. (...)

Emanyn mĩ wapeyja ramõ ixewyxewyri aawo yna wetyma katy. A'e ekwe aawo axemaxekwaãp aawo yna ranõ. Emanyn xepe aayayjna axawi aawo ranõ. Axeiwe emanyn itoitori apata ranõ. Iaroaro'i a'e ramõ emanyn akawo Apyãwa imagywo weka axaopeope.

For *Apyãwa*, greeting one another is a really good thing. This has been done for a very long time. In *Apyãwa* culture, Only arrogant people don't greet one another.

In this sense, whoever comes out first (in the *Takawytera*) greets or hosts the others, saying: Pa erexat! "you are coming!", so, greeting everyone who arrives. When all get together, they start to tell stories.

In the same way, when one feels asleep, before going out, one says goodbye, and all others do the same. The following night, the same happens. It is very beautiful for the *Apyãwa* to keep our culture among themselves. (Júnior Okario'i Tapirapé (2018), p. 12.)

It is important to highlight that, for the *Apyãwa*, this is the law of respect, which has been kept for a very long time. This way, besides learning actual knowledge, we also learn the norm and the concept of respect.

Despite not directly participating in the *Takawytera* meetings, women always influence the decisions taken, since all the topics are never exhausted in one single evening, as the men take the discussed issues home, where they talk to their wives and family members. This happens often, especially in regard to decisions about rituals, for we cannot decide about them without first consulting everyone's opinions.

In regard to other topics, for example, land, education and health issues, *Apyãwa* women do not always actively participate; they participate discreetly. Given that they understand

that the fight for their rights is the responsibility of men. This way, the topics are discussed only among men until reaching a conclusion. Nonetheless, they are kept informed about everything that is discussed in that space.

This way, even though the *Takãra* e *Takawytera* are spaces used by men, they have a central importance in the social life of all *Apyãwa*, since, one way or another, all participate in important ways in issues politically decided in these spaces. In the same way, there, future generations are prepared to face diverse situations, including new demands that may arise from contact with other societies.

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