NOTES ON THE PANARE INDIANS OF VENEZUELA

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The present paper is a preliminary summary report on a number of Indian bands occupying a part of the state of Bolivar, Venezuela. The material given here was collected during a field trip to interior Venezuela in the winter of 1950-1951. The Panare Indians were studied over a period of three to four months. The work was divided into two parts, the first period being spent with one group and the second in a survey trip to several Panare bands.

The material in this paper is almost entirely descriptive in nature and is intended to give specialists in the South American field a brief outline of the field data. Eventually it is hoped to present the Panare notes in monograph form with particular emphasis on comparative studies.

Natural features

The Panare Indians are concentrated in the llano and jungle country of the district of Cedeño in Western Bolivar. The northern boundary of this region is the Orinoco River. Along the course of the river and extending 5-15 kilometers inland are stretches of relatively flat grassland with small clusters of scrub forest. A little further south are a series of small ranges, the largest of which (the Cuchivero Mountains) form an eastern border to the Panare area. In this mountain group, peaks may reach the height of 1,000 m. or more. To the south of these ranges are the extensive jungles of the upper Cuchivero and Chivapuri Rivers.

The Panare country is drained by three main river systems. The Cuchivero is the most important and most of the Indian villages are along tributaries of this river. Further west is the Tortuga and, in central Bolivar, the valley of the Suapure-Chivapuri, the latter forming a southern boundary to the Panare homeland.

Group distribution

There are two main divisions or "tribes" of Panare Indians. The first of these lives in the valleys of the Coqüisis (Cocuisis), Piñal, and Guaniamo Rivers (eastern tributaries of the Cuchivero), and on small streams of the upper Tortuga Valley. These Indians, for geographically obvious reasons, will be referred to as the Northern Panare.(1) The second group lives along the streams that drain into the upper portion of the Cuchivero River. These Upper Cuchivero Panare are considerably less well known than the northern peoples.

The following list of villages and populations was compiled from a number of sources. Really dependable data exist only for the Piñaguero, Piñal, and Colorado bands. For other groups, estimates by Indians or by

Venezuelan traders are used. Population figures for most of the groups are based on the number of houses in each village. Needless to say, these figures should not be used uncritically.

Map Number	Name of Group	Houses	Population
Northern Panare			
1	Colorado	3	100-125
2	Comatagua (San Augustín, Guaratarito)	4	100-200
3	Piñaguero (Bendiciones)	1	23
4	Piñal	1	45
5	La Raya	2	50-100
6	Guarataro	1-2	50- 75
Total		12-13	368-568
Upper Cuchivero Panare			
7	Uroné	1	25- 50
8	Raudalalto	2	50-100
9	Las Ponchas	1-	25- *
Total		4-	100-175 *

List of Villages And Populations

Table I

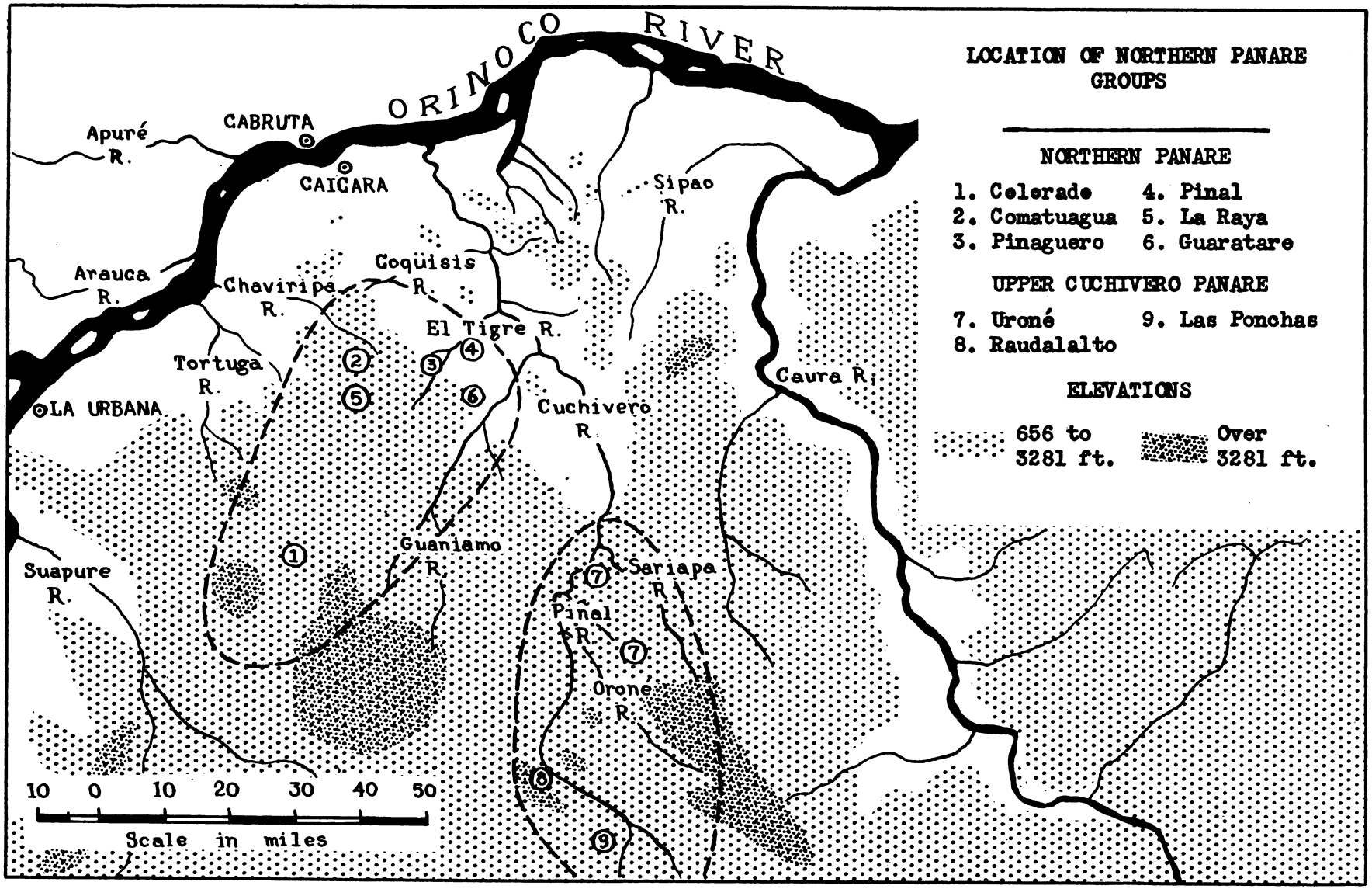
Subsistence

The Panare depend primarily on plant crops in their food economy. Each group has a series of small conucos or fields, usually in the river bottoms. A number of crops are grown but the most important are manioc, bananas, maize, and rice. Both sweet and bitter manioc are produced, though the bitter variety is the more common. The two kinds of manioc are planted at the same time, in the latter part of the dry season (April to June), and are usually not dug until the following year. In planting the ground is loosened with a digging stick, a heavy staff a meter or more in length. The manioc root is cut into sections, each separate piece containing an eye. A single section is then dropped into the loose dirt and covered by pushing dirt over it with the feet. The planter (usually a woman) then goes on to the next hill where the process is repeated.

Rice is planted in May and June at the beginning of the summer rains. A series of shallow depressions, about a handbreadth apart, are made with a digging stick. The worker then drops three or four grains of rice in each hill and covers them by pushing dirt over them with her feet. The grain is harvested in October or November, at the

PLATE I

Map of Northern Panare Territory



end of the rainy season. Rice stalks are stripped with the fingers and the grain is deposited in large baskets. Women and children do most of the planting but both sexes help at harvest time. The loads of rice are brought to the settlement by women, who carry the heavy baskets by means of bark tump lines.

Bananas and plantains form an important part of the diet of the Panare with several varieties grown. The plants are spaced about 2 meters apart in special fields and are kept carefully weeded. The main banana harvest is from October to April, at which time the bunches of fruit are cut while still somewhat green and allowed to ripen in the camp or house area.

Maize is planted at about the same time as rice and is harvested at the end of the rains. The ears are picked by women and stored in large baskets under the rafters of the communal house.

Cane is grown in separate fields or between the plants in banana groves. The Panare use wooden hand presses to extract the juice but most cane is eaten raw.

Two plants not part of the food economy are important to the Panare. The Indians grow gourds which are made into containers. These are planted in August or September and are picked in January. They are normally not planted in regular fields but, rather, around the houses, in banana patches, or along paths leading to the settlement. Cotton is also grown by the Panare. The seeds are planted in December and the cotton is picked in May.

Although most of the food supply comes from domesticated plants, the Panare strongly emphasize hunting and fishing. The main hunting implements are the blowgun, the lance, and the fish harpoon. A bow and arrow is occasionally used to shoot fish but is of secondary importance. The men hunt most commonly with the blowgun, which is used for birds or small tree animals. Hunters go alone or in pairs when this weapon is employed. Larger land animals are killed with the lance and are hunted by individuals or small parties of men. At the present time, shotguns are used for both birds and large game but such guns are very rare among the Panare.

A number of land and water animals and birds eaten by the Indians were specifically identified. Animals include the wild pig, anteater, deer, and two or more species of monkey. Tortoises, iguanas, and lizards are common in the diet, as well as river turtles and caiman (crocodile). The Panare eat crocodile meat whenever obtainable. Almost every bird in the area is utilized in the diet. Snakes, however, are not eaten and, in fact, the idea seems repugnant to the Indians.

The Panare hunt the jaguar and mountain lion using dogs and the lance or spear. The skins are valued for trading purposes but neither animal is eaten. Domesticated dogs are used in hunting and to warn the village against strangers but they are never utilized as food.

Several fishing implements were noted, with the fish scoop probably the most common. This scoop is a loosely woven twilled basket and is used to dip up the minnow-like fish that abound in the smaller streams. Other fishing techniques include the use of woven-reed fish traps, the fish harpoon, and hook and line. The Panare also employ fish poison (Phyllanthus piscatorum), a root that grows around the edges of cultivated fields. The plant is used in December and January at a time when the smaller streams are falling rapidly. Roots are pulverized and placed in large open baskets which are then dipped into pools where fish have been trapped by the low waters. The fish are stunned by the poison and float to the surface where they can be easily caught.

Preparation of food

Most meat foods eaten by the Panare are boiled in an iron cauldror or kettle together with rice, maize, or manioc. Bitter manioc is grated and pressed in a cylindrical basketry press until the harmful acids have been removed. The drippings from bitter manioc are carefully collected in a gourd for use in chicha making. Manioc paste is sometimes made into tortillas, baked on a flat iron griddle.

The Indians crush rice and maize in a mortar or boil the whole grain. Green bananas are sliced and boiled with meat, while ripe bananas are eaten raw or roasted over hot coals.

Fish and lizards are usually eaten boiled with vegetable stock. If the animal is small it is put in the pot whole, thus cooking the internal organs and intestinal contents with the rest of the meat. Small fish are often toasted by spreading them on a mat-covered rack directly above a small fire.

The only alcoholic beverage made by the Panare is manioc chicha. The women brew this by chewing manioc paste and mixing it with water, cane juice, and a small amount of prussic acid (bitter manioc juice). The ingredients are then stirred together in a large wooden container. The chicha is covered with a mat and allowed to stand for two or three days, after which time it is consumed by the whole group. Chicha, as made by the Panare, is a sourish tasting, soupy liquid with perhaps the alcoholic content of a light beer.

Settlements

The habitation areas of the Northern Panare are, for the most part, along small streams on the upper courses of the various rivers. The house or houses are normally built in clearings some distance from the river on a hill slope or rise. The settlement also includes a number of fields, the largest of which is usually not more than 100 square meters. These fields are in the river valley, though they lie far enough back from the actual stream bed to avoid flooding in the wet season.

The village group usually has small outbuildings scattered through the fields. These are used for grain storage and as temporary dwellings. At Piñaguero there is a campsite some 2 km. from the communal house and at the other end of a stretch of fields. This site is occupied during harvest of the fields most distant from the main dwelling.

The Panare house is circular in groundplan and is 10-20 meters in diameter. The framework is constructed by implanting a series of upright posts (normally 12-15) in a roughly circular area. These posts, which are 2-3 meters in height and about 20 cm. thick, are linked by spanner beams fitted in notches at the top of the posts and secured by lashings of bark. At the center of the circle of posts is a roof pole, somewhat thicker than the outside posts and 8 meters or more in height. One or more posts are driven into the ground close beside the roof pole. These help to brace the longer member and they also act as supports to a pair of crossbeams that extend the length of the house. The roof of the structure is made with a series of long, slender poles placed diagonally across the spanners. The top of these poles converge on the centerpole and are tied into place giving a kind of "tipi" effect. A series of small rods are then interwoven with the diagonal timbers to make a wattled wall frame. This frame is covered by bundles of moriche palm. A row of the palm branches is fastened to the lowermost part of this diagonal wall with succeeding rows placed above and overlapping the previous ones. A doorway is left and is usually fitted with a tunnel entrance, 4 meters long and 2 meters high, thatched like the main part of the house. The house when complete looks a little like an inverted ice-cream cone.

Storage platforms are made in the house interior by placing slabs of bark between the crossbeams. The earth floor is soaked with water, then trodden to form a hard crust. There are very few furnishings in the Panare house. Hammocks are attached from one to another of the side posts, or from side post to center pole, and household belongings are stored on the platforms or stuck in the wall thatch. Each family normally has its own cooking fire, a scooped out area in the floor sometimes bordered with large stones used for balancing pots. Interior partitions, however, are completely absent.

All adults in the house-group work on construction of the communal house. Both men and women help in cutting and carrying the poles and thatching material, and in fitting the various timbers into place.

Smaller houses in the fields or in temporary camp areas are made in rectangular tent shape with a ridgepole and slanting walls. The framework is made by men; then women thatch the hut with bundles of moriche or coroba palm fronds. Even simpler is the one-wall leanto. Here, a lattice of rods is constructed and this frame is covered with palm bundles. The whole assembly is lifted and tilted against two trees or posts and fastened firmly into place.

Manufactured objects

Panare hunting implements include the lance or spear, harpoon, blowgun, and bow and arrow. The lance is 2-1/2 to 3 meters long and is made of croton wood. The hafting end is 2-3 cm. in diameter and the spear is usually tapered toward the butt end. The point is of iron, normally made from an old knife or machete blade. (2) In hafting, the end of the wooden shaft of the lance is split for about 5 cm. and the blade (which is 20-30 cm. long) is inserted. The split shaft is then bound tightly with a waxed cord of macanilla (Bactris sp.). The lance can be thrown but is primarily a thrusting instrument.

Fish harpoon lances are made from caña brava. The point of the harpoon is a separate piece of thin iron, hammered from a knife blade. The haft end of this metal point is in the form of a sleeve and is joined with a hardwood joint which, in turn, fits into the hollow cane shaft. Arrows are made from the same material and in much the same way. A simple bow is formed from lengths of verdepodria (Guadua latifolia) 1 meter or more in length. For a bowstring the Indians use a piece of heavy macanilla cord.

The Panare manufacture only the outer tube of the two-tube blowgun (the sole type used in this area). This tube sheath is made from a section of cubaro (Bactris cubaro) 3 or more meters in length. The interior is cleaned with a thin metal knife mounted on a stick. The inner tube of arundinaria reed is traded from the Piaroa. This part is forced into the outer tube allowing the end of the reed to protrude some 6-7 cm. from the mouth-end of the section of cubaro. A mouthpiece of hardwood (usually Tabernaemontana psychotrifolia) is carved and fitted like a sleeve over the protruding section of the inner tube. The mouthpiece is sealed onto the cubaro sheath with tree wax.

Darts for the blowgun are whittled from ribs of either coroba or cucurita palm fronds. The butt end of the dart is wrapped in domestic cotton or in algodon de ceiba (Ceiba pantandra). For hunting birds the blowgun dart is usually employed without poison, the men using curare only to kill monkeys or very large birds. Curare poison is occasionally home manufactured but the Panare obtain most of their poison in trade with groups further south. The homemade poison is brewed from a variety of plants including a species of Strychnos.

Household goods

For cooking the Panare use iron pots, traded from Venezuelans. The Indians do not make pottery and do not recall ever having been potters. Twilled basketry, however, woven only by the men, is important in the economy. It is used locally in many ways and is an important trade item. Basketry includes not only containers of various kinds and shapes but also fish-drying mats, fish traps, fish basket scoops, manioc squeezers, and dart quivers. Most basketry is plain but designs are occasionally introduced by the use of different

colored warp and weft splints. Several fibers are used in the production of basketry; commonest is the casupo reed (Calathea sp. prob. lutea).

Gourds form another important class of containers. These are cleaned by splitting and scraping or, in the case of water containers, by cutting a hole in one end and allowing the interior to dry. The vessel is then filled with sand and shaken to remove dried fragments from the inside walls. Water jugs, when in use, are plugged with corncob stoppers.

Other household implements include wooden ladles, cane presses and the mortar and pestle. The mortar is manufactured by men from a cylindrical section of pardillo log (Cordia alliodora) about 1/2 meter long and 30 cm. in diameter. A shallow depression is chipped out with knives and hot coals are placed in this area to burn out the interior. When complete the mortar has a depression 30-40 cm. deep. The pestle is made from a log of ariconoco or chaparro. The mortar and pestle is used to pulverize rice and maize.

Manioc graters used by Northern Panare groups are constructed from metal, commonly a side cut from a large gasoline can. A number of perforations are made on one side of the strip with a knife, so as to leave a series of jagged metal edges. The section is then fastened, smooth side down, onto a section of bark. When using this implement the Panare woman tilts the grater against the front of her legs and leans over it somewhat after the fashion of a washwoman bending over a scrubboard. A gourd at the base of the grater catches the grated material.

Only one skin implement was noted. This is a bag worn by hunters to carry dart poison and cotton wadding and is constructed from the skin of an anteater. The fresh skin is pegged to the ground, hair side down, and the interior is scraped and rubbed with ashes. When it has dried, the skin is folded in the middle, hair side out, and sewn with cotton cord along the sides. The tail is bent over to form a flap and a piece of cord fastens this cover over the mouth of the bag. A carrying strap of cotton cord is then stitched into either end of the container.

Probably the most important single household item in Panare life is the hammock. Women construct these by winding weft strands of moriche cord around and around two posts placed 2 to 2-1/2 meters apart. A warp cord of cotton is used to tie the weft strands together at intervals of about 20 cm. The weaver slips the ends of the hammock off the posts and binds them tightly with cord to form loops. Panare hammocks are always used with netting which, among the northern groups, is a light cotton trade cloth.

Clothing and ornaments

The only garment worn by adult Panare is the breechclout, or loincloth. Men dress in a rectangle of heavy cotton cloth about 60 by 80 cm. The section of cloth is worn like a diaper, being pulled between the legs and tied around the hips. The woman's costume is also a rectangular strip of cotton cloth, about 10 cm. wide and 30 cm. in length. Short lengths of cotton thread are attached to each corner of the cloth to hold the garment in place. Decorative tassels of cotton thread are fastened to the back of the garment and rest on the wearer's hips.

In addition to the clothing, most adult Panare wear ornamental bands of cotton cord. One band is fastened tightly below the knee and the other directly above the ankle. Women also wear necklaces of red, white, and blue trade beads and both sexes occasionally have arm bands of the same material.

Children of pre-puberty age do not wear breechclouts. Boys sometimes put on a hip-band of cord colored with onoto (Bixa orellana); a single strand is worn loosely on the hips. Children of both sexes use cotton leg and arm bands and beads are worn on both neck and arm. A few boys have necklaces of animal teeth.

The cloth used in Panare clothing is all woven from local cotton. The strands are seeded, straightened, and spun by hand. For weaving the breechclout, an oval horizontal loom is constructed. All cloth is colored reddish-brown by rubbing it with a mixture of onoto seeds and water.

Amusements

Panare children have a number of toys. Small girls carry toy baskets, sometimes fitted with tump lines, and tiny gourds are made to simulate water jugs. Boys play with a toy formed by cutting wheels from a large pithy plant and joining them with a stick axle. A long reed is then split at one end and the axle is placed in this split. The ends are bound with bark cord, producing a handled go-cart which can be either pushed or pulled. (3) Boys also make toy lances and throw them at prearranged targets. A bullroarer used only by children is produced by attaching cord to a thin piece of bark or a broken stirrer.

Several musical toys are known. A rattle is fashioned from small gourds tied together. The Indians make a pseudo-stringed instrument for the children from a large section of jointed cane. The hard shell of the cane is cut off along one side and strands of the stringy under-surface are pulled loose. These are pegged with small sticks at either end of the length of cane, thus making the strands taut. When strummed, the instrument gives off a soft harplike sound. (4)

Adult musical instruments include flutes of two kinds. One of these is made of a section of "bamboo" a meter or more in length and fitted with an interior vibrator. The smaller flute is fashioned from carrizo reed (Gynerium sp.) and is 50-60 cm. in length. One end of the hollow reed is filled with tree wax leaving a small slit opening. Three finger holes are bored in the side of the instrument with a heated sliver of iron. Panare men play this flute through both mouth and nose.

The men make maraca-like rattles from small round gourds. The plant is dried and a hole is cut in top and bottom and small pebbles are inserted. A wooden handle is then pushed through the gourd, plugging both the holes. Designs are sometimes cut on these rattles, usually lines of chevrons or flower motifs.

A staff with rattles attached is used by the women to mark time in group dances. It is a seasoned rod of wood, a meter or more in length, with a number of parrot bills attached near one end. These produce a dry rattle when shaken.

Dancing is the most common group amusement with both adults and children participating. Dances are prepared for in advance; chicha is brewed and all the Indians paint themselves with onoto. Designs are painted on the face, breasts, abdomen and legs of the women and on the face, chest, arms and legs of the men. The designs are in the form of spots, circles, chevrons, and flower-petal figures. In the actual dance, a line of people holding hands moves around in a circle. The dancer at one end of the line acts as pivot man and describes a small circle while the rest of the dancers keep in line formation. The women mark time with the rattle-staff and the men with maracas and large flutes.

Medical lore

The Panare use a number of native herbal medicines. One of the most important of these is the inner bark of the chaparro tree (Curatella americana) which is valued for a number of ailments. Snake-bitten individuals apply the crushed wet bark to the point of the bite. A tea made from bark chips can be taken internally for dysentery. Chaparro leaves are brewed into tea as a remedy for fevers. The root of piñon (Jatropha curcas) is crushed and boiled with water as a specific against dysentery. The Indians make a brew from the bark of conoco (Renealmia sp.) as a remedy for malaria and other fevers. Fregosa (Capraria biflora) bark is boiled and eaten for dysentery or stomach upset. Mere (Merei anacardium occidentale) bark, boiled or soaked in hot water, is commonly used as a compress to combat sore throat. The roots of ginger (Zingiber sp.) are crushed and mixed with water. This remedy cures stomach troubles and reduces fevers.

Contact with other peoples

The Northern Panare trade with the Venezuelans of the Orinoco settlements and with the more southerly Indian groups. The Panare exchange skins, basketry, and sarrapia beans for the Venezuelans' iron tools (especially knives and machetes), cloth, salt, tobacco, and gunpowder. From the southern Indian groups the Panare obtain inner tubes for blowguns and also curare, cord, and wax. For these they give basketry, skins, and occasionally articles obtained from Venezuelans. Contact with the Venezuelans comes mostly through traders who enter Panare country in spring to obtain sarrapia beans. Individual Indians occasionally visit Venezuelan settlements along the border of Panare country and, on rarer occasions, make a trip to the town of Caicara on the Orinoco. Trading expeditions are made to the southern Indian groups, particularly the Suapure Mapoye. Piaroa blowgun tubes are often obtained on these trips with the Mapoye acting as middlemen in the movement of goods. Recently, Piaroa blowguns, sent downriver from Puerto Ayachuco to Caicara, have found their way into Panare territory via white traders. (5)

Panare trading parties all go by foot, the members of the group following a series of jungle trails. The Northern Panare have no boats and none of the groups visited have horses.

The Panare have a reputation for aggressiveness, and unfriendly relations between the two Panare tribes seem to have been common in the past. The last outbreak of hostilities was 20-30 years ago when one Northern Panare village was sacked. The Upper Cuchivero Panare have reportedly been raided by Mapoye in recent times. The northern group is generally friendly toward non-Indians, but murders of individual traders by members of the Upper Cuchivero Panare have been reported.

Life cycle

Birth takes place away from the settlement but in the general camp area. The mother sits or kneels above a shallow depression while her husband receives the child and cuts the umbilical cord. He anoints the infant on both temples and on the crown of the head "to make the child strong." The father takes the baby to the hammock and curls up with it; the mother, meanwhile, bathes in a nearby stream.

Children are referred to as mančá (baby) until they reach the age of two or three years, at which time they are given an individual name. This name is retained until the child is about 10 years old. Then a puberty dance is performed and the child receives an adult name, often that of a dead relative. At the same time the boy or girl is given adult dress.

All grown-up members of the group are expected to contrubute to the general group economic activities. There is very little specialization among the Panare, the main division of labor being sex-based.

Men hunt and fish, weave basketry, make weapons, and conduct business with outsiders. Women cook, tend the camp area, make hammocks, prepare cotton and weave cloth. Women also carry household objects when the group is on the move. Both sexes help in house building and in agriculture. Actually, because of the rather unformalized nature of Panare life, both sexes contribute in work not specifically theirs. Thus, men often assist the women in weaving and hammock making and women, in turn, join fishing expeditions.

There are no full time specialists among the Panare (except perhaps the shaman) but some individuals are more skilled at certain crafts; for example basketry or weaving.

Older members of the group somewhat slacken their participation in the economic life. Old men often stay in the camp area working on baskets and helping the women in various tasks. Elderly women normally care for the children while the mothers work in the fields. Except for hunting, however, the economic round is not particularly arduous and the very oldest Panare can contribute a fair share to the activities.

At the death of an adult a ceremonial dance takes place. The deceased is buried in an extended position with clothing and personal belongings. For the death of a child there is no ceremony and burial takes place quietly. There is no name avoidance after death and the name of the dead person is often given to a younger relative.

Daily round

The Panare rise a little after daylight. Women stir up fires that have been burning all night and start the morning meal while men repair hunting equipment or make baskets. The meal, usually bananas or left-overs from the previous night, is eaten one or two hours after sunrise. The men then leave on hunting trips or start work on some home project and the women go to the fields. Women return in mid-afternoon and the men reach the settlement an hour or so before sundown. At that time the main meal is eaten, consisting of boiled rice, manioc, or maize, with fish or meat added. At darkness the fires are banked and the house group settles down to sleep. Children are taken into hammocks with parents or larger brothers or sisters. Normally the adults chat for a half hour or so before going off to sleep.

Political organization

The most important political unit among the Panare is the village or band. This is made up of the inhabitants of one or more communal houses. Each house is, in turn, made up of a number of families with one of the family heads acting as chief. The ranking house chief in a village operates as village leader. Actually, chiefs have very little authority. Panare life is strongly democratic and decisions

that concern the house group or village are made by all adults of both sexes.

The Panare have no clan or gens structure, though there are close informal kinship and friendship links between individuals and families that crosscut the house group organization.

Each band has hegemony over a more-or-less clearly defined area. The nucleus of this territory is the settlement with its surrounding fields. The villagers live in this vicinity for most of the year. At the beginning of the rains, however (generally in May), the Panare scatter in individual family units and stay in the hills to avoid insect pests. For a period of two or three months they live in small huts in the mountains, existing on game, fish, and stored foodstuffs. In September the groups return to the village to prepare for the fall harvest and live in the communal houses until the following spring.

The two tribes of Panare are separate in area and probably speak distinct dialects. The tribe, at least in the north, serves no political function and has no regular leader. There is a feeling of tribal unity, however, and a considerable number of trade and social contacts exist. (6)

Social organization

The primary unit in Panare life is the conjugal family. This includes the husband, one or more wives, and small children. The conjugal family has a separate, restricted hammock area in the large house. This group normally has a private cooking fire where the wife or wives prepare family meals. In the rainy season these families go as units to establish small settlements in the uplands.

Two or more biological families make up a house unit and these normally form an extended family. The village at Piñaguero, for example, is made up of a number of brothers and sisters, their husbands, wives, and children. Marriage is usually endogamous with respect to the house or village, though there are occasionally inter-band, or even inter-tribal marriages. Cross-cousin marriage is common and the ideal match is that between a man and his mother's brother's daughter. Sororal polygyny is preferred but is not mandatory. Parallel cousins cannot marry and address each other as "brother" and "sister." Aside from marital rules, however, there is no stricture on social intercourse between siblings nor is there in-law avoidance. Marriage can be either patrilocal or matrilocal but the latter is more common. Most marriages, of course, are between members of the same settlement area. Marriage is very flexible; either member can break off the relationship by simply moving away from the family area in the house or camp. In marital breakups children normally go with the mother, though a child of the father by a previous marriage is cared for by the father's sister. Actually, of course, such changes have very little effect on the child's habits or contacts.

Like other facets of the culture, the social system of the Panare is strikingly unformalized.

Ownership

Such things as clothing, weapons, tools, and toys are individually owned. Even a child must give consent before his personal property is disposed of. Agricultural land and the produce from it may be utilized by families or by a whole house group or village in cooperative effort. In any case, foods are freely shared so that the distinction between family and village crops is obscured. A village shares its surrounding hunting land in common but there is a feeling that members of other bands should not intrude on this territory without permission. Because of the smallness of the Panare population and the wide expanse of territory surrounding each village, this feeling is probably not of critical importance. Each family normally eats the game killed by its own members but excess meat is freely shared. Casual visitors are not offered food but outsiders who live with the group share meals with any of the family units.

Religion

The data on religion are quite scattered and incomplete. The Panare believe in a supernatural jaguar. There are woods spirits that roam the jungle at night and villagers, especially children, seldom venture beyond the house or camp after dark. The Northern Panare believe that members of other groups, particularly the Upper Cuchivero Indians, are witches who are "very dangerous and can kill from a long way off." Panare specialists, with functions somewhat analagous to the North American shaman, exercise spirit control and effect magical cures.

Panare myths tell of supernatural individuals or of the cunning attributes of animals.

ENDNOTES

(1) Almost all the following data are drawn from this group.

(2) Panare informants could not remember any other material used in pointing weapons.

(3) The idea for this may have come from observation of Venezuelan ox-carts.

(4) Perhaps from Negro or European sources.

(5) For a more complete discussion of Panare trading see: Carroll L. Riley, Trade Spanish of the Piñaguero Pañáro (Studies in Linguistics, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1952, pp. 6-11).

(6) The Panare word for "family" (piaká) is used also to mean the house-group, the village, and the tribe.