



THE SHIPIBO-KONIBO OF THE PERUVIAN AMAZON



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Linguistic family: Pano
Language: Shipibo – Konibo

INTRODUCTION

The Shipibo-Konibo people is an ethnic group of the Peruvian Amazon distributed on the banks of the Ucayali River, located 1,000 km north-east of Peru's capital Lima. The Ucayali is one of the principal rivers of the Amazon, originating in the Andes mountain ridge and joining the Amazon in the north of Peru. The Shipibos live in 122 native communities in traditional multiple-family groups. In the past, the Shipibo, Konibo, and Xetebo were considered separate communities. Today, the Shipibo-Konibo are mixed in one group through years of peaceful coexistence. Their culture and language are related with the Pano people.



1. Organization

Organizational Structure

The Shipibos were formerly organized in five patrilineal clans. Today, they are organized according to a model of extended family relationships. The group of incest in this system extends to all the descendants of an individual to the seventh generation. The rule of post-marital residence is called “matrilocal”.

1.1. Social organization

The Shipibo - Konibo live on the margins of the Ucayali River and its affluents Pisqui, Calleria, and Aguaytia and on the shores of the Lakes Tamaya and Yarina. The total indigenous population reaches some 85,000 people divided in 228 native communities. The Shipibo - Konibo, are one of the native communities with most settlers in the Ucayali region.

1.2. Territorial Extension

The Shipibo-Konibo people reside in the rural Amazonian regions of Ucayali, Loreto and Madre de Dios. The capital of origin of the Shipibos is in the area currently occupied by the city of Pucallpa. A certain part of the population Shipibo, resides in urban areas of the main cities of the regions of Peru, for instance the community of Cantagallo (Lima).

In the low jungle of the Ucayali of Peru, there are more than 12 different ethnic groups, the Shipibo-Konibo people is one of them. Distributed along the banks of the Ucayali River, there are more than 228 native communities. The main authorities in each community are: The Head of the Community, the Municipal Agent, who watches over the cleanliness of the Community, and the Lieutenant Governor, who ensures order and security. The Shipibo-Konibos struggle for self-determination, including their political, economic and territorial security.

1.3. Economic Organization

1.3.1. Sectors of economic activity

The main economic activity of the Shipibo-Konibo people is agriculture: They plant bananas in the months of June, July, August, September; corn in September; rice in June and July; pineapple in June, July, August and September, as well as peanuts, sugarcane and coffee. In order to have a good harvest, there are certain rituals, such as planting when there is a full moon, refrain from sexual intercourse for fifteen days because otherwise the seedlings would dry out and would not produce anything. In addition, a woman who is pregnant or menstruating cannot do planting. Most of the work in agriculture is for family consumption.

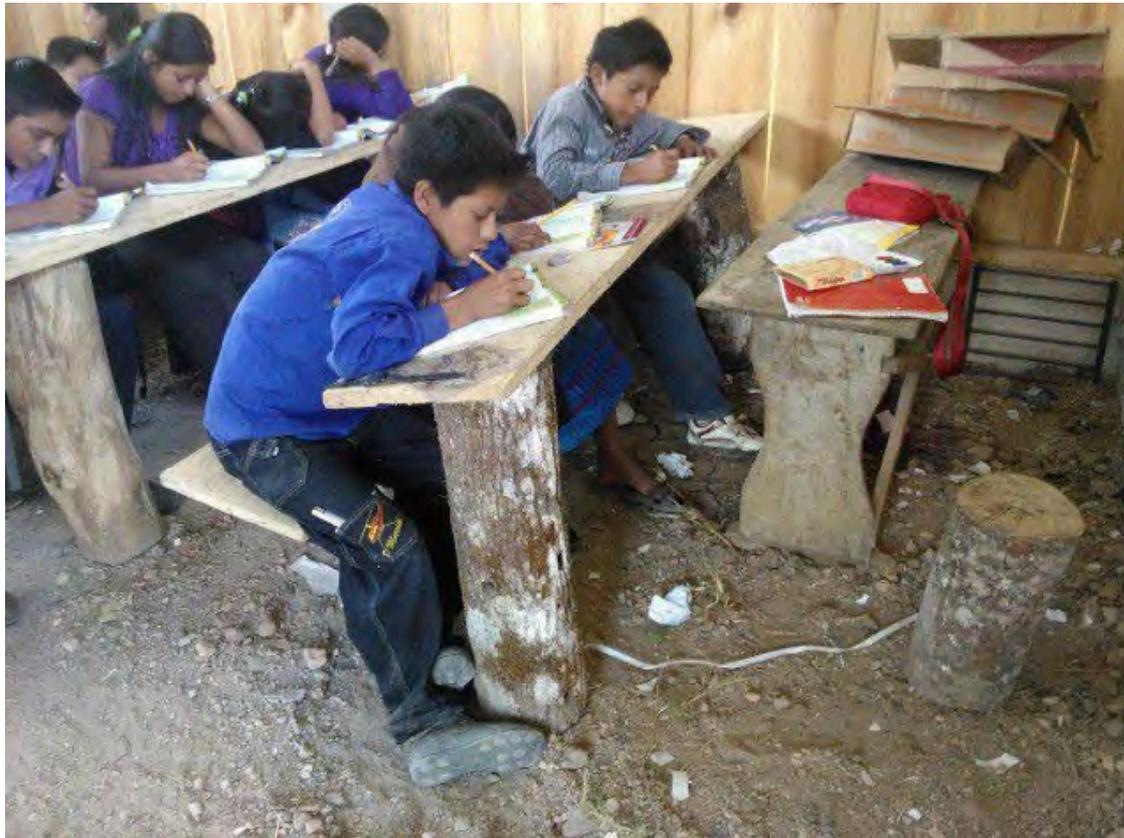
Others are dedicated to hunting of Amazonian fish, while the hunting of wild animals has declined and now product quality is improving. Farmers are also planting camu-camu fruit selling them for their nutritional and medicinal properties. However this achievement, yet our natural resources continue to decline due to the depredation of the forest. In addition, when planting near the banks of the river, the crops are lost because the river advances with the rains that produces the soil erosion and takes all the crops.

The Shipibo' Konibo, are organized in native communities with the objective of rescuing their local ecological knowledge about the management of natural resources in ecosystems that are flooded, fertility and soil type, flood, species tolerant to the flood, annual crops, pests, the tomb and burning, fishing and hunting. On the other hand, are the textile handicraft production and the Shipibo - Konibo people is one of the most famous of the Peruvian Amazon.

1.4. Educational and Cultural Organization

1.4.1. Language

With 90 thousand speakers, the Shipibo-Konibo language is the most spoken of the Pano language family. The Shipibo-Konibo do not have a name specific to their language and they usually call it "Non Joi" or "Our Language", as opposed to "Nanwan Joi" or "language of foreigners" that applies to both the Spanish as to other indigenous idioms, especially outside the Pano language family.



1.4.2. Literacy

This population records a 27% illiteracy rate among persons aged 5 and over. The levels of schooling indicate that 16% of this population has no level of instruction, while for 57% primary education represents the highest level reached. 17% have gone through secondary education, being one of the highest percentages among the indigenous peoples of Peruvian Amazonia. Higher education is an option accessed by only 3% of the population.

1.4.4. Natural resources

Management of natural resources is based around the periods of flooding and flooded soils. The agricultural knowledge of the Shipibo-Konibo ethnicity is not very ancient; therefore, it presents a medium knowledge of soil types. The traditional knowledge conflicts between farmers, Shipibo and mestizos. The Shipibo-Konibos on the other hand, have deep knowledge about medicinal plants. Their main activities are the hunting and fishing as their main source of food, essential in their daily lives, although in recent years they are acquiring more agriculture skills.

1.4.5. Religiosity

The community accepted the arrival of the Franciscan Father Felipe Lake in 1914 and his later work of evangelization in the area without major inconveniences. Many accepted and established the Christian norms as their way of life. Problems only arise when it comes to deeper aspects in their customs and forms of conceiving its world. The Catholic Church was quite tolerant with many practices, even accepting the work of healers experimenting with plants and performing the *Ayahuasqueras* sessions. The greatest problem arose with the arrival of the protestant church, which was quite radical with many Shipibo customs. This was around 1978, when the first Adventist Church was established, which regards traditional healers as witches or demons. Until today they suffer discrimination because of their work. Many quit consuming *Ayahuasca* and participating in the meetings.



1.4.8. Interculturality

Intercultural education and bilingual education is a constitutional norm. However, some teachers still applying methods of physical punishment to bilingual pupils when they speak Shipibo-Konibo.

Type of products

- Medicinal Plants (monthly usage)
- Native fruit (Use monthly and yearly)
- Handicrafts looms and ceramics (monthly usage)

Raw materials

- Natural colorants (plants of dyes for fabrics)
- Earth "Loam" red, white and black (For manufacturing of ceramics)