

EKKELAND GOETZE - AMAZONAS - THE STORIES

As I've already said, I believe that there are many gods and spirits. They watch over and stay here, in the place I have just told you about, this uninhabited place where there are no human souls to be seen. That is where the things happen which one calls Saruã. And when Saruã happens, then some sort of an animal appears.

That is why one should never enter the forest on a full stomach. Never eat anything warm beforehand, no warm coffee, no warm porridge, nothing. One must always enter on an empty stomach, so that the snakes don't get angry and won't bite you, so that no poisonous insects will attack you. One should only eat when one comes back from work.

I know that in the kitchen of the greatest stores in the forest, which is where the food is cooked or even overcooked for everyone, a spirit advances which does evil things and turns itself into all things imaginable. That is a natural phenomenon, it can turn into an evil animal, into thunder, bad weather, a storm, it can even turn into a bicho-d'água. I have, as I said before, had this experience, it has happened to me before.

That is why I say that we have many spirits, many gods in this universe. For example, the god of the earth, the god of the water, the god of the birds. Above all, I believe that there must be a real God, which rules over all and everything.

I know the following about the god of the forest: I have a brother with whom I used to work before. We collected Cipó, Surva, rubber, all manner of products of the forest. I was never able to harvest more than my brother. Why? I didn't know why. For example, one day it was raining, he didn't go to cut Piaçava, plant fibres. I didn't either, but I prepared myself for the next day. On the next day, I went cutting and I managed to get around ninety kilograms of Piaçava, two bales, so ninety kilograms. When I cut ninety kilograms, he cuts one hundred, one hundred and twenty kilograms, so two bales each weighing sixty kilograms. Later I decided to no longer measure myself against him, because I could never win against him when we were working. He was always the best, had more luck.

Later he came to me and told me the following: when he goes into the forest he always takes a half litre bottle of Cachaça with him. He makes a goblet out of an Açai leaf, a kind of little bucket which is called Caparas. As he is walking he always shakes a small amount of Schnapps on the earth right up until the end of the path, so that only a little Schnapps is left over. He does this for the mother of the forest, so that she will help him to find the right plants. And also to help him with the processing.

So I believe that this is the real truth. My brother was the kind of person who worked the most of the time and had the greatest success. More than all of us, and we were seven brothers. No one was able to explain why he was able to get more than us.

Later, after we had stopped worked and were no longer cutting, no longer working in the forest, he came and told me the procedure of how to be better than all the rest. And he does this with all kinds of work, also when collecting rubber. He goes in the forest and shakes the Schnapps at various points. And the god of the forest helps him. When collecting rubber he could always get three, four barrels, I was only able to get one, two at the most.

One time, we went to the Piaçava field. I was looking for my way and he found his. I believe he had Schnapps with him. Suddenly it started to thunder like a firework about our heads. I was startled and asked: what the hell is going on? He said: that is the mother of the forest. I believe she is drunk, because I brought her an entire bottle of Schnapps. And interestingly enough, the next day there wasn't a single drop of Schnapps left to be seen, everything was gone.

Told by Borge de Oliviera Franca in his house in São Gabriel de Cachoeira at Rio Negro, on 11th October 2000.

