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### A Tiriyo Death (Surinam)

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IM THURN has described burial practices in the Guianas (1883: 225) and RIVIÈRE (1969: 17) and LEWIS (1975) have described Tiriyo (Trio) attitudes toward severe illness and impending death. In 1964 we were able to make detailed notes about a death and burial at a Tiriyo village on the Tapanahony river at the confluence with the Paloemeu, Surinam.

Tiriyo custom at this time was to bury the dead in the floor of the house, and the house (and the village) was then abandoned. This village, for a variety of reasons, needed to remain where it was for the time being. The people had recently come to the Paloemeu in their first sustained White contact, and had increasing dependence on a nearby dirt airstrip for trade, medical assistance, and for continuance of an enthusiastic relationship with a charismatic missionary. To forestall moves, therefore, a separate village had been established across the river to accommodate burials. The houses were of the same general construction, pole uprights and thatch roofs, but were without hearths or furnishings, and without inhabitants. This burial village was used for the burial of a young Tiriyo man, Opiri.

Opiri was about 14 years of age, and already a hunter and provider. I had known him the previous year when he had fished for me. In August 1964, when I next saw him, he was moribund, with fever and emaciation. He walked only with the aid of two female relatives. He had an enormously distended liver and spleen, and was intermittently stuporous and comatose. He was cared for by his family but was "considered to be dead." The women of his family (but not the parents) asked that he be treated but expressed little active concern about him since he had been ill for a long time and was not likely to recover. I thought he was dying and said so, but started him on an antibiotic and anti-malarial medication, to which there was little response over the next two days. In the night after the second day, the family summoned me, with my son, to the house and we sat with him, about twelve people in all, until he expired. The body was immediately wrapped in his hammock and hammock-cover and placed in a canoe with his eating utensils, weapons, clothing, and adornments.