

# Two Tribes with a Different Philosophical Point of View



By Laima Jonusiene, MD, for Medical Expose' 3-15-2014

**Here are two stories of people who live much differently than we do. One African tribe who uses song to guide through life, and another Malaysian tribe who uses dreams as advice and guidance through life. Both of these tribes have very minimal crime and little deception. Researchers have said that these tribes have incredible psychological stability. The people are much more mentally secure and not prone to despair, depression, and other mental illness.**

**Our culture should learn that technological advance is not the end all of a culture. And cultures who value more than money should be looked at and learned from. There truly are more things than contained in our philosophy**

**An African Tribe where the birth date of a child is not counted from the day the child is born, but from when the mother creates the song for the child**



The Himba Tribe uses Song to Define a Life

There is an African tribe where the birth date of a child is NOT counted from when they were born, nor from when the child is conceived but from the day that the child was a thought in its mother's mind. This is the Himba Tribe northern parts of Namibia on the banks of the Kunene River.

And when a woman chooses that she will have a child, she goes off and sits under a tree, by herself, and she listens until she can hear the song of the child that wants to come into this world. And after she's heard the song of this child, she comes back to the man who will be the child's father, and teaches it to him. And then, when they make love to physically conceive the child, some of that time they sing the song of the child, as a way to invite it.

And then, when the mother is pregnant, the mother teaches that child's song to the midwives and the old women of the village, so that when the child is born, the old women and the people around her sing the child's song to welcome it. And then, as the child grows up, the other villagers are taught the child's song. If the child falls, or hurts its knee, someone picks it up and sings its song to it. Or perhaps the child does something wonderful, or goes through the rites of puberty, then as a way of honoring this person, the people of the village sing his or her song.

In the African tribe there are other occasions upon which the villagers sing to the child. If at any time during his or her life, the person commits a crime or aberrant social act, the individual is called to the center of the village and the people in the community form a circle around them. Then they sing their song to them.

The tribe recognizes that the correction for antisocial behavior is not punishment; it is love and the remembrance of identity. When you recognize your own song, you have no desire or need to do anything that would hurt another.

And it goes this way through their life. In marriage, the songs are sung, together. And finally, when this child grows up and is lying in bed, ready to die, all the villagers know his or her song, and they sing—for the last time—the song to that person.

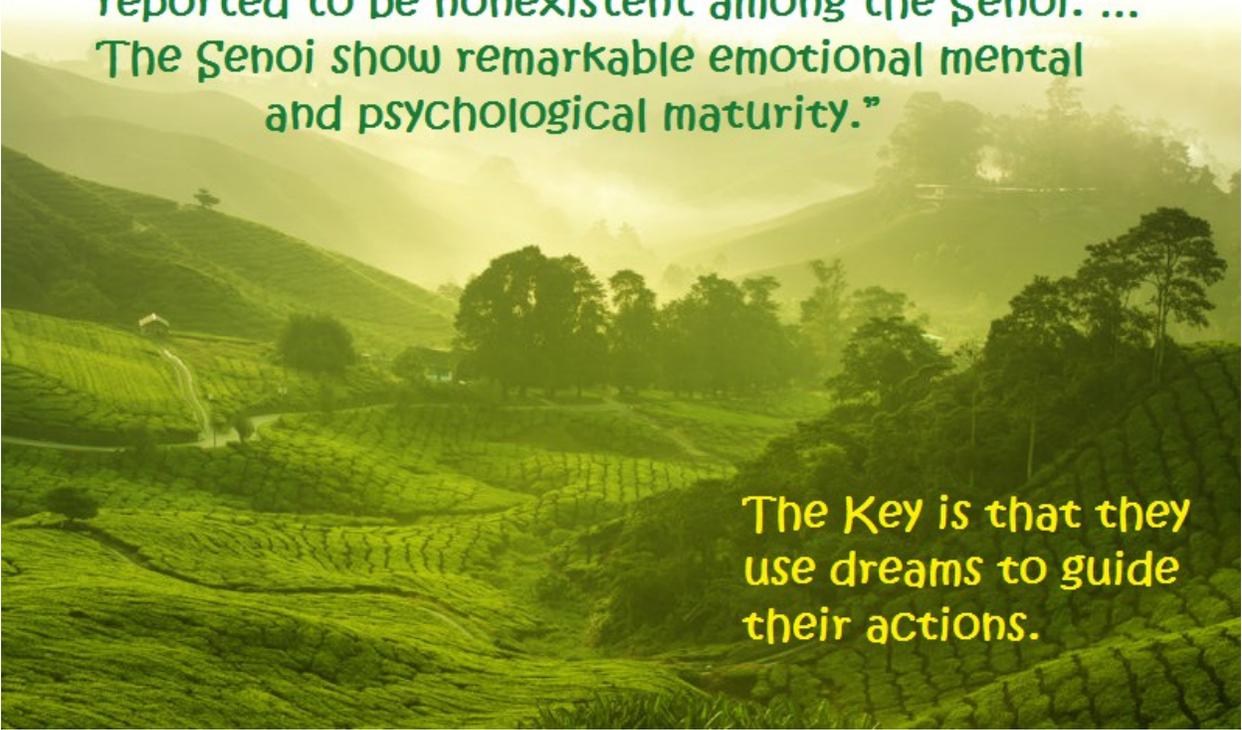
You may not have grown up in an African tribe that sings your song to you at crucial life transitions, but life is always reminding you when you are in tune with yourself and when you are not. When you feel good, what you are doing matches your song, and when you feel awful, it doesn't. In the end, we shall all recognize our song and sing it well. You may feel a little warbly at the moment, but so have all the great singers. Just keep singing and you'll find your way home.

## The Senoi - Dream Tribe

Among the Senoi, a primitive tribe in the mountainous jungles of Malaysia, dream sharing is the hinge around which the rest of life revolves. According to scientists, each day begins with the members of the family, including children, sharing their dreams from the night before. Family members are asked about how they behaved in their dreams, and suggestions are given for correcting behavior and attitude in future dreams. Then the group suggests actions based on the events in the dreams.

Once the family dream-sharing is over, the village council meets and the serious dream business begins. With each dream that's reported and chatted about, the tribe's picture of itself becomes richer. Symbols are analyzed, and each council member gives his opinion. People in the tribe who agree on the meaning of a particular dream adopt it as a group project.

"The Senoi people determine most activities of daily life from the interpretations and decisions that arise out of their council discussions," writes Patricia Garfield in *Creative Dreaming*. The dream actions of the Senoi are carried out, in positive form, in waking life. If, for instance, one person dreams that he's hostile toward another member of the tribe, then in his waking life he goes out of his way to be amicable.



**"Neurosis and psychosis as we know them are reported to be nonexistent among the Senoi. ... The Senoi show remarkable emotional mental and psychological maturity."**

**The Key is that they use dreams to guide their actions.**

## **Joy's Use of the Senoi Dream Practice**

In his symposium workshops, William Brugh Joy, author of *Joy's Way*, encourages dream sharing. But since this practice isn't typical in Western culture, it can be a disturbing experience for some people. Judith Orloff, who attended one of Brugh Joy's conferences and writes about it in *Second Sight*, initially felt intimidated. Out of a bunch of strangers, Brugh Joy chose her to be the first person in the group to share a dream from the previous night.

The Senoi don't criticize or condemn dream actions. Instead, they suggest alternative behaviors. Any negative aspect is to be transformed. Fear is transmuted into courage. Danger is avoided, pleasure is harnessed, and a positive outcome is achieved.

Orloff couldn't recall any dreams from the night before, so she told a recent dream that had bewildered her. Brugh Joy proceeded to interpret the dream, and by the end, Orloff felt as if she'd been stripped naked. She was mortified. By the next morning, she was so angry she considered leaving the conference. She soon realized, though, that her anger meant Brugh Joy had touched a nerve and she had to take a closer look at everything he'd said. Her experience is cautionary. It's far more comfortable to share dreams with people you know and trust. On the other hand, a knowledgeable outsider such as Brugh Joy may offer a concise interpretation that you, or someone close to you, might not suggest.

## Senoi Study

The British anthropologist H. D. "Pat" Noone first collected information about the Senoi culture for his doctoral thesis at Cambridge in 1939. Noone's brother Richard and Dennis Holman wrote *In Search of the Dream People*, which was published in 1972. In the years since, certain researchers have claimed that the Senoi culture described by Noone never existed as depicted. The issue is still being debated. But as Jill Morris notes in *The Dream Workbook*, "There is no dispute over the effectiveness of the techniques themselves."

