

Cannibalism, or **anthropophagy** (person-eating), has long been a feature of human societies in different forms. While **endo-cannibalism**, or consuming the remains of community members, has diverse symbolic uses, **exo-cannibalism**, or eating the flesh of those outside one's own society, is a common feature of war rituals. There are many forms of symbolic cannibalism that occur during political conflict.

Ingestion of part of an enemy's body is thought to transfer power, courage, and protection to the victor. Soldiers of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda under leader Joseph Kony in the Second Congo War (also known as the Great African War, from 1998 to 2003 and beyond) reportedly ate the flesh of captives or ordered others to do so (Associated Press 2016). Forced cannibalism was used as a tactic of terror against captive villagers, who were ordered to kill, cook, and eat other villagers. Child soldiers were also forcibly initiated by killing and ingesting the flesh of captives.

Among the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán, evidence shows that human sacrifice and cannibalism

served the important purpose of feeding the gods. Thousands of captives would be sacrificed upon the dedication of a new temple. For instance, on the occasion of the dedication of the main pyramid in Tenochtitlán in 1487, one estimate of sacrifices ranges from 20,000 to 80,000 victims (Burhenn 2004).

Tasting the flesh of enemies had an aspect of closure in some societies, making it an essential part of the process of killing. Among members of the Carib society, who lived in today's Venezuela, Guyana, and adjacent Caribbean islands when the Spanish arrived in the New World, cannibalism was practiced to end a raid. Warriors would become possessed by the ferocious Tiger Spirit, called *Kaikusi-Yumu*. The Tiger Spirit bound the assassins to murder, and was only satiated when the warrior chewed a part of the dead enemy's flesh and tasted their blood. Failure to do so would exile a warrior from his village, condemning him to wander without ever being released by the spirit-demon inside. Possessing fierceness and aggression was the way to be a valued member of Carib society. The term cannibal may originate from the Carib word for person, *Caribna*.