



Language and Culture Archives

Bartholomew Collection of Unpublished Materials

SIL International - Mexico Branch

© SIL International

NOTICE

This document is part of the archive of **unpublished** language data created by members of the Mexico Branch of SIL International. While it does not meet SIL standards for publication, it is shared “as is” under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) to make the content available to the language community and to researchers.



SIL International claims copyright to the analysis and presentation of the data contained in this document, but not to the authorship of the original vernacular language content.

AVISO

*Este documento forma parte del archivo de datos lingüísticos **inéditos** creados por miembros de la filial de SIL International en México. Aunque no cumple con las normas de publicación de SIL, se presenta aquí tal cual de acuerdo con la licencia "Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-CompartirIgual" (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) para que esté accesible a la comunidad y a los investigadores.*

Los derechos reservados por SIL International abarcan el análisis y la presentación de los datos incluidos en este documento, pero no abarcan los derechos de autor del contenido original en la lengua indígena.

A TARASCAN MINIATURE WEDDING

Elisabeth Lathrop

Summer Institute of Linguistics

Tarascan recreation is largely borrowed from other cultures. Sports such as basket ball, marbles, kite flying and other games are the same as in other communities. Religious and semi-religious festivities as well as political holidays are also largely borrowed, although with some admixture of Tarascan folk-ways. baptisms and weddings are much more typically Tarascan than other festivities.

Among the more wealthy Indians of the Sierra (in the town of Cheran Michoacan) there is a chanakua (play) which seems to be entirely of Indian origin, although it contains borrowed elements from the relationships of the people with the church. This recreation consists in a miniature wedding.

In this fiesta there is no serious intent. It is observed entirely for recreational enjoyment.

The family which wishes to hold the fiesta makes plans well in advance. Every feature of an adult wedding is followed with the utmost fidelity. The mother of the child who is to impersonate the bride goes with friends to ask the hand of the bridegroom or vice-versa. The children are usually between the ages of three and ten.

Clothes are prepared for the children, and they exchange gifts of clothing which are worn at the "wedding". These gifts may include hats, rebozos, shirts, blouses, woven belts, beads for the bride and other such articles.

Since Tarascan children are always dressed as exact replicas of adults, the effect of the miniature wedding is very true to life. The children enter into the spirit of the thing and ape their elders to perfection. There is little childish laughter or play.

As in all Tarascan weddings in Cheran, the godmothers of the bride and groom are the most important persons. Guests invited to the wedding bring many colored ribbons which they tie in the hair of the godmothers until their hair is covered with varicolored bows. Each guest also brings a plate covered with an embroidered

napkin, under which is placed a coin, usually ten centavos. This plate is presented to the godmother who is the special kin or friend of the guest bringing the gift. She extracts the piece of money, and gives back the plate and napkin. The godmother is expected to kneel and kiss the hand ~~of~~ the giver.

When the guests have gathered, there is the cry or "Come, follow." The bride between the two godmothers leads the procession of children and women to the house of her godmother, where miniature refreshments are served, a hot drink and sweet bread in various shapes. Later in the day, usually past noon, more refreshments are served at the house of the bride or the groom or the godmother, consisting of "chulipu", meat soup containing some vegetables, also "kulundas", which is "masa" steamed in corn leaves. The helpings are in keeping with the size of the bride and groom. The plates are small and the "kulundas" are in miniature.

Guests come and go throughout the day to the houses of the various participants in the wedding. During the afternoon some of the older girls who are to be "comadres" go into a house and close the door. They go through a ceremony of kneeling and putting their faces together on one side and then on the other, repeating the words, "Now we are comadres, and we will meet each other in heaven."

Following this a miniature glass is offered for tasting among the guests. This is a replica of the wine that is passed at adult weddings. If possible there is music and dancing among the children in exactly the same manner as among adults at a true wedding. The godmothers apparently choose the dancers. The dancing is entirely the traditional Tarascan dancing and in no way comparable to the social dancing among Mexicans.

Toward the end of the fiesta, trays are presented containing miniature garments. These articles of clothing are distributed among the honored guests.

Men are not usually present at these miniature weddings, but the women apparently enjoy and manage the affairs, spending considerable money and time in preparation and carrying out of the plans.

Such miniature weddings are not known throughout the whole Tarascan region, many towns being so poor that a fiesta without absolute necessity would be un-

Tarascan Miniature Wedding

-3

thought of. The Cheran Indians, however, have a great deal of land in their own right, and by comparison with other towns are considered more wealthy.