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CHATINO - GRAM - LING

THE CHATINO INDIANS

1952

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The Chatino indians live in the southwestern part of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. In 1930 there were 11,739 Chatinos [1] living in the Juquila district of Oaxaca. Of this number, 8,586 were monolingual in 1940 [2]. An unofficial estimate made in 1952 places the population at about 20,000.

Nearly all of the district where the Chatinos live is mountainous. The soil is shallow. Although there is an abundance of limestone, there doesn't appear to be any precious metals in this region. The district extends from the Pacific coast towards the interior some 40 miles. The altitude ranges from sea level to approximately 8,500 feet. Nopala, one of the larger towns in the district, is at an altitude of 1200 feet above sea level. Juquila, t e political center of the district is 4500 feet above sea level. Yaitepec, located some 2500 feet above Juquila, is one of the higher towns in the district.

The Chatino region (Juquila district) is almost isolated from the rest of the state. The nearest road-head is at Sola de Vega and the second nearest is at

Miahuatlan. These two towns are respectively three and four day trips with loaded animals. Nopala and Rio Grande, one of the smaller villages, have air strips and tututepec, close to the western border of the district has commercial air service. It is obvious that horseback and foot travel are the widely used means of transportation in this district. The actual distance from Juquila to Sola de Vega is approximately 90 kilometers. The mountainous terrain (the trail rises to a height of 8500 feet above sea level twice and dips to 1000 feet between the two summits) accounts for the time necessary for the relatively short journey between the two towns.

Intervillage trade is limited by the terrain. The Indians of Yolotepec have lime and plam leaf mats and some of the Indians in the "hot country" have fruit to trade, but in the district as a whole, there is not enough intervillage trade to allow the Indians to depend on it for a livelihood. Some of the Indians, however, who have animals, go to Sola de Vega to bring out cargo, especially flour and salt.

There are numerous streams and rivers in this region. The Rio Verde, which borders the district on the north and west, is the largest river in this part

of Oaxaca. This river, which the trail crosses at Juchotongo on the northeast side of the district, restricts travel during the rainy season.

Drinking water for the people of this district mainly comes from natural springs. There are numerous springs in each village and all springs are community property (that is, they can not be fenced off for exclusive use of any one person or family). Some of these springs are so large that they never dry up while others, furnishing plenty of water during the rainy season and early part of the dry season, dry up in the latter part of the dry season. There are a few wells dug in some of the villages, but this is still a rare practice.

This district has a moderate climate due to its altitude. The coastal part of the district is hot but in the larger part of the region, the mornings and evenings are pleasantly cool and the heat of midday is not unbearable. The mean temperature is approximately 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit. There are two seasons of the year -- rainy and dry. The rainy season extends from the middle of May until the middle of October with rain falling nearly every day. The dry season finds the sky practically cloudless. Any rainfall

during this time is an occasion for e citement. Wind here comes from the south and/or southwest. This wind, coming off the Pacific Ocean, is usually quite warm. Occasionally, however, the wind switches around and comes from the north or northwest, at which times it is cool.

The district, scattered as it is in a titude, ranges from a tropical growth in the lower altitude to a coniferous forest near the summits of the mountains. There are many deciduous trees in the middle altitudes and this region could probably be c assed as being a deciduous forest region with fringes of tro i-cal growth and coniferous forest.

As is true in nearly all of Me ico, corn is the basic cro of the people here. There are a few of the more progressive Indians who cultivate a few other foods. Among these foods are tomatoes, onions, squash, beans, a few greens (lettuce, cabbage, turnips) and sugar cane. The tomatoes, onions, greens and sugar cane are grown only in irrigated plots. (There is so little irrigation as to be negligible except as an indication that perhaps ultimately there will be better crops). The irrigation is confined to places near a stream of water or a large spring. Al of this irrigation is by gravity flow. There is much coffee

grown in this district. In the "hot country" the tropical or semi-tropical fruits -- bananas, lemons, limes, oranges, pineapple, papaya, avocado -- are found. Among the non-cultivated plants used are the mushroom (of which they apparently eat about six classes) and the fruits anona (custard apple), granada (a type of pomegranate), and the guayaba (fruit of the guava tree). None of these non-cultivated foods are considered staple food, but are considered luxuries to be had when possible in addition to the regular meals.

Cornfields here are cleared by the simple process of cutting the trees and underbrush, letting it dry, and then burning it off. Of course there are many trees that are not used and are burned to get rid of them. The tragedy lies in the fact that each year the Indians move on to a new place. These fields are planted in what may be called the "stick and toe" method. On a short pole (4 to 6 feet in length) called a dibble stick is placed a piece of steel about 4" wide and some 8 or 9 inches in length. This piece of steel is cut about 3 or 4 inches from one end and this piece is doubled around the pole to secure the steel to the stick. This leaves a blade about 4 inches wide and 5 inches long. One edge of this blade is sharpened to aid in cutting roots. With the stick so

prepared, the Indian makes holes in the ground some 3 or 4 inches deep and about a meter apart. Into each hole are placed 4 or 5 kernels of corn. One hole thus filled is covered with the toe of the foot while the next hole is being made with the stick. The field is then, after this planting (middle of May) is left untended until about the middle of July when the bigger weeds and underbrush are cut. After this midseason cleaning, the corn is left until time to harvest, (October and November), with the owner of the field paying occasional visits to make sure no animals have broken into the field. Rabbits cause the most damage to the corn when it is just sprouting. After a bout with the rabbits, the corn is fairly safe until the ears of corn are approaching maturity. Then there is a likelihood that the field will be visited by dogs, foxes and small animals which are called tejones (raccoons) but which are believed by the author to be a smaller member of the raccoon family, the cacomistle. These animals are smaller than raccoons, rarely attaining a height of 8 inches at the front shoulder, and are not as brightly marked as raccoons. All three of the above mentioned animals will eat a large quantity of corn if not detected early and steps taken to eliminate them. Some are shot and thus stopped, but the

large majority of them are handled with poison. The poison is put in a banana and left in the field where signs show the animals to be eating. This type of protection has proven the most effective in this district. Some of the Indians make scarerabbits (or crows) early in the year, but their value is questionable. Most do not even bother with them.

Due to its isolation, much of this district is still covered by virgin timber. In this region can be found armadillos, foxes, squirrels, racecoons (tejones), deer, rattlesnakes, a snake that looks like a coral but does not seem to be deadly, a cat that is marked like a leopard but is called a tiger, doves, pigeons, hawks, owls, buzzards, and a large group of smaller birds.

The domestic animals of the Chatino are the ox, mule, horse, burro, turkey, chicken, dog and cat. Around the houses of the Chatino are often found other animals which have been trained to some extent. Among these are parrots, racecons, small deer, and rabbits. There is evidently no attempt to breed animals. If an animal turns out to be a good one, the owner is fortunate. The oxen are the only animals used in the fields although their main purpose is to drag heavy

loads. Carts are not used because of the terrain. The trails are not wide enough nor smooth enough to accommodate a wheeled vehicle. One of the principle jobs of the oxen is dragging in the beams and large logs for houses. The mules, horses, and burros are used mainly for carrying cargo. The loads, 60 - 80 kilos for the burros and up to 120 kilos for the mules and horses, are packed in equal parts on each side of the animal. When a riding animal is needed, the mule is the most frequent choice, although many people do ride horses.

Chatino is a member of the Zapotecan language family. In the Juquila district there are some fifteen towns and villages. Eleven of these are monolingual while both Spanish and Chatino are used in the remaining four. In the census of 1940, 3,500 of the Chatinos are listed as bilingual although this bilingualism is confined for the most part to trading terms.

Although the Chatinos do not write (with the exception of a very few), they can communicate with one another at a distance. This distance is limited to the distance a whistle can be heard. There is a system of whistles, each with its own meaning. The boys and women folk understand the whistles but do

not use them. There does not appear to be any limitation on the possibilities. However so far only some six or eight messages have been heard. A further investigation of these "whistle-talk" messages may reveal some concrete system as was found by Cowan[3] in Mazateco.

Chatino phonemes[4] include sixteen consonant phonemes -- p, b, t, d, k, g, ʔ, s, š, m, n, w, y, l, r and h and nine vowel phonemes -- i, į, e, ę, a, o, ǫ, u, ų. There are four phonemic tones marked high ´, midhigh ¯, midlow unmarked, and low `. Chatino exhibits both prefixation and suffixation. No plurals have been found in Chatino and gender is nonexistent as such. Syntactically, the sentences are formed with pronoun-like words first, followed by verb-like word, one or more noun-like words, and/or particle. These are the word classes in Chatino. In formula the syntax of Chatino is as follows: ± Pn + V ± N ± Na ± P. (± indicates that the form following may or may not occur; + indicates that the form following will occur. Pn is the symbol used to represent pronoun-like words, V, verb-like word, N, noun-like word, Na, noun-like words used as attributives and P, particles).

The Chatino numbers one to ten are separate words.

Eleven through fifteen are combinations of ten one, ten two, ten three, ten four and ten five. Sixteen is ten five one, seventeen is ten five two and so on through nineteen. Twenty is a separate number. This then is the pattern of the numbers up to one hundred: 20 has one, 20 has two, etc. Thirty is 20 10; 31 is 30 10 has one, etc. Although 35 is 20 15, 36 is again 20 10 has 6. Forty is usually used as a separate number though the Indians recognize it as two 20's. (It is so counted in another of the villages). Sixty then is three 20's; 80 is four 20's and 100 is a combination of Chatino and Spanish; one is Chatino and hundred is borrowed from Spanish. A sample of these numbers is as follows:

1	ska	13	tišnǭ
2	tukwā	14	tiykwa
3	snǫ	15	ti²yų
4	hakwa	16	ti²yųškā
5	ka²yū	17	ti²yųtšukwā
6	skwa	18	ti²yųšnǭ
7	katí	19	ti²yųykwá
8	snų²	20	kalà
9	kā	21	kalà nduwa ská
10	tí	22	kalà nduwa tukwā
11	tíška	25	kalà nga²yǭ
12	títšukwa	26	kalà ngà²yǫ nduwa skā

30 kalàtyĩ

35 kalà ndĩ²yǫ́

36 kalàtyĩ nduwa skwa

40 tũ²wá

45 tũ²wá nga²yǫ́

50 tũ²wátyĩ

55 tũ²wá ndĩ²yǫ́

56 tũ²wátyĩ nduwa skwa

60 snǫ́yla

65 snǫ́yla tsu²wĩ kã²yú

70 snǫ́yla tsu²wĩ tí

75 snǫ́yla tsu²wĩ ndĩ²yǫ́

76 snǫ́yla tsu²wĩ ndĩ²yǫ́ãká

80 hakwayla

85 hakwayla tsu²wĩ kã²yú

90 hakwayla tsu²wĩ tí

91 hakwayla tsu²wĩ tiãka

95 hakwayla tsu²wĩ ndĩ²yǫ́

96 hakwayla tsu²wĩ ndĩ²yǫ́ãká

100 ska sientù

Although they use the national currency of Mexico, the Chatino use their own language for counting it. They use a system which parallels the spanish "real". This unit is a nyi 12 and 1/2 centavos. Tukwanyi two reales then would be twenty five centavos and

either sapa̰u hakwanyi one peso four reales or more commonly tita̰ukwanyi twelve reales would express the Spanish uno cincuenta one peso fifty centavos.

In Chatino villages the officials are elected every four years. These officials are the president, secretary, three alcaldes, and a council of four. To these men as well as to all "viejos", the older men and women, is shown respect in the salutation used. This greeting diya̰ yo̰ʔ the hand is said by some of the older men to be a remnant of the greeting nda ya̰ yo̰ʔ kàʔatnyo̰ʔ nyo̰ I give my hands to help you.

Generally the Chatinos are a small people. An ave age man is about five feet six inches in height and weighs about 140-160 pounds. The women are usually some three inches shorter than the men and twenty pounds lighter. They all appear to be small-boned people-- their legs and arms are very small.

The hair of the Chatinos is black and in the aged turns grey or white. The arms, legs, and body are nearly hairless. The average man shaves three or four times a year. Some of the men wore moustaches. The hair of both the men and women is usually straight and only occasionally will a family be found with curly hair. Men wear their hair cut so that hair grow-

ing on the crown of the head reaches the nape of the neck or the forehead. Most of the women have at least waist length hair which they wear in a single braid, either down the back or wrapped around the head like a crown. A brightly colored piece of cloth is inserted in the hair and braided in from about the shoulder down.

The Chatinos are a physically clean people, bathing two or three times a week if not engaged in manual labor, in which case they bathe daily. The various streams furnish them with bathtubs with springs occasionally substituting.

The Chatinos are slow to adopt the customs of the Mexicans and even now, although many of the children dress in clothes like the Mexican children wear, most of them still dress like their fathers.

The women among the Chatino dress in long (ground length) cotton skirts of bright colors. In all about 8 1/2 meters of material is used for each skirt. The blouses are simple white blouses with a 3-inch piece of embroidery work around the neck and sleeves. Many of them wear aprons over their skirts and these aprons too, are brightly colored -- usually a color different from the color of the skirt. Some of these color com-

binations noticed have been orange and pink, blue and green, orange and green, purple and red, and orange and purple. When out of the house, the women usually wear a rebozo which is used, not only for protection from the wind, rain, and sun, but also as a rumble seat for junior. Nearly all of the Chatino women wear beads. Some wear a single strand around the throat while others wear several strands. Some add strands at one or both wrists. Earrings are not reserved for special occasions but are worn as part of the daily dress.

The men wear a type of trousers which are fastened by drawing the top around the waist. Most of these pants are ankle length with the bottom of the legs very narrow. These pants are made of muslin. The shirt is made straight and is waist length. The "everyday" shirt is usually made of white cotton. The "dress" shirts are brightly colored and made of rayon. Red and purple appear to be the favorite colors. The men wear heavy, black, felt hats that have been treated with wax. This wax treatment not only makes the hats hard, but also waterproofs them. For festive occasions some of the Chatino have wide-brimmed, straw, vaquero type sombreros. The men nearly always carry a machete when out of the house. Frequently they will also carry a small bag slung over the shoulder in which can be put

small purchases or a day's supply of tortillas.

Although for an adult Chatino to dress like the Mexicans causes him to stand out among the village people and he is ridiculed somewhat, the cloth for the clothes of the Chatino is almost exclusively manufactured and purchased from outside the tribe. One exception to this is the girdle worn by nearly all the men and women here. This girdle is about eight inches wide and about six feet in length. It is wrapped tightly about the waist. A few of the Chatino wear huaraches, but for the most part, they go barefooted. For a long trip the men sometimes make a sandal out of a piece of used auto tire for a sole and rubber for the straps -- straps passing between the great toe and the second toe to the two sides of the instep and then around back of the heel.

The Indians use fire mainly to prepare their food. Although wood is used almost exclusively among the Indians for fuel, the supply is apparently still unlimited. The system of cutting off timber to clear a place for their corn fields is depleting the supply of wood and some of the men have commented on the fact that they have to go farther and farther to gather their fire wood.

Most Chatino homes actually consist of two or more buildings, one of which is used as a kitchen. It is here that the food is prepared. In this building, the women of the home spend most of their day. The metate (stone for grinding corn) is here, close to the comal (large, flat, clay or stone griddle) where the tortillas are cooked.

The Chatino eats beef, pork, turkey, chicken, dove, iguana (a type of lizard), venison, squirrel, tejone, ants and dried fish as meats. The ants (chicataña) are considered more of a delicacy than the other types of meat. In killing the animals (especially the cows and hogs, occasionally the turkeys and chickens), nothing is wasted. The blood is caught and used to stuff the tripe. The skin is carefully removed and sold. The tripe after it is removed from the animal, is washed thoroughly and then filled with the blood which was caught when the animal was killed. This is one of the first things sold.

Boiling is the most common method of food preparation. This excludes the tortillas, which are cooked on the comal, and the corn on the cob which is frequently baked in the ashes of the fire. Most of the food is boiled in clay pots. There is no baking done except

bread which is baked in the large ovens located at various homes. These ovens are built of adobe and are about seven feet high. The lower three feet is solid and the floor of the oven is at the level of this solid table. Above this level the oven proper is dome-shaped. The door or entrance way is about sixteen inches square and at the floor level.

The only method of preserving food observed among the Chatino is salting and drying and this is limited to beef. When a cow is butchered the area surrounding the house appears to be a system of poles and wires, each with a strip of meat hanging on it. All of the meat is cut into strips about four inches wide and 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick. This meat dries in a few days (2 to four days) and will stay edible for a month to six weeks.

The Chatino usually eats three meals a day. When working in the fields, however, he will often omit the midday meal. In the homes, the first meal is eaten about mid-morning. This meal usually consists of tortillas and coffee. The main meal of the day is eaten about two in the afternoon. Depending upon the family, this meal may consist of beans, tortillas, and coffee or it may include a meat dish. The evening meal, eaten between six and seven in the evening is again tortillas and coffee with whatever might have been left

from the noon meal. Extras are always welcome in the Chatino homes when available. These extras might include tamales at any time of the year and for any meal of the day, corn on the cob in the fall, squash almost anytime, but especially in the fall and winter, and fruit, primarily bananas. When beans or mole are served, the tortillas serve as both plate and eating utensils.

There is very little order about the actual process of eating. The mother (or the woman of the house) is usually busy cooking tortillas and has the food near her. She serves -- puts the beans or mole on the tortillas for the members of the family -- and catches a bite as she can. As each member of the family gets his tortillas, he seeks a place of his own choosing to sit. This might be a log near the fire, an overturned box somewhere else in the room, a grass mat, or he may just sit back on his heels.

The Chatino habitually drinks from a jícara, a half of a thin shelled gourd. Most of them have bowls made of pottery which serve as cups, but these are rarely used except for coffee. The jícara is used to dip water from the spring as well as for drinking.

Coffee is perhaps the most common drink other than water. Coffee is boiled in one of the clay pots

with the sweetening (panela, the unrefined sugar of sugar cane) boiled right with it. The coffee is grown right in the district which might account for some of its popularity.

Tea is apparently unknown and chocolate, though known, is seldom drunk. Milk is rarely if ever drunk alone. It is commonly used with rice and with corn to make atole. This drink, flavored with cinnamon and sweetened to taste, makes a good energy giving food and is a favorite with the youngsters.

Wine and mescal are available through the merchants in the district and large amounts of the latter are consumed by the Indians, especially during the fiestas. The Chatino needs comparatively little to make him intoxicated, and while intoxicated (or drinking) has practically no inhibitions. Pulque (the drink made from the maguey plant) is losing ground as a drink among these Indians although some of it is still made and sold here.

The Chatinos do little hunting and no fishing at all. Occasionally one of the men will kill a deer but this is usually while he is at his field or on the way to it and just happens to see the deer. During the early part of the rainy season (May and June) the

men and boys often go rabbit hunting but it is every man for himself. There is no attempt to organize a hunt and each person goes where and when he chooses. Dried fish is occasionally brought in from the coast so although they do not fish themselves, the Indians do eat fish.

The only type of narcotic found in use among the Chatino is a type of mushroom. This plant, used exclusively by the witch doctors, causes the person to lose consciousness or to pass into a coma. Supposedly, it is in this state that the witch doctor is able to cast a spell. Tobacco, which is not grown in this region, is widely used by both men and women. The most common usage is in cigarettes, though there are a few old women who chew the tobacco of the cigarettes rather than smoke them.

There are five principal types of residential construction among the Chatinos. The wealth of the owner is shown by the type of house he has.

The poorest Indians live in a construction of upright bamboo poles tied to cross pieces of bamboo. The roof is a coarse grass and needs to be replaced every other year. This house is sufficient to turn most of the rain, and though it has the disadvantage

of having worms, spiders, and small lizards drop in from the roof occasionally, it serves the purpose for which houses are intended. One serious drawback is the lack of protection from the cold wind.

The second type of house is constructed similarly to the first except that it has a tile roof. This actually entails a more secure structure to support the weight of the tile. Of course this house has the same drawback in lack of protection from the wind as the first type.

The third type of house is constructed of adobe to the height of about four feet and then upright bamboo for an additional two feet. The roof of this type of house is tile. Although it is still cold inside this type of house when the wind is blowing, the wind cannot blow directly on a person sitting or sleeping on or near the floor.

The next type of house is a house whose walls are completely of adobe and which has a tile roof. This type of house and the following type are the warmest and most sturdily built. Actually there is little choice between these two types as to being more expensive or better.

The fifth type of house is constructed of mud

walls about four inches thick. The mud is held in place until dry by bamboo poles tied horizontally to upright poles. Among the Indians, this type of house is considered to be the strongest house built. In a house of this type 36 feet by 12 feet, there are ten upright poles about 10 inches in diameter and 96 upright poles ranging in size from 2 1/2 to 4 inches in diameter. The larger poles are about 1 1/2 to 2 meters in the ground and the smaller ones are about one meter in the ground. The ridgepole and two eave poles are about 10 inches in diameter and are cut from the hearts of trees. There are four cross beams in a house of this size. These beams are hewn with machetes until they closely resemble rough cut 8" by 12" beams. Both of these last two types of houses are frequently whitewashes to add to their appearances. These houses may or may not have tile brick floors. Doors and windows for these houses are products of the Mexican carpenters. Doors used in the first three types of houses are usually homemade.

For the materials used for building any one of the houses, the Indians depend on the region except for the tile which are bought from the Mexicans. For the large poles for ridgepoles and uprights for houses it is necessary for the Indians to go some three or four hours journey to find trees of sufficient size. As the forest lines are pushed back and up, these materials for housebuilding are becoming

more and more scarce. The other materials, small uprights, bamboo, adobe and mud, are available in the villages.

The information as to the durability of these houses is a bit vague. When asked how long a house of type four or five will last, the Indians usually answer 10 to 12 years. Of course with tile roofs, there is no cause for the roof to wear out, although the grass roofs need to be replaced every other year.

Cooking, among the Chatino, is a woman's job in the home. Although men do not cook when at home, they may do so when on a trip or working in the field. When building a house, the Chatino depends on his friends to help. Wages are not paid, the accounts being kept in the head. They use a system of exchange labor. For each day's help, the recipient is expected to help each person helping him, day for day. The entire adult male population is responsible for the maintenance of the town hall or tu nǫ?ǫ tnyǫ house of work as the Chatinos express it. This is one of the three community buildings. The other two are the school and the church. These two likewise are maintained by the village. The men of the village are also responsible for maintenance of the trails surrounding the town. Usually some three or four days are set aside each fall after the rains have stopped to repair the trails.

Occupationally the Chatino men are classed as laborers on the town records. There are some who butcher animals during the dry season and others who go to the roadheads to bring in cargo but these are exceptions and comparatively so few that for simplicity the general classification is laborer.

Various of the Chatino women weave cloth to make small bags. These bags are one true Chatino product. Another similar object is the large "napkin" used to wrap tortillas. These also are woven by the women here. The bags are all striped and this striping (actually use of different colored thread) determines the price of the finished product. The price varies from $1.25 to $4.00. Some bags are single, for carrying on the shoulder and others are double for use as saddle bags.

The use of palm leaves to make checkerwork mats and baskets is a perfected art of the Indians of Yolotepec, a Chatino village about 3 hours walk from Juquila.

As civilization makes inroads in the tribe, the machete is being replaced as a weapon by the rifle and shotgun. The earliest type of gun used here -- hand-made muzzle loaders -- are actually relics, although there are still many guns of this type in use by the poorer Indians. Breech loading shotguns and .22 rifles

are becoming more common.

The Chatino carries burden in almost every conceivable way. With the tumpline, the most common method, he carries loads up to 40 kilos on his back. Smaller loads are carried on the head, shoulder, or in the arms. The women carry loads in their rebosos slung on their backs. The bags previously described are used for small items.

The family is the main organized group among the Chatinos. Although the primary family group is the most common, a bilateral extended family group is not uncommon. Principally, the Chatino live in a patriarchal system. As the relationship between various Chatinos is traced, the intermarriages and family ties encountered almost defy description. One of the main reasons for these intermarriages and confused family ties is the scarcity of men. Records are not available for exact data, but nearly all of the older men have a legal wife and at least one other woman and children by both. These women do not occupy the same house. Rather, in fact, each has a house of her own. There is evidently no preference shown for the legal wife nor shame for the second wife.

There is apparently no effort on the part of the

officials of the villages to make a man support his wife and/or children if he does not wish to do so.

After marriage, the choice of residence is with the newly married couple. Most frequently, they build a house near the house of the parents of one of them. There seems to be a leaning toward a patrilocal system although nothing concrete enough to definitely identify it as such has been found. Regardless of the choice of location, the new couple, almost without exception, establishes a separate home. Rarely do the new couple establish a home completely separated from all relatives, although there are occurrences of this.

The Chatino family, although it may be physically scattered, is in speech a close-knit unit. They have only four words to refer to any particular member of the family. These four words are stĭ father, y°ǭ mother, with the word kula big or old, added to the word for father or mother to give grandfather or grandmother, and ta°ā relative which refers to any other member of the family. This reference is to blood relationship only. Legal relationships are varied in their terminology.

Childbirth is not considered a special occasion among the Indians. The mother-to-be may or may not

be attended by a local Chatino midwife. When a midwife is present, she is paid about $0.35 and her food during the time she is at the house. In the small (1500 approximate population) village of Yaitepec, there are three or four women who are known to be midwives. Usually the job of the midwife is relegated to the mother of the mother-to-be, or if she is not living, to the paternal grandmother.

The entire primary family who happen to be in the vicinity at the time witness the birth. If the father is away in the fields, he is not called home.

If an abortion occurs, the fetus is thrown in the river. If a baby is premature and dies (as premature children here nearly always do) it is buried, but not in the cemetery. A stillborn babe is treated the same as a premature one which dies. The belief concerning a stillborn babe is that a kwi?i še?o demon (literally bad air) killed it before its birth. The Indians also believe that if a pregnant woman looks at an eclipse, of either sun or moon, the fetus will be aborted in pieces.

The umbilical cord is cut with a piece of cane selected, washed and sharpened by the father-to-be.

The placenta of a newborn child is taken to the river by the maternal grandmother accompanied by the paternal grandmother. At the river, the placenta is thoroughly washed. After this washing, the placenta is placed in a white cloth. Among the older people, the placenta is then placed in a tall tree near the house. The more common action now is to bury the placenta near the house. If the placenta is not washed thoroughly, then the baby's eyes will be sore. This is the explanation given for the washing of the placenta.

After the placenta is taken out of the house, the baby is bathed with warm water and placed with the mother on the grass mat. The breast is first offered to the baby when it is about four hours old. Until the baby is about one year old, the only food it has is the milk its mother furnishes it. The average period of lactation is two years with some extreme cases going as long as three years. During the first four months of the baby's life, the mother avoids chili and other hot seasoning.

The house is protected from the demons (bad winds) by painting a cross on the door during the time of labor. This cross is thought to keep the demons from entering

the house.

Multiple births are rare among the Chatino. There have been twins born but seldom do both babies live. No one questioned remembered the birth of triplets. When told of the Dionne quintuplets, the Indians just laugh. It is evidently beyond their comprehension that human beings can and are born in groups like this. The Chatinos know so little about multiple births that apparently they have no general belief about them, although some have said that twins are a sign of God's blessing upon a house. It is believed by some that if the parents-to-be will each eat one of two bananas that have a common peeling, the offspring will be twins.

Babies are given the name of their patron saint by the town secretary when he records their birth.

Babies among the Chatinos are pampered to an extreme. If a three-year old stubs his toe and falls, he lies on the ground crying until his mother or someone else in the family can pick him up. Small boys are exempt from work, except carrying small cans of water, until they reach an age of 12-14. Girls, on the other hand, are put to work around the house much younger. From about the age of six, the girls are busy grinding corn, washing clothes, cooking tortillas,

or caring for a younger child. The sight of one of these young girls carrying a baby on her back is not unusual, but rather to be expected.

Although there are organised schools in several of the pueblos, attendance is not compulsory and as often as not, the teacher is the only one at the school.

Apart from the work that the girls are required to do, the children are fairly free to play as they like. Their play, however, is likely to be a family affair. The boys have sling shots, tops, and small machetes. Some of the girls have wooden dolls made by their fathers.

Girls reach the age of puberty at about 14 years of age. This also marks the age of marriageability. Although boys reach the age of puberty a year or so younger than the girls, at which time they are put on the official work list of the village, they are usually fifteen or sixteen when they marry.

There is apparently no period of adolescence among the Chatinos. From childhood, the Chatino passes into adulthood and is ready for marriage. The average age at marriage is sixteen for the men and for the women, fourteen. There seems to be no restrictions on pre-marital or extramarital relationships. Marriages are

arranged by the fathers, or in case the father is dead, by a friend of the family. Custom decrees that the age of the friend be approximately the same as that of the father. A young man wishing to marry a particular girl tells his father who she is and asks that the marriage be arranged. At times, fathers arrange a marriage without prior consultation with the children involved. In such cases, although they are becoming more rare, the arrangements stand if the betrothed remains in the village. Marriage can be escaped by leaving the village. These arrangements for marriage are usually made about one month before the marriage.

The parents of the bride-to-be furnish the groom with his clothes for the marriage ceremony and, vice versa, the groom's parents clothe the bride. The groom is expected to work for the bride's father for three or four days before the marriage.

The wedding fiesta, given by the parents of the bride, but at the home of the groom, lasts three or four days. After the first day it usually turns into an ordinary fiesta with the emphasis on drinking and dancing. The first day, however, is exhibition day, not only of the bride and groom, but everyone wears their best clothing and special care is taken of them.

At 18 years of age or marriage, whichever comes first, the Chatino is put on the town roster. This involves payment of a local tax of about three cents a month. For the women, being put on the roll means nothing except that they are subject to this tax. For the men this means the beginning of their responsibility to the pueblo. On community projects he is expected to do his share. He is eligible to take part in the town meetings and to hold office. According to the Mexican law he is also eligible to vote in the national elections.

Death is feared among the Chatinos. They have varied ideas about the hereafter and one of them involves having to carry on with the same type of work done here. This fear is especially evident among the older people who complain that they have worked hard all their lives among the people that they know and that they do not want to have to work hard after death among strangers. Not only do they fear death, but they fear the dead also. If one of the Chatinos finds the body of another, he makes the sign of the cross as he passes the body, and then he turns and spits on the body. The spitting on the body is supposed to keep the spirits from passing from the dead body to the one passing by.

Upon the death of a member of the family, there is a brief period when the remaining members give way to their emotions. After this first outbreak, however, they appear stoic until time for the funeral. There is another emotional release at this time which is usually more pronounced that the first. Actually there seems to be little or no feeling about the corpse itself after the first emotional outbreak. During this time the surviving members of the family stroke the cheeks and arms of the corpse as if to bring back life.

The body is wrapped in white muslin and has a frayed rope wrapped around the waist and tied in front. The grave is prepared by the membe s of the town police. The funeral takes place within 24-48 hours after death. During the night (or nights) that intervenes between the death and the burial the family and friends sit us, afraid to go to sleep. Their belief is that the spirit of the dead person has been released from the body, but is still present and if they go to sleep, the spirit will enter their body. Funerals originate at the home of the deceased. The body, preceded by two or three members of the town band, is carried to each house owned by the family of the dead person. At each house there is a brief pause and then the body is carried to the church. After a brief ceremony there, usually by

one of the Indians, but occasionally by the priest from the area, the body is taken to the cemetery. If death was due to a wound, an "autopsy" is performed at the cemetery by the town secretary. If there is to be an autopsy, three petates are placed at the back of the cemetery forming a partial blockade between the autopsy and the mourners. The body is taken from the church to this place. While family and friends wait some fifteen yards away, the "autopsy" is done. One member of the family is expected to be present along with the secretary and one of the town officials. After this "operation" the body is taken to the grave and there lowered with the aid of ropes under the casket. In the grave, the body is on its back, the head toward the west. In the casket with the corpse are put all of the clothes of the deceased, some bread for the dead to eat on its journey, a few centavos for the ferry across the river, a small hen to give to the chicken hawk which is guarding the road the dead must travel, a crab to assure the corpse of water, a jicara, napkin, and a small bag for the convenience of the corpse. On the ninth day after the burial, the grave is partially opened and the following put in this hole: some small (about 1 1/2 inches in diameter) tortillas; his machete, sombrero, and cargo net, if a man; her rebozo, if a

woman; a small replica of the handiwork of the dead; cigarettes; matches; a small crab to assure water; a bee to attack the robbers along the road; and a tadpole to hold the hand of the corpse when crossing the river. On top of the grave is put the cross of lime that has been in the house of the dead during the nine days.

On returning from the cemetery on the day of the funeral, the hands and feet of all who went are carefully washed to remove any spirits encountered there. On the day following the burying of the possessions, the tenth day after burial, the entire family goes to the river to bathe themselves and wash their clothes.

When the head of the family dies, the legal possessions pass to the eldest child, although frequently the mother becomes the active head of the house.

Nominally the Chatinos are Roman Catholics. Their general belief, however, is in the gods their ancestors worshipped. They have nine gods, listed as follows: Holy Trinity, Saint James (patron saint of Yaitepec), Jesus, Holy Cross, heart, Saint Peter, Saint John, sun, and moon. Each of these have a long list of attributes. Clearly the belief about these gods shows the combination of the teaching of the church and the pagan beliefs

as taught by the older Chatinos.

The fiestas here are the fiestas of the Catholic church. Dancing by the Chatinos is limited to these fiestas. Nominally these fiestas are Catholic fiestas but in the main, they are outlets for the expression of the aboriginal religious customs of the people. The dancing is more of a walk within a ritual accompanied by music. Although it is apparently easy to teach the Chatinos to play the various musical instruments, as far as has been found, there are no songs nor rhythms native to the Chatinos.

Market days for the Chatinos are primarily Wednesday and Sunday. Many of the Indians visit the market towns, Juquila and Nopala, more often, if not daily. Much of their time in the market towns is spent in visiting and talking with friends. Often the Chatino will spend the entire day in one of the market towns on a trip to buy a kilo or so of salt.

The superstitions of the Chatinos are many and varied. A belief here is that birthmarks result from the pregnant mother passing a place where a person was writing. This person threw ink at the mother and it appeared on the babe. The birthmark is supposed to appear the same color as the ink, although only birth-

marks colored red or black have been observed.

When cut, the Chatino is stoic enough, but his mind is subject to fears, and, even when seriously wounded, his mental suffering is often much greater than the actual physecal suffering. A case in point: one of the men fell into a fire while drunk and severely burned his leg. His greatest suffering, although the leg hurt him, was the fear of gangrene. (There is a case of it in this pueblo at the present time).

The Chatinos believe strongly in spirits. They believe that the soul of a dead person joins the other spirits in another world. This other world is like this one and the spirits there have the same possessions and work that they had here. The movements of the spirits in the other world are apparently unrestricted, but movement between the two worlds is limited to one day each year -- All Saints' day. On that day the spirits roam this world at will and if a Chatino encounters one on the road, the Chatino believes that the spirit will enter his body and that he will die within a year. For this reason, the Chatinos do not leave their homes on All Saints' day except in extreme necessity. In belief that all the dead in the family will return on All Saints' day, large amounts of food are prepared.

Hens and turkeys are the choice meats for this day, although some people prefer pork. Beef is definitely not eaten and if a rooster is killed for All Saints' day, the belief is that he will crow when the spirits enter the house. For fear that the spirits will enter their body while sleeping, the Chatinos do not sleep on the night of All Saints' day.

The spirit lives in the heart of a person during life. Although the Chatinos say that the spirit leaves the body when death occurs and goes to the other world the same day, a trip of one day's duration, a place is set for the spirit at all meals during the period of nine days between burial and the burying of the possessions. These spirits, when seen, appear briefly in the form of people, but vanish quickly into thin air.

Demons are very familiar to the Chatinos. Their name in Chatino is kwi?i še?e bad air. Many times the demons are blamed for misdeeds of the Indians. They provide a convenient "out" when the Indians are caught in these misdeeds. Then too, the most common personal diagnosis of illness by the Chatinos is "bad air."

Nearly all of the Indian houses have the pagan crosses. These crosses are placed as follows: one for the owner of the house and then one for each child as

the children are born. As the crosses for the children are placed in the ground, cooked chicken, bread, and panela are placed in the ground at the foot of the upright piece. This is to insure the child's growth.

This paper is by no means complete. More investigation is needed in all aspects of the culture. Certainly further investigation is needed in the realm of spiritual culture. The lack of information about the music and mythology is keenly felt. The author hopes to continue the study of the Chatino Indians in order to expand this paper in these various fields.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Jose E. Iturriaga, La Estructura Social y Cultural de Mexico (Mexico, 1951); p. 131 ff.

[2] Ibid. p.99.

[3] Cowan, George M., "Mazateco Whistle Talk" Lg. Vol. , No.

[4] In his article "Chatino Formulas and Phonemes", IJAL Vol. 20, No. 1, 1954, McKaughan list 19 consonants and 9 vowels. The difference in the number of phonemes in these two papers is explained by his interpretation of the sequences mb, nd, and ng as the nasalized stops b̃, d̃, and g̃. It is the authors contention that such interpretation is unwarranted and only adds to the complexity of the phonemic system.