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Jicaltepec is a Mixteco village about twelve or fifteen miles inland from the Pacific Coast in the state of Oaxaca. The entire population of seven hundred is monolingual with the exception of a few of the younger generation who speak Spanish when marketing in neighboring towns.

The people of this village, for the most part, live in family groups. Each family unit, which consists of the father and mother, the unmarried children and the married sons and their wives and children, lives together in their own group of houses. For the first few years or more the married son and his wife may live in the same house with the parents, but eventually he builds his own house just next door.

Each group of houses is built on a level clearing of ground and usually consists of a cluster of three or four huts. One of the huts is used only as a kitchen and is a very temporary type house. It is made of upright poles, and usually has a grass or palm leaf roof. The poles have wide spaces between them through which the smoke from the ground fire escapes. The flat grinding stone with stone rolling pin, a clay griddle on top of a built-up platform with the fire underneath, a few clay jugs and gourds constitute the furnishings of the kitchen. It is here that the women and older girls spend much of the day—grinding and patting tortillas for the family.

Each group of houses also has at least one round house, which serves as a parlor. This house is well constructed—of bamboo canes going horizontally around and mudded inside and out with red mud. The roofs are of grass and have a sharp slant, extending as high as twenty feet from the ground. Then they are tied at the top like a tassel. Some mud houses have a cement floor, though the majority have hard mud floors. Often their doors are also made of cane poles tied together at the top and bottom and hinged on one side. This way they can be rolled back when open.

Inside this house is a crude altar with candles and perhaps a picture or image of some saint and also flowers. Most of their posessions are kept here too: weaving loom, supply of cotton, thread and spinning whorl, any extra clothing, a hammock and sometimes a homemade, circular baby swing which hangs from the rafters; also there are a few small rough chairs, straw mats rolled up in a corner, sacks of corn and beans and possibly a few baskets.

Some of their houses are rectangular and made of adobe with tile roofs and those have about the same use as the roundhouse.

The health of the people as a whole seems to be much better than in many Indian villages. This could be partially attributed to their cleanliness. All day long the edge of the square spring in the center of town is filled with women and children washing their hair, bathing and washing clothes. This spring is about six feet square, is lined with a wall of stones and has a roof of palm leaves built over the top. Another reason for their good health is their diet. Besides the regular beans and tortillas, they have tomatoes, eggs, meat and fish, bananas, oranges, lemons, mangos, papayas and coconuts.

Most of the children up to the age of ten or twelve run bare-skinned all day long. They all own at least one set of clothing though, and occasionally the boys will run around with only a shirt and the girls with only a skirt. The women wear only skirts—made of heavy home-spun, dark blue or wine striped material about two meters long. This she wraps around her body, tucking it in at the waist and then winding a three or four inch straw belt around her waist. At the end of this belt is attached a red sash, hand-woven, which is likewise wrapped around and around and tucked in. Some of the women do not wear this belt at all.

Only on special occasions, a trip to Pintepa, going to mass, a funeral, wedding or other celebration, does she wear the top piece to her outfit. This

is a white square of heavy hand-woven cotton material which is folded crosswise and draped over her shoulders. Or as she walks along the trail, the square is put over her head as a protection from the sun, and a half gourd is worn on her head to keep the cloth in place. Her hair-do is simple and takes but a few minutes to fix. She seldom braids it, but rather twists it and wraps it around her head.

The men's outfit consists of trousers which overlap and tie at the waist and a shirt--pullover type--with long sleeves. The whole outfit is hand made. They raise their own cotton and the women sit under a tree in the afternoons, often in groups of three. One will card the cotton, another spin it into thread and a third will do the actual weaving. It takes approximately two weeks to make enough material for a shirt and trousers. Then the men do the cutting and sewing by hand. There is also a town tailor who does sewing for those who prefer to have theirs done by someone else. Generally their suits are all white, though sometimes they are white with a purple thread running through the material forming squares. They do raise a brown cotton too from which they make brown shirts--never trousers. The finishing touch on every shirt is a little piece of colored wool sewed in the center of the square neck in front and back.

Though the men ~~have~~^{own} moccasins, they seldom wear them even when going to town. Their hats--either straw or felt--the, wear only when working in the fields or otherwise working in the hot sun or on the trail.

The children are very carefree and happy. They don't seem to have too many responsibilities other than caring for younger brothers and sisters and carrying firewood and water. However, as they get older the girls are taught to grind ~~and~~ pat tortillas and spin and weave; while the boys go with their fathers to the fields to learn to plant and care for the crops.

The women's duties include baking meals, caring for the children, spinning and weaving, and sometimes carrying wood. They carry most of their loads--water jugs, babies etc. on their hip. New loads of wood, however, are carried on their backs. Sometimes the men carry water with a pole on their shoulders and a container on each end. They also carry jugs on their shoulders.

The men are kept busy with burning the fields, cultivating, planting, making adobe and sewing. In their fields they raise mostly corn, cotton, tomatoes and beans. They also raise coffee and cocoa beans. Occasionally they make trips to buy fish and claws and resell them in the village. They also have to donate a part of their time to town projects, such as repairing the church etc. Some of them also serve as town president, secretary, vice-president and other minor offices. The town hall business is carried on at night in order to free the men for working in their fields and other duties.

The town hall is in the center of town along with all the other public buildings: the school, jail, church. Next to the church there is also a room which houses three ancient bells. These are rung regularly every morning, noon and night and also on special occasions.

School is not compulsory, and out of a possible two hundred only about twenty five attend--mostly boys. Usually the teacher is someone who does not understand dialecto, and since the children do not understand Spanish the school system isn't too successful. To attend the village school one of the requisites is that they don trousers and shirt, skirt and blouse which is not exactly to their pleasing.

There is no market day in Jicaltepec, but any traveler coming through may sell his wares. Usually they stop under the big mango tree along the trail in the center of town. Often on Saturdays there is a small pottery market in the same spot. Since the village is located on the mail trail to

Pinojito Nacional many travelers go through daily. Many of these travel only between Pinojito Nacional and Pinojito Ien Iule, but there are also many travelers from High Country who bring their wares: potatoes, onions, pottery etc. They sell these things and take back salt and fruit. Many of them travel as long as eight days to get there.

There is no mail service in the town, because the people refuse to pay for it. The nearest service is an hour away in Pinojito Nacional. The mail is brought in three times a week on the planes from Campeche City and Mexico City.

The greetings in this village are not very formal. They do not shake hands at all. The younger person always has to greet the older person first and if he fails to do so there is no greeting at all. Neither is there a greeting between people of the same age.

The village band which plays for all the fiestas consists of about seven or eight men who play various instruments including horns and a drum. During one of their dances, in which about ten men take part--each dressed in European clothes with make up their faces--the leader plays on a jawbone of an animal. He keeps time with the rest of the band by running a stick over the teeth. Then there is a smaller three piece orchestra which plays for weddings etc. It is composed of a violin, a guitar and a jug. As the music plays one man and women at a time will dance for the entertainment of the rest of the guests.

When a young fellow wants a girl he wants to marry, he hires the services of the 'pedider', a man who goes to the girl's parents to make a deal for their daughter. This fellow usually makes at least three trips and is paid thirty pesos a trip. On these visits he finds out whether the boy can have the girl or not and settles on how long he is going to have to work for her. He works anywhere from four to twelve months for the girl's parents and when the time agreed upon is fulfilled, the wedding can take place. After the wedding the boy takes his new wife home to his family.

When someone dies there is again a time of feasting and drinking. If the person dies after sunset an all night watch is kept and the body is buried the following day. A procession follows the coffin from the home to the church and then to the cemetery on the edge of town. The graves are marked by a smooth cylindrical shaped mound of mud the full length of the grave. When a man dies his widow has to wait a year before she is free to remarry. The day of ones death is remembered the following year by family and friends who gather together and spend the whole night in drinking and feasting and also make a trip to the grave.