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RICE UNIVERSITY

SACRIFICE AND CANNIBALISM: AN ANALYSIS OF MYTH AND
RITUAL AMONG THE LACANDON MAYA OF CHIAPAS MEXICO

by

R. JON McGEE

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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SACRIFICE AND CANNIBALISM: AN ANALYSIS OF MYTH AND RITUAL AMONG THE LACANDON MAYA OF CHIAPAS MEXICO
ABSTRACT

SACRIFICE AND CANNIBALISM: AN ANALYSIS OF MYTH AND RITUAL AMONG THE LACANDON MAYA OF CHIAPAS MEXICO

R. JON MCGEE

This dissertation illustrates the similarities between the ritual and mythology of the Lacandon Maya and that of the pre-Columbian Maya in the Yucatan. Its focal points are an analysis of contemporary Lacandon rituals in which the symbolic expression of human sacrifice and cannibalism are found, and a demonstration of the importance of the ba'alche ritual in Lacandon society. The drinking of ba'alche was an important part of ancient Mayan ritual, and today it forms the cornerstone of virtually all of the Lacandon communal rituals. Included as an integral part of this analysis is a film of the rite. It covers the ritual over a span of two days, from making ba'alche to cleaning up at the end of the ritual. It is meant to be a visual counterpart to the written analysis of the ba'alche ceremony.

Evidence is also provided to support the contention that traditional Lacandon religion is not in danger of extinction as is popularly believed but is in fact a stabilizing force in Lacandon society today. Based on extensive interviews with young Lacandon men and economic data it is argued that the younger generation of Lacandon have very good social and economic reasons to not abandon their traditional faith.

The historical analysis of Lacandon myths and prayers forms a large part of this work, and provided in appendices are the raw data, the
myths and prayers transcribed in Lacandon Maya. The field research for this dissertation was conducted between May 1980 and March 1982. Support for this work and funding for the film was provided in part by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professors Stephen A. Tyler and Michael M. J. Fischer for their continual support, helpful criticisms, and suggestions during the period of my fieldwork and subsequent writing of this dissertation. I also owe a special debt to Dr. Michael J. Rees who first introduced me to the people of Naha', Mensābak, and Lacanha Chan Sayab, and patiently provided my first lessons in Lacandon Maya. Last I would like to thank my father, Professor Reece J. McGee. Without his kind suggestions on editing and structure this work might never have achieved a consistent degree of clarity.
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Introduction

The field research which is the basis of this work was conducted between May 1980 and March 1982 under the supervision of the Department of Anthropology, at Rice University, and was made possible by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and a Ora N. Arnold Research Fellowship from Rice University.

My work deals primarily with the symbolic analysis of Lacandon Maya ritual and mythology. The greater part of this work was conducted in the Lacandon village of Naha', the last non-Christian Lacandon settlement, with brief visits to the other two main Lacandon villages, Mensäbëk and Lacanha Chan Sayab.

My data-gathering techniques consisted of interviews, tape recordings, 35mm. photography, and super 8mm. filmmaking. Included as an integral part of this work is a film on the ba'älche ceremony which is meant to be viewed in conjunction with the reading of chapter 6, my analysis of the ritual.

The pronunciation of Lacandon terms follows the standards set by the International Journal of American Linguistics except for the following changes:

- Ŷ = ch
- Ŷ = sh = x
- Ŷ = å
- Ŷ = ts
- (') indicates a glottal stop

The literature on the Lacandon is not large. Although the civilization and the peoples of the Maya area have excited imaginations
since the first years of the Spanish conquest in the early sixteenth century, the Lacandon were not actually studied as a specific group of people until the turn of this century due to their elusiveness within the jungles of Chiapas.

Alfred Tozzer produced the first extensive description of Lacandon culture for the Peabody Museum at Harvard and for years published material based on his two months of field time with a Lacandon family. (The head of this family, Tozzer's main informant, was the father of Chan K'in Viejo who is a prominent figure in most of the work written on the northern Lacandon in the last forty years. Chan K'in Viejo was also my host during the time I lived in Naha'). Tozzer was an accomplished Yucatecan Mayan linguist and he produced an excellent account of the turn of the century lifestyle of the Lacandon. But the validity of his work with Lacandon mythology and religion is suspect because of the brevity of his field time and his incomplete knowledge of Lacandon Mayan. Much of what he wrote about Lacandon religion has been accepted by the leading figures in Mayan research, but this information is often contradictory to that provided by my own informants. In fact Chan K'in Viejo says that his father would make up information to tell Tozzer, not to be malicious, but because he did not want to disappoint Tozzer by not knowing the answers to his questions, a circumstance which has implications for the work of all field anthropologists and is not unknown elsewhere.

Tozzer's work has set the tone for much of the writing done on the Lacandon, i.e. well-intentioned but not necessarily accurate. The
Lacandon, possibly because of the exotic nature of their habitat, seem to have attracted more than their share of adventure writers over the years, those who write "my life with the savages" type of articles based on a few days' stay in a Lacandon community. Unfortunately, this type of work is still going on with the addition now of the electronic media. Several times during my field experience, journalists, and twice film crews, came to Naha' staying only two or three days and then departing to sell their films and articles based on their visits. I cannot help but believe that the amount of misinformation generated in such work is far greater than is accurate material.

Baer and Merrifield's work for the Summer Institute of Linguistics (1971), is an accurate picture of the life, environment, and kinship relationships of the southern Lacandon in the community of Lacanha Chan Sayab in the mid 1950's, but it is not an accurate picture of the contemporary community. The community has changed drastically in the last twenty years in part because of Baer's own missionary activity.

Gertrude Duby-Blom, who first visited the Lacandon with her husband, anthropologist Franz Blom in 1943, is now the director of Na Bolom, the Mayan study center in San Cristobal, Chiapas where the Lacandon are regular visitors. She is quite active in the Mexican popular press, publishing short articles on the degradation of the Lacandon's rainforest environment, and her book (1944) is an entertaining description of Lacandon culture and lifestyle just prior to the beginning of the industrial expansion into the area.

The most complete treatment of contemporary Lacandon cultural
ecology, population dynamics, and subsistance patterns has been done by Nations (1979, 1981), who worked primarily in Mensäbak just before that community's conversion to Protestant Christianity.

By far the most comprehensive treatment of many facets of Lacandon culture, especially linguistics, (1968) kinship, (1974) and mythology (1976), has been by Robert D. Bruce of the Departamento Linguistica, Museo Nacional in Mexico City. So complete is his knowledge in some areas that he has been called a "Lacandon informant" by other anthropologists working with him.

Bormanse's dissertation (1978) is especially valuable to the student of the Lacandon. It has the form of the classic British ethnography, taking a descriptive view of a wide range of Lacandon topics such as ecology, settlement pattern, kinship, the life cycle, rites of passage, and religion. This work is packed full of details on Lacandon belief and behavior and is a virtual encyclopedia of Lacandon information.

Two other works, dissertations by Davis and Rees, are both also useful references in the study of the Lacandon. Davis (1978) provides several detailed descriptions of Lacandon ritual performances from Mensäbak, recorded just before the conversion of the indians there. Originally hoping to study Lacandon musical behavior she found them relatively non-musical people, and so instead devised a system for the detailed recording of rituals, writing them as if they were a musical score. Further, several of the men she interviewed and worked with have since died, thus making her work especially valuable.

Rees' dissertation (1978) deals primarily with Lacandon kinship. The Lacandon do not call each other by name but instead use a fairly
large and complex set of kinship terms to refer to other individuals, thus causing the anthropologist to undergo serious mental gymnastics to follow any conversation involving people not actually present. Rees, wondering how the Lacandon could utilize this system so easily and rapidly, devised a mathematical model of Lacandon kinship relationships. Using the concept of the algebra of the Klein group, Rees' model enables its user to generate the correct kinship terms that will be used between any given set of Lacandon.

My own work is special because I have attempted to relate diverse areas of information to create a comprehensive picture of traditional Lacandon religion as it is practiced in Naha' today. I have not written about Lacandon mythology, kinship, or environment as independent facets of Lacandon life. Instead, following Kluckhohn's (1942) work on myth and ritual as interrelated facets of symbolic activity, I have attempted to demonstrate how the Lacandone's historical development, mythology, economics, even settlement pattern, have contributed to their present form of religious expression. This traditional religion preserves forms of ancient Mayan ritual-religious symbolism, especially human sacrifice. In its present form this religion has successfully resisted the intrusions of Catholic missionaries, and most recently two different forms of Protestant Christianity, while other Lacandon communities have converted and abandoned their traditional forms of worship. In this respect Naha' is a unique community and it is worthwhile to examine the circumstances which have preserved this form of religious expression.
Figure 1

The Lacandon Jungle Lies in the Chol-Yucatec area Between Palenque and Bonampak from (Thompson 1966:18).
Chapter 1

The Lacandon Maya Indians live in the rainforest of southeastern Chiapas, Mexico. Numbering only about 300 persons, they inhabit three main communities, Naha', Mensabak, and Lacanha Chan Sayab. Although grouped together under the name "Lacandon", they are actually two distinct cultural groups, northern and southern, differing in customs and speaking slightly different dialects of Mayan. The Lacandon themselves are pointedly aware of these differences. The northern Lacandon living in the villages of Naha' and Mensabak, call the southern Lacandon chukuch nok "long tunics," and have traditionally avoided them because the southern Lacandon possess a reputation for violence. In fact, during the period 1870-1940, homicide was the most frequent cause of death among the southern Lacandon. Nations (1979:135), states that 75 percent of these murders were the result of intra-group feuding over women. Although a murder has not occurred since 1952, the northern Lacandone's fear of the southern Lacandon persists. Even today, intermarriage between the two groups occurs only rarely.

The work described here was undertaken in the period between May 1980 and March 1982 among the northern Lacandon, primarily in the village of Naha', which lies approximately 100 kilometers south of the city of Palenque (see Fig. 1), on the shore of Lake Naha'. The community lies in mountainous terrain, heavily forested with pine, mahogany, ceiba, and palm trees. The area is about 1000 meters above sea level, and receives from 70 to 100 inches of rain a year, the heaviest rains occurring between June and November.
The primary means of subsistence is swidden, or slash and burn agriculture. The fields are usually cleared and burned in April and May in preparation for planting just before the rains in June. The principle crops are maize and black beans, but chilis, tomatoes, squash, onions, bananas, and tobacco are also grown. Orange, grapefruit, and tangerine trees grow in the area, and small-game hunting supplements the Lacandon diet. The most common game animals found today are spider and howler monkeys, aguti, armadillo, small deer, and tepesquintli. Fish and snails are found in the nearby lakes, chickens are raised for both eggs and meat.

The Lacandon managed to remain isolated from the outside world until after World War Two, at which point the exploitation of the jungle by Mexican industry began. Since then, changes have come quite rapidly. Each community now has a grass airstrip large enough for single engined airplanes. In the summer of 1979, a road was bulldozed into the jungle to reach Naha'. Today, the people of Naha' communally own three trucks, as do the people of Mensabuk. In the dry season when the road is passable, the Lacandon villages are only a matter of hours from the cities of Palenque, Tenosique, Emiliano Zapata, and Ocosingo, all formerly at least a two or three day trip by foot. Today, even with these changes, the most reliable means of travel is by foot or plane, for the long rainy season usually makes the road impassable. For example, in October 1981 flooding washed out two of the bridges on the road between Naha' and Palenque.

In 1940, the Mexican government's agrarian reform laws were applied
to eastern Chiapas so that much of the rain forest was declared national territory and opened to colonization. This encouraged an influx of immigrants into the Lacandon jungle, mostly Tzeltal and Chol Maya who are the descendents of the jungle's original inhabitants who had been resettled elsewhere by Spanish colonial administrators in the 16th and 17th centuries. Even today this process continues with the migration of Tzeltal and Tzotzil Maya from the highlands of Chiapas into the Lacandon jungle. Cattle and pig raising were brought to the jungle by these new settlers, and have had severe negative environmental consequences. Abandoned milpas, instead of lying fallow, have been seeded with grass for cattle pasture. Land treated in this way soon becomes useless for food crops unless it can be worked with intensive agricultural techniques not available to the indians. Not only has the jungle thus been rapidly shrinking in size, a further consequence of this action is that the number of game animals has been drastically reduced. In self defense, the Lacandon sought legal ownership of the lands which they lived on. In 1971, the Mexican government declared 614,321 hectares of Chiapan rainforest a national park with the Lacandon of Lacanha Chan Sayab its only legal residents. In 1975, this area was expanded to over 662,000 hectares in order to incorporate the villages of Naha' and Mensâbêk. The park was created in an attempt to protect the Lacandon, but no effort has been made to enforce the park boundaries. The result is that thousands of indians from other areas of Mexico have been moving into this land and are still pushing the Lacandon out. The most obvious change caused by this population pressure has been the
alteration of the traditional Lacandon settlement pattern. Formerly, the Lacandon lived in isolated family compounds separated by miles of jungle. They preferred to avoid strangers and rarely visited other Lacandon families. Today, they have moved together into villages for self protection from the invading outsiders who steal from their fields, destroy large sections of jungle with improper agricultural techniques, and drive away the game.

Not all has gone badly for the Lacandon since the creation of the national park however. They have become, relatively speaking, rather wealthy from the sale of lumbering rights to their land. According to Bormanse, (1975:5), "70 percent of the received funds for lumber rights are placed in a common fund for the community of Lacandon, while 30 percent is divided among the Lacandon themselves." Further, Bormanse states (1978:12) that in August, 1975, the head of each Lacandon family received 4,862 pesos, in November, 1975, 6,060 pesos more, and

By November, 1975, the Lacandon as a group had received credit from la Nacional Financiera for five million pesos of a contracted seven million in exchange for lumbering rights within their national territory. The bulk sum has been placed in a group fund controlled by the 'Fondo Nacional de Fomento Ejidal' (National Fund for the Promotion of Communal Territories).

With that money the organization has built several clinics in the Lacandon jungle as well as a small grocery store in each community which sells items not readily available in the jungle such as soap, rice, batteries, cigarettes, and canned goods.

The Lacandon have adapted to technological change quite readily. As early as the turn of the century, tobacco and bows and arrows were
being exchanged for steel machetes and axes. By the 1940's the
Lacandon were hunting with rifles instead of bows and arrows. Metal
grinders have replaced the mano and metate, and manufactured cloth
has replaced the traditional hand woven cotton cloth. The traditional
dirt-floored, thatched-roof hut has largely been replaced by huts with
cement floors and tin roofs. Flashlights, radios, cassette tape players,
matches, rubber boots, even chain saws are common household items today,
replacing traditional pieces of equipment.

Some of the greatest changes have occurred in religious behavior.
In the mid 1950's, a Baptist missionary succeeded in convincing the
Lacandon of Lacanha Chan Sayab to abandon their traditional gods and
rituals for a nominal conversion to Protestant Christianity. Today
traditional dress (the xikul, a long one piece smock) and appearance
(shoulder length uncut hair) have also been abandoned among the southern
Lacandon. Bruce, present in Lacanha throughout the period of conversion
writes,

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, Phillip Baer, the
missionary at Naha', discovered the differences in religious
observance between the northern and southern Lacandones, and
moved to Lacanha Chan Sayab. The southern Lacandones there
had dropped their active religious practices since the death
of their last priest and t'o'ohil, Ceron...

Probably without fully realizing what he was doing, the
missionary simply became a temporary substitute t'o'ohil.

Jose Pepe Chan Bol was the Lacandon who, according to
the traditional order of succession at Lacanha, should have,
but for some reason didn't, pick up the original functions
of a Lacandon t'o'ohil. After a very short time he
managed to take over the new, occidental values and to
function as preacher and municipal president for his
community. The form of his function under the 'new order'
was traditionally Lacandon; only the content had changed.

The abstinences imposed by the new set of moral values
were limited to abstention from tobacco and alcoholic
beverages—rather simple and poor demands compared with their own Maya tradition. The Maya demands had included (though only for limited periods during ritual activity): sexual abstinence, limitations on diet (principally chili peppers), long pilgrimages, and the observance of the rituals indicated by kinyah (divinations), which often implied many days of hard work and many nights of sleepless vigil. Still, the new restrictions filled the intensely felt need of the southern Lacandones. It would seem that a set of strange, alien values was better than no values at all. (Bruce and Perera, 1982:17-18). (See also p. 62, below.)

By 1973 a Yucatecan-speaking missionary for the Seventh Day Adventist Church had succeeded in eradicating the traditional belief system of the people of Mensabak, building a cement block temple in the village and imposing Seventh Day Adventist doctrine and dietary restrictions. As in Lacanha, the prime factors behind this conversion had little to do with the concepts of Christianity. They were rooted in the problems caused by the rapid influx of immigrants into the jungle, and the subsequent necessity for one Lacandon community, Monte Libano, to resettle near Mensábak. In the mid 1950's, the Lacandon began to band together into villages to resist the invasion of their lands by neighboring Tzeltal Maya Indians. It was at this time that the Lacandon of Monte Libano moved into the Mensabak area bringing their t'o'ohil Pepe Castillo with them, and therefore bypassing the authority of Mensábak's t'o'ohil Jose Güero. From this point, Bruce, again present during the conversion process, described what happened. The parentheses are my additions to the passage.

In Mensábak the newcomers from Monte Libano soon felt the presence nearby of the American missionary (Baer), and his emissary Jose Pepe Chan Bol. The missionary extended them the same services (primarily medicine) he offered the Naha' group, and with the same condition: they must lift up their spirits to Jesus Christ.
The latest phase began when Pepe Castillo developed a painful ulcer. This correct and responsible elder had always been a heavy drinker, but he suddenly found that even the effects of light social drinking appeared to be some kind of divine punishment out of proportion to any sins he may have committed. Perhaps Jose Pepe's preaching against drinking and smoking was being confirmed. At the same time, one of his son Joaquin's small children died of an intestinal infection, and Joaquin was heard to lament not having the preferential medical treatment offered to converts and their families. For whatever reasons or combination of reasons the t'o'ohil Pepe Castillo and his son Joaquin suddenly proclaimed themselves evangelistas.'

Once the traditional Lacandon religion had been broken down at Lake Mensabak, Pepe Castillo and his followers were easy prey for any new ideas, no matter how incongruous. It was at this point that a Yucatecan speaking Seventh Day Adventist arrived on the scene and converted the evangelist Mensabak Lacandones once again. The first of numerous restrictions was the declaration that approximately half of the Lacandones' traditional game and fish were unkosher. Liquor, beer, the ceremonial drink called ba'alche or anything else alcoholic, together with tobacco in any form were sinful. The polygamous households were broken up. A man could keep only his first wife. The others, though they may have been happily married and faithful to their husband for ten or twenty years, discovered that they had been living in sin; each was obliged to leave the husband and marry some bachelor. (Bruce and Perera, 1982:21-22).

The northern Lacandon of Naha' have proven to be more resistant. They have actively discouraged all missionary activity in their village since Baer's first attempts in the late 1940's, choosing to retain their traditional gods and modes of worship. One man from Naha' characterized the words of the missionaries as "wolol tus," "all lies." The families of Naha' have even gone so far as to alter the traditional pattern of post-marital residence in the marriages of their daughters. Formerly, after completing his bride service, a Lacandon husband would take his wife and return to live near his father's compound. Today, a young man who marries a woman from Naha' must promise to remain with her in the
village and not move to Lacanha or Mens&ö;k. In this manner, the people of Naha' are attempting to preserve their traditional values and behavior, while actively adopting beneficial technology and ideas from the outside world.

The people of Naha' have managed to retain their traditional belief system intact, while virtually every other Mayan group has adopted some form of Christianity and been rapidly assimilated into the mainstream Mexican cultural system. As a consequence of their self-enforced isolation, the Lacandon of Naha' possess a traditional religious-ritual system uninfluenced by Mexican cultural contact. This makes these people ethnologically significant, for the main source of information dealing with pre-colombian Mayan civilization are accounts by Spanish priests, soldiers, or indians educated by the Spanish. The opportunity to study a Mayan belief system practically untainted by Spanish or Christian thought is extremely valuable. Traditional Mayan belief systems had been largely forgotten or altered by the early seventeenth century as a consequence of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Thus the study of Lacandon mythology and religion is important for it represents a link to the civilization of the ancient Maya.
Chapter II

There are seventy-seven people living in Naha', forty men and thirty-seven women. Several more Lacandon families live nearby in relative seclusion about one hour's walk away. They are not counted in the following information. The age distribution of the people in Naha' is as follows.

Table I

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<tr>
<th>Age Distribution in Naha'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Polygyny is occasionally practiced among the people of Naha' as it is generally among traditional Mayan groups, though it has been banned by the missionaries in Lacanha and Mensäbäk. In Naha', only Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo have more than one wife, Chan K'in having three and Mateo two. Polygyny can either be a matter of prestige, as is the case with Chan K'in Viejo who is respected and even feared throughout the area, or, as in the case of Mateo Viejo, practicality. When Mateo's first wife was unable to have children they agreed that he should take a second wife. Multiple wives in a family can cause problems. Nations (1979) describes the cases of new teenage brides in Mensäbäk being starved and beaten by older co-wives. But in Naha' this does not seem to have been a problem. Chan K'in Viejo's second wife Koh says that she and her co-wives get along well together sharing the workload and taking care of their husband and families. She said that they even
alternate cooking days to ensure a continual rotation of kitchen duties. In fact, the Lacandon family structure in a household with multiple wives resembles separate distinct families united only through the husband as its head. Though all wives split the workload in the milpa, gathering firewood, etc., each wife is in charge of her own children. The responsibility of feeding and caring for them is not shared.

In many aboriginal societies the women do the majority of the work and provide a large percentage of the food protein while men generally hunt. This is not true in Naha' where the work load is fairly evenly shared between men and women. Men are responsible for the heavy work in the milpa, cutting, clearing and burning it prior to planting. They also hunt and are responsible for the spiritual well-being of their families. Ritual action is almost totally a male responsibility. Women, on the other hand, are responsible for the care of the home, children, chickens, and the preparation of food. Although these divisions seem clear cut, in fact they overlap a great deal. Planting, weeding, and harvesting crops in the milpa is shared, the men and women going to the milpa together and spending the morning working. Gathering firewood and caring for the children, technically women's work, is also usually shared. Paco, son-in-law to Chan K'in Viejo, often spends his free time carrying his two baby girls around with him as he visits with the other men.

The children in a family also do a great deal of work. As soon as a child is old enough to swing a machete, he will begin helping with the work in the fields. By the age of eight or nine young girls will begin to care for their younger siblings, carrying them slung in a
Figure 2

One page of the codex Tro-Cortesiano (Villacorta 1933:292). The black figure in the upper panel is planting maize with a digging stick, a practice which contemporary Lacandon still follow.
scarf on their back as they do their chores. Young boys help in the milpa, gather firewood, fish, and if old enough may go hunting with their fathers. Children old enough to walk and fend for themselves are generally expected to begin to learn adult roles and responsibilities.

The preparation of a milpa begins with clearing an area of jungle with a machete. The trees and underbrush are cut a month or two before burning and allowed to dry in the sun. In late April and early May the underbrush is burned, depositing a layer of fertilizing ash over the field. The new field is then planted using a digging stick. A hole is poked in the ground, seed dropped in, and the hole covered (see Fig. 2).

Probably the most arduous task is weeding the milpa once the corn begins to sprout. A family will have to spend several hours every day pulling the weeds by hand or cutting them with a machete, for all of the milpa work is done by hand.

In the late fall when the corn is ripe the ears are usually left on the stalk but bent over, pointing downward, so that rain does not seep in and mold the ear. The family then can come to the milpa every few days to pick just enough corn to fill their immediate needs. There is often no large scale harvesting effort.

Because of the degree of intermarriage between families in Naha', a kinship diagram illustrating the relationships between families is prohibitively complex to draw. But I provide a chart of Chan K'in Viejo's family together with some of the basic inter-familial relationships manifested in Naha (see Fig. 3 and Table III).
Chan K'in Viejo's family (living in Naha), and its interaction with Antonio's household.

Figure 3
The village is organized into four clusters of households plus two families I have named independents because they are not living near their parents (see Table II). The main clusters are formed by 1) The households of Chan K'in Viejo, his son Chan K'in Joven, and Chan K'in Viejo's sons-in-law, Paco and K'in Panni-Agua; 2) The households of Mateo Viejo and his sons-in-law K'in (son of Chan K'in Viejo), Nuxi, and Kayum; 3) The cluster formed by Antonio's household (he is Chan K'in Viejo's oldest son-in-law) and Antonio's sons-in-law Kayum and Bol, both sons of Chan K'in Viejo; and 4) The cluster composed of Mateo Joven (Mateo Viejo's oldest son) and his family together with his son-in-law Juan Jose. The independents are Jose Celoso and his family and Chan K'in, another son of Chan K'in Viejo, and his wife and baby.

The outlined population distribution highlights an important problem for the young unmarried men in Naha'. There are five men who are now or are soon to be of marriageable age, and only two women who in a couple of years will be ready to marry. This presents a problem. Choosing a woman from the outside, i.e. Chamula, Tzotzil, or Tzeltal Maya, for a wife is forbidden by their fathers, which leaves them the choice of moving to Mensãbãk or Lacanha and taking Christian wives, an option which one man from Naha' took and now says he regrets. Further it is debatable if a father-in-law living in Mensãbãk or Lacanha would allow a son-in-law to take his daughter back to Naha' when the term of brideservice has expired. Men marrying women from Naha' are expected to live there. I believe the Christian communities would react in a similar fashion.
Table II

Organization of Households in Naha'

I. The Compound of Chan K'in Viejo.
   a. Chan K'in Viejo's household
   b. Chan K'in Joven's household
   c. Paco's household
   d. K'in Panni-Agua's household

II. The Compound of Mateo Viejo.
   a. Mateo Viejo's household
   b. Nuxi's household
   c. Kayum's household
   d. K'in I's household

III. The Compound of Antonio.
    a. Antonio's household
    b. Kayum's household
    c. Bol's household

IV. The Compound of Mateo Joven.
    a. Mateo Joven's household
    b. Juan Jose's household

V. The Independents.
   a. Jose Celosa's household
   b. Chan K'in IV's household
Table III
Breakdown of Naha's Population by Household

I. Chan K'in Viejo's household.
   Chan K'in Viejo
   wife 1- Koh
   wife 2- Koh
   unmarried children of wife 2- K'in II
   wife 3- Koh
   unmarried children of wife 3- Chan Nuk
   Chan K'in
   Chan Bol
   Chan Kayum
   Nuk
   Och (unnamed male infant)

II. Chan K'in Joven's household.
   Chan K'in Joven (son of Chan K'in Viejo's first wife)
   wife- Nuk
   unmarried children of Nuk- Chan Nuk
   Och (unnamed female infant)

III. Paco's household.
    Paco
    wife- Nuk (daughter of Chan K'in Viejo)
    unmarried children of Nuk- Chan Nuk
    Och (unnamed female infant)

IV. K'in Panni-Agua's household.
    K'in Panni-Agua
    wife- Koh (daughter of Chan K'in Viejo)
    unmarried children of Koh- Nuk

V. Mateo Viejo's household.
    Mateo Viejo
    wife 1- Koh
    wife 2- Nuk
    unmarried children of wife 2- K'in
    Chan K'in
    Chan Nuk
    Nuk
    Chan Kayum
VI. Nuxi's household.

Nuxi
wife (daughter of Mateo Viejo)
unmarried children- Chan K'in
  Chan Bol
  Och (unnamed female infant)
  Och (unnamed male infant)

VII. Kayum's household.

Kayum
wife- Nuk (daughter of Mateo Viejo) Kayum's younger brother-Bol
unmarried children of Nuk- Kayum's mother
  Chan K'in
  Chan Nuk

VIII. K'in I's household.

K'in I (son of Chan K'in Viejo's first wife)
wife- Nuk (daughter of Mateo Viejo) Kayum
unmarried children of Nuk- Kayum
  Chan K'in
  Chan Nuk

IX. Antonio's household.

Antonio
wife- Chan Nuk (daughter of Chan K'in Viejo's first wife)
unmarried children of Chan Nuk- Chan K'in
  Chan K'in
  Chan Bol
  Chan Nuk
  Och (unnamed female infant)

X. Kayum's household.

Kayum (son of Chan K'in Viejo's second wife)
wife- Nuk (daughter of Antonio)
unmarried children of Nuk- Chan Kayum
  Chan Nuk
  Chan K'in
Table III
(page 3)

XI. Bol's household.

Bol (son of Chan K'in Viejo's second wife)
   wife- Chan Nuk
   unmarried children of Chan Nuk- Och (unnamed male infant)

XII. Mateo Joven's household.

Mateo Joven (son of Mateo Viejo)
   wife- Chan Nuk (Margarita), daughter of Chan K'in Viejo
   unmarried children of Chan Nuk- K'in
   Chan Nuk
   Mateo's maternal grandmother

XIII. Juan Jose's household.

Juan Jose
   wife- Margarita (daughter of Mateo Joven)

XIV. Chan K'in IV's household.

Chan K'in IV (son of Chan K'in Viejo's second wife)
   wife- Nuk
   unmarried children of Nuk- Och (unnamed male infant)

XV. Jose Celosa's household.

Jose Celosa
   wife- Nuk
   unmarried children of Nuk- Chan Nuk
   Chan K'in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinship Term</th>
<th>Maternal</th>
<th>Paternal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grandmother-</td>
<td>chiich</td>
<td>miim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandfather-</td>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>sukuno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother-</td>
<td>Nah</td>
<td>tet- father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother's sister-</td>
<td>Nah</td>
<td>ishkit- father's sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother's brother-</td>
<td>Ækän</td>
<td>yum- father's brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother's sister's husband-</td>
<td>Ækän</td>
<td>father's sister's husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother's brother's wives-</td>
<td>mu</td>
<td>nah- father's brother's wives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ego**

- Ego's older brother- sukun
- Ego's older sister- kiik
- Ego's younger siblings- itsin
One concept, probably once important in Lacandon marriages but with little importance today, is the onen. The onen is an animal name, patrilineally transmitted, which is used as a surname. For example, Old Chan K'in (and thus all of his family) is of the ma'ax, "spider monkey" onen. Thus his proper name, and the name which is used in documents, is Chan K'in Ma'ax. Bruce (1979:20) believes the Lacandon to have once practiced onen endogamous marriages, but a severe reduction in the Lacandon population in the first part of this century led to the breakdown of this rule.¹ Today the concept is important only in the analysis of dreams, where dreaming of an animal may refer to a person. For example, to dream of a spider monkey could mean you would soon see a person of the ma'ax onen, or simply that you would see a spider monkey.

The Lacandon recognize several different onen, all which have a common animal name or two, plus a ceremonial name. Table V lists the Lacandon onen (p. 21). The onen is often compared to other systems of human/animal classification such as totemism and nahualism which, strictly speaking, it is not. A person's onen is not their totem because the Lacandon do not believe they are descended from these animals. Further, it is also not a nahual because men cannot take the form of these animals, though other indian groups in the area do believe in nahuals which the Lacandon claim are therefore their onen.

All known living Lacandon, according to Bruce (1979:22), are divided into only four onen. The northern Lacandon have two, Ma'ax and K'ek'en,

¹For a statistical breakdown of Lacandon marriages by onen see Bormanse, 1978:pp. 366-368.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lacandon Onen (from Bruce 1979:21)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ma'ax, &quot;spider monkey&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba'ats, &quot;howler monkey&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'ek'en, &quot;wild boar-peccary&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitam, &quot;wild boar-collared peccary&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuk, &quot;small deer&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keh, &quot;mule deer&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'ambul, &quot;curaso&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koox, &quot;wild turkey&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aakabak, &quot;raccoon&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunk'inbak or ah ts'uts'u, &quot;coati mundi&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale', &quot;paca&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsup, &quot;prairie dog&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilu', &quot;quail&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunk'uk', &quot;eagle&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balum, &quot;jaguar&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chåk balum, &quot;puma&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa'hol, &quot;badger&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uuk, &quot;dove&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ts'ul, &quot;dove&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo', &quot;macaw&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka'cho' or T'ut', &quot;parrot&quot;</td>
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</table>
while the southern Lacandon have three, K'ek'en, Yuk, and K'ambul. Chan K'in Viejo's grandmother is said to have been of the Aakäbäk onen, but all members of the other onen have either been assimilated into Mexican society or have died.

The Lacandon gods are also classified into onen, though they only belong to three, Ma'ax, K'ek'en, and Yuk. Further, their onen classification seems to group them into solar and earth deities. Table VI, based on information in the Lacandon myth of the creation of the gods (see Bruce, 1974:25-34) illustrates this division.

Chan K'in Viejo believes that all human beings have onen, including foreigners. If we do not know what our onen is, it is merely a sign that we have forgotten our traditions. Though I told the men of Naha' I did not know what my onen was, they joked that it must be Miso' because my name, Juan, was similar to Ah wan, "partridge", which is the name of a character in the Lacandon story "Wan T'ut' K'in", "Partridge, Parrot, Sun". Because of this linguistic similarity it was speculated that my onen must be T'ut' (Miso'), and making puns based on Juan/Wan became a popular activity in public situations in which I was present.

The jungle surrounding Naha' is dotted with small Tzeltal settlements, mostly immigrants from Guatemala and the highlands of Chiapas who have moved into the area within the last twenty years. In general, though the Lacandon often hire them to do heavy labor such as felling trees or building house frames, the Lacandon intensely distrust and dislike the Tzeltal and not completely without justification. The
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table VI</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classification of Lacandon Gods By Onen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ma'ax Onen - k'uh yok'ol ka'an, &quot;gods in the sky&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hachäkyum, &quot;Our True Lord&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itzanal, assistant to Hachäkyum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ak'inchob, &quot;Cross Eyed Lord&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Säkähpuk, &quot;White Jaguar/Destructor&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'ulel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bol, god of ba'alche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayum,&quot;god of music&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'in, &quot;Sun&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K'ek'en Onen - k'uh yok'ol k'ax, &quot;gods in the forest&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mensäbäk, &quot;Maker of Powder&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ts'ibatnah, &quot;Painter of Houses&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itzanok'uh,&quot;god of lakes and hail&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Känänk'ax, &quot;Guardian of the Forest&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<th>Yuk Onen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Äh K'ak', &quot;Fire&quot;</td>
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</table>
Tzeltals consider the Lacandon savages and have in the past stolen from their milpas and driven livestock through fields to ruin the crops and force the Lacandon to move. In turn, the Lacandon avoid the Tzeltals considering them inferior and unintelligent.

The present site of Naha' is new. The Lacandon moved from the old site in 1979 after a government-operated clinic had been built near them. They now live about two miles farther away "to get away from all those sick indians."

Since the move, Lacandon house building techniques have undergone a great deal of innovation. The traditional dirt-floored, thatched-roof hut has largely been replaced by huts with cement slab floors, board walls, and tin roofs. A government house building program provided the opportunity for even greater change, supplying the materials to make cinder block houses. Now three men who took advantage of the offer, Antonio, Kayum, and Mateo Joven, have two-roomed white-washed, cement block houses. They use these homes only for sleeping and storage, however. Following the traditional Lacandon pattern, most of the everyday work, visiting, cooking, and eating are done in separate huts built near the main house.

The people of Naha' communally own three trucks, two pickups and a flat bed, given to them through the office of the governor of Chiapas. These trucks are used mainly for transportation to and from nearby villages. Chan K'in Joven, the president of Naha' and owner of the town store, reserves the use of one truck for conducting village political affairs and hauling supplies for his store. In his dual role
he travels quite a bit between Tuxtla, the capital of the state of Chiapas, San Cristobal, and Palenque, often being gone for several days a week.

Naha' is also special in one other respect. Largely through the work of the linguist Robert Bruce, with minor help from Mike Rees and myself, the village has been supplied with electricity using a simple generating system. Naha' is built at the base of a hill. About forty meters above the village is the source of a good sized stream. Bruce built a small reservoir at this spot. Out of this dam, down the hill to a water turbine, runs a three inch plastic pipe. The fifty meter drop gives the water enough force to spin the turbine which powers an automobile generator hooked to the turbine with a fan belt. The generator charges a bank of four automobile batteries which provides the electricity. Technically, there are two systems, one AC, the other DC. The first houses with electricity were wired to current directly from the car batteries which supplied enough power to provide each house with light from two or three very small lamps, about the size of lights used in automobile taillights. Now the system has been expanded and modified with the addition of an alternator and power inverter so that lights can be installed which use AC current and have greater lighting power. Houses on the new system each have two or three twenty to forty watt bulbs, with the old DC lights as a backup system. Currently, everyone in the village has lights and can power small electric devices such as tape players on this system which is simple and virtually maintenance free.
During the day the system is switched off allowing the batteries to charge. At dusk it is turned on.

One further advantage of this system is that enough pressure is generated in the pipe feeding the water turbine to run hoses with taps off of the pipe to various areas. Now every two or three houses share a fresh water tap placed just outside of their doors. Women no longer have to carry buckets of water from the stream.
Chapter III

The history of the present day Lacandon is problematic. Although some disagree, there is linguistic and historical evidence to support the contention that they are not the original inhabitants of the area in Chiapas in which they now live, but are, historically speaking, fairly recent immigrants. The contemporary Lacandon speak a dialect of Yucatecan Maya while the other Indians around them speak Tzeltal or Chol, all dialects of Mayan, but not closely enough related to be easily mutually intelligible. The Lacandon are thus a small island of Yucatecan-speaking people surrounded by a sea of Chol and Tzeltal speakers (see Fig. 4). Based on historical evidence, it appears that the original inhabitants of the area spoke Chol. Tozzer (1912:497-509) cites a manuscript letter written in 1595 which contains a reference to Chol-speaking people in the area of the town of Dolores, south of Lake Miramar near the Lacantun River (see Fig. 4). Father Pedro Lorenzo, Bishop of Chiapas in 1560, the man responsible for evangelizing and resettling the Indians in the area where the Lacandon live today, was a skilled speaker of both Chol and Tzeltal and does not mention the presence of a Yucatecan-speaking people in the area. Father Lorenzo appears to have had a thorough knowledge of the area. He founded the settlement of Pochutla (near Dolores), then transferred the inhabitants of that area to the town of Ocosingo. He was also responsible for founding the settlements of Tumbala, Tila, and Palenque, all peopled by Chol-speaking Indians who had been brought out of the surrounding jungle. Thus it appears probable that the Lacandon came to this area after Lorenzo's work, for there is no record of contact with Yucatecan-speaking peoples at this time.
Figure 4. (Thompson, 1970:6)

A Linguistic Map of the Maya Area.
Using historical evidence plus material from Lacandon ritual and mythology, I shall address several questions in this work. First, I shall support the thesis that the present-day Lacandon are descendents of Yucatecan Maya who left the Yucatan for the jungles of Chiapas and I shall examine evidence to explain why and when this migration took place. Second, I shall present an hypothesis to explain why the contemporary Lacandon of Naha' have not followed the pattern of their neighbors and converted to Christianity. Third, I will outline the survival of ancient patterns of symbolism, primarily revolving around human sacrifice and cannibalism, which survive in contemporary Lacandon ritual.

When discussing the Lacandon, one first must deal with the term "Lacandon" itself, for the word was a term used by the Spanish to describe the non-Christian Indians within a geographical area covering Chiapas and part of the modern state of Tabasco. In the sixteenth century it was not the name for one specific group of people as it is today. There is no way of knowing exactly how many groups were included under the term, a fact which confuses historical accounts considerably. As the original Lacandon were apparently Chol-speaking people, how did the name come to refer to a small group of Yucatecan-speaking people? The answer, I believe, lies in the linguistic analysis of the term Lacandon. There are two conflicting hypotheses which attempt to explain it. The first, by Thompson (1972:4), states that the term Lacandon is derived from the word "Acalan," the Chontal Maya name for the land between the estuaries of the Usumacinta and Pasión Rivers. At the end of the ninth century, the Chontal Maya, native to Southern Campeche,
expanded south into Chiapas. They named the area of their settlements "Acalan," or "Land of the Canoe People," after their homeland, for the Chontal were known as great merchants, trading goods throughout Mexico by both land and sea. There is historical evidence to support this theory for there were pockets of land in the central Mayan area called "Acalan" at the time of the Spanish conquest probably inhabited by Chontal Maya (see Map I). I believe, however, that the second theory, offered by Robert Bruce, more effectively utilizes the available historical information. Bruce believes that the term Lacandon was derived from the Mayan words "ah acantun," "to set up stone, stone pillars, or stone idols." Bruce writes (1979:4), "Ah acantun would be a convenient term by which their (the Lacandon's) christianized Maya neighbors would call them 'the idolators, the pagans,' or 'those who worship stones.'" Bruce's explanation is supported by historical and archeological evidence. The original Lacandon were Chol-speaking Maya. Early sources describing Chol religion say that they did not have idols, worshipping phenomena of nature such as mountains instead. But the present day Lacandon speak Yucatecan Maya and pray and make offerings to clay "godpots," incense burners with figures of their gods modeled on them; a practice probably introduced into the Yucatan by northern Mexican indians during the Toltec invasion in the tenth century. Furthermore, by the mid-seventeenth century, Chol-speaking Franciscan missionaries working in Chiapas had sent for Yucatecan-speaking priests to work with a large group of Yucatecan-speaking indians concentrated in a settlement called Nohha, near the town of Palenque. Nohha was located by Soustelle (1937:3) near a Lake
Nohaa (see Fig. 4). Lake Nohaa is also referred to as Lake Naha and may be the same lake near which is built the present day Lacandon settlement of Naha. Bruce's explanation not only matches the historical evidence, it explains why the term is applied to a Yucatecan immigrant group and not the original inhabitants of the area. Lacandon was probably the name given the Yucatecan worshipers of stone idols by the native Chol. The term, I believe, was then adopted by the Spanish as a general name for the non-Christian Indians in Chiapas. The original and correct usage of the term has survived and today is confusing because of its historically incorrect usage by Spanish chroniclers. What is important to note is that by 1646 there was a well-established community of Yucatecan-speaking Maya, who worshipped stone idols, in a concentration large enough to warrant a special mission sent from the Yucatan; and that the name Lacandon had been adopted and was in use as early as 1579 when Melchor de Alfaró Santa Cruz used it on his map of the province of Tabasco. On this map he located the Ocumanicinta (Usumacinta) River and described it in this manner: "The river rises from some large lakes of Lacandon where there is a pueblo of infidels." ¹ It is even possible that the seventeenth century Mayans in the village of Nohha were the ancestors of the contemporary Lacandon. The similarity in the names Nohha and Naha may not be mere coincidence. We know that in the mid-1500's during the initial subjugation of Chiapas, there is no mention of Yucatecan Maya in the area, but by 1646 there is a large,

¹This map can be found in Scholes and Roys, 1948.
well established community of Yucatecan speaking Indians near Palenque. The Indians of Nahha, were described in this manner, (Scholes and Roys, 1948:45-46)

A Dominican friar from Chiapas made little progress in Christianizing the people, since they spoke only Yucatecan Maya, but subsequently Franciscan missionaries came from Yucatan and lived among them for a time. Nohha is described as being about 15 or 18 leagues from Tenosique on the other side of the river... The missionaries reported that the people of Nohha were monogamous. From what little we know of their religious organization, it somewhat resembled that of the Maya (Yucatecan Maya). A priest had charge of their idols. He was assisted in his ceremonies by an "ah kulel," or deputy, and an "ah kayom," which means singer or chanter. A daughter of one of these men prepared the sacred breadstuffs, and no other woman was present at the sacrifices. Human sacrifice was practiced, accompanied by excision of the heart and ceremonial cannibalism.

Many points in this description are similar to contemporary Lacandon behavior. While the Lacandon technically practice polygyny, most men in Naha' never take more than one wife at a time. There is no formal office of priest among the Lacandon today, but there is the "to'ohil," an older man noted and respected for his knowledge of traditional rituals and mythology and in Naha' the "to'ohil" owns most of the godpots, or "idols," used in the rituals. Kulel is a minor god, an assistant to Hachakyum, principle deity of the Lacandon, and Kayom is the Lacandon god of song and music. Among the Lacandon, women prepare the ritual foodstuffs used as offerings for the gods, and are not allowed into the godhouse where the rituals are held, much like the women of Nohha. Finally, though human sacrifice and cannibalism is no longer practiced by the people of Naha', I shall demonstrate later that both practices survive in symbolic form, in the religious rituals of the contemporary Lacandon in Naha'.
One explanation for the Yucatecan origins of the Lacandon involves archeological evidence found in the ruins of the Yucatecan Mayan city of Mayapan. After the defeat of the Itza Maya in the early thirteenth century, and until the mid fifteenth century, the city state of Mayapan ruled the Yucatan (see Table VII). An indication of Mayapan's influence is the presence of pottery and architectural remains influenced by Mayapan in Belize, the east coast of the Yucatan, and in the Peten, heart of the classic Mayan empire.² The rise of Mayapan highlights several interesting changes in Mayan society. At this time the first Mayan walled-cities were built in the Yucatan, indicating a rise in militarism. Until this time large scale defensive fortifications were unknown at lowland Maya sites. Also, at this time, organized religion seems to lose its predominance in Mayan society.

The formal temples at Mayapan are small and crudely made. Private dwellings, especially the homes of the aristocracy, have, in some cases, much better masonry work than the temples. Most homes had a room in the house or a special outbuilding devoted to a family shrine. This evidence of private worship may indicate the decreasing importance of organized religion. An important bit of archeological evidence is that at Mayapan, for the first time, are found quantities of coarse pottery incense burners. The practice of using incense burners molded in the form of gods for personal worship may have spread from Mayapan, for it is one of the more influential sites known to contain a large

Table VII

Events in the Yucatan During the Lacandon Migration Period (taken from Morley 1956:92-93).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>987, November 27</td>
<td>Chichen Itza occupied by the Itza, Mayapan founded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1007, August 15</td>
<td>Uxmal founded, League of Mayapan, a treaty between Chichen Itza, Mayapan, and Uxmal began.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1194, November 22</td>
<td>League of Mayapan ends, Itza driven from Chichen Itza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1204, September 30</td>
<td>Mayapan ascends to power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1441, January 6</td>
<td>Destruction of Mayapan, end of centralized authority in the Yucatan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1464, September 23</td>
<td>Hurricane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500, June 11</td>
<td>First epidemics, possible smallpox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1511</td>
<td>Spaniards first seen in the Yucatan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1542, January 6</td>
<td>Merida founded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1546</td>
<td>Conquest of the Yucatan completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>Tayasal, island capital of the Itza Maya visited by the Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697, July 27</td>
<td>Tayasal destroyed by the Spanish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
number of fragments of incense burners in shrines. This fact is important, since the Lacandon worship with incense burners while the sixteenth century Chol did not, further evidence that the Lacandon migrated from the Yucatan, bringing the practice with them.

Mayapan was sacked about the year 1441. Archeological evidence indicates that the city was burned. Centralized government in the Yucatan ended at this point, plunging the area into a prolonged civil war between rival city-states, a war which was not ended until the Spanish conquest of the Yucatan. I believe this to be the earliest point at which the Lacandon could have moved into Chiapas, for at the time of their migration they were idolators, thus the Chol name, Lacandon, "those who worship stone." If they had moved before the rise of Mayapan, it seems unlikely that they would have carried the practice of worship using incense burners with them, for it was not customary before Mayapan became an influential power in the Yucatan. A civil war would have provided ample reason for large groups of Yucatecan Maya to move from their homeland.

Although civil strife in the Yucatan during the mid-fifteenth century, as indicated by the construction of defensive fortifications around Mayan cities and the sacking of Mayapan, provides a possible explanation for the Lacandon migration, it is merely speculation. The Lacandon themselves preserve no account of such an event in their oral history, and the earliest Spanish missionaries did not contact Yucatecan speaking-indians when they first entered Chiapas. To the contrary, Bruce argues that the Lacandon are the original inhabitants of the area they now inhabit. He writes (1976:186):
All data from these Lacandones' traditions tend to associate the Northern group with Palenque, and the Southern group with Yaxchilan, and until I am given reasons more convincing than the inferences of my own investigations (from 1953 to present) to believe otherwise, I shall continue to consider them the direct descendents of the theocratic nobility of the mentioned ceremonial sites.

Bruce utilizes several lines of evidence to support this view. He cites the Lacandon belief that Palenque is the center of the world and the home of the gods. For example, contemporary Lacandon believe the "Palacio" at the ruins of Palenque to be the home of "Hach'kyum," the principle Lacandon deity. Similarly, the tower within the "Palacio" is thought to be the home of "Hach'kyum's" son "T'uuup." Second, Bruce believes that the Lacandon had a pre-knowledge of the "Ruz" burial in the Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque, preserved in their mythology before archeologists discovered its existence. Third, Bruce cites the fact that the Lacandon have no migration myth such as that of the Itza Maya, which preserves an account of their expulsion from Chichen Itza and subsequent migration to the island of Tayasal. Bruce also argues that the division of the traditional Lacandon gods into solar and earth deities supports his view, for while the Lacandon gods are predominately the same as those of the pre-conquest Maya of the Yucatan, they are given a different emphasis by the two groups. The most important gods of the Yucatecan Maya were the "Chacs," the gods of rain, which were crucial to the cycle of maize production in the Yucatan. But by far the most important gods to the Lacandon are the solar deities, which Bruce believes to be evidence of the aristocratic nature of the Lacandon's ancestors. Finally, there is the Lacandon myth
"U Lak' Mensåbæk" "The Wife of Mensåbæk," which can be interpreted to support Bruce's theory. The following version is my translation of the myth which was collected by Bruce (1974:196-204).

The Wife of Mensåbæk

1. There was Mensåbæk, first there was his house on the Pala'iso Hill.

2. He had two wives. First, the original wife born in the båknikte' flower.

3. Later, he saw the pretty daughter of San Antonio, living in the town of Dolores.

4. He asked her father. He asked her mother. Her father said, "Certainly you may take her. I give her to you."

5. Mensåbæk went to work (brideservice) for two days. He took money, he paid her father. He took his wife and they went to his house.

6. Her father did not like it. Her father said, "Here you sit your village (build your house compound) ... near here." (Lacandon son-in-laws live with their wife's family during the term of their brideservice).

7. Mensåbæk answered, "Good... eeh good."

8. Mensåbæk's father-in-law said, "You go and watch, you call my servants. You see if their work is good, for you pay my servants."

9. Mensåbæk was frightened. "I have no strength for this work. I am scared of my father-in-law."

10. Mensåbæk left. He said to his father-in-law, "I am going to my house. I will come to visit here and do my work."

11. San Antonio said, "Here is your work. Do not go to your house."

12. Mensåbæk said, "Eeh good." Mensåbæk went to his house.

13. After five days he came. He did not show himself to his father-in-law. He went to the spring.

14. The daughter of San Antonio was washing her father's clothes. Mensåbæk saw she was alone there washing clothes. He called, "Eh, let's go."
15. She said, "Good, let's go. My clothes washing is not important." She came and they fled.

16. Mensåbåk said to those guarding the house, "Do not talk to me. I am going. I give you my house. Take my house."

17. The guardian of the house answered, "Go."

18. They went then to the lake. He concealed his trail. He covered it.

19. San Antonio came to the house. There was no one. He said to the guard at the house, "My daughter is not here? Where is Mensåbåk?"

20. The guard answered, "No one. Mensåbåk is not here."


22. The guard answered, "I do not know."

23. San Antonio had many men. They wanted to tie Mensåbåk's hands and shut him in the house.

24. They searched. They did not see him. Two times they came and searched. No one. Nothing. They asked, "Do you know? Go and show us."

25. The guard of the house answered, "I do not know. I can not show you."

26. Good. Mensåbåk's father-in-law forgot. Mensåbåk was there one year. He did not show himself.

27. After two years he went to see his father-in-law. Arriving he again saw the house of his father-in-law, he was happy.

28. He saw his child there the son of Mensåbåk, he said to his father-in-law, "Eh, very good."

29. The wife of Mensåbåk arrived she talked with her mother. Mensåbåk was very happy. He drank Trago with his father-in-law. The father-in-law of Mensåbåk was very happy.

30. After one year at the house of his father-in-law, Mensåbåk returned to his house. He called to his father-in-law, "Eh, I am going."

31. His father-in-law answered, "Eh, go. But return here."

32. Mensåbåk answered, "Here I will return."
This myth can be interpreted as Lacandon folk history. The town of Dolores was originally founded by the Spanish as a site at which to resettle and convert the Indians in that area. There was a major effort to bring the Indians out of the rainforest and into towns such as Dolores and Palenque (site of a temple pyramid called "The Palacio") in order that they could be better supervised. If the Lacandon were, in fact, native inhabitants of the area, then they may well have been subjected to resettlement into a Spanish community. The efforts of San Antonio to make Mensabak stay, work for him, and live near him, Bruce believes to be an account of the enforced Spanish resettlement of the Lacandon. San Antonio does, after all, say, "Here you will build your settlement...near here." And Mensabak not wanting to work for San Antonio, takes the daughter and runs away which can be interpreted as a rebellion by the Lacandon and their subsequent escape back into the jungle, an event which actually occurred with other Indian groups over all of Chiapas. The presence of renegade groups of Indians were a source of constant irritation to the Spanish missionaries. San Antonio, with many of his servants, look for the couple but are unable to find them; much I suppose, as a Spanish military force would have searched for a renegade group of Indians. The final reconciliation between Mensabak and his father-in-law may reflect the historical fact that the Spanish, unable to pacify the Lacandon, decided to leave them alone.

Though this whole argument is intriguing, it need not be accepted. Bruce's evidence can just as logically be interpreted in a simpler
manner. First, although Bruce says that contemporary Lacandon believe Palenque to be the center of the world, this is a common phenomenon in the world view of various Mayan groups. Gossen, (1974:8) writing about the Tzotzil Maya municipio of Chamula says, "The ceremonial center also contains within the central San Juan Church, what is believed to be the actual center of the universe or 'navel of the earth.'" Similarly, Vogt found the same belief among the Tzotzil of Zinacantecan who designate the center of the universe as the main Zinacantecan ceremonial center (Vogt, 1976:58). So, it would appear, that the Lacandon choice of Palenque as the center of the universe may not be significant. It seems to be merely a common Mayan cultural belief. While contemporary Lacandon say that the ruins of Palenque are the homes of the gods, I am not sure how old that belief is. Tozzer working with the Lacandon in 1903 and 1904 states that his informants believed the ruins of Yaxchilan to be the homes of the gods. In fact he specifies that Nohotsakyum (Hachäkyum), his son Ertub (T'uup), and T'uup's older brother Upal (Paaläkyum, who Tozzer mistakenly identifies as Hachäkyum's daughter), all lived at Yaxchilan. Chan K'in Viejo told Bruce that the homes of the gods were at Palenque, yet Tozzer's main Lacandon informant was Chan K'in, Viejo's father who, theoretically, taught Chan K'in Viejo about Lacandon mythology and ritual. Further, Davis' (1978:19) study of Lacandon cosmology, designates Yaxchilan as the center of the earth and includes a map illustrating this belief based on the instructions of Chan K'in Viejo (see Fig. 5). In a partial resolution to the contradiction Chan K'in Viejo does say that religious pilgramages were made only to
Figure 5
A Lacandon Map of the World
A copy of a map from the fieldnotes of Mike Rees, included also in Davis (1978:19).
Yaxchilan, never to Palenque, which would indicate that Yaxchilan was the more important of the two sites. It is possible that Palenque may have become important to the Lacandon only recently, in conjunction with its increasing importance as a tourist center.

The myth that Bruce believes proves the Lacandon's pre-knowledge of the "Ruz" burial in the Temple of Inscriptions at the ruins of Palenque is the "U k'ax xiw xa'an Hachäkyum" the "Palm-leaf Surrogate Man of Hachäkyum." In this myth Kisin, one of the gods of the Underworld, out of jealousy kills what he believes to be Hachäkyum but is in fact a surrogate made of palm leaves, created by Hacnäkyum in his own image. Believing his father to be dead, T'uup buries the surrogate and mourns for him while his father, in reality very much alive, is off making the Underworld and the sky. The Lacandon believe that the bones found in the Temple of Inscriptions are the k'ax xiw xa'an, Hachäkyum's palm leaf surrogate. While interesting, the myth itself only speaks of T'uup's burial of the k'ax xiw xa'an and does not locate the burial in any specific location. Furthermore, the burial was discovered before Bruce collected the myth from his informant. Thus it is entirely possible that the connection between the myth and the burial was made after the discovery of the burial, and is now used as a rationalization to support the authenticity of the myth's account.

Bruce's third point, that the Lacandon have no migration myth, is

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technically true. But, as I explain in detail later, I believe that the myth "U Tsimin ti' Hach Winik" the "Horses for the Lacandon," provides a great deal of accurate information about conditions in the Yucatan at the time of the Conquest, and supports the contention that the Lacandon were fleeing the Spanish invasion.

Bruce also argues that the importance of the Lacandon solar deities is evidence of their aristocratic heritage, while the importance of the rain gods in the Yucatan indicates a predominately peasant background. On the contrary, the differences in relative importance may simply reflect environmental circumstances. The Yucatan is very dry country. To compound the farmer's problems, not only is the soil dry and rocky, but the only available surface water is found in natural limestone wells, the cenotes. Therefore it seems natural that a people living under those conditions and depending on their corn crop to the extent that they deified maize would consider rainfall and the gods associated with it, the Chacs, of crucial importance. On the other hand, rainfall in the Lacandon jungle of Chiapas is not a problem. There is plenty of it. Nations (1979:8) estimates that there are 75 to 100 inches of rain a year in southern Chiapas. The Lacandon have never had the need to emphasize the rain deities at the expense of the solar deities as happened in the Yucatan. In fact the sun itself is not a deity of any importance in Lacandon religion today.

The last piece of evidence in support of Bruce's argument is in the interpretation of the myth "The Wife of Mensubak" as the oral-historical account of an actual event. While I use this form of
interpretation in other parts of this work, in this case there is a simpler explanation. The myth is quite possibly merely a parable about a social situation common in Lacandon marriages. In the traditional pattern of Lacandon marriage, the prospective husband negotiates with his future father-in-law until an agreement upon the length of brideservice has been reached. He then lives in his father-in-law's household with his new wife until his term of brideservice has been fulfilled. After that, he is free to take his wife back to his own community. This is the ideal situation. In real life, things may not work out so smoothly. A young man unhappy with his in-laws, or chafing under an unreasonable term of brideservice, might simply take his wife and leave one day, hiding from his father-in-law until everyone's anger has subsided and a reconciliation can be made. The myth about the wife of Mensābāk may simply be a type of parable about a fairly common situation among Lacandon families. I believe that the historical evidence, and evidence that I will present from Lacandon mythology and ritual, overwhelmingy demonstrates the Yucatecan origin of the Lacandon, no matter how interesting the other theories. In the following chapter I will elaborate on the most probable hypothesis accounting for the origins of the Lacandon, that is, that the ancestors of the contemporary Lacandon fled the Yucatan to escape the invasion of the Spanish.
Chapter IV

In 1517, the first Spanish military force, under the command of Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, sailed around the Yucatan, landing and fighting an engagement with Mayan Indians near the city of Champoton, close to the present day city of Campeche. Cordoba, who died of wounds suffered in this battle, lived long enough to carry an account of his adventures back to Cuba, and in 1519, Hernando Cortes accompanied by Francisco Montejo and a small military sailed from Cuba to the Yucatan for, as Landa wrote, "When he heard the news of so much land and riches he felt a desire to see them and even to acquire them for God and for his king, as well as for himself and his friends."\(^1\) Cortes, however, was unable to establish a permanent foothold in the Yucatan. In 1526, Montejo again attempted to establish a base there but was driven out in 1535. Finally, in 1540, Montejo and his son succeeded in conquering part of Campeche. In 1542, the city of Merida was founded on the site of the Mayan city of Tiho, and in 1543 the city of Valladolid was established. Finally, in 1546, one hundred and fifty missionaries were sent to the Yucatan and systematic attempts to Christianize the Indians began. This work was implemented quite quickly. By 1560 a bishop had been appointed for the province of Chiapas and the resettlement of the Chol-speaking Indians had begun. It is at this point with the resettlement of the Chol into towns such as Palenque and Ocosingo, that the Lacandon probably began to move in to Chiapas and settle in areas depopulated by the Spanish resettlement drives. I

believe that it is in the period between 1550-1580 that the Lacandon began to establish themselves in Chiapas, since by 1580 the term was adopted by the Spanish and had been generalized to refer to all of the non-Christian indians in Chiapas. Now it becomes important to look at conditions in the Yucatan prior to this period which may have precipitated a migration out of the area.

Although some of the Spanish undoubtedly truly believed in their mission to bring the word of God and civilization to the Indians, the conquest brought terrible hardships to the Maya. Disease, slavery, and resettlement all took a large toll of the native population. Concerning the pacification of the Indians Landa wrote (Tozzer, 1978: 60-61):

The Indians of the provinces of Cochua and Chetumal revolted, the Spanish pacified them in such a way, that these provinces which were formerly the thickest settled and the most populous, remained the most desolate of all the country; committing upon them unheard of cruelties, cutting off their noses, arms, and legs, and the breasts of women, throwing them into deep lagoons with gourds tied to their feet; stabbing the little children because they did not walk as fast as their mothers; and if those who they drove along, chained together around the neck, fell sick or did not move along as fast as the others, they cut off their heads between the others, so as not to stop and untie them. With like inhuman treatment as this did they drag along in their train for their services a large number of male and female captives.

The Spanish excused this type of conduct by saying that as they were few in number, they could not subjugate so many people without instilling terror in them, and the Spanish government granted Montejo the right to enslave natives if they were rebellious and refused to accept Spanish domination, or if they refused Christianity.
One method the missionaries used in their attempts to convert the natives was to resettle the Indians in larger towns near the monasteries. This program brought great hardship to the Indians. On this subject, Tozzer (1978:72) quoted from the Relacion of Dzonot which said,

These old Indians also say that one important reason why so many people have died was the depopulation of the pueblos where they were settled on their old sites in order to bring them near to the monasteries ... And in the pueblos which did not wish to leave their sites; he ordered their houses to be set on fire.

Disease also took a terrible toll of the Indian population. It has been estimated that there was a seventy-five percent decline in the native population in central Mexico between the years 1520-1600. Smallpox had been introduced by 1520. Native Yucatecan sources place its appearance in Katun 2 Ahau, which ran from June 1500 to February 1520. The author of the Relacion De Yucatan, in 1579, estimated that ninety percent of the Indian population had died in the thirty years between the conquest and 1579 because of

...the great infirmities and pestilences which there have been throughout the Indies and especially in this province, namely measles, smallpox, catarrhs, coughs, nasal catarrhs, haemorrhages, bloody stools, and high fevers which customarily break out in this province.

Some of these symptoms may refer to both influenza and malaria. Yellow fever also reached epidemic proportions. The author of the

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4Ibid., p. 53.
Chilam Balam of Chumayel wrote (Roys 1973:120), "In the year 1648 yellow fever occurred and the sickness began to afflict us..."
The first yellow fever epidemic in the Yucatan spread from Campeche to Merida, and from revised tribute lists, Scholes and Roys (1978:304) estimate that half the Indian population of the towns in the area died. Working with the records of the town of Chanaca, in the north-eastern corner of the Yucatan, Scholes and Roys (1948:324) estimated that in 1528 the town had three thousand men alone, not counting women and children. In 1543 this number had been reduced to between six and seven hundred people total, and by 1579 only twenty families lived in the town. Faced with enslavement and epidemic diseases, large numbers of Indians fled from the Yucatan. The assumption that the Lacandon were one such group is supported by evidence from the following Lacandon myth, "The Horses for the Lacandon."


2. He made cattle. He made pigs. He made dogs. He made cats, he made doves with chickens. He made (them) with Akyantho.

3. Akyantho made horses for the ladinos. He made cattle ... Akyantho with Hachákyum.

4. He made sheep, he made goats, he made dogs, he made cats, he made turkeys, he made chickens, he made pigs for the ladinos.

5. He made money for the authorities.

6. He made medicine. He made sickness with medicine. Hachákyum did not make them. Akyantho made all the diseases.

7. Akyantho and Hachákyum finished their creating, they gave (them) to the Lacandon.
8. Hachâkyum said, "Here are horses; enclose them, guard them, water them, feed them.

9. Here are pigs. For you pigs. For you chickens...turkeys. Take them all."

10. They took them; they enclosed them. (But) They all escaped from the Lacandon. In the morning all were gone.

11. Ñkyanño gave (them) to the Ladinos. "Here are horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, all for you. You guard them all."

12. The ladinos were good. They guarded. They watched the pigs. They watched the horses and cattle.

13. They were all tame, they guarded them all. They fed all the animals, they watered them.

14. Ñkyanño was happy. No animals escaped.

15. Hachâkyum said, "Eh, you are very good. Horses will carry the ladinos...forever.

16. Cattle, they are for pulling out trees. They are for meat to eat."

17. Ñkyanño said to the ladinos, "Cattle are to eat for meat. Horses do not eat for meat...they carry (things)."

18. He gave them money. "For you pay the people when they work for you."

19. Ñkyanño said, "In five days you untie your animals. Cattle you untie. Horses you untie. Pigs you untie...all of your animals. They will not escape. They are tame." After five days it was very good.

20. Hachâkyum said, "Eh, now I am not happy.

21. Now, no (iron) machetes for them (Lacandon). No one will go to make machetes for them...no axes.

22. They will search for stone to make their milpas.

23. They look for the ant mounds. They plant corn in the ant mounds.

24. They will have arrows...no guns. They will go to make bows with flint. They will go to search for flint."
25. Ækyantho answered, "No, Lord. They (Lacandon) can go to buy machetes...for I, I will show them (Ladinos) how to make all things."

26. Hachàkyum answered, "Eh, good you. The cattle do not escape. The animals do not escape. The Ladinos (shall) have all things.

27. In five years they (Lacandon) go and buy.

28. They make arrows, they sell them. They make candles, and sell them. They take axes...they take candles...with their machetes. All things they will buy. Thus the Lacandon will have no money... forever."

29. Hachàkyum said, "Eh good. Very good. It is good. There is salt... Eh good. They will eat the ashes of the Kun palm...the ashes of wood."5

In Lacandon society today, this myth is used as a rationalization to explain why the ladinos have horses, cattle, pigs, and guns, etc., and the Lacandon do not. It is also an accurate representation of the situation the Maya found forced upon them by the arrival of the Spanish. It supports the historical evidence left by sixteenth century Spanish and Mayan authors.

The Lacandon believe Hachàkyum to be the creator of mankind and the earth as we know it today. As such, he assumes responsibility for the welfare of the Lacandon. Ækyantho, on the other hand, is the god of foreigners. His dress is that of a foreigner and he is thought to wear a hat and carry a pistol. He not only watches over foreigners, but animals and objects as well, so horses, cattle, pigs, metal implements such as machetes and guns, and medicines are all within Ækyantho's sphere of influence. Bruce (1967:96) adds to this list of attributes,

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5This is the author's translation of the myth first collected by Bruce, 1974: 137-145.
that Äkyantho is also the god of money and commerce, is associated with the direction north, and may be a derivation of the ancient Mayan god Ek Chuah, god of markets and travellers.

In the myth, Äkyantho gives the ladinos objects unknown to the Maya until the arrival of the Spanish. For example, Äkyantho gives ta'ık'in literally "excrement of the sun" which refers specifically to gold or silver money, to the "wes," judges" or "authorities." The Mayan economy did not use a metal currency until the conquest. Throughout Meso-America the cacao bean was the principle medium of exchange with jade and spondylus shell beads as secondary units. Furthermore, the Lacandon are extremely egalitarian; the concept of a judge with authority over their lives is alien to them but is recognized as a foreign institution. Even today, though each village has a "presidente," who is an elected representative for business affairs, he is not an authority figure in a political organization. Furthermore, Äkyantho is given credit for creating diseases and the medicine to treat them. I do not believe that it is a coincidence that the god of foreigners is believed to have created diseases which after their initial introduction by the Spanish decimated the native population. The discussion on the mortality rates of indians in the Yucatan from measles, smallpox, and yellow fever, all introduced by the Spanish, makes the origin of that one attribute of Äkyantho quite clear.

In the myth, the Lacandon and ladinos are both given pigs,

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horses, and cattle, etc. But the Lacandon do not care for their animals, allowing them to run away into the jungle as they sleep. As a consequence of this action, the Lacandon are not given metal tools and guns. Therefore they must work their fields with stone tools, hunt with bows and arrows, and sell candles and bows and arrows to make money so that they can buy goods from the ladinos, which is a pattern of behavior they still follow. Once again, this reflects the actual historical situation. The Maya worked very little metal, using most of what they had for ornamentation; all their tools were of stone, bone, or wood. The Indians of Meso-America also had no large domesticated animals. The first cattle, horses, pigs, metal tools, and guns were all introduced by the Spanish. In the myth, Akyantho, the god of foreigners, is given credit for providing objects which, in historical reality, were first brought to Mexico by the Spanish.

Finally, one last support for this argument is based on Lacandon mythic geography. The ancient Maya associated the four cardinal directions with different gods. The Lacandon, still holding this belief, associate several of their gods with the cardinal directions. One such association is between Akyantho and the north. While this association may be coincidental, the route of the Spanish invasion from the Yucatan into Chiapas was from the north. The Lacandon associate the god of foreigners with the north, the direction from which the foreigners first came. The myth, intentionally or not, accurately reflects the historical circumstances surrounding the Spanish conquest.
and provides further evidence that the Lacandon were originally from the Yucatan.

In the Chi'am balam of Chumayel (Roys, 1967:79), it was written,

> It was only because these priests of ours were to come to an end when misery was introduced, when Christianity was introduced by the real Christians. Then with the true God, the true Dios, came the beginning of our misery. It was the beginning of strife with purse snatching, the beginning of strife with blowguns, the beginning of strife by trampling on people, the beginning of robbery with violence, the beginning of forced debts, the beginning of debts enforced by false testimony, the beginning of individual strife, a beginning of vexation, a beginning of robbery with violence. This was the origin of service to the Spaniards and the priests,...while the poor people were harassed. These were the very poor people who did not depart when oppression was put upon them.

I believe the ancestors of the contemporary Lacandon were people who did depart when oppression "was put upon them."
Chapter V

Lacandon men today are faced with a rapidly changing environment in which the traditional patterns of subsistence are becoming more difficult to maintain as they are pressured to adopt a money-based economic pattern. Traditional subsistence behavior revolves around swidden, or slash and burn agriculture. In the spring, Lacandon families clear plots of tropical forest and in April or May burn the accumulated overgrowth to refertilize the thin tropical soil. Soon after burning, the milpa is planted with beans, squash, onions, tomatoes, cotton, tobacco, and, most important of all, maize. To supplement this diet, the men hunt for deer, peccaries, monkeys, and other small mammals of the tropical forest. The Lacandon have traditionally lived in this isolated and self-sufficient manner. But within the last two generations, this pattern has been altered in response to the pressure of the expanding Mexican population and the rapid industrialization and modernization of the Mexican economy.

Summing up these problems, James D. Nations, director of investigations for the Center for Applied Human Ecology in Chiapas observes (1981:6-8),

Despite its ecological soundness and high productivity, however, the Lacandon agricultural system is disappearing along with the tropical rainforest which supports it. Like tropical forests throughout the world, the Lacandon jungle is being cleared and burned by the juggernaut of progress.

The main forces of destruction in Chiapas are colonization schemes and beef cattle production. Since 1940, more than 80,000 peasant farmers have migrated into the lowland Chiapas jungle in search of land and new lives. In a program similar to the U.S. Homestead Act, government agencies have opened up the area to families from the Chiapas highlands and from other areas of Mexico. Such programs are popular because
they help relieve demands for land reform in other regions, and thus, postpone the need to break up the large land holdings of influential families. The increasing population of rural farm families provides an equally important impetus.

The tragic flaw in these colonization programs is that the immigrant farmers are ill equipped to deal with the tropical forest environment. Unlike the Lacandon Maya, they do not carry the heritage of years of co-existence with the rain forest. They lacked the detailed understanding of plant-animal relationships, they plant grass for cattle instead of tree crops in abandoned garden plots, and their milpa fires burn out of control. As a result they frequently destroy large sections of forest in attempting to make the land produce.

Even more destructive than colonization is the practice of clearing the rainforest to plant pastureland for cattle ranches. Already, Mexican cattlemen have cleared and burned the northern third of the Lacandon jungle to produce beef cattle for the nation's growing urban population.

Faced with the decrease in available land, and a massive decline in the population of game animals in the area, Lacandon men have adapted to these changes in part by adopting the practice of making and selling items to tourists. These objects, primarily sets of bows and arrows and pottery, are taken to towns which are major tourist attractions, such as Palenque and San Cristobal, and sold. I have even seen Lacandon selling their wares in Merida, capital of the state of Yucatan, hundreds of miles from Chiapas.

Some have regarded this practice as unfortunate "commercialization" of the Lacandon, and it is invariably compared with the rise of the tourist trade within American Indian reservations, but the comparison is not valid. In the case of the American Indian, the tourist trade and subsequent commercialization of Indian culture were the result of deliberate reconstruction of a social system fifty years after it had
been obliterated for the purpose of promoting tourism as a means of income. The Lacandon's situation is very different. The Lacandon live in a rich environment, not dependent upon government support. Nor are they dependent on tourism; the income generated by the sale of items to tourists is merely a supplement. The milpa is still the base of Lacandon subsistence, occupying most of the working day, and allowing them to continue to retain a high degree of self sufficiency. The manufacturing of tourist items is done in a man's free time or on a rainy day, thus giving them, as I will demonstrate, the potential to raise a surprisingly large amount of money with a small investment of time. With money a man can buy canned goods, flashlights, batteries, shoes, cloth, and bullets. The trade in items for tourists in this case is an adaptive measure for the Lacandon. This is graphically illustrated by the following example. In 1981 Chan K'in Viejo's corn crop failed and by January 1982 he had run out of corn. He had immediately replanted his field but they would not be ready to harvest until July. The fact that he had money, generated in part by his family's sale of tourist items, allowed them to buy enough corn to feed themselves until their new crop was ready to harvest. Instead of this "commercialization" adversely affecting traditional patterns of behavior, just the opposite has occurred. The manufacture and sale of these items has been adopted into the traditional Lacandon family work structure and has become a family related enterprise just like milpa work or hunting. The introduction of technology and money does not unalterably lead to the breakdown of a communities traditional behavior patterns. Bellman and Jules-Rosette observed a
situation similar to that I experienced during their fieldwork in an African community. Writing about the effect of technology, specifically, the introduction of piped water and video-tape equipment into a village they wrote (1977:199-200),

...This comparison illustrates that technology in itself does not necessarily introduce new cultural principles. Rather, it is the uses to which community members allow technology to be put and the ways in which they initially conceive of it that influences its cultural effect.

Change, whether technological or cultural, does not necessarily introduce cultural destruction. In fact, I believe just the opposite to be occurring in Lacandon society today. As I shall illustrate, this method of generating income has been adapted into traditional patterns of economic behavior and, most important of all, is promoting the continued acceptance of traditional dress, appearance, and participation in traditional rituals by the younger generation of Lacandon men. Even as their rapid entry into modern Mexican culture erodes the traditional belief structures which are the rationalizations of the older men for the faith they hold, new reasons for belief are being accepted by the younger generation. Chan K'in Joven, president of Naha', summarized these views in a video-taped interview recorded in the summer of 1979. He said the Lacandon needed to promote traditional crafts to generate income. Specifically, he mentioned growing tobacco, making bow and arrow sets, flutes, and crafts such as pottery, all for sale to tourists. Recognizing the change in Lacandon culture, he advocates this trade in tourist items as one means to adapt to it. When asked if he thought this meant the Lacandon would lose their traditions he answered, "We will never lose our customs."
As my analysis of the ba'alche, the most common Lacandon communal ritual, and the more specialized nahwah ritual, will show, Lacandon ritual symbolism is very conservative. Though the forms of the rituals have changed over the centuries, the symbolism remains very close to its ancient Mayan roots. While the older men preserve their rituals out of faith and tradition, the younger men have added incentive. In Naha' rituals and traditional appearance are preserved by the younger men in part, because, 1) it serves to promote their reputation for being exotic and uncivilized thus promoting their trade in tourist items; and 2) these rituals are also a communal assertion of community, of "Lacandoness". In an environment which is rapidly changing in many directions, and faced with pressures to change traditional cultural patterns, these communal rituals are a reassertion of the solidarity and distinctive nature of the Lacandon community.

Further, the ba'alche ritual provides an outlet for unresolved tensions in the community, providing a non-violent method for dealing with conflict which the other Lacandon communities, because of the missionary's ban on ba'alche, lack. But before looking at the ba'alche ritual, I would like to discuss the Lacandon trade in tourist items, predominately, the sale of bow and arrow sets.

There is no doubt that Lacandon men can generate considerable income simply by working in their spare time making bow and arrow sets to sell to tourists. Bow and arrow construction is fairly simple, the only heavy labor involved being the cutting of oh', the large reeds which are dried and used as the base shaft of the arrow. Men will spend
several days harvesting oh', returning at the end of a day's work with a bundle of fifty or sixty. As each stalk is three to four meters long and can be used to make three or four arrows, each day's work represents a large quantity of arrows. In this way one year's supply of arrows can be gathered in less than a week. Gathering oh' does not interfere with milpa work for oh' cutting occurs in the late fall after the maize has ripened and has been bent over on its stalk in preparation for harvesting. The only work being done in the milpa at this time is harvesting or occasional weeding. The actual bow and arrow manufacturing process is piecework, done during leisure time or at night.

The process can be divided into several steps. They are 1) cutting oh', 2) making tok', the stone projectile points, 3) gathering and trimming feathers, usually chicken, turkey, or parrot, for the arrow shafts, 4) whittling the arrow's foreshaft out of wood (the foreshaft is fitted with a projectile point, then wedged into its base shaft of oh') and 5) carving the bows into shape with a machete. This process is the continuation of a skill the Lacandon have practiced for centuries. In fact, up until the early part of this century, all of their hunting was still done with bow and arrow. Today they have merely adapted the process to selling bows and arrows to tourists. What is interesting is how this process passed from the product of individual effort for use in hunting, to family-based production, including young men doing brideservice, for sale to tourists. The best way to demonstrate this is to describe the process in action as I witnessed it in Naha'.

Lacandon marriage is a long process of negotiation between a girl's
father and her suitor, involving a pattern of behavior which Bormanse (1981:251) has termed "ritual humiliation." The process involves repeated visits by the suitor always bringing small presents, such as cigars, to the girl's father while he in turn tells the suitor that his daughter is lazy and would make a bad wife. This pattern of behavior may be repeated continually for several months finally culminating with the young man moving into his father-in-law's household and starting his own milpa to demonstrate his independence and reliability. He then will stay with his father-in-law's household for an agreed length of time, hunting and helping in his father-in-law's milpa. Today this pattern has also absorbed the process of bow and arrow construction and vending. The whole family can become involved in the process though only the younger men, often with their wives, take the finished products to sell. In Chan K'in Viejo's family, it is his unmarried son K'in, together with his sons-in-law Paco and K'in Panni-Agua, who cut the oh' for the family's arrows. After cutting, the oh' are generally laid out on racks to dry in the sun. But on days that are damp or cloudy they will be dried over a fire. I have watched Chan K'in Viejo spend the better part of a day drying the oh' of his son-in-laws in this manner. While most of the money earned in the sale of bow and arrow sets is kept by the vendor; significantly, some of the profits are distributed to the head of the household compound. This pattern of distribution mirrors the traditional pattern of distribution for game killed in a hunt. In this case Chan K'in Viejo was chipping in with the lighter work, freeing the younger men for other tasks, though he did not have to help.
One of Chan K'in Viejo's married sons, Chan K'in IV, who had been seriously ill and was being supported by his father at the time, spent several hours a day trimming feathers for his younger brother's arrows, and Paco and K'in Panni-Agua made the stone points for all of the arrows. Even women may help in the process. I occasionally witnessed younger women sanding the oh' shafts smooth, helping in the process.

Though the whole family may participate, making tourist items is mainly the province of the younger men. They contribute part of their profits, so the family in turn may contribute labor. This fits the traditional pattern of reciprocal familial obligations to which young Lacandon men are held.

One interesting incident of cooperation which regularly occurs is between two young unmarried men who are good friends. Their production of bow and arrow sets is both rapid and highly specialized. They could turn out a bundle of thirty bow and arrow sets ready for sale in two evenings work. I can be precise in my description of this event because my quarters were the site of their "factory," and I lost many nights' sleep watching and listening to them as they worked. Both would carve their own bows, then split the rest of the work, with one whittling wooden foreshafts and the other cutting the base shaft of oh' and fitting the foreshafts into them. One would then cut and fit the feathers while the other fastened the projectile points (which had been bought from K'in Panni-Agua for ten pesos apiece), to the head of the shaft. They then divided the arrows and went to Palenque to sell them. Using this kind of process it is easy for a man to earn a large sum of money
over the course of a year. I have attempted to illustrate this with an earnings chart for eleven of the twenty-one adult men in Naha' who sell bow and arrow sets (see Table VIII). Two of the main factors which regulate the amount of money a man can earn are: first, the length of the tourist season, which the Lacandon say runs from December through August, the fall being the peak of the rainy season which hinders both tourism and the Lacandon's own mobility, and second, the price of the bow and arrow sets, which is regulated by the number of tourists. The greater the number of tourists, the greater the asking price, which fluctuates from one hundred to three hundred pesos a set, and the less inclined the vendor is to make a deal. The chart serves to illustrate that it is possible, with a small expenditure of time and labor, to earn quite a bit of money during the tourist season.

My sample was of eleven out of twenty-one adult (ba'alche drinking) men in the village and is quite representative, for out of the twenty-one, only thirteen men are old enough to be interested in doing the work to make money, yet not too old to have stopped selling the sets. None of the older men, Chan K'in Viejo, Mateo Viejo, or Antonio, is involved in actually selling the arrows, although they do lend a hand in making them and their sons may sell the items for them. Yet all of these men were involved in the process as young men. The only difference was that they took them to Tenosique to sell instead of Palenque as is done now. The reason older men quit selling these items, I believe, is that there is no need for them to. They all have large extended families with children and sons-in-law working for them, contributing to food
### Table VIII
Three Month Earnings for Eleven Men in Naha*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K'in II</td>
<td>$ 9,000</td>
<td>$ 2,450</td>
<td>$ 500^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'in Mateo</td>
<td>$ 15,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 500^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bol</td>
<td>$ 7,500</td>
<td>$ 10,000</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayum^a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 16,250+$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mateo Joven</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 1,000</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco</td>
<td>$ 6,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 14,000+$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'in Panni-Agua</td>
<td>$ 9,000</td>
<td>$ 13,950</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuxi</td>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chan K'in Joven</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 19,950</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'in I</td>
<td>$ 13,500</td>
<td>$ 30,000</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chan K'in Viejo^b</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 8,050</td>
<td>$ 650^c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Amounts are given in pesos  

^a Kayum also paints pictures of the jungle which he plans to sell in San Cristobol.  

^b Chan K'in Joven sold these bow and arrow sets for him.  

^c The Lacandon receive payment from a lumber company for the right to cut lumber on their land several times a year (see p. 4). Given in a lump sum, the money is divided among all of the adult males. In this case, in the month of February, unmarried men received 500 pesos, married men 650 pesos.
Figure 6

Chan K'in Joven selling bow and arrow sets at the Ruins of Palenque.
production and the income of the family. They have the young men's help in their milpas, the younger men contribute game to their tables, and part of the money earned in the sale of tourist items is given to them. It makes no sense for them to compete against their own family members for the trade in tourist items. In turn, as the young men grow older, they too will curtail their money-making activities as their own sons and sons-in-law begin to contribute to the family's support.

In the light of the changes bombarding the Lacandon, the invasion and degradation of their environment, and especially their demonstrated ability to adapt to a money-fueled economy, it is reasonable to ask the question: are there other reasons besides the tourist trade for the young men to retain their traditional personal appearance and dress, and still participate in the traditional rituals, worshipping gods they may only partially believe in? Brought from a virtual stone-age existence into the industrial twentieth century in their own lifetimes, the older men keep the old traditions out of faith and habit. In one interview Chan K'in Viejo said that he sang the old songs and told the old stories during ba'alches because he hoped the young men would learn them. He said he thought the god of the foreigners (Jesus Christ) was a powerful god, but that what he had been told about Christ, that he would take all souls with him into the sky and could save them all from being burned in the Underworld, was a lie. "Akyantho' and Jesus Christ are the gods of the foreigners," he said, "Hachäkyum is the god of the Lacandon."
But the young men are products of the twentieth century and have been brought up with modern technology. Why do they keep the old rituals alive with their participation? The question of belief aside, the answer is complex and revolves around two matters. The first is purely practical. They retain traditional rituals and appearance because it is this behavior which makes them special, exotic, and generates the demand for the items they sell to tourists. This is amply illustrated by an anecdote told by Robert Bruce about the conversion of the southern Lacandon in the community of Lacanha Chan Sayab. Lacanha is made up of the people from two separate villages who joined together in the early 1940's. The community was soon split over a conflict between the ritual leaders of the former two communities. The conflict became serious, then was abruptly terminated when both men died, one soon after the other, leaving a vacuum that no one filled. Into this situation, in the early 1950's, stepped Baer, the Baptist missionary who convinced the Indians to abandon their traditional rituals and gods, change their traditional dress, the *xikul*, for western style pants and shirts, and ultimately convinced some to cut their hair. Bruce's anecdote concerns an incident he witnessed while visiting Lacanha. Upon hearing a plane carrying tourists approaching to land, several of the men of Lacanha who had not cut their hair rushed back to their homes, changed into *xikuls*, then ran back to the airstrip with sets of bows and arrows to sell to the arriving visitors. Even after conversion to Protestant Christianity, some of the men of Lacanha had preserved the pretext of being traditional Lacandon in order to market their tourist items.

To the young men of Naha' appearance is a very important part of
their self image. In response to my question, why don't you cut your hair and wear shirts and pants?, the general answer that I received was that they did not want to look like kah, a derogatory term for the Christianized Tzeltal Maya. Kayum told me a story about a political meeting the Lacandon had been invited to where one of the men from Lacanha (with short hair, pants, and shirt), had been knocked down by a soldier and prevented from meeting the politician, because he was not recognized as a Lacandon. In an interesting reversal to my question Paco, one of Chan K'in Viejo's sons-in-law, said he would not cut his hair because he liked the way it looked, and asked me why I didn't grow my hair longer.

A few of the young unmarried men of Naha' do wear pants and shirts when they travel in towns, such as San Cristobal or Palenque, for any extended period of time, though never in Naha'. I asked about this practice and was told they changed in town because 1) they felt that they were more attractive to girls, and 2) they did not like people trying to look up their xikuls to see what they wore underneath. All said though they might wear pants and shirts, they would never cut their hair; they liked it long.

The second reason that the young men of Naha' choose to practice the traditional rituals was that these communal activities serve as a reassertion of Lacandoness, it helps preserve the solidarity of the small community in the face of outside influences and pressures and provides a means to vent social tensions within the village itself. In effect, the ba'alche, the main communal ritual, serves the function
Figure 7

Three young Lacandon men in Palenque. K'in of Naha' changed his clothes for the trip. He changes back to a xikul when he is in Naha'.
of what A. F. C. Wallace named the "rite of intensification." He writes (1966:30), "Just as nature requires ritual attention in order to assure that its fertility and benevolence shall not flag or fail, so the community of people from time to time needs to be restored in its attachment to the values and customs of its culture." Having demonstrated the Lacandone's ability to generate income with a small input of time and labor, and the desirability of retaining a traditional appearance to market the tourist items they make, I shall next turn to Lacandon ritual behavior and the function of the ba'alche as a rite of intensification.
Chapter VI

For a long time the study of Mayan systems of belief, especially the symbolic analysis of ritual and mythology, has been hindered by inadequate methods of analysis. A major mistake in the anthropological analysis of symbolism, popularized by Sir James Frazer in his voluminous collection of ritual and mythological symbolism, *The Golden Bough*, and still repeated today, is the collecting and grouping of symbolic elements from diverse cultural traditions based on a superficial similarity in surface appearance, while discarding or ignoring the cultural context of the symbols.

In culture theory this mistake formed the heart of the diffusionist school of thought popular in the first decades of this century. Accepted in diffusionist theory was the idea that the human mind was basically un inventive and therefore the independent invention of similar phenomena was seen as highly improbable. Thus the Mayan temple pyramids were viewed as evidence of ancient Egyptian influence on Latin American Indian civilizations and the cross, which to the Maya symbolizes a gateway to the spirit world, was said to be evidence that one of the apostles had preached to the Indians or they were descendents of one of the lost tribes of Israel.

This same line of reasoning has been incorporated and misused in some contemporary methods of symbolic analysis. In these analyses apparent similarities of symbolic form among disparate cultures are used to support theories on the biological or psychological basis of human symbolic behavior; for example, symbolic similarities are used as
evidence of pan-human patterns of cognition. A major fault with these
theories is that they decontextualize their evidence, then deal with
all symbolic material as if it had only one source. In particular I
find that analysts have manipulated psycho-analytic and structural
analyses of symbolic material in this manner.

This is not to say that there are not useful ideas to be found in
the works of Freud and Levi-Strauss, for their theories have shown great
utility in the analysis of symbolism. For example, in Turner's (1967)
work with Ndembu symbolism he uses concepts such as "condensation," and
"polarization of meaning," which were first outlined by Freud in his
introductory lectures on the analysis of dream symbolism. Similarly,
Vogt (1976) organizes Zinacantecan Mayan ritual symbolism into a system
of binary opposites which organizes his data into an extremely effective
structural analysis.

What I offer as a method of symbolic analysis is simply a detailed
knowledge of Lacandon symbolic behavior based on fieldwork, linguistic
analysis, and historical sources. Discussing the use of historical
sources in her work with Zinacantecan myth, Hunt (1977:28) writes:

Although some of the elements of the symbolic code and
structure are embedded in the contemporary Zinacantecan's
life, their meanings could not have been unlocked without
an understanding of the key symbolic references and
transformations that have been lost to contemporary Zina-
cantan and are buried in the colonial past.

My symbolic analyses lie in an extensive knowledge of the Lacandon Maya
based on fieldwork in a Lacandon village, both Indian and Spanish colo-
nial historical documents, linguistic work with both Yucatecan and
Lacandon Maya, plus an extensive collection of Lacandon mythology and
folklore gathered by the linguist Robert Bruce of the Museo De Anthropologia E Historia in Mexico City. These types of sources are all necessary for a valid symbolic analysis. I believe, as Levi-Strauss argues (1968:155-157), that symbolic systems may move over time to increasing levels of arbitrariness. Therefore it is necessary to include all available lines of evidence in a symbolic analysis, to bring as much data as possible to bear on the problem.

In my own work, the symbolic analysis of myth and ritual are used as lines of evidence in an explanation of social processes in a contemporary Lacandon community. In turn historical and linguistic data are used to support my analysis which illustrates a continuity in the symbolic behavior of the Lacandon stretching over at least the last five hundred years. In addition I attempt to demonstrate how this conservative ritual and mythological symbolic system continues to function as an adaptive mechanism for the Lacandon, in the face of the rapid changes affecting Lacandon society today.

It is commonly believed among people who have worked with the Lacandon in the last twenty years that the last traces of traditional Lacandon belief and behavior will disappear with the death of Chan K'in Viejo, who is presently about 85 years old. Often the degradation of their forest environment by Mexican industry is used as a metaphor for the process of cultural disintegration thought to be occurring among the Lacandon of today. Thus it seems relevant to address the validity of this belief in a discussion of the younger generation of Lacandon men and the practice of the traditional rituals. The idea of the cultural disintegration of the Lacandon, argued quite vocally in the Mexican
popular press by Gertrude Duby-Blom, director of the NaBolom research
center, Bormanse (1981), and Nations (1981), is a reflection of the
opinions of the two "elder statesmen" of Naha', Chan K'in Viejo, and
Mateo Viejo. On several separate occasions Chan K'in Viejo has
reiterated this opinion. "My sons are lazy," he says, "They do not
know the old ways, they do not learn the old songs." Similarly, in a
video taped interview, anthropologist Mike Rees had this conversation
with Mateo Viejo.

Rees, "In twenty years there will be other men in the
godhouse and you will be dead. Do you think that
when you are dead your son Mateo will throw them
(the godpots-RJM) out?"

Mateo, "I do not know...It is very bad...They (the
young men-RJM) are ashamed of the gods. My son
Chan K'in is ashamed. He will throw them out."

There is no question that the old men believe that when they are
dead, so too will the old ways die. And, this is the view that anthrop-
pologists have traditionally echoed. In fact, the issue is not so
clear-cut. The question of faith among the Lacandon, even among the old
men, is a very complex issue. The oldest men in the village are regarded
as the faithful, the guardians of the old beliefs. But after questioning
every young man in Naha' old enough to participate in the rituals about
their knowledge of the old stories and their belief in the traditional
gods, and observing them on ritual occasions in the godhouse, I found
that judging a man's degree of faith along generational lines to be
invalid. Using the criteria of ritual action in the godhouse and what
a man said about his beliefs, most of the young men become virtually
indistinguishable from the old. I thought to use the use of modern
Nuxi, the son-in-law of Mateo Viejo, with the help of his brother-in-law Kayum, pray to the gods for a cure to Nuxi's oldest son's sickness while touching him with a bo'oy, a palm leaf smoked in burning incense.
medical facilities as a scale for measuring a man's faith in the old
gods, for the traditional view of Lacandon medicine pictures disease as
a punishment of the gods, to be cured by appeasing the angry gods with
offerings. Yet everyone now makes use of the nearby government clinic
as well as continuing the offerings to the gods when a family member is
sick. It is also common now for Lacandon women, when pregnant, to go to
the hospital at San Cristobal to have their babies. Only Chan K'in
Viejo's wives still deliver their children at home with only the help
of their co-wives. Antonio explained this saying, "In childbirth the
gods help Chan K'in Viejo more than they help the rest of us. I do
not know why." Even with the clinic nearby, the men, both young and old,
continue to pray for their sick children in the godhouse as well as make
use of modern medicines. I will also present data which shows that there
is virtually total participation in the men's rituals, so by that
criteria the young men are certainly not abandoning the old traditions.

This leaves three questions, 1) why do the young men not take a
more active role in the everyday ritual work? Most of the young men do
not tape the pine trees to gather incense, nor do they make ba'alche;
2) do the young men not know the old songs and stories as the older men
say?; and 3) do the young men actually believe in the traditional gods?

When I asked the first question, Why don't you gather incense and
make ba'alche?, the answer I invariably got first was, "Ne ma kol-en"
("I am very lazy"). The men I questioned knew how to tap the trees for
resin to make incense, and they knew how to make ba'alche, but they al-
most never did either. Aside from K'in II who regularly tapped trees
for incense for his father Chan K'in Viejo, I saw only two other young
men do this work, Kayum the son-in-law, and Chan K'in the son, of Mateo Viejo. In the fifteen ba'alche rituals that I participated in, Chan K'in Viejo, Mateo Viejo, or Antonio made the ba'alche in twelve of them. Why do the young men not do this work? I believe it simply because they do not have to, and the reason they do not have to is a consequence of the new settlement pattern that was adopted in the early 1950's.

Traditionally the Lacandon lived scattered over the jungle in isolated family clusters. When a man married and finished his bride-service, he took his wife and moved to a new area to set up his household. As a sole head of the household it was his responsibility to care for his family's ritual needs. In this role he had to gather resin for incense, make his own godpots, build his own godhouse, and make his own ba'alche. But within the last generation a vastly different settlement pattern has been adopted by Lacandon families. They now live in villages and it is no longer necessary for every man to conduct all of his ritual labor by himself. In Naha' everyone is related, primarily by marriage, to Chan K'in Viejo, Mateo Viejo, or Antonio. These three men are the undisputed leaders of the community and by virtue of the interrelated nature of their families, the heads of virtually every family in Naha'. They own the godpots, they built the godhouse, and they make the ba'alche. These three, conducting the ritual affairs of their families, automatically involve almost everyone else as well. The young men do not do the work of gathering incense, making ba'alche, etc., because they do not have to, and indeed would not be supposed to, in these circumstances. The old men, as the heads of every extended family in the
village, do the ritual work for them. In support of this hypothesis, the older sons of Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo, (K'in I, Chan K'in Joven, Kayum, and Mateo Joven), told me that when their fathers died they would take over the ritual work, but right now they could be lazy because their fathers did it for them.

The second question is based on the old men's statements that the young men do not know the old stories and songs. (I believe that one reason Chan K'in Viejo has been so receptive to anthropologists in the last twenty years is that many of us have been recording the lore that he believes will be lost when he dies.) Though the young men may not possess the incredible encompassing knowledge of ritual and mythology that Chan K'in Viejo has internalized, they are not as remiss as the older men believe them to be. Two examples illustrate this point.

During a ba'alche, on video-tape, Mike Rees asked Chan K'in Joven (one of the most cosmopolitan men in Naha'), if he knew any of the old songs. When pressed for an answer Chan K'in Joven admitted that he did know them but was embarrassed to sing them. At this point Kayum, Chan K'in Joven's younger brother, and Mateo Joven cut into the conversation to agree with Chan K'in Joven. They all knew the songs, they said, but just didn't like to sing them. Further, Chan K'in Viejo's sons, despite what he says, know the old songs and stories quite well. Bruce's book Lacandon Texts and Drawings from Naha', a compilation of traditional Lacandon songs and poetry, was written down for Bruce, in Mayan, primarily by Chan K'in Viejo's sons Chan K'in Joven and Kayum, the only two men in Naha' who know how to read and write. Chan K'in Joven felt
it important to write these songs down because, as Bruce (1976:13) writes, "...he told me he wanted to write down the texts of all of his father's songs which he either had not yet learned in their totality, or those of which he feared he might forget some significant detail."

The answer to the last question, do the young men believe in the old gods?; is difficult to judge. I have seen each of the married men in the godhouse praying or making offerings at one time or another, though admittedly some only once or twice. I asked them all directly if they still had faith in the old gods, if the old gods were real?, and everyone to a man said that they believed the traditional gods were real. The only exception to this were the two young men from Mensâbâk who said there were no gods at all, Lacandon or Christian. Among the men of Naha' there was a great deal of uncertainty about how powerful the gods actually were, or if they listened to prayers, but most of them also said that they thought the Christian missionaries lied to them. Most believe that Jesus Christ is a god, but a foreign god, not to be worshipped by the Lacandon. Chan K'in Joven told me that Hachâkyum understands all languages (I had asked him if one could pray to Hachâkyum in Spanish), and that it was our (foreigner's) own fault that we no longer communicated with him. So, in direct contradiction to the beliefs of Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo, the younger man at least say that they believe in the old gods. Their actions, judging by their participation in the ba'alcche rituals seems to support their statements.

Undeniably, though, changes are occurring in Lacandon ritual behavior. Several ritual activities noted by Davis (1978) during her
fieldwork in the early 1970's have been discontinued today, principally behavior involving the use of musical instruments during the ceremonies. She writes (1978:108-109),

Traditionally musical instruments were played at the balche? ceremony. The music marked specific stages of the ritual and was also performed as entertainment. Now it is possible to observe only a few remnants of the ritual use of instruments. Ceremonial sponsors preceding Chan K'in's generation called people to the balche? ceremony by beating the drum ten times after the godpots were fed. Drums are said to have been larger and louder, and, depending on the wind velocity, could be heard for several miles. Drums are no longer used in any of the Lacandon settlements. During a balche? offering the conch shell was blown traditionally four or five times consecutively; in this way the sponsor called the gods to accept their gifts. The only present day use of the conch was observed at a balche? ceremony at Lake Mensaabak; actually, a bull's horn was substituted for the conch and was blown before one of the godpot feedings by the sponsor's young son (the men at Naha' still keep a conch shell in the godhouse but I have never seen or heard it used-R.J.M.). In the past when the ceremonial drink and tamales were offered together a special chant was sung and accompanied by the rattle. Now this has been dropped; however, at Naha' a chant accompanied by the rattle is still sung when the rubber figures are presented. (Again, though the rattle is still kept in the godhouse, I have never seen it used-R.J.M.). Traditionally the flute was played either as a melodic introduction to a chant or by itself as entertainment during the less formal periods of the ceremony. At Lake Mensaabak it is still possible to observe the performance of a melody on the flute followed by the same melody sung with a text; however, it is no longer a formal stage of the procedings and is performed only as entertainment. (Even this no longer survives in Mensaabak, the missionary there has banned the performance of traditional music-R.J.M.).

One note about the conversion of the people at Mensaabak; though I cannot explain the degree of change tolerated by the people of

1Davis' spelling of ba'alche, "balche?" merely reflects the variation in the Lacandone's own pronunciation of the word. In my work I have adopted Bruce's spelling of the word.
Mensäbäk after their conversion to Christianity (among other things the redistribution of co-wives within polygynous families and dietary restrictions), the idea of mass monolithic acceptance of Seventh Day Adventist doctrine is not correct. Though the musical performances mentioned in the preceding paragraph no longer occur, there are several families living in the same area who have not converted and still keep godhouses. In fact Nuxi, second oldest man in Naha', moved near Mensäbäk in the fall of 1981 because he wanted to start a new milpa and he felt the land was better there. When I last I heard he had just finished building his new godhouse. From my interviews with men from Mensäbäk I am convinced that many of them are not especially happy as new Christians. Several, it appears, converted because wives did, or because they wanted to marry a woman who had converted. A few of them occasionally visit Naha' to drink ba'alche and most of them drink when they visit Palenque, violating a prohibition established by the missionary in Mensäbäk.
Chapter VII

The roots of Lacandon mythology and ritual behavior can be found in the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Maya, and much of present-day Lacandon ritual, when compared with historical accounts, is virtually identical to the ritual behavior of the sixteenth century Yucatecan Maya just prior to the Spanish conquest. Changes that have occurred revolve mostly around the loss of the elaborate ritual paraphernalia and esoteric knowledge associated with the formal priesthood which existed up to the time of the conquest. Contemporary Lacandon rituals are quite simple and informal. The most obvious survivals of ancient Mayan ritual practice found today among the Lacandon are the use of pom, "copal incense," and ba'alc hé, a ritual drink which is mildly alcoholic, as offerings to the gods. The gifts are given to the gods through the medium of the läk-il k'uh, the "godpot", a clay incense burner with the face of a god molded on the front. The Lacandon's use of godpots, and the relative simplicity of Lacandon ritual, can be explained, in part, by the development of secular political authority in the Yucatan, at the expense of the established religious authority, between 1,000 A.D.-1,450 A.D.

At the height of the Classic Period, about 500 A.D. to 700 A.D., ancient Mayan civilization was controlled by a ruling hierarchy of priests who created and oversaw a complex religious organization highlighted by an intricate 365-day solar calendar integrated with a 260-day ritual calendar which was based on a complex system of astronomical observations and astrological predictions. The calendar was so accurate that it allowed the astronomer-priests to predict eclipses
that would not be observable in Meso-America and enabled them to calculate the solar year more exactly than does the calendar we use today. The famous Aztec Calendar Round was a simplification of the Classic Mayan calendar. A measure of the priesthood's power was its ability to motivate large masses of people to donate voluntary labor for the construction of the massive temple complexes found all over the Mayan area of occupation. By around 950 A.D. there is evidence of the destruction of this priestly hierarchy and the abandonment of the ritual centers in the central Mayan area. With the disappearance of this class came the accompanying loss of the esoteric ritual knowledge that they possessed. Accordingly, with the increasing influence of secular powers in the Yucatan, principally Mexican-dominated Chichen Itza, and by 1200 A.D. the city state of Mayapan, there survived only a simplified version of the ritual calendar. Also, there was a great increase in personalized worship as evidenced by the rise in popularity of incense burner idols in household shrines.

Thompson (1966:147), writes,

Mayapan's temples and shrines are strewn with fragments of large incense burners, of highly porous coarse pottery and up to eighteen inches high. Each had on its front, in relief the full length figure of a god painted after firing in brilliant color.

This rise of secular power in the Mayan city states led to a decrease in the power and importance of religious authority. This is indicated by the rise in popularity of personal household shrines, and by the fact that public temples appear no longer to be very important. Evidence to support this can again be found in Mayapan.
Thompson says,

... the best masonry is in the residences of the nobility, not in the temples. Beautifully dressed stone of Puuc style from the site which preceded Mayapan is frequently reused in private homes, but crude stonework of the Mayapan period was thought good enough for many of the temples. Secondly, each important residence has its family oratory, either in a special room of the house or in a nearby building, and there is archeological and literary evidence that these shrines were primarily for ancestral cults... and for the worship of deities who had gained the devotion of the family. Such private cults were elements of family aggrandisement and flourished at the expense of organized communal religion.¹

Evidence indicates that these trends continued and expanded. By the time the Spanish arrived, in the early sixteenth century, the use of clay or wooden idols had spread throughout the Yucatan. Landa, writing about the proliferation of these incense burner idols said (Tozzer, 1978:108),

They had a very great number of idols and of temples which were magnificent in their own fashion. And besides the community temples, the lords, priests, and the leading men had also oratories and idols in their houses, where they made their prayers and offerings in private.

Further, Tozzer discussing Landa's work says (1978:108-109)

He speaks of the 'abandoned temples' and burning copal in them. In other words, the temple cult in Landa's time seems to have been, to a great extent, abandoned. The oratory and the Lord's house seem to have taken the place of the temple.

A corresponding situation is found today among the Lacandon. Ritual activity occurs in the yatôch k'uh, literally "godhouse", a thatch-roofed hut constructed apart from the village. The center of

Figure 9

Lak-il k'uh, Lacandon "godpot" used for burning incense offerings.
ritual attention is the godpots, through which offerings are transmitted to the gods. Individuals make and care for their own godpots. Younger men who do not yet have their own godpots use those of their older male relatives. There are godpots representing each of the major gods and their wives, except the gods of the underworld to whom offerings are not made. One other class of deities, the chembel k'uh or minor gods, also do not have godpots for they are merely assistants to the main deities. The Lacandon say that a major god, if he chooses to do so, can distribute part of his offerings to his assistants himself.

The complex ritual calendar and the astronomical knowledge which governed so much of the life of the ancient Mayan Indians have not been preserved by the Lacandon. Instead activities such as burning and planting the fields is timed by the blooming of specific seasonal jungle plants. Not all astronomical knowledge has been lost though. Chan K'in Viejo still gauges the passing of time by the phases of the moon. Times are usually expressed by reference to the ya'ax k'in, the term for "year", or "spring", or the moon. For example two weeks would be expressed as chumuk nah, "half a moon". Times during a day are expressed by references to the position of the sun. The following table is a list of these references. The term chun k'in, "base of the sun", refers to the sun being directly overhead.

The Lacandon also recognize several stars and planets. Though stars in general are only referred to as ba'al ka'an, "things in the sky", several are named. There is Kitam, "the Boar", three stars in the
### Table IX

**Lacandon Time Referents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hatska</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasi</td>
<td>&quot;to clear&quot;</td>
<td>daybreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chumuk Chun K'in</td>
<td>&quot;half base sun&quot;</td>
<td>about 7:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni Chun K'in</td>
<td>&quot;nose base sun&quot;</td>
<td>8:00-9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'ak' Chun K'in</td>
<td>&quot;fire base sun&quot;</td>
<td>noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni Chun K'in</td>
<td>&quot;nose base sun&quot;</td>
<td>about 5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hña K'in</td>
<td>&quot;no sun&quot;</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aakà</td>
<td>&quot;dark&quot;</td>
<td>after sunset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
constellation Orion; Ḥuh Tsab, "the Rattle", the Pleiades; Tunsel, "the Carpenter Bird", the star Rigel; Chāk Tulix, "The Red Dragonfly", the star Betelgeuse; Xaman Ek, "North Star", Polaris; and Ayim, "The Alligator", Ursa Minor. The Lacandon also recognize the dates of the summer and winter solstices (Bruce 1974:107).

Further, the importance of Venus in the ancient Maya cosmology is reflected in the several names that the Lacandon have for different aspects of the planet. Some of the names of Venus found in Lacandon mythology are Ah Sāh Kab, "Star of the Morning", Ah Sāh K'in, "Star of the Afternoon", Nah Ek, "Great Star", Kooch Ich, "Big Eye", and Nah Xulaab, "Great Destroyer" (Bruce 1974:107).

The Lacandon have been called idolators because of their use of godpots, and it is important to realize that they do not worship the pots. They are not believed to be gods, merely the medium through which the offering is transmitted to the gods. Incense is burned in the godpots, and offerings of food and ba'alche are literally fed to the image modeled on the godpot. Working with the Lacandon at the turn of the century, Tozzer divided the process of the ritual offering into three steps. He wrote (1907:116-117),

The article is brought in and 'placed' before the idols, or, as it is expressed in the chants, 'restored' to them...The gift is then offered to the braseros and their idols as a sacrifice, and the gods are asked to come in person and partake of the offering. Finally the food and drink are 'administered' to the heads on the incense burners in behalf of the god. Posol (corn gruel-RJM) and balte' (ba'alche-RJM) are placed on the mouths of the figures on the side of the bowls...wheras the offering of meat or buliwa (ceremonial tamale-RJM) is placed on the lip of the brasero with the fingers.
To Tozzer's observations I would add only that not all of the gods choose to partake of these offerings. Before a ritual the gods are "asked" through kinyah, divination, if they want to participate in the ritual. Those that "answer" yes, participate and are given offerings.

The most common offerings are *pom*, copal incense, posole or *ma'ats*, a drink made of water and corn dough, and *ba'alche*, which is brewed from honey and the bark of the *ba'alche* tree. Though it is no longer practiced, the old men of the village say that their fathers also made offerings of their own blood, cutting their earlobes with flint blades and burning their blood with incense in their god-pots. Game was also sacrificed to the gods, the meat and blood being offered with copal incense. This ritual behavior is very similar to the sixteenth century Mayan forms of sacrifice. Landa, witnessing such a ritual in the mid sixteenth century, described it in this manner,

> They offered the image bread made with the yolks of eggs and others made with the hearts of deer, and another made of dissolved pepper. There were many people who drew their blood, cutting their ears, and anointed with the blood the stone of the god called Chac Acantun, which they had there...and meanwhile they burned their incense to it.²

The offering and drinking of *ba'alche* is a prerequisite for any major Lacandon ritual. They believe that *ba'alche* has a purifying effect and can help cure sickness, therefore ritual inebriation is a common part of Lacandon ceremonial behavior. In general, drunkeness is

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not considered polite behavior, but because the gods enjoy getting drunk on "ba'alche", men are free to indulge also.

Only men are allowed in the godhouse to participate in these rituals. The women's role is limited to preparing the ritual food offerings for the godpots and helping their drunken husbands home at the conclusion of a ceremony. Again, present-day customs mirror ancient Mayan behavior. Landa wrote about a sixteenth century ba'alche ceremony,

And they make wine of honey and water and a certain root of a tree which they cultivate for this purpose, by which the wine was made strong and stinking...And after the repast the cupbearers...poured out drink from great tubs, until they (those celebrating the ritual-RJM) became as drunk as scimiters, and the women took it upon themselves to get their drunken husbands home.3

Though women are not allowed in the godhouse to participate in the rituals, it is common for the men to bring gourds of ba'alche out of the godhouse to give to their wives and children, to share the blessing of the drink.

Many early Spanish accounts speak of the indian conception of ba'alche as a sacred purifying drink, and it brought great hardship to the Maya when the Spanish outlawed its use. Roys (1931:216) quotes one such source writing,

Another reason why these indians have diminished in number is...because they are prevented from making a wine which they were accustomed to make which they said, was healthful for them and which they called ba'alche...After they were drunk they vomited and were purged, which left them cleansed

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3Ibid, p. 92.
and hungry...Some of the old men say that this was very
good for them, that it was a medicine for them and cured
them because it was like a good purge.

The use of balche and the offering of incense and special
foodstuffs are not the only ancient Mayan ritual practices which survive
in contemporary Lacandon ritual behavior. The use of suhuy k'ak' or "virgin fire" meaning a new and unused fire, is still a part of
Lacandon ritual. Ritual purity was a necessary requirement for the
participants in ancient Mayan rituals. Before a ceremony Mayan priests
would have to spend prescribed periods of time, sometimes several months,
in fasting, prayer, and sexual abstinence to achieve the level of ritual
purity necessary to conduct the rites. Furthermore, the objects used in
the rituals and the sacrificial offerings also needed to be ritually pure
or "virgin". Archeological dredging of the sacrificial cenote at Chichen
Itza showed that most of the virgins thrown into the cenote as sacri-
fices were small children, thus dispelling the popular idea that beauti-
ful maidens were thrown into the well. Landa even mentions the use of
virgin fire and water in sixteenth-century Mayan ritual. Describing
a Mayan "baptism" he wrote,

They made this water from certain flowers and of Cacao
pounded and dissolved in virgin water which they
called that brought from the hollows of the trees or
of the rocks in the forest.\footnote{Ibid., p. 105.}

Though the Lacandon no longer utilize virgin water, virgin fire is still
a part of their rituals. When incense is to be offered to the gods
during a ceremony, a virgin fire will be kindled using a wooden drill
kept in the godhouse for this purpose. Into this fire are placed sticks of kindling which are then used to light the incense offerings in the godpots. Again, contemporary Lacandon practice mirrors that of sixteenth century Maya. Describing a Mayan ritual Landa wrote,

Once having expelled the evil spirit, all began to pray with great devotion, and the Chacs (ritual attendants-R.J.M.) kindled the new fire, (my emphasis-R.J.M.) and lighted the brazier for in the feasts which all joined in common, they burned incense to the idol with new fire and the priest began to throw this incense into it.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 153.
Figure 10

A page from the Dresden Codex. In the middle panel two priests are making *su[huy k'ak']*, virgin fire, with wooden drills (Villacorta 1933:20).
Chapter VIII

Having established that the roots of Lacandon ritual lie in ancient Mayan religious rituals, I would like to discuss the Lacandon ba'alche ritual, in greater detail. I have stated that the ba'alche ritual acts as what A. F. C. Wallace calls a "ritual of intensification". The ba'alche is a communal gathering of all the adult men in the village. I have participated in 15 of them and they appear to fall into two categories, ba'alches conducted out of ritual necessity, and those that are socially inspired. The features of both types are the same, men pray, offer ba'alche to the godpots, then spend the rest of the day drinking ba'alche, talking, and becoming mildly intoxicated. I differentiate between the two types on the basis of the frequency with which ba'alche is made. Men are usually motivated to make ba'alche to fulfill their obligations to the gods. My conception of the relationship between the Lacandon and their gods is that it is based on the fulfillment of mutual obligations. If the Lacandon fulfill their obligation to feed the gods and burn incense to them, the gods will be benevolent. So men may make ba'alche for the gods when asking a favor of them or thanking them for services rendered. These are ba'alches conducted out of ritual necessity. But I have also witnessed ba'alche being made three times in one week, two days in a row (the same man made both, he said the first had been too "sweet"), and Bruce speaks of participating in ba'alches on three consecutive days. It is at these times that I believe the ba'alches are socially inspired, for their frequency is greater than that needed to fulfill ritual obligations. It is a time when men are released from their everyday duties and can spend a day becoming happily intoxicated
with their friends or resolve social problems, and not have to worry about disapproval from their wives or co-villagers.

A ba'alche is always very informal. Men come and go as they please, drinking for awhile, then leaving to eat, run an errand, or maybe work for a short period of time. After completing their business they will return to the godhouse to drink more. The only men who will stay in the godhouse for the complete ceremony (usually about eight hours long) are the "hosts" of the ceremony, the man or men who made the ba'alche and serve it. Attendance at a ba'alche is not required, but at every ba'alche that I have observed, invariably every man old enough to be allowed to drink ba'alche (14-15 years old) attends the ritual, and even boys who are not considered old enough to drink come to the godhouse to watch and listen to the older men. A man may miss a ba'alche if he is sick, or not in the village on the day the ritual is held, but generally 19 out of the 21 men old enough to drink ba'alche do so. The two men who do not drink cannot for medical reasons. One has tuberculosis, the other takes medication to prevent epileptic seizures. Though they will not drink they do participate, coming to the godhouse to smoke and talk with the other men.

After the ritual offerings of incense and ba'alche have been made to the godpots, the men spend the duration of the ritual drinking and talking. The time it takes to conduct a ba'alche varies for the ritual lasts until the ba'alche chem, the dugout canoe in which the ba'alche is brewed, is emptied. Conversations during a ba'alche may be about
anything, usually current events or village gossip. Occasionally one of the old men will tell one of the old stories or sing a traditional Lacandon song. Musical behavior among the Lacandon is rare although they enjoy listening to music. The fact that the ba'alcche may be used as an occasion for this type of performance adds support to the view that it is a ritual of intensification, for these traditional songs are not often sung. The only time that I have ever heard them was during the course of a ba'alcche. Perera (1982:52-53), described a similar experience during a ba'alcche, in which he witnessed Chan K'in Viejo tell a story about one of the gods who disguised himself as a jaguar. He writes, "Chan K'in finishes the song...He then explains its meaning at considerable length, giving us the logic behind each of the transformations". I even have a video-tape of Chan K'in Viejo singing one such song during a ba'alcche. It is called the "Song to the Gourd" or "The Liars Song", and is named after the hollowed out drinking gourds in which ba'alcche is served. The song personifies the gourd of ba'alcche as "little woman", and the metaphor of ba'alcche as a woman is carried throughout the song. To understand the symbolism in the song it is necessary to know that the song is sung when a man has drunk a large quantity of ba'alcche and is feeling nauseated. With this in mind, the phrases "Do not leave me little woman" and "I embrace you little woman" take on a new meaning for the sung can be sung in an attempt to keep from vomiting the ba'alcche the singer has drunk. The "measure" referred to in the song refers to the gourd cup which is used to ladle ba'alcche into the drinking gourds. I have a video tape
of this song recorded the summer of 1979 during a ba'alche ritual, Bruce (1976:39) has also published a translation of the same song.¹

Song to the Gourd

1. Once again I have wanted you, oh little woman.
2. One of your measures.
3. Do not leave me, oh little woman.
4. Once again I have seen you, little woman.
5. Like ripe custard apples are your breasts, oh little woman.
6. Nothing is as beautiful as you, one of your measures, little woman.
7. Once again I have wanted you.
8. I will not leave you, oh little woman.
9. I feel completely undone, little woman.
10. Do not leave me little woman.
11. My mind clears well little woman.
12. Do not leave me little woman.
13. Embrace me well little woman.
14. Once again I have wanted you. Do not leave me little woman.
15. Your breasts are custard apples.
16. One of your measures, little woman.
17. Call me well little woman.
18. My mind has cleared now, little woman.
19. Do not cast me down, oh little woman.

¹Note this is Bruce's translation. Line 9 I believe literally means "I am broken", but Bruce's translation captures the spirit of the phrase.
20. One of your measures.
21. Once again I have wanted you.
22. Like ripe custard apples are your breasts little woman.
23. I embrace you tightly, oh little woman.
24. Oh I will not leave you, little woman.

The secondary title of the song, "The Liar's Song", highlights a second function the ba'alche ritual may serve, to resolve conflicts between individuals and act as a mechanism for social control. To the Lacandon lying, theft, or other anti-social behavior is thought to be a form of illness. Ba'alche taken in large quantities acts as both an emetic and a purge, and thus can cure the body of this illness. A man who feels that he has been wronged may make a ba'alche with the intent of punishing the wrongdoer. He will not make his intentions public, but will ask the gods to punish the wrongdoer by making him vomit. On the day of the ceremony after the opening round of ba'alche has been drunk, the person accused of the transgression will be made to drink a large quantity of ba'alche. He will be teased by the other men, and he cannot refuse a gourd of ba'alche offered to him. He will only be allowed to stop when he has vomited and has been cured of his illness. If the accused drinks but does not vomit, he is assumed to be innocent of the accusations against him.

While there are several distinct steps involved in the ba'alche ritual, such as incense offerings, ba'alche offerings, and the invocation to the four cardinal directions, the order in which they occur is not set and varies. But as stated before Lacandon ritual is
by nature conservative, and my observation of the ritual (below) is virtually interchangeable with the description written by Tozzer who worked with the Lacandon at the turn of the century.

_ Ba'alche_ is made only by men and the ritual is held in the godhouse where women are forbidden to enter. Women have almost no function in Lacandon ritual behavior. Their role is limited to making ceremonial food offerings to be given to the godpots by men. But women are allowed to drink _ba'alche_, and it is not unusual to see a man leave the godhouse during a ritual, to take his wife and children a gourdful to drink.

The first step in the ritual is to make _ba'alche_. This is usually done in the morning the day before the ritual is to be held. The man sponsoring the ritual, the host, prepares the drink with the help of one of his sons or a friend. The _ba'alche chem_, which is placed upside down when not in use to keep rainwater out, is righted and filled with water from a large clay pot, the _Bol_ jar, which has the face of _Bol_, the Lacandon god of wine, molded on it. Then either honey, pulped sugar cane, or granulated sugar is added. Long strips of _ba'alche_ bark, (_ba'alche_ is also the name of a tree) from which the drink takes its name, are laid lengthwise in the _chem_ with short sticks wedged into the inside of the _chem_ to hold the _ba'alche_ bark underneath the water. Finally the top of the _chem_ is covered with palm and banana leaves so that rainwater and insects will not get into the _ba'alche_, and it is left to ferment for the rest of the day and overnight. An ear of corn is tied to the _ba'alche chem_ to keep Kisin, the god of the
Lacandon child's drawing of a ba'alche ceremony in the godhouse (Bruce 1976:38).
Figure 12
Making "ba'alche".

Figure 13
Drying "ba'alche" bark.
underworld who causes death, from polluting the ba'alche and making it unfit as an offering to the gods. Kisin is said to be afraid of crowds of people. The kernels of corn on the cob appear to him as people, so the ear of corn keeps him away from the ba'alche. Often after the ba'alche has been made, xikals, large flat paddle-like boards, are taken down from their storage shelf in the rafters of the godhouse and nodules of incense are arranged in rows upon them, to be burned as offerings the next day.

The ceremony is held the day after the ba'alche is made. Starting about seven or eight in the morning, men drift over to the godhouse at their leisure to participate. The older men, Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo, usually arrive at the godhouse first, to make the first round of incense and ba'alche offerings to the godpots. Godpots of the gods who have chosen to participate in the ritual are taken off their storage shelf and placed on flat wooden boards laid on the ground, facing east. The godpots are arranged in order of their importance and reflecting their kinship to one another, with the most important gods in the center. For example, Ak'inchob, who is thought to be especially effective at mediating between the other gods and men, will be placed in the center of the board with the godpots representing his family and relatives placed on either side. Then gourds of ba'alche offerings and xikals of incense are placed on a bed of palm leaves in front of the godpots, and a virgin fire is kindled with a wooden drill, for incense burned as an offering to the gods is lit with embers from this fire.
Figure 14
ARRANGEMENT OF A LACANDON GODHOUSE FOR A BA'ALCHE CEREMONY
A. Hollow log (chem) for pulping sugarcane.

B. **Ba'alche chem**, hollow log where the drink is brewed.

C. **Chem** for preparing copal incense **pom**.

D. Cooking huts for ritual food offerings.

E. Water bowls for washing hands before entering the godhouse.

F. Site for libation offerings to the four directions.

G. Seats, **kanche**, for the older men.

H. Clay pot from which **ba'alche** is served with the effigy of **Boł**, the Lacandon god of wine.

I. **Ba'alche** drinking gourds.

J. Palm leaf matting upon which are placed the offerings to the gods and the **ba'alche** drinking gourds.

K. **Xikals**, flat boards with rows of incense offerings arranged upon them.

L. Boards upon which the godpots receiving offerings are placed.

M. Godpots being used in the ritual always face East.

N. Shelf for the storage of godpots.

O. **Suhuy k'ak'**, the virgin fire. Embers from this fire are used to light the incense offerings.

P. Seats for the younger men.

Q. Position from which offerings and prayers are made to the godpots.

R. Large storage gourds of **pom**, copal incense.
Figure 15

Offering incense to the gods.

Figure 16

Feeding ba'alche to the godpots.
Usually the incense is burned first. Using small wooden spoon-like paddles, a man places bits of *pom*, copal incense, into the bowl of the godpot representing the god who is to receive the offering. The incense is lit, and the man making the offering squats behind the godpot and prays amidst the smoke and sparks of the burning incense. The prayers, simple and repetitious, are offered in a high pitched nasal, singsong chant. One such prayer, said when incense is being offered says,

1. "I am giving my copal incense to you,
2. for you to give to the father.
3. For you to raise up, for you his gift."\(^2\)

Next, when people have gathered, but before drinking has begun, *ba'alche* is offered to the gods. Gourds of *ba'alche* are poured from the Bol pot, and placed in front of the godpots. A palm leaf wand (*bo'oy*), is made and a man dips this wand into each one of the gourds holding the *ba'alche* offerings, then shakes the *ba'alche* thus collected into a small gourd he is carrying. This action is repeated for every gourd full of *ba'alche* being offered to the gods. The *ba'alche* collected with the wand in this manner is then literally fed to the mouths of the god figures on the godpots, with the wand. Thus, through the godpot, the gods "drink" the *ba'alche* while prayers such as the following are said, (Tozzer 1907:181),

1. "Ba'alche I am dipping out for your mouth.

\(^2\)Tozzer, 1907:171. The form of the prayers collected by Tozzer, though transcribed almost eighty years ago, are quite similar to contemporary Lacandon prayers.
2. I am giving you ba'alche again, for our welfare.
3. for you to give to the father.
4. Ba'alche I am dipping out for your mouth, for you to come and see.
5. Come down, Look. I am paying you.
6. Ba'alche I am dipping out for your mouth, for you to drink again, for our welfare.
7. Ba'alche I am giving you on your mouth again, for our welfare.
8. My sons are enjoying life.
9. Ba'alche I am giving you.
10. My wife is enjoying life.3
11. Ba'alche I am giving you, for your mouth, again for our welfare.4
12. I enjoy life, I sacrifice to you.

After the offering to the godpots a man takes the wand and a small gourd of ba'alche, steps out of the godhouse, and offers a prayer and libation to the four cardinal directions, sprinking the ba'alche offering into the air with a palm wand, the bo'oy. As this action is taken the following prayer is repeated (Tozzer, 1907:174).

Parentheses are my additions to the translation.

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3 Here Tozzer translates watan as "wife", but the Lacandon term for spouse is lak. It is likely that Tozzer's watan is either the Lacandon wäkän, or "uncle", or w-et hanan, "The one who makes food", in which case "wife" could be, but would not necessarily be, the correct translation.

4 The Lacandon term which Tozzer repeatedly translates as "welfare" is kunyah, which literally means, "to cure pain or sickness".
1. Comes (Here is-R.J.M.) its head for you Lord, accept (gather-R.J.M.) it for the souls of my sons Lord.⁵
2. For the soul of my wife.⁶
3. For you to eat, for you to drink.
4. Take (I give-R.J.M.) the ba'alche for your gift.⁷

The ba'alche ritual is thought to be the mirror image of a ceremony the gods hold to make offerings to Kakoch, the ultimate creator deity, the creator of the gods themselves. Despite this principle of parallelism, (i.e., the gods have the same rituals, eat the same kinds of food, live in the same kinds of dwellings, etc., as the Lacandon), the offerings are believed to undergo a reversal of form when they are given to the gods. For example offerings of incense are transformed into tortillas for the gods, a small quantity of bitter ba'alche is changed into a large quantity of sweet ba'alche, and the palm leaves placed under the offerings become wooden stools for the gods similar to those that Lacandon men sit on during the ba'alche ceremony. It is this same principle which explains why the thatched roof dwellings of the gods appear as stone ruins to men.

Following the libation, the host of the ritual invites the assembled men to take a seat around the Bol pot or along the north

⁵Again I have made a correction in Tozzer's translation. Much-ite, which he translates as accept, should be much-ik, "to gather".

⁶Here again is used the word watan which may be either "wife", or "uncle".

⁷Here Tozzer confuses his verbs, translating tsai-ik as "to take". Tsai-ik in Lacandon is "to give". The word for "take" is chai-ik.
edge of the godhouse. The seating arrangement is based on the age and kin relationships of the participants. The godhouse is divided into two sections. The northern half belongs to Chan K'in Viejo, the southern to Mateo Viejo. These two usually sit in the middle with their sons (in order of age), then sons-in-law arranged beside them, paralleling the arrangement of the godpots explained earlier. This pattern is not inflexible. Following this rule Chan K'in Viejo's oldest son K'in should sit beside his father, yet Antonio, Chan K'in Viejo's oldest son-in-law and an older man than K'in, usually does so. In this case the fact that Antonio is older than K'in seems to give him the right to a place of higher status, closer to the center, despite the fact that he does not have a consanguineal relationship with Chan K'in Viejo. Young unmarried men and those who have not yet been sponsored in a mek'chul ceremony (explained later in this work), usually sit along the north side of the godhouse. The host then offers each a gourd full of ba'alche addressing each man by a kinship term, for example, "tech yum", "you uncle", to which the recipient replies "bay", "good". When everyone has a gourd of ba'alche the host invites them all to drink at which time everyone makes a small libation from their drinking gourd and drinks their ba'alche.

From that point on formal order in the ceremony seems to be discarded. Men make offerings of incense or ba'alche when they decide that it is appropriate. While some talk others pray, and others leave to run errands, attend to personal business, or take ba'alche to their families. For the rest of the ceremony men come and go, burn offerings,
pray, drink, joke, and gossip. It is desirable to become mildly inebriated, and because ba'alche has such a low alcoholic content everyone drinks large quantities. It is the host's job to continually serve ba'alche throughout the day. When the Bol pot is empty the host refills it from the ba'alche chem and the ceremony continues, stopping only when the chem is empty. Late in the afternoon when the ba'alche has been finished, the ba'alche set in front of the godpots as offerings is poured back into the Bol pot and then drunk. The Bol pot and drinking gourds are then turned upside down, the ba'alche chem is turned over, the palm leaves upon which the offerings were placed are picked up and thrown away, and the men go home. The ritual is over and only the host remains to wash and put away the drinking gourds and store the xikals on their shelf in the godhouse.

Although women may not enter the godhouse during a ba'alche ceremony, they are not isolated from the event. During the course of the ritual the older women often come to the godhouse and joke with their husbands. Usually they call to their husbands, "t-ah kala'an-ech"?, 'Are you drunk?' To which the men reply, "Ne kala'an-en"!; "I am very drunk"! While the ritual is serious, it is not at all solemn. It is a chance for everyone to gather, joke, exchange news, and become mildly drunk. The Lacandon characterized the ba'alche ritual to Perera (1982:43), in this fashion,

Chan K'in passes me a cigar and accompanies it with a little homily on smoking and drinking. 'After you smoke a cigar you get dizzy and have to lie down', he says. 'After you drink ba'alche you are content and can still walk around. If you smoke a cigar and drink ba'alche together, you are
content and a little dizzy, and you can sit or walk around as you wish. It is perfection'.

Young Chan K'in adds pointedly, 'And ba'alche does not give you a headache and hangover like whiskey'.

I ask, 'And what if you drink too much ba'alche and smoke too many cigars'?

'Ah then you get sick and vomit and piss all night until you pass out', Chan K'in replies. 'The next day you feel like newly-born'.

At the same time ancient traditions are reinforced. Traditional songs may be shared and the traditional gods honored. Ancient patterns of behavior are preserved by the ba'alche ritual.

The nahwah ritual is a variant of the ba'alche, with the addition of offerings of nahwah, a ceremonial tamale, first given to the gods, and then divided among everyone in the village. It is especially interesting for during the nahwah ritual, the Mayan practices of human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism are preserved in symbolic form, themes which remain surprisingly common in Lacandon ritual behavior.

Preparation for the first nahwah that I witnessed began two days prior to the actual ceremony with the preparation of the nahwah by the wives of Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo, the hosts of the ritual. The food was prepared in the cooking huts next to the godhouse where ritual food offerings must be prepared. The nahwah, small thin tamales with a filling of ground black beans, were wrapped and cooked in banana leaves then stored in large wicker baskets. The day before the ritual, ba'alche was made by Chan K'in Viejo and Mateo Viejo, and left to ferment overnight. The two men then spent the rest of the
Figure 17
The "host" of the *ba'alche* refilling the *Bol* Jar.
Figure 18

Drinking, conversation, and singing during a ba'alche.
The man with the guitar is the linguist Robert Bruce.
Figure 19

Lacandon women watching their husbands during a ba'alche ceremony.
(See Fig. 14--they are in hut "D" looking into the godhouse).
Figure 20

The end of a ba'alche. Drinking gourds and Bol Jar left upside down.
day in the godhouse praying and burning incense, actions remarkably reminiscent of the ancient Mayan customs for establishing purity before an important ceremony. Several times I saw Mateo dip his hand into the flame and smoke of the burning incense and with a cupped hand wave the smoke over himself, as if splashing water on his face. They also prepared xikals for the following day's ritual, taking a small piece of bark with a bit of burning incense on it and waving it over the xikals, praying for the gods to accept their offerings. Early the next morning the ritual began. (The ritual I describe was held in June 1981. I have since participated in two others). The godpots, representing the gods who had "chosen" to participate in the ritual, were placed on a bed of palm leaves in the godhouse facing the east. The hosts of the ceremony invited the assembled men to sit down and then administered the first round of ba'alche offerings to the godpots. One of the hosts placed gourds of ba'alche along with baskets of nahwah and xikals of incense in front of each of the godpots, and then ba'alche was administered to the godpots with the bo'oy, a palm leaf wand, just as in the ba'alche ritual. A prayer and a libation of ba'alche were made to the four cardinal directions and then the men were invited to begin drinking the ba'alche. Soon after the drinking began a virgin fire was kindled. Once it was burning, another set of ba'alche offerings was collected and given to the godpots, and then Chan K'in Viejo again stepped out of the godhouse and offered prayers and libations of ba'alche to the four directions. Incense was then burned in the godpots as another round of ba'alche was
administered to them. As in the first ritual, the atmosphere at this
time was very informal. While one of the hosts made offerings to the
gods, the other men continued to drink ba'alche and talk, choosing to
make offerings at their own initiative. These rounds of offerings,
prayers, and drinking, continued unabated until the late afternoon.
When the ba'alche had been finished pots of beans cooked in a red sauce
were brought down to the godhouse and placed with the baskets of nahwah
in front of the godpots. Most of the men, in turn, picked up one or
two of these pots and stood for a moment in front of the godpots,
praying. At the conclusion of these prayers, Chan K'in Viejo and one
of his sons tore open each of the banana leaf packets of nahwah. Taking
a bit of nahwah in their left hands, they dipped their right hands into
a pot of beans and dripped the red sauce onto the nahwah. The nahwah
was then placed in the mouth of the figure on the godpot accompanied, by
this prayer. Items in parentheses are my additions.

1. Here it is Lord Mensâbâk.
2. Ts'ibatnah here. See it then.
3. Very close he passes, he walks Sâkapuk-eh.
4. See your food tortillas (tamales). See where the grove of
   palms are. (Refers to the bed of palm leaves the offerings
   are placed upon).
5. See (the offerings), with sil (small godpots for the assistants
to the gods). See it then, the payment (for our) welfare.
6. You took them there, you go to Itsanok'uh. You enter there.
7. Here goes one (nahwah?) Itsanok'uh. One you take.
8. You take one, here my mother.

9. You go to the Lord of the Sky. Here go and give it.

10. We see him go from the grove of palms. It is clear. We will not be careless.

11. He kills his older brother. (My older brother is dead. Though the third person is used, the informant is speaking of his older brother). You made mounds (burial mounds).

12. He came to go. With the passings (in two trips), he goes.

13. Eh, he sits before Itsanok'uh. No one sits, he goes.

14. He killed my father (my father is dead). He killed no one yet he goes.

15. Good he brings to the Lord of the Sky.

16. See it mother, see it. His Older brother my Lord. Oh mother.

17. Look Xk'anle'ox-eh. Ki Chāk Chob (Äk'inchob), see the sikil-wah (tamales with gourd seeds), for the Lord of the Sky.

18. It is good they make my sacred water (atole). It is good my food (my wife, she who makes my food is well). My sons are well.

19. My sons are all gathered together, all gathered together. It is good Lord.

20. All together (with) me. I am with my (son) K'in. I am with my (son) Chan K'in. We are all together.

21. Eh, poor us. (Have pity on us). All together we make my sacred water (atole). All gathered for your hand.

22. Very close your feet (you enter), you see your food bu'ul-il-wah (literally "flood of flood"), your food-leaf covered meat (meat tamales), your tamales with gourd seeds. Very close you enter, you see them.

23. Look. See your food with Our Lord. Look with the godpots for the gods' assistants. Look then Older Brother of My Lord.
24. Eh, it is good they make my sacred water (atole). It is good I made it. All is gathered in your hand.

25. He did not enter the village, he is buried. Before he enters your godpot, I will bury him.

26. Eh, newly they made tortillas (nahwah), they made white water (atole), newly they made it then.

27. Eh there. My sons are all together. All together they pay for their welfare (their cures), my payments (offerings). 8

In this manner each of the godpots was fed from the baskets of nahwah and the pots of beans placed in front of it. Then the ritual host stepped from the godhouse and made a ritual offering of nahwah to the east, throwing bits of nahwah into the air. A prayer recorded by Tozzer (1907:185) which is said at this time is:

1. The head of (this offering-RJM) my beans comes for you Lord.
2. You take my beans, my nahwah you.
3. For my sons live.
4. My wife lives, she makes posole, she makes tortillas.

Once these offerings were made, the nahwah and beans were divided among the men to eat, the host saying (Tozzer 1907:185),

1. I am giving you one bowl of beans, again for your welfare.
2. I am giving you one bowl of nahwah, again for your welfare.

At this time, as the nahwah and beans were being divided among the men, the women and children came to the godhouse and the men shared the nahwah and beans with their families. By six in the evening the food was finished and everyone returned home. The ritual was finished.

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To understand how the ancient practice of human sacrifice and cannibalism survives in symbolic form in this Lacandon ritual, it is necessary to have a background in Lacandon mythology. The Lacandon have folktales about the Nuki Nawahto, an ancient people of the K'ambul or K'oox onen, who are said to have sacrificed men to the gods by cutting open their chests with flint knives, feeding the victim's heart to the godpot, and painting the godpot with the victim's blood. Obviously the folktale preserves a memory of historical fact. Landa, describing human sacrifice in the sixteenth century writes (in Tozzer, 1978:118-119),

If the heart of the victim was to be taken out, they led him with a great show and company of people into the court of the temple, and having smeared him with blue and put on a corozá, they brought him up to the round altar, which was the place of sacrifice, and after the priests and his officials had anointed the stone with a blue color, and by purifying the temple drove out the evil spirit, the Chacs seized the poor victim, and placed him very quickly on his back upon that stone, and all four held him by the legs and arms, so that they divided him in the middle. At this came the executioner, the Nacom, with a knife of stone, and struck him with great skill and cruelty a blow between the ribs of his left side under the nipple, and he at once plunged his hand in there and seized his heart like a raging tiger and snatched it out alive and, having placed it upon a plate, he gave it to the priest, who went very quickly and anointed the faces of the idols with that fresh blood.

The name Nuki Nawahto itself provides information relevant to this analysis. Nuki is a derivation of nukuch, mayan for "ancient" or "long ago", and Nawahto is obviously related to nahwah the ceremonial tamale used in contemporary Lacandon ritual offerings. Nahwah itself can be broken down further. Wah is Lacandon for "tortilla" and "nah" is most conspicuously used in Mayan mythology to mean "great" or something
Figure 21
A godpot with an offering of *Nahwah* in its mouth.
which possesses supernatural qualities as in Nah Ek the "Great Star", the deified planet Venus, or Nah Tsulu, the celestial jaguars who will destroy the world. So the term nahwah can be seen to have a powerful linguistic association. It is not only a ceremonial tamale, it is the great or supernatural tamale, the food of the gods, and Nawahto are those who fed the gods human flesh. This linguistic coupling implies a link between the nahwah and human flesh. The similarity of the two words nahwah, and Nawahto, and the actions associated with each: the offering of ritual tamales to the godpots followed by the communal sharing of the food, and human sacrifice with the victim's heart offered to the idols followed by ritual cannibalism, suggest that the tamale nahwah is a substitute for the ancient sacrificial offerings of the Nawahto.

As already discussed, at the conclusion of the nahwah ritual, bits of nahwah are dipped into the pots of beans cooked in a red sauce, then fed to the gods by placing the food in the mouths of the figures on the godpots. When the offerings have been completed, the men and their families finish the tamales and beans themselves. In order to explain this symbolism, it is necessary to refer to Lacandon mythological color symbolism. The color red is especially significant in Lacandon religion, because red is believed to be the favorite color of the gods. The fact that the Lacandon ordinarily eat black beans makes the red beans cooked in a red sauce significant. Chük hu'ún headbands of bark cloth dyed red are worn around the head in some ceremonies, and circular designs (whose significance the Lacandon no longer
remember), are painted in red on both the ba'alche chem and specific beams of the godhouse in imitation of the designs believed to be painted on the homes of the gods. According to Tozzer, the Lacandon used to paint their faces and arms red for certain ceremonies and I have seen photographs of men of Naha' painted in this manner. Tozzer (1907:73) writes,

..., the faces of the participants are also painted. The men have spots of red upon the chin and on the forehead and short lines under the eyes... The leader in this rite has two circles of red running around each ankle and wrist. This probably corresponds to the two circles on the beams and posts of the ceremonial hut.

Red is thought to be the favorite color of the gods because it is associated with blood. In one Lacandon myth, the god Hach'kyum first destroys the sun, then, collecting all of the people together, he cuts their throats and collects the blood in a gourd. He mixes the blood with achiote (used by the Lacandon as a red dye) and gives the mix to the god Ts'ibatnah, instructing him to paint the houses of the gods red. Thus the designs on the godhouse are in imitation of this event in which achiote was also used. Just as men formerly painted their faces with red during their rituals, they also offered their own blood to their godpots. I believe that the painting of the body is done in imitation of the ancient practice of cutting one's ears, nose, lips, tongue, and arms with a flint blade, an important part of ancient Mayan ritual. Landa wrote,

They offered sacrifices of their own blood, sometimes cutting themselves around in pieces and they left them in this way as a sign. Other times they pierced their cheeks, at others their lower lips... at others they pierced their tongues in a
Figure 22

The Designs, painted in red, on the beams of the godhouse. Note also the shelf where the godpots are stored when not in use. (See Fig. 14-"N").
slanting direction from side to side and passed bits of straw through the holes.⁹

A graphic representation of this practice can be found in the murals in the ruins of Bonampak. In one section of the murals of room number three, (which, judging from long count dates found at the site, were painted around 800 AD.), women are pictured sitting on a raised platform making offerings of their own blood by piercing their tongues. One woman is pictured in the act, poised over a bowl of paper into which she drips her blood, the paper to be burned later with incense as an offering. Standing below her is an attendant, handing her a sharp blade (see Fig. 23).

Any doubt about this interpretation can be erased by a visit to the Lacandon Museum at the Na Bolom Library in San Cristobal. There they have a photograph of a Lacandon man with his face painted as previously described. It looks as if his cheeks are covered with blood, and the former Lacandon practice of piercing the tongue to make a blood offering has already been noted.

Finally, I believe that the offering of nahwah dipped in the red sauce, fed to the godpots, then consumed by the people themselves, is the symbolic feeding of human flesh and blood to the gods, followed by symbolic ritual cannibalism. Both practices were common features of sixteenth century Mayan ritual behavior, from which the Lacandon derive their religious beliefs. Landa, writing about human sacrifice,

Figure 23

One section of the murals at Bonampak showing a woman making a blood offering by piercing her tongue (Caleti 1949).
Figure 24
Sacrificial Scene from the Dresden Codex (Villacorta: 1933).
said, "The custom was usually to bury in the court of the temple those whom they had sacrificed, or else they ate them, dividing them up among those who had arrived."\(^{10}\)

Lacandon mythology also supports the interpretation of the nahwah ritual as symbolic cannibalism. The Lacandon myth of the creation of human beings says that Hachākyum and his wife made people from clay and kernels of maize. So, in a symbolic sense, in feeding nahwah to the gods and then eating it themselves, the Lacandon are eating the substance of their own flesh. Furthermore, maize is called "the food of the gods", thus linking human flesh and nahwah once again. This symbolic transformation is quite similar to that which occurs in Christian communion when the celebrant, taking the communion wafer, consumes the body of Christ. The Lacandon, when they take a bit of nahwah dripping with red sauce and feed it to the godpots, are preserving a pattern of human sacrifice in their religious symbolism which is very old, and deeply ingrained in Mayan ritual behavior.

Other forms of symbolic human sacrifice also exist in Lacandon ritual behavior. The xikal, the paddle-like board upon which nodules of incense are placed, is also involved in sacrificial symbolism. When a Lacandon man prepares a xikal, the rows of incense are imagined to be parts of the human body and in this manner a human being of incense is patterned on its surface. For example, as he places nodules of incense in a row upon the xikal he may say, "This is your head; this is your head.

\(^{10}\)Ibid., p. 120
Figure 25
Chan K'in Viejo Preparing a Xikal.
This is your arm; this is your arm". Then when the xikal has been prepared and the gods have been asked to accept the offering, the incense is burned. Xikals also appear to have been a part of ancient Mayan ritual. Landa writes (Tozzer, 1978:152),

It was at this time that they chose officials, the Chacs to assist the priest, and he prepared a large number of little balls of fresh incense upon little boards which the priests had for this purpose, so that the fasters and abstainers might burn them in honor of their idols.

The Lacandon also use another ritual object which has obvious human associations. These are human figures made of rubber called k'ik', which are burned with incense in the godpots. K'ik', "rubber", was quite generally utilized by the ancient Maya as a ritual offering. Its use in the Lacandon's territory is mentioned in documents described by Thompson (1952:193-195), which refer to an entrada led by Juan de Morales Villa Vicencio in 1586. Thompson writes,

After the inglorious retirement of Villa Vincencio's army,...a small group was sent to observe what signs of activity there might be around the lake on which the (Lacandon's) island fortress had stood. The group had orders to return with tangible evidence that they had carried out their orders, and one of the things they brought back was this idol of wax...The testimony of Anton Gomez, the leader of the detachment from Ocasingo is more explicit: 'Close to where the canoes were kept...they found the bundle of pine torches with the little idol of wax and rubber...'.

Landa also mentions the burning of k'ik' as an offering to the gods, and at Chichen Itza rubber figures were thrown into the sacred cenote as offerings.

Bruce (1976:26), describes the two types of k'ik', generally used in Lacandon rituals. They are made from sap bled from a tree. The first is taka'an u nok' k'ik', or "k'ik' with clothes". These figures,
Figure 26

Parts of the Rubber Figure Offerings (Davis 1978:133).
up to twenty cm. tall, are all considered to be male, and are fashioned quite realistically to the point of including genitals on the figures, and as the name imples, clothes. The second type, tulis k'ik', are much smaller, only five to eight cm. tall, and can be either male or female though all are made in a stylized triangular form. The female tulis k'ik are called Chel, a reference to the ancient Mayan goddess Ixchel who was symbolized by the moon. The male figures are called K'ohol, but it is unknown if the name is a reference to any other object.

The Lacandon believe that when the figures are burned they become attendants to the gods, washing their hands and mouths, lighting their cigars, working in the god's fields, and making ceremonial offerings to Kakoch on the god's behalf. This is a reflection of the human sacrificial nature of the act, for among the ancient Maya it was believed a sacrificial victim went directly to the gods to become a servant or messenger. The sacrificial symbolism is further reinforced by the act of painting the rubber figures with k'uxuh, the red dye which is also used to color the ch'ak hu'un, the red barkcloth headbands worn in Lacandon rituals. Also, the name of the rubber figures, k'ik', is the same as the root of the mayan word for blood, k'ik'-el, which further strengthens the symbolic connection between the rubber figures and human sacrifice.

Once the figures have been molded and are ready to be burned, a special song is sung over them to bring the figures to life before they are burned. The following text is one such song, sung by Chan K'in Viejo (Davis 1978:137-140).
1. My foot is afraid
2. My hand is afraid.
3. Awaken.
4. I awaken them so they stand on the board.
5. I, I touched (formed) their lives.
6. I touched their bones.
7. I touched their lungs.
8. I touched their hearts.
9. I awaken them so they come stand on the board.
10. They are for you from me, Lord of Heaven.
11. They are for you from me, Äk'inchob.
12. They are for you from me, Mensabok.
13. They are for you from me, Itzanok'uh.
14. They are for you from me, Äkyantho'.
15. For all the gods.
16. I set them down so they come and stand on the board.
17. The rubber figures.
18. These very rubber figures.
19. Near their feather crowns.
20. Near their heads.
21. All of the copal lumps.
22. I have raised them and they come and stand on the board.
23. I, I truly awakened them.
24. The hirih beams of your house, I am your father.
25. Here is your house, I am your mother.
26. The châk op wood.
27. This châk op wood.
28. This is the hirih beam of your house, I am your father.
29. This is the hirih beam of your house, I am your mother.
30. The châk op wood.
31. Palmetto leaves, your house, I am your father.
32. Xa'an palm leaves, your house, I am your mother.
33. This is your house, I am your father.
34. I awaken them so they stand on the board.
35. I set them down and I raise them high.
36. For you, for you to accept Lords.
37. For you from me, the na'ahplil ceremony.
38. For you from me, the ya'ahk'in ceremony.
39. For you from me, the witsbir ceremony.
40. I awaken you, they come and
41. stand on the board.
42. They are for you from me, the tikiñwah ceremony.
43. These I raised so they come and
44. stand on the board.
45. Ah for you the tsâyar fly at the tikiñwah ceremony.
46. But there is corn drink for the Lords.
47. But there are tamales for the Lords.
48. I awakened them, they stand on the board...

Once again I have attempted to illustrate the conservative nature of
Lacandon ritual. Human sacrifice was a common part of ancient Mayan ritual as evidenced by illustrations in the Mayan codices and from historical accounts. The use of k'ik' as an offering to the gods is just one more way this sacrificial symbolism has been preserved in contemporary Lacandon ritual.

A story which refers to the origin of the association between k'ik, "rubber", and k'ik'-el, "blood", can be found in the Popol Vuh, the mythic history of the Quiche Maya. In part II, chapter three, is the story of the maiden Xquic (or Xk'ik', X is a prefix signifying female), and Cuchumaquic (Kuchumak'ik', "To Carry Blood"), her father.

At the end of the preceding chapter, two mythic hero-brothers, Hun-Hunahpu and Vucub-Hunahpu, are challenged to undergo a series of trials by the Lords of Xibalba, the Underworld. Failing in the last test, they are both sacrificed. The Lords cut off the head of Hun-Hunahpu before burying the bodies, and hang the head in a tree by a road. Instantly, the tree which had never before born fruit, was filled with fruit, and the Lords of Xibalba, filled with wonder, order that no one may pick the fruit.

Cuchumaquic tells Xquic about the tree and she decides to go see it. Arriving at the tree, the head of Hun-Hunahpu tells Xquic that the fruit she sees are only skulls, but if she would like one of them she should reach out her right hand. Xquic reaches up and the skull spits into the palm of her hand which impregnates her.

Six months later, Cuchumaquic notices her condition and demands to know who is responsible for her pregnancy. She answers before a council
of Lords that there is no father, she is still a virgin. Judging her
to be lying, and having dishonored him, Cuchumaquic orders that she be
sacrificed and commands four of his messengers to cut out her heart
and bring it back in a gourd. The girl, not wishing to die, and the
messengers, not wanting to kill her, concoct a plan. She leads them to
a tree and says [Recinos, 1978:122-123],

'Neither shall my heart be burned before them. Gather the
product of this tree', said the maiden. The red sap gushing
forth from the tree fell in the gourd and with it they made
a ball which glistened and took the shape of a heart. The
tree gave forth sap similar to blood, with the appearance
of real blood. Then the blood, or that is to say the sap
of the red tree, clotted and formed a very bright coating
inside the gourd, like clotted blood; meanwhile the tree
glowed at the work of the maiden.

Finishing their work, the girl slips away and the messengers return with
the gourd of sap. The end of the chapter provides a description of the
offering.

When they arrived in the presence of the lords, all were waiting.

'You have finished?', asked Hun-Came.

'All is finished my Lords. Here in the bottom of the gourds is
the heart.'

'Very well. Let us see', exclaimed Hun-Came. And grasping it
with his fingers he raised it, the shell broke and the blood
flowed bright red in color.

'Stir up the fire and put it on the coals', said Hun-Came. As
soon as they threw it on the fire, the men of Xibalba began to
sniff and drawing near to it, they found the fragrance of the
heart very sweet.

As I read this passage I am reminded of the times I have watched
Lacandon men praying before their godpots, as the smoke from incense
and k'ik' offerings billowed around them, in repetition of a centuries-
old ritual. Above all it becomes clear how Lacandon ritual has symbolically preserved a very ancient pattern of bloodletting and human sacrifice through the use of the color red, representing blood in chák hu'ún, the sauce in which nahwah is dipped, and stylized body painting. Finally there is the offering of k'ik', nahwah, and xikals of incense which represent the human body.
Chapter IX

I have described the ba'alche ceremony, the most common Lacandon communal ritual, and one variation of the ba'alche, the nahwah. I have attempted to explain the function of these rituals and the ancient patterns of symbolism which survives in these rituals today. Though there are several variations, the basic pattern of the ceremony remains the same. For example other ceremonies such as the Ya'ahk'in or Na'ahplil, both of which are ceremonial payments to the gods for curing someone seriously ill or for assistance during the birth of a child, remain essentially the same as the ba'alche, for Lacandon rituals can be differentiated not so much by form as by their purpose. In this sense the ba'alche ritual is a "key" ceremony, for it sets the pattern for almost all transactions with the gods. But there are two rituals which do not follow this pattern. They are the mek'chul, a ceremony of initiation into adulthood and ritual payment to the gods, and the funeral.¹

The name mek'chul derives from the Mayan verb mek-ik, "to embrace," and refers to the manner in which a mother carries her infant, that is tied straddling the mother's hip with a sash. The ritual is both an initiation into adulthood and the time of a major payment to the gods. Offerings usually consist of ba'alche, incense, chäk hu'un, k'ik', ma'ats, and nahwah, as well as special ritual items which are chosen in accordance with the sex of the child being sponsored in the ceremony.

¹I have not personally witnessed either the mek'chul or a funeral. My account here is based on information from the fieldnotes of anthropologist Mike Rees, the Ph.D. Dissertation of Didier Bormanse, and information provided by Lacandon informants.
The gifts are presented by the father of the child who may or may not also sponsor the child during the ritual. Chan K'ín Viejo usually sponsors his own children, yet Mike Rees was asked to sponsor a child for a *mek'chul* in Licanha, so the selection of the sponsor is apparently the choice of the child's father. The gifts are presented to benevolent gods who have taken care of the child since he was born, and to appease angry gods who might want to harm the child in the future. "Indeed," Bormanse writes (1978:80),

> the father of the child will pay all the gods who helped or threatened his child at different periods of his life, i.e. every time he was seriously ill, at the *mek'chahal*. This means that these gods have sometimes to wait for ten to fifteen years before they get the gifts which have been promised to them when the father was burning incense in their censer and working over his sick child with the 'xate' leaf. But at last the promise is fulfilled.

The *mek'chul* is really a two-part ceremony. The first part is the payment of the gods which lasts for several days. The second involves the child's ritual instruction which lasts less than an hour. While the *mek'chul* of the Yucatecan and Southern Lacandon Maya is performed when the child is an infant, the Lacandon of Naha' may wait until the child is in its mid teens. Two young men I asked about their *mek'chuls* said they had been performed when they were about sixteen years old, and there are young men in Naha' now who are that age and have not yet been through the ritual.

Why do the Lacandon wait so long to hold the ceremony? Bormanse speculates that the parents are afraid the child may not live so they choose to wait until it is strong and healthy, "because there would not be much sense in paying the gods if they did not keep the child alive"
(Bormanse, 1978:91). Another reason, which I heard from several informants was, as they say, "I am just lazy." The amount of work and preparation necessary to hold a mek'chul is so great, they put it off until the young man is ready to assume adult responsibilities such as marriage. A third reason may be that postponing the mek'chul allows the parents to keep a child in a state of relative dependency. A child's leaving home means less help in the milpa or with household chores. A father can refuse to give a daughter away in marriage because she has not yet been sponsored, and it makes it more difficult for a son to leave his parents and get a wife because if he has not been sponsored in a mek'chul ceremony, he technically cannot begin the ritual-religious behavior required of an adult married man. So parents are able to prolong the dependency of their children if they choose to do so. A possible example of this situation can be found in Chan K'in Viejo's family. Although his oldest unmarried son (K'in II) is about 17 years old and is old enough to be sponsored in a mek'chul, it has not yet been done. A reason for this may be that Chan K'in Viejo is deliberately postponing the ritual and maintaining his son's dependency because he needs his help in the milpa. Chan K'in Viejo is in his mid-eighties, yet still must work a big enough milpa to feed the 10 dependents still remaining in his immediate family. By forbidding K'in II to take a non-Lacandon wife, and postponing his mek'chul, Chan K'in Viejo can keep his son in the household and working for him.

Along with the ritual offerings to the gods of ba'alche, incense, bark cloth headbands, rubber figures, nahwah, and ma'ats, the objects
to be used for the child's ritual instruction are placed before the godpots the day before this instruction occurs. If the mek'chul is for a boy, these objects consist of sets of bows and arrows, a leather pouch, a net bag, a machete, a gourd bowl, and a gourd plate containing flints, feathers, a knife, and cord. These are the traditional tools of the adult Lacandon man. The bow and arrows and the leather pouch are for hunting. Even though Lacandon men now hunt with rifles, bows and arrows are still used in the ritual. The objects on the gourd plate: the flints, feathers, knife, and cord, are used to make bows and arrows. The machete and net bag are for work in the milpa.

The night before the child's instruction begins, his or her father begins to make ritual offerings to the godpots, burning incense and k'ik' and feeding the godpots ba'alche and nahwah. Bormanse (1978:95), recorded the following ritual prayer said during this set of offerings. Items in parentheses are my additions to the text.

This Känänk'ax, is the rubber of my Kayum (name of the boy to be instructed the following day-RJM), from me to you, and for the lord Ki Chäk Chob (Ahk'inchob-RJM). Go and see him, and you will tell U Na'il Yum-Bili Ka'an (the wife of our Lord in Heaven-RJM), to see my lord from your part. You will then go to Itsanok'uh (Alligator Lord, guardian of lakes and maker of haii-RJM), and tell him, 'This is for you my Lord, he will not have to bury him, he is happy.' Forgive my Kayum for him to get up and collect pom resin because he will be in good spirits. Get rid of his stomach aches so that he can eat. Then he will be in good spirits to get up and burn incense. I will not have to bury him. Send your word, this is from me to you, go and see, O Lord, and you Ki Chäk Chob, go up and see U Tum-Bili Ka'an, go and see him with Äk Na' ("Our Mother," the moon-RJM), see, see what is being done, and cure my Kayum, I will not have to bury him...
The next day, starting early in the morning, the men begin to drink ba'älche so that by the time the ceremonial instruction is to begin, everyone is slightly drunk. The women also gather near the godhouse in the ceremonial cooking huts, and begin to drink ba'älche too. After the offerings of nahwah and xikals of incense are given to the godpots, the child who is to be initiated is brought to the godhouse. He wears a new xikul called a hach nok' which has been painted with reddish-brown spots, which may simulate either the spots of a jaguar or ritual bloodletting. The child is brought into the godhouse and is led to a hammock which has been hung for him in the northeast corner of the godhouse. He is told to watch the approach of the ritual instructor's wife, who is allowed to enter the godhouse.² The instructor offers a bowl of ba'älche to his wife as she enters the godhouse saying, "Now I am very drunk," repeating it several times. (Though ritual inebriation is a desirable state during ceremonial activities, ba'älche is only slightly alcoholic and no one usually gets very intoxicated). The instructor then informs everyone that he is going to take the child. He then takes the child by the hand and begins to instruct him. The first lesson is how to climb a tree in case of attack by a dangerous animal. The instructor leads the child to the northwest pole of the godhouse, squeezes the child's legs around it and

²This is one of the few occasions that a woman is allowed in the godhouse. When a boy is instructed she will have no active part in the ritual, but if a ritual is for a girl, a woman will perform the ritual teaching.
says, "Learn how to climb a tree, climb a tree, do not learn from me, I do not climb trees, do not learn from me." Then the instructor dusts the shelves where the godpots are stored, sweeps the floor of the godhouse and says, "Learn to sweep the shelves of our Lords, do not leave anything, do not learn from me, I do not sweep the house of our Lords, you learn how to clean it even though I do not." Next the instructor picks up one set of bow and arrows, the net bag, and the machete lying in front of the godpots. He leaves the godhouse with his wife and followed by the child. The rest of the participants remain where they are. The instructor demonstrates how to use the bow, and according to the type of game being hunted, which kind of arrow to use. After this the child is shown the path to the latrine area. Each household cluster has a private latrine area, one for men, another for women, and it is considered very bad manners to use any other spot for defecating. The instructor then shows the child a path to the milpa. He is also shown the trail to the trees where resin is gathered for incense.

Following the instructions for tapping incense, the child is taken to a nearby stream and told about carrying water for ba'alche. He is instructed to be careful with the Bol pot, from which the ba'alche is dipped, and returned to the godhouse and shown the ba'alche chems, the dugout canoes in which ba'alche is prepared. Next they re-enter the godhouse and the child is shown how to make arrows using the implements left on the gourd plate, the knife, feathers, and cord.
Finally, the child is given a gourd of ba'alche to drink, his first official drink of ba'alche, and the instruction ends with a lecture admonishing the child to be thoughtful. The word for thoughts or thinking in Lacandon is tukul, and this short speech is recited so the child, ma' u tubul u tukul, "does not forget to be thoughtful." The instructor touches gourd seeds to the child's forehead, neck, and his chest and says,

Here is calabash for your thoughts. Do not learn from me, I do not have any for my thoughts. For you there are calabash seeds for your thoughts, for you to remember, for you to remember everything. Whatever you do, for the things you do, you will think about them, because here are (seeds) for your thoughts. Do not learn from me, I am thoughtless. But there are (seeds) for you to think about your work, about whatever you do. 3

He then gives nahwah to the child saying, "Here Kayum (the name of the boy being sponsored-RJM), for your thoughts, some food for you; there is nothing more" (Bormanse, 1978:99). This brings the ritual instruction to an end. The father of the child chants over him touching him with a xate' (palm) leaf which has been consecrated in the smoke of the burning incense saying,

O Lord Ki Chák Chob, I have finished sponsoring my Kayum, I will not have to bury him. He will burn incense on the stone in your house, O Lord Kánánk'ax, send forth your hand to cure him. You have just seen his arrows, you have just seen the chák hu'un. You saw what has been done, first for Itsanjk'uh. I will not have to bury him, he will walk and bring the first of my chák hu'un, give tortillas to your censer, to your shrine. O Itzana, tell Chob, tell Itsanok'uh..., and tell T'upu. He will come down and tell Yum Bili-Ka'an and U Na'il Yum Bili-Ka'an: He will not

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have to bury his child Kayum who will pray to his censers, who will give us the chāk hu'un of the Na'abil-il. Now you will go in and sit down at Itsanok'uh. His smoke will be finished; finished will be the many rubber figures, to bring the mek'chāhāl to an end, the payment of tamales... This is the payment of their curing. O Lord Ki Chāk Chob, here are the fillets of your Naabil-il, the payment of their curing, their payment...

Now the child returns to the hammock and his father gives ba'alche to everyone. The chāk hu'un, which has been tied around each of the godpots as an offering, is distributed among the men, each putting one of the red bark bands around his head. The child receives three. Nahwah is then distributed to everyone, and they eat, drink ba'alche, and continue to make offerings to the godpots. At this point the regular pattern of the ba'alche ritual reasserts itself. The following day, the ritual instruction is repeated in exactly the same manner as the previous day's ritual.

Mek'chul's are also given for girls. According to Bormanse, the form of the ritual is the same except the instruction of the child is done in the ceremonial kitchen hut near the godhouse, and the items placed before the godpots, the tools of the woman, are different. Placed for the instruction of a girl are spindles of cotton, thread, parts of a loom in a large gourd, a net bag with a water gourd, a wooden comb and a gourd bowl. There is also a broom and a low table on which tortillas are made. The young girl's sponsor, a woman, will show her how to sweep the floor, and take her to the paths around the village to instruct her on where to fetch water, the location of the woman's

Figure 27

Chāk hu'un, the barkcloth headbands.
latrine, etc. In the ceremonial kitchen she is shown how to weave, and told to wash her hands and the kitchen implements before preparing food. At the conclusion of the instructions, as with the boy, she is given ba'alche and her father chants over her.

The *mek'chui* ceremony is not an isolated incident practiced only by the Lacandon, it is quite widespread throughout the Mayan area. An interesting comparison can be made between the *mek'chui* and the Yucatecan Mayan version of this same ritual called the *hetzmek*. Though the *hetzmek* has adopted Spanish cultural influences, several of its basic features remain unchanged and so remain quite similar to the Lacandon *mek'chui*.

Unlike the Lacandon of Naha' (but like the southern Lacandon of Lacanha Chan Sayab) the *hetzmek* is performed when the child is an infant less than a year old. A sponsor is asked to teach the infant, as with the Lacandon, but acceptance of this role is the start of a *compadre* relationship which implies more responsibility than is accepted by a Lacandon child's sponsor. Also the *hetzmek* is a secular activity while the Lacandon *mek'chui* is a time for a major payment to the gods.

As in the Lacandon ritual a man and wife act as sponsors for the ceremony but only one plays a major part: a man if the child is a boy, a woman if the child is a girl. The *hetzmek* is a private family matter unlike the communal Lacandon ceremony, and outsiders are not invited. The persons present are seated around a table and objects for the child's future life are placed on the table such as a book, pencil, notebook, catechism, hammer, hatchet, tortillas, a plate of boiled meat, and money.
Other objects are placed under the table. Redfield (1962:189) describes the ceremony in this manner,

The godfather takes the child and puts it astride his hip. He then goes nine times around the table, at each circuit taking one of the objects from the table and putting it into the hand of the child while he utters an admonishment according to the character of the object. Thus, on the first trip around the table he takes up the book, and says, 'Here you have a book. Take it so that you may learn to read.' Thus he does with each object—the pencil and the notebook, so the child may learn to write; the catechism, so that he may learn to pray; the hammer, that he may learn to work; the hatchet, that he may learn to fell bush, the bread, that he may 'learn to eat everything'; the boiled fowl, that he may learn to eat 'good food'; the coins, that he may learn to earn money. He then hands the child to the godmother, telling her to make hetzmek with it; and she does as he has already done. It is also customary for the godmother, on each of the trips around the table, to eat one of the nine squash seeds which have been placed on the table. 'As the squash seed is opened to expose its soft interior, so will the mind of the child be opened.' When the squash seeds are used up, the godmother has finished her task...

Though the establishment of the _compadre_ relationship is an obvious Spanish cultural intrusion, the form of the _hetzmek_, and the ritual instruction, still closely follow the pattern of the Lacandon ritual. The child is instructed in the responsibilities of the adult and shown the tools which will be a part of its adult life. And, just as the Lacandon sponsor gives the child squash seeds and admonishes the boy to be thoughtful, squash seeds are opened to open the mind of the child in the _hetzmek_.

The funeral is the other Lacandon ritual which does not resemble the _ba'alche_ ceremony. According to Lacandon mythology, men did not originally have to die. A mythic character, Nuxi, or Åh Lehi Käh Bah, "The Ancient One" or "The Trapper of Moles," travelled to the Underworld
and fell in love with the daughter of Kisin. There he was given the äsäb, a device with which he could awaken the dead and give them new life. Following, is a translation of part of the myth of Nuxi and the äsäb, and how it was rendered useless.

The Mole Trapper's Return to Earth

9. Later the Mole Trapper saw one of his companions thinking of his wife who had died.

10. The Mole Trapper said, "I am very sorry for you. Let us go and see (her). If you have your wife's clothing, bring it."

11. His companion answered, "I have. I shall bring it."

12. Arriving there where her bones were, the Mole Trapper unwrapped his Äsäb, 'The Awakener,' and inserted it into her nasal fossa.

13. When he inserted it, quickly she arose sneezing. Her flesh, her skin, the hair of her head, she had them all.

14. Her voice came forth, "Oh, I am so tired of sleeping!"

15. But she had no clothing. The Mole Trapper said to her husband, "Come and give her clothing."

16. Given her clothing, she put it on. She returned home with her husband.

17. The man said, "Let's go." The woman answered, "Let's go."

18. Two dead persons did the Mole Trapper awaken.

19. But when he went to tap his incense trees, his wife unwrapped that which he kept covered (the äsäb).

20. She saw it. She called all her companions to look at that which he used to raise (dead) people.

21. The Äsäb, 'Awakeners,' (which he used) to awaken us, had colors, like the lotus flower. They were bright red.
22. The one for men was a paler tone; the one for women was a brighter red.

23. When he returned from his incense, he saw it. "Oh, you have unwrapped my things!"

24. She answered, "No. I didn't uncover them."

25. "You unwrapped them. I see it. I am going to die because of this. But me, I shall not burn (in the Underworld). You shall burn."

26. She answered again, "No. I did not uncover them."

27. Another day, came another of his companions. He asked him to raise his wife who had died some time before.


29. He dug up her grave. He pulled out her bones, and he fitted them all together loosely. He put on her head.

30. He said to her husband, "Turn your back. Do not watch."

31. He inserted the awakener into her nasal fosa...but this time, nothing.

32. The Mole Trapper said, "Oh, my wife unwrapped it. This is not good.

33. It cannot be. Now I know. I am going to die."

34. In a month he was no more. He burned with fever. He died.

35. But he was not concerned about dying. He wanted very much to return and see the daughter of Kisin.5

The Lacandon believe that death is caused by the gods, though it is not an end of existence but a transformation to another level of existence. This follows the same principle of reversal which causes

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5This myth was collected and translated by Robert Bruce who provided me with a copy of it during one of his trips to Nana'.
transformations in ritual offerings. According to Davis (1978), the Lacandon believe in a multi-layered universe. The first layer is the underworld called Metlan, the second is the world which people inhabit, the third level is where the gods live, and Kakoch lives in the fourth. The change from one level to another causes a reversal of form. Death is a reversal of life, the transformation a living organism undergoes when changing levels of existence, from the second to the first level.

If a man angers the gods they may send sickness to him or a member of his family. Through divination a man attempts to learn which god is angered, the reason he is being punished, and which gods will consent to help him. Then the divination continues to see what types of payment the gods will want if they choose to help him.

Someone needing a divination will ask an older male relative to do it for him. It is usually Chan K'in Viejo or Mateo Viejo who do this in Naha'. The diviner goes off by himself into the jungle to ask questions of the gods using one of two methods of divination which provide answers to yes or no questions. The first method involves placing the fingers of both hands together with the fingernails touching. The hands are then brought sharply together, palm to palm, and the answer to the question is read from the position of the fingers. The second method involves rolling two xate' leaves in a special pattern. The answer to the question is read in the manner in which the leaves unroll.

In decisions of life and death Hachäkyum is the ultimate arbiter. If mercy is granted the person will be cured. If, despite the offerings and prayers, the person dies, his pixan, "soul," goes to the Underworld to be judged by Sukunkyum, the chief Lord of the Underworld and older
brother of Hachäkyum. If the person was guilty of lying, theft or murder during life, the soul is given to Kisin for punishment. Kisin in turn, alternately burns the soul with hot iron then freezes it with cold water. If a person's sins were very bad, its soul may be burned to nothing.

On the other hand, if the soul is judged acceptable by Sukunkyum, it will go to the house of Mensäbäk, the god of rain, where it will live until Hachäkyum next decides to destroy the world. At that time everything but the gods will be destroyed.

Though living with Mensäbäk is not a punishment, souls are thought to be unhappy there, for there is no forest at Mensäbäk's house, and no game. There are only beans and tortillas to eat, for the souls of animals cannot be killed a second time. So the soul, missing its home and family, wants to return to the living. Mensäbäk then sends it to look at its rotting corpse and the sight scares the soul so badly that it accepts its fate.

Death can also be caused by Kisin. Old Chan K'in says that just as everyone has a pixan which is their double, so too the pixan has a double, in the form of a spider monkey, living in the Underworld. Kisin, in search of meat, hunts these monkeys, and if he kills one, then the person who has that monkey as his soul's double dies also. Kisin is not successful every time he goes hunting though. If he misses his target or only wounds the monkey, the person on earth will feel a corresponding pain in the same part of the body where the monkey was hit. Several years ago Chan K'in Viejo was hit on the head by a falling tree branch
and knocked unconscious. He says, about that incident, that he was lucky Kisín had not hit the monkey hard enough to kill it or it would have killed him also.

Death, to the pixán, is the beginning of a journey in which the soul faces several trials. First, to reach the Underworld, it must pass down the road to the Underworld, encountering chickens, lice, a pack of dogs, and a large river. A person is buried with food for the journey, candles for light in the Underworld, and sticks and wood shavings with which he may make a fire. Also, to help the pixán surpass its trials, the corpse is buried with a cob of maize to give to the chickens in the Underworld, hair to throw to the lice, and bones to throw to the wild dogs so they do not eat it. Finally, at the river, the soul of the man's favorite dog will help him cross by letting its master's pixán hold on to its ears as it swims, thus pulling the pixán across the river. Chan K'ín Viejo noted that this river is not a real river, but merely the tears that the soul's family and friends cried during their mourning.

The Lacandon have a myth which describes this journey through the Underworld. It is called "The ancient one (or ancestor), who saw the Underworld."

The Ancient One/Ancestor Who Saw the Underworld

1. In the beginning, Sukunkyum said to the ancient one/ancestor, "Let's go, I will show you something to tell your friends about."

2. The ancient one/ancestor answered, "Good, let's go."

3. He saw the beautiful forest in the underworld. He saw boar in the Underworld. The ancient one/ancestor had arrows, he shot at the boar.
4. He did not know it was the spirit of a boar. He shot it but he did not kill the spirit.

5. He saw a deer, he saw mule deer, pheasant, turkey, partridge, all the animal spirits. He saw the spirit of spider monkeys, he saw howler monkeys, night monkeys, snakes and jaguars.

6. The ancient one/ancestor said, "Eh, there are many hidden animals in the forest here." Then he said, "I did not know that these were spirits of animals."

7. Sukunkyum said to the ancient one/ancestor, "They are animal spirits. They are all the spirits of animals. Do not shoot the animal's spirits. They will not die."

8. Arriving, he was shown the road. "This is the road when you die."

9. He was shown. "Here are dogs. First you will see dogs. Very many."

10. Later, he saw chickens. He walked past them. He took ten steps and arrived at the forest. He passed through the forest.

11. It was good, far away was the place of lice.

12. He took ten steps, there was water, he saw a river.

13. Sukunkyum said, "Eh, here comes your soul. Do you see it? Watch how it passes."

14. The soul passed them on the road.

15. "First the dogs...Do you see how it throws animal bones to the dogs. If you have no bones, the dogs will eat you."

16. The ancient one/ancestor saw the dogs come, the soul threw animal bones. The dogs finished eating the animal bones. The ancient one/ancestor saw the soul run past. The dogs finished. The dogs saw the bones and finished them. The soul passed.

17. The soul arrived at the chickens, he took the corn and threw it. He passed by.
18. He arrived at the lice, he threw the hair of his head. He passed by.

19. Arriving at the water, the dog came. The dog arrived, he said to the soul, "What do you see here master?"

20. The soul answered, "Nothing. I cannot cross the water. It is very deep. The current is strong. There are extraordinary alligators."

21. The dog answered, "You poor thing. Lay on my back. Grab my ears. I will pass you over the water." They passed by.

22. Sukunkyum said to the ancient one/ancestor, "Someone goes to my house."

23. Another soul came. First it arrived at the water. Next his dog came.

24. The dog said to the soul, "What do you see Master?"

25. The soul answered, "Nothing. I cannot cross the water. It is very deep. The current is very fast. There are extraordinary alligators."

26. The dog answered, "I am not sorry for you master. You cut my ears. You cut my tail. You did not like to see me. I have no ears. I have no tail. I will not help you pass. You must pass alone."

27. The soul said, "I cannot pass. I will not cross. There are extraordinarily many alligators."

28. The dog answered, "Watch, I cross. Did you see it? Nothing will eat you. There are no alligators."

29. Sukunkyum said to the ancient one/ancestor, "None of the dogs will bite you. The chickens will do nothing to you."

30. None of the lice will bite you. They only frighten your soul. So that your soul will not return.

31. Water, there is no water. There is no river...only tears (shed) for you. Your spouse cries, all of your friends cry.
32. (Because your friends cry) You see a great river, and your soul sees that there are alligators in the river. There are no alligators. It is to scare your soul, so that it will not return (to the living)."

33. Now Sukunkyum said, "Eh go. Go with the soul of your friend to my house.

34. You see now how you will pass on the road of your death."

35. The ancient one answered, "It is true Lord."6

After overcoming the obstacles in the Underworld, the soul is judged and sent either to be punished by Kisin, or to live with Mensäbäk. At this time, the last test they must master is to conquer their fear of the pets of Mensäbäk, gigantic jaguars, snakes, and eagles which the pixans must feed for the rain god. In fact the souls have nothing to fear for they are actually in no danger. Mensäbäk's pets will not eat them for they have no scent.

In the Popol Vuh, the mythic history of the Quiche Maya, the list of obstacles in Xibalba, the Underworld, is similar. There is the House of Gloom in which there is only darkness, and Xuxulim-ha, the house of unbearable cold. Third is the house of jaguars, Balam-ha, in which jaguars pace and roar. The fourth place of punishment is Zotzi-ha, the house of bats, and the last is Chayim-ha, the house of knives.

The two stories are obviously different versions of the same underlying ancient myth. In fact contemporary Lacandon mythology mirrors

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several of the accounts in the Popol Vuh, something I will demonstrate later with a second Lacandon myth. These similarities further highlight a point that I have stressed over and over again; that the Lacandon preserve ancient symbolism in their ritual and mythology which is a direct link to the civilization of the ancient Maya. The Popol Vuh, by far the most complete account of Mayan mythology, was written in the mid-sixteenth century by a Quiche Indian, educated by the Spanish, who wanted to preserve the history of his people, in the face of complete domination by the Spanish church and civil government. The many correspondences between this document and contemporary Lacandon mythology reinforce my belief that in Lacandon mythology and ritual a simplified, undeniably primitive but pristine and uncontaminated example of the Mayan belief system is still practiced. Though there are differences between the two accounts, for example the Lacandon version does not mention bats; they are more similar than is first apparent. The Popol Vuh mentions the House of Gloom, and Lacandon corpses are buried with kindling for a fire, to light their way in the Underworld. The Popol Vuh describes the House of Cold as one of the tortures of the Underworld, just as Kisín uses freezing water to punish souls in Metlan. The Lacandon must care for the monstrous jaguars that are the pets of Mensábäk, and the Popol Vuh speaks of the house of jaguars, Balam-ha. Last, the Lacandon soul must cross the river full of alligators on the path to the Underworld. Though at first glance the Popol Vuh has no corresponding test, linguistic analysis of Chayim-ha, the house of knives described in the Popol Vuh, indicates otherwise.
Chayim-ha, is translated as "house of knives," because of the Quiche word chay, "obsidian." But ayim means "alligator" in Mayan and ha' is "water." Ch-ayim-ha is quite close to chák-t-ik ayim ha', or to "cross the alligator water/river," which certainly describes the trial in the Lacandon version of the myth.

When a person is dying, village life continues as usual until the time of death is near, at which point all the men go to the godhouse to pray and burn incense. The oldest man in the dying person's immediate family will pray constantly at this time, touching the dying person with a xate' leaf which has been passed through the smoke of an incense offering; the same pattern of behavior observed when trying to cure someone who is seriously ill. At the person's death, a maize cob is put into his hand (Chan K'in Viejo says the left hand), for him to give to the chickens in the Underworld. A lock of hair is cut from the corpse's head and, together with a bone, is put in the other hand. The hair and bone being, as in the preceding myth, for the lice and wild dogs in the Underworld. The body is put into a hammock with the knees bent and the arms crossed across the chest, and the hammock is tied shut with a cord. The eyes of the corpse are closed so that, Bormanse says, the pixan does not come back and call the living to follow him. If a woman has died, all of her jewelry and other personal adornments are removed.

The man preparing the body goes to the godhouse, puts all the god-pots on their storage shelf, places a maize cob next to them, covers them with palm leaves, and then sweeps the godhouse, all of which is
meant to protect the godpots from the malevolent spirits which will be around the village for the next five days. The Lacandon call these spirits *kisin*, which refers not only to the god in the Underworld, but to malevolent spiritual beings in general. After a death in the village the spirits most feared are the *kisin Aak'ä*, the "night Kisins," who dwell underground, look like rats, and try to devour the corpse in the grave or small children wandering in the jungle. The maize cob placed with the godpots is to protect them, for when a *kisin* sees a maize cob it thinks it is a crowd of people, and *kisins* are said to be afraid of crowds. The godpots must be protected because if a *kisin* touched a godpot it would lose its spiritual power. Thus they remain covered for five days after the funeral.

At night a clay brazier of charcoal was placed under the corpse in the hammock to keep it warm. If this was not done the soul of the deceased might complain to the gods that his body was cold and as punishment the gods might cause another family member to die.

The next day, friends of the family go to the graveyard and dig a grave. The grave, only three to four feet deep, has a small thatched roof about three feet high built over it. When the roof is finished, the hole is covered with poles, and the grave is ready.

The body is carried to the graveyard in its hammock by two men, with a pole that has been passed through the ends of the hammock resting on their shoulders. The funeral procession is led to the grave by the men carrying the corpse, and followed by other men carrying the food and personal items to be buried with the body. As they carry the body, they
tell it what is happening. Chan K'in Viejo says that the corpse must be spoken to at each stage of the funeral ritual so the spirit does not return afterwards to frighten the family. When they come to the graveyard, the poles covering the grave are moved just enough to allow the body to be lowered down into the hole, with the ends of the poles resting on the edges of the grave, so that the hammock lies suspended in the hole and does not touch the bottom of the grave. Before the poles are pushed back to cover the grave a net bag containing ma'ats, tortillas, candles, and shavings of firewood is put into the dead man's lap. The food is for the soul to eat on its journey, the candle and wood are for light and warmth in the Underworld. The body is laid into the grave with its head to the west and feet to the east, with the head raised so that the corpse faces the east. Bormanse says this is so the corpse will be facing Yaxchilan, the home of Hachakyum, but it may also be to face the light and heat of k'in, the sun, rising fed and rested from the Underworld. The poles are then laid over the hole and covered with palm leaves and the palm leaves are covered with a mound of earth piled about one foot high. At this time each member of the family says goodbye to the corpse saying "Now I am going to throw earth on your face. You are dead. If you were not dead I would not throw earth on your face. I prayed to the gods but you did not recover. I do not know which was angry..." (Bormanse, 1978:120). Then the ashes from the fire that was used to keep the body warm during the night are spread over the grave mound to prevent maggots from infesting the burial. If there were maggots inside the grave it would be disrespectful and might anger
the soul, which again might bring misfortune to the living. A plate
with tortillas and posole is hung on the west side of the grave, above
the head of the corpse, and personal items of the dead person are left
on top of the grave mound. Food is left both inside and outside of the
grave for the two stages of the soul's journey. The food placed in the
lap of the corpse is for the soul's journey into the Underworld. The
food left outside of the grave is for the soul to eat as it travels
from the Underworld to the house of Mensābāk where it is to live. Four
palm leaf figures, representing dogs, are left at the gravemound as
well, two at the head and two at the feet. They are said to accompany
the soul to the river of tears but not across, for the soul of the
dead person's favorite dog will meet him there to help him cross the
river. Following, is a Lacandon prayer for the dead recorded by Bruce
in 1968.

1. Here xtabay, person.

2. I have given you your food. I gave you tortillas,
   I gave you atole. Go well.

3. Go to your grave, your grave, person xtabay not
   here.

4. Count, count the roads you pass person-xtabay.

5. I, if I leave you go to the Underworld, not here
   xtabay for you leave you watch the sunrise.

6. For the underworld you see, I leave you, forever.

7. Sit down in the Underworld, when I give (the grave
   offerings).

8. I made your food, I made it for you.

9. I made your food for the Underworld.
10. Forever, sitdown.

11. I, I gave tortillas, I gave atole, your cup; I gave to you.

12. You go to the house of Sukunkyum in the Underworld.

13. You sleep with his older brother, the older brother of your young Lord.

14. You will not see me pass. He takes you, he comes on the road to the Underworld.

15. With xtabay-person, forever he raises them.

16. It is not necessary for you leave xtabay person.

17. You will not see my feet I come, I am passing.

18. I gave you dog companions.

19. I gave everything to you.

20. I gave you all your candles for you go to the Underworld.

21. You go, it comes. I turn your face to the east.

22. There is the Little Lord Sun.

23. Forever for (you), the finish xtabay-person, earth, for you earth, the Underworld.

Next, sticks with candles tied to them are stuck into the ground by the deceased family along the northern and southern sides of the grave. As the candles are left, they say (Bormanse, 1978:122):" This is my candle...do not frighten me when I walk in the afternoon or even at night, do not frighten me, take your candle with you where you will go in the Underworld." This use of candles clarifies one aspect of Lacandon symbolism, that is, that candles invariably represent death. Especially in Lacandon dream symbolism, to dream of a star or a macaw
(because of its red breast), prophecies death, for both are symbolic of funeral candles.

Finally, a fire is built next to the grave. The soul will see it as it returns from the Underworld and may rest and warm itself. When the mourners return from the graveyard, everyone bathes and changes clothes for the earth of a grave has a smell which attracts the dead and they might come to call another person to join them.

It takes three days for the soul to travel to the Underworld and back. Bormanse (1978:122-123) says the day of the funeral is called *u chen k'in*, the "only day." The day after the funeral is *u chan k'in*, "the little day," and the third day is called *u na' k'in*, "the mother's day." These three days are a dangerous time for the living for the soul can reappear in places it formerly frequented, and to see the soul of a dead person can in itself cause death. During these three days the food on the grave must be renewed every day. Bormanse says that the Lacandon expect the food to be touched on the first day for the soul has not yet reached the Underworld and may have eaten a little. On the second day if the food is not touched it is believed that the soul has not yet returned from Metlan. If on the third day no food has been taken at all, it is expected that the soul was not allowed to leave Metlan and has been completely burned by Kisin.

Just as the godpots must remain covered and on their shelf for five days after the funeral, so too there are certain prohibitions which must be followed for the same period of time. If a man had died, men cannot make arrows during this time. If it is a woman who died, other
women may grind corn only at noon. They may not comb their hair or weave, and the floor of the house may not be swept. If one of these restrictions is violated, another person will soon die.

The range of Lacandon ritual has now been explored. In the *mek'chul*, a "ritual of integration" (Bormanse, 1978:124), the gods are asked to participate and are rewarded with generous offerings. At the same time the individual sponsored in the ritual is symbolically initiated as a full-fledged member of Lacandon society, socially and ritually mature, after being shown the tools and tasks of adulthood.

The *ba'alche* is a "ritual of intensification", a social gathering where gods and men get drunk together, social tensions may be dispelled, and traditional mythology and ancient symbolic patterns may be shared and reinforced.

Finally, the funeral is a "ritual of exclusion" (Bormanse, 1978: 124). The gods are covered and excluded from the ceremony, and people are prohibited from working at their usual tasks for five days. During the funeral the members of the village gather around the grave, say goodbye, leave gifts, but ask to be left alone. They ask the soul to stay away, to not return and frighten them, for it is dead.
Chapter X

I have argued throughout this paper that contemporary Lacandon ritual and mythology has a direct connection to the belief system of the ancient Mayan civilization. I have illustrated how ancient symbolic themes, especially human sacrifice and cannibalism, survive in Lacandon ritual today. There are several other lines of evidence which also support this hypothesis.

First is the survival in contemporary Lacandon ritual of the use of specific types of ritual paraphernalia which were common in pre-Colombian Mayan ritual activity. Second is the continued worship of a pantheon of gods which have retained the attributes of the ancient Mayan gods (though in many cases the names have changed), and last the continuation of ancient mythological themes in modern Lacandon folklore.

The Lacandon do not use many ritual implements, but those they have all correspond to ritual paraphernalia used by the ancient Maya, or were in use prior to the Spanish conquest as evidenced by surviving Mayan codices and paintings, or sixteenth century written works such as the Popol Vuh or Landa's Relacion de Las Cosas de Yucatan.

The most common of the ritual offerings was pom, "copal incense," and its use was widespread throughout the ancient Mayan empire. In the Relacion of Mama (Tozzer, 1978:75), is written, "There is a tree which the indians call pom...from these they obtain a certain resin like incense with which the natives smoked their idols and houses of idolatry," and in the Popol Vuh is found this description of the use of incense (Recinos, 1978:187), "They wept for joy as they danced and burned their incense, their precious incense." As previously described, the Lancandon burn their incense in godpots, a practice which became common with the
city-state Mayapan's ascendancy to power in 1200 A.D., and which was described by Landa in this manner (Tozzer, 1978:153),

...they burned incense to the idol with new fire and the priests began to throw this incense into it, and all came in their turn, beginning with the lords, to receive incense from the hands of the priest...And they threw it into the brazier little by little waiting till it had finished burning.

Further, as previously described, Landa mentions the use of k'ik' as offerings for the gods, as it is offered today in Naha'.

Though music does not play an important part in Lacandon ritual today, rattles, conch shell trumpets, drums, and flutes are all made by the Lacandon and are occasionally used in their rituals. The conch shell is blown to summon the gods to drink ba'alche, and the rattle may be used while reciting prayers. A combination drum and godpot is also made for burning incense and is dedicated to the god Kayum, the Lacandon god of music. Similarly, in the Dresden Codex are pictured priests playing flutes, drums, and rattles (see Figure 10). Even earlier evidence of the use of these instruments come from the murals of Bonampak. In room number one, painted about 800 A.D., priests are pictured playing long horns, rattles, and drums made from turtle carapaces. In room number three at Bonampak are found more men with horns and rattles.

I have already discussed the use of xikals in Lacandon ritual, and Landa's description of their use in the sixteenth century, the same is true for the use of zuhuy k'ak', "virgin fire." It should be clear that contemporary Lacandon ritual paraphernalia and practice has ancient Mayan antecedents.
Figure 28

A panel from a page in the Dresden Codex showing priests with bags of copal incense around their necks (Villacorta 1933:38).
Figure 29

A page from the Dresden Codex. The top panel shows men playing a rattle, drum, and flute.
The Lacandon worship a complex pantheon of gods, most of whom are also related to the gods of the ancient Maya. The ultimate Lacandon deity, the father of the gods, is named K'akoch. A remote god, he was the creator of the original earth, sea, and the first sun. He does not care about the affairs of men, remaining aloof, but he did create the bāk nikte, a flower from which the other gods were born. He is the same god as Xpiyacoc, "twice grandfather" in the Popol Vuh, and possibly Hunab Ku, the supreme creator god of the Yucatecan Maya. The Lacandon account of K'akoch's creation of the world and the three principle Lacandon deities, Sukunkyum, Äkyantho, and Hachäkyum, is described in El Libro de Chan K'in (Bruce, 1974:17-24).

Prologue

1. In the beginning was K'akoch. K'akoch is not everyone's god. The Lacandon do not know him.

2. Our Lord knows K'akoch. K'akoch is his god.

3. K'akoch made the earth. The earth he made was not good. The earth was not hard.

4. There was no forest. There was no stone. He made only earth with water.

5. Then he made the sun. He made the moon for the sun.

K'akoch made all the gods.

1. Now he made the bāk nikte flower. The older brother of Our Lord (Hachäkyum-RJM) was born first.

2. After Äkyantho' was born Hachäkyum.

3. He saw only the bāk nikte'. There was no forest. He lowered his feet to the earth. Hachäkyum said, "This is not very good."
4. Sukunkyum did not descend from where he said on the bāk-nikte'. Ākyanto' did not descend. Hachākyum wanted very much to descend to the earth.

5. Hachākyum descended, he stood erect. He went walking. He called his older brother. "I am going to walk and see if the earth is good." Sukunkyum answered, "Good little brother."

6. Sukunkyum descended with Ākyanto'. They left the bāk nikte' fully grown. They passed, they saw it. The land below—near the water. (This sentence refers to the ruins of Yaxchilan, it means the land below the Usumacinta river—RJM).

7. First Hachākyum saw the house there (the ruins—RJM) with Sukunkyum. Hachākyum said, "It is our house I say."

8. Sukunkyum answered, "I don't know."

9. Hachākyum said, "It is our house. There are no people."

10. Later Hackāhyum saw K'akoch. K'akoch said to Hachākyum, "Eh, this is your house." Hackākyum answered, "Eh, good Lord."

11. K'akoch finished talking and left. He did not show himself a second time.

12. There were three there on the earth. They talked with each other. They said, "Eh, the earth is not hard. How can we make it?"

13. Hachākyum said, "Ok, wait I am thinking." It was almost midday, Hachākyum said, "I am going to search for things to do it with, let's go." "Good," answered Sukunkyum.

14. There were little hills there, Hachākyum said, "Eh sand. First I throw sand." He took sand, he threw it on the earth. "Eh, sand-sand change it."

15. Now Hachākyum made the forest. Very good...he saw it was very good. Then the stone emerged. There was stone in the forest.

16. He finished making the forest, all went well. Now the earth was very good.
As described in the myth, Sukunkyum was the first god born from the bāk nike flower. He is the older brother of Hachākyum, and his name means "Older Brother of Our Lord." Sukunkyum is also the chief lord of the Underworld and the protector of good souls. He cares for the sun, feeding it and carrying it through the Underworld on his back from the west to the east, so that it can ascend in the morning, rested and strong. During the day he cares for the moon in the same fashion.

Åkyantho' was also created in the bāk nike before Hachākyum. He is the god of foreigners and commerce, and, as said before, is said to wear a hat and carry a pistol as foreigners do. He is also responsible for foreign objects such as medicine, hard liquor, cattle, horses, and diseases. Bruce (1967) links Åkyantho' with the ancient Mayan god Ek Chuah, the god of travellers and merchants. He is commonly represented in the ancient codices, usually painted black.

Hachākyum is the primary Lacandon deity. His name means "Our True Lord." He is the creator of the earth, the jungle, animals, the sun that men can see, and with his wife's help, men and women. Though K'akoch created the original earth, Hachākyum altered it to be fit for life. He is also responsible for the creation of the Underworld for Sukunkyum. Hachākyum, the son of Kakoch, closely resembles the ancient Mayan god Itzamna, thought to be the lord of heaven and son of Hunab-Ku, the supreme deity of the ancient Yucatecan Maya. Itzanal, whose name is related to Itzamna, is the first assistant to Hachākyum. His job is to guard the stone pillars in the Underworld which support the earth. Because of the similarity of the names Itzanal and Itzamna it is possible
that over time the power and duties of Itzamma were divided by the
Lacandon between Hachäkyum and Itzanal.

Besides Itzanal, Hachäkyum has five other assistants. First is
Säkapuk, which means "White Jaguar." Next is K'ulel, which is the same
as Ah K'ulel, the title of a class of ancient Mayan civil authorities
who were the deputies of the batabs, priests of the weather. Boi, the
fourth assistant to Hachäkyum, is the Lacandon god of wine, and it is
his features which are modeled on the ba'alche pot from which the drink
is served during Lacandon rituals. Bruce (1976:96), believes his name
derives from bol-t-ik, "to pay," and refers to the use of ba'alche as a
ritual payment to the gods. Another assistant, Kayum, is the Lacandon
god of music, poetry, and song, though these no longer play an important
part in Lacandon ritual. It is his features which are modeled on
Lacandon drums. Hachäkyum's last assistant is K'in, the sun. Though
of great importance in the ancient Mayan pantheon of gods, (one temple
at Palenque was devoted to his worship), he does not have a great deal
of importance in Lacandon mythology or ritual. As with K'ulel, K'in
was also the name of a political office in sixteenth century Mayan
society. Ah K'in was the title of a priest, and is mentioned by Landa
several times in his Relacion.

Ixchel is the Lacandon goddess of childbirth, and is exactly the
same as the goddess Ixchel of the ancient Maya, the patroness of
pregnancy and weaving. Ixchel also had a sinister side to the ancient
Maya though, for she was also the goddess of floods and cloudbursts and
was portrayed with crossbones, symbols of death, on her skirt. In this
aspect she is pictured in the Dresden Codex (Figure 30), helping destroy the world by flood.

Ak'inchob, which means "Cross-Eyed Lord," is the Lacandon god of maize. He protects the Lacandon from fevers and snakebite, and corresponds to the ancient Mayan "Young Lord of Maize," pictured in the Dresden Codex as a youth with a maize headdress (Figure 31). Ah K'ak', literally "Fire", is truly a survival of the ancient Mayan pantheon of gods for he is the god of war, an alien concept to the Lacandon who fear violence and strive to avoid it. The Lacandon believe K'ak' sends the pox diseases which are called k'ak'. The equation of disease with the god of war probably stems from the Indian's realization that the introduction of epidemic diseases could be associated with the arrival of Spanish soldiers. Ancient Mayan representations of this god show him carrying a torch and a spear.

Mensábk is the god of rain. His name means "Maker of Powder", which refers to the process by which he makes rain. The Lacandon say Mensábk makes a black powder which he gives to the Ha'hanak'uh, his six assistants, who spread the powder through the clouds with macaw feather wands causing the rain. Mensábk corresponds to Yum Chac, the ancient Mayan god of rain who was conceptualized as having four aspects, Chák Xib Chac, "Red Man Chac" of the east; Sac Xib Chac, "White Man Chac" of the north, Ek Xib Chac, "Black Man Chac" of the west; and Kan Xib Chac, "Yellow Man Chac" of the south. This conceptualization of four gods in one, similar to the Christian Trinity, was adopted by the Lacandon but altered. The Lacandon say Mensábk has six assistants, the Ha'hanak'uh,
Figure 30

A page from the Dresden Codex (Villacorta 1933:158), showing Ixchel and a celestial serpent flooding the world.
which means "Water House Gods", who, like their ancient Mayan counterparts, are associated with the directions. The ha'hanak'uh are Xämän, the north; Tseltsel Xämän, the northeast; Bulha'kilutalk'in, which means "Flood waters from where they see the sun come", or the east; Tseltsel Nohol, the southeast; Nohol, the south; and Ch'ik'ink'uh, "Mouth of the Sun God," the west.

Chan K'in Viejo once told me during a storm that thunder and lightning are caused by the Ha'hanak'uh. He said that Kisín likes to insult them by raising his tunic and exposing his buttocks to them. In anger, the Ha'hanak'uh throw stone axe heads (which are occasionally found in the jungle), at Kisín causing the thunder and lightning.

Kisín, one of the lords of Metlan, the Lacandon Underworld, is the cause of death and earthquakes. The ancient Maya believed in an underworld called Metnal, which had nine levels. Landa, using information from a Yucatecan Mayan informant described it this way,

The penalties of a bad life, which they said that the bad would suffer, were to go to a place lower than the other which they called Metnal...and be tormented in it by the devils and by great extremities of hunger, cold, fatigue, and grief.¹

Landa names the lord of this underworld Hunhau, but other sources give his name as Cisín. This ancient belief is very close to that of the contemporary Lacandon. The Lacandon say that there is one underworld called Metlan. In this place the souls of those who were evil during their lives are alternatively burned with hot irons, then frozen by

Figure 31

A page from the Dresden Codex (Villacorta 1933:34). The top panel shows the Young God of Maize (Äk'inchob), sitting with Yum Chac, the god of rain (Mensäbäk).
Figure 32

A page from the Codex Tro-Cortesiano (Villacorta 1933:344). The middle panel shows the rain god nourishing a tree and the god of death uprooting it.
the god Kisin. In the Lacandon myth U K'ak'-il Metlan, "The Fire of
Metlan", the judgment and punishment of souls is described. Portions
of the myth are given below. I provide my translation of Bruce's

1. In the beginning Sukunkyum (lord of the underworld-RJM)
said to the Lacandon, "You go see the fires of
Metlan, you see the iron that will burn you."

2. Arriving, the Lacandon were shown. Sukunkyum said,
"See it, do you see it?"

3. Near the mouth of the fires of Metlan was iron.
Sukunkyum shows them iron. "Look, see the iron
for your ears." He showed them one object. "The
iron for your mouths. Here is one, the iron for
your eyes." With one piece of iron he burned our
urethras...He made them see, your sister, your
younger siblings, your mother...for he burns them...

12. Sukunkyum paused in finishing his meal. He looked
at the soul. He gazed into the eyes of the soul.
He sees many things the soul has done...

13. Sukunkyum gives the soul to Kisin. He says, "Take
it. You, it is yours."

14. Kisin was very happy. He answered, "Good. I take
it." He took it. Kisin grabbed the soul's hand.
The soul sat down. Kisin said to the soul, "Go."

15. The soul said, "I will not come."

16. "Go now!" He pulled the soul. He saw the soul go
over the edge. Kisin pulled.

17. Sukunkyum said to the ancient one (the observer-RJM),
"Go, you see it. I will return to my meal. Go
see how you will burn."

18. The Lacandon answered, "I will go."

19. Together, Kisin, Sukunkyum, the Lacandon and the soul
left. They arrived at the fires of Metlan.
Then the mole trapper (the ancient one-the observer-RJM) saw Kisin take iron. They saw him burn the soul with iron. They saw how Kisin did it.

Kisin took the ear of the soul. Kisin said to the soul, "You did not listen to the words of your father or mother." He burned the ear of the soul.

Now Kisin said to the soul, "Your eyes were angry, you quarreled with your father, your mother, with your friends. Your eyes were angry." Next he burned its eyes with fire.

Now he puts hot iron on the soul's mouth. Kisin called, "Do you hear, do you feel the pain...You lied to your father...You lied to your friends."

The soul said, "That is enough. I will not do it anymore."

Kisin answered, "You did it long ago..."

Another time he burned the soul's urethra with hot iron. He burned it with hot glowing iron.

The soul said, "Ay! That is enough."

Kisin said, "What do you understand? You did it little sibling..."

The soul answered, "I will not do it anymore. I will not be irresponsible."

Kisin answered, "Long ago you did it with your sibling. You are still alive."

The soul answered, "No. I will not be irresponsible."

Kisin answered, "No more. You will be totally burned up." He grabbed his hand. By the hand Kisin pulled the soul into the middle of the fire of Metlan.

The soul said, "Ay! My burning is very painful."

Kisin answered, "Is your burning painful? Here is cold, the cold water of Metlan..."

The soul said, "Very cold, good."
36. Kisin said, "Eh good. Very cold?" He pulled it by the hand into the fire of Metlan.

37. The soul said, "My burning is very painful."

38. For the second time Kisin answered, "Your burning is painful? There it's freezing. The freezing water of Metlan."

39. Now Kisin pulled it out. He threw it into the fire. He pulled it out a second time, he threw it into the freezing water...until it became little like a cricket...The first soul was totally burned. Changing it, Kisin pulled out the soul of a rooster.

40. Sukunkyum said, "You see how he changes you souls. Kisin makes your souls horses, he makes dogs of your souls. Cattle were created...Now no people are created from your souls."

41. "If you killed your friends, you will not emerge (from the fire-RJM). For you will all go...finished in the fires of Metlan..."

I know of no ancient Mayan god who corresponds to Ts'ibatnah, the "Painter of Houses", who is the Lacandon god of art and writing. It was he who was instructed by Hachakyum to paint the houses of the gods red with a paint made from human blood and achiote (see p. 119).

Itsanok'uh, "Great Alligator Lord", is the Lacandon god of hail and guardian of lakes and alligators. His name derives from itsam, an archaic mayan word for alligator; noh, "great" or "large"; and k'uh, "god". As with Ts'ibatnah, Itsanok'uh has no known counterpart in the ancient Mayan pantheon of gods.

Kánank'ax is the guardian of the forests (kánant-ik is "to guard," k'ax is "forest"), and is said to protect the Lacandon from jaguars and snakes. He is the same god as the ancient Mayan Yum K'ax, "Lord of the Forest."
The Lacandon also believe in two other classes of deities whose functions are not clear, the Chembel K'uh, "Minor Gods", and the Xtabay. Lacandon mythology describes the Chembel K'uh as servants to the gods, and says they were born from the bāk nikte flower after the major gods. Though Petryshyn (1973) classifies two categories of Chambel K'uh, one group who will receive the souls of the Lacandon at the end of the world, and the second malevolent spirits on the earth who possess snakes and jaguars, I tend to doubt these classifications. They are merely a repetition of the functions of Sukunkyum and the kisins who roam the jungle.

The second group, the Xtabay, are also a mystery. They are a type of female spirit and were created by Hachäkyum for the Chembel K'uh, but it is also said that they may appear as beautiful women to men walking through the forest and seduce them. The Xtabay may be related to the goddess Ixtab of the ancient Maya, though no one is quite sure of the function she served. Based on her pictures in the Dresden Codex (Figure 14), and Landa's description, she is generally considered the patroness of suicides, for Ixtab means "she of the cord," and she is pictured as a woman who has been hung by the neck. Yet Thompson (1970: 301), offers an interesting alternative explanation. He believes that Ixtab is one aspect of the moon goddess, for the picture of the hanging woman appears in the eclipse tables of the codex. It is possible the figure refers to an eclipse of the moon. The Lacandon though, do not believe that the moon, called Äk Na, "Our Mother", is a deity. Chan K'in Viejo described it as "a person like us but made of stone," still
Figure 33

A page from the Dresden Codex (Villacorta 1933:116). The bottom panel shows Ixtab, the goddess of suicides and the moon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lacandon Gods</th>
<th>Ancient Mayan Gods</th>
<th>Characters of the Popol Vuh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K'akoch</td>
<td>Hunab Ku</td>
<td>Xpiyacoc, Hunahpu'-Vuch (Universal God Opossum), Ca-mul Oaholom (Twice father/Grandfather), Nim-Ac (Great Boar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukunkyum</td>
<td>Ek Chuah</td>
<td>Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ækyantho'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cucumatz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hachakyum (Yumbili Ka'an, Lord Heart of Heaven)</td>
<td>Itzamna</td>
<td>Huracan (also called Lord Heart of Heaven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itzanal</td>
<td>Ítzamna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Säkapuk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Xbalanque'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'ulel</td>
<td>Ah K'ulel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'in</td>
<td>Ah K'in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ixchel</td>
<td>Ixchel</td>
<td>Cheh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Æk'inchob</td>
<td>Young Lord of Maize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah K'ak'</td>
<td>God of war (name unknown)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mensäbäk</td>
<td>Yum Chac</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisin</td>
<td>Cisin</td>
<td>The Lords of Xibalba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Känänk'ax</td>
<td>Yum K'ax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xtabay</td>
<td>Ixtab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'aak' Chäk Xib</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hun Batz (One Howler Monkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa'alikyum Chak Xib</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hun Chouen (One Spider Monkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuxi (äh lehi käh bah)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hunahpu'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the linguistic similarity between Xtabay and Ixtab may point to the survival of yet another ancient Mayan god in contemporary Lacandon mythology, who gradually lost the attributes for which she was formerly known.

The Lacandon do have female deities. The Lacandon say that the family structure of the gods is like their own, and that most of the gods have wives and children. Following (Figure 34), is a chart of the relationship between the major Lacandon gods. I have not described the wives of the gods for almost without exception they are said to mirror the actions of their spouses. The exceptions, of course, are Ixchel, Ixtab, and U Na'il Hachäkyum, "The Wife of Hachäkyum". Just as Hachäkyum made men, his wife is said to have created women and the clothes which the Lacandon wear (see pages 185-187 concerning the creation of men, women and onens). Her other name Xk'ale'ox, or "She of the Sacred Breadnut Leaves", is the same as the ancient Mayan goddess who was the wife of Itzamna, which itself is further evidence for the identification of Hachäkyum with Itzamna.

One interesting addition to the group is Hesuklistos, "Jesus Christ". The Lacandon of Naha' do not reject the idea of Jesus Christ as a god; they are merely opposed to worshipping him themselves. They accept him as a god of foreigners, and as such he is believed to be, quite naturally, the son of Äkyantho, the chief god of foreign people and objects.

Interesting comparisons can also be made between sixteenth century versions of more ancient Mayan myths with contemporary Lacandon mythology.
THE PRIMARY LACANDON GODS

K'A KOCH

Sunkunkyum △

U Na'il Sukunkyum

Akyantho △

U Na'il Akyantho'

Hesusklistos
(Jesus Christ)

Hachakyum

Xk'ale'ox

Kisín Xtabay

K'aák'Chák Xib

Palikyum Chák Xib

T'up Ixchel Akinchob

△Itsanal
△Sákápuk
△K'ulel
△Bol
△K'ayum
△K'in

Ah K'ak'

U Na'il Ah K'ak'

Mensábák

U Na'il Mensábak

San Antonio's Daughter

△Xáman
△Tsetsel Xáman
△Bulha'Kilulk't'ín
△Tseltsel Nohol
△Nohol
△Ch'ik'íink'uh

Ts'ibatnah △

Itșanok'uh △

Kánánk'ax △

Chembel K'uh
(see Table VIII). One example of this is the myth of the creation of humankind. The oldest written version of this myth is from the Popol Vuh, the mythological history of the Quiche Maya up to the year 1550. The book was written shortly after the Spanish conquest by a Quiche Indian who had been taught to read and write Mayan using the Spanish alphabet. The name of this author and the fate of the original manuscript is unknown. The only surviving version is a transcription of the original text by Father Francisco Ximenez, a Dominican historian and linguist. Following is the Quiche account of the creation from the Popol Vuh (Goetz, 1978:167-169).

And then grinding the yellow corn and the white corn, Xmucane made nine drinks, and from this food came the strength and the flesh. and with it they created the muscles and the strength of man. This the forefathers did, Tepeu and Gucumatz, as they were called.

After that they began to talk about the creation and the making of our first mother and father; of yellow corn and of white corn they made their flesh; of corn meal dough they made the arms and the legs of man. Only dough of corn went into the flesh of our first fathers, the four men, who were created.

These are the names of the first men who were created and formed: the first man was Balam-Quitze, the second, Balam-Acab, the third, Mahucutah, and the fourth was Iqui-Balam.

These are the names of our first mothers and fathers. It is said that they were only made and formed, they had no mother, they had no father. They were only called men. They were not born of woman, nor were they begotten by the Creator, the Maker, the Forefathers, Tepeu and Gucumatz. And as they had the appearance of men, they were men; they talked, conversed, saw and heard, walked, grasped things; they were good and handsome men, and their figure was the figure of a man.
They were endowed with intelligence; they saw and instantly they could see far, they succeeded in seeing, they succeeded in knowing all that there is in the world. When they looked, instantly they saw all around them, and they contemplated in turn the arch of heaven and the round face of the earth.

The things hidden (in the distance) they saw all, without first having to move; at once they saw the world, and so, too, from where they were they saw it.

Great was their wisdom; their sight reached to the forests, the rocks, the lakes, the seas, the mountains, and the valleys. In truth, they were admirable men, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Acab, Mahucutah, and Iqui-Balam.

Then the Creator and the Maker asked them: "What do you think of your condition? Do you not see? Do you not hear? Are not your speech and manner of walking good? Look then! Contemplate the world, look (and see) if the mountains and the valleys appear! Try, then, to see!" they said to the first four men.

And immediately they (the first four men) began to see all that was in their world. Then they gave thanks to the Creator and the Maker: "We really give you thanks, two and three times! We have been created, we have been given a mouth and a face, we speak, we hear, we think, and walk; we feel perfectly, and we know what is far and what is near. We also see the large and the small in the sky and on earth. We give you thanks, then, for having created us, oh, Creator and Maker! for having given us being, oh, our grandmother! oh our grandfather!" they said, giving thanks for their creation and formation.

They were able to know all, and examined the four corners, the four points of the arch of the sky and the round face of the earth.

But the Creator and the Maker did not hear this with pleasure. "It is not well what our creatures, our works say; they know all, the large and the small," they said. And so the forefathers held council again. "What shall we do with them now? Let their sight reach only to that which is near; let them see only a little of the face of the earth! It is not well what they say. Perchance, are they not by nature simple creatures of our making? Must they also be gods? And if they do not reproduce and
multiply when it will dawn, when the sun rises? And what if they do not multiply?" So they spoke.

"Let us check a little their desires, because it is not well what we see. Must they perchance, be the equals of ourselves, their Makers, who can see afar, who know all and see all?"

Thus spoke the Heart of Heaven, Huracan, Chipi-Caculha, Raxa-Caculha, Tepeu, Gucumatz, the Forefathers, Xpiyacoc, Xmuncane, the Creator and the Maker. Thus they spoke, and immediately they changed the nature of their works, of their creatures.

Then the Heart of Heaven blew mist in their eyes, which clouded their sight as when a mirror is breathed upon. Their eyes were covered and they could see only what was close, only that was clear to them.

In this way the wisdom and all the knowledge of the four men, the origin and beginning (of the Quiche race), were destroyed.

In this way were created and formed our grandfathers, our fathers, by the Heart of Heaven, the Heart of earth.

The Lacandon version of this myth is told as a narrative, and so has a different form than the Quiche story. Furthermore, the Quiche version, written by an Indian educated by the Spanish, appears to have been influenced by the story of Adam and Eve and their fall from grace. In his account, the sight of men is dimmed because they can see everything and thus have total knowledge. Similarly in Genesis, Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge thus gaining a knowledge of good and evil and getting themselves evicted from the Garden of Eden. Just as in the Popol Vuh the gods say, "Let us check a little their desires, because it is not well what we see. Must they perchance be the equals of ourselves, their Makers who can see afar, who know all and see all?", one can find God saying in Genesis 3:22, "Behold the man has become like
one of us, knowing good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life..." The remarkable similarity of these two phrases plus the fact that in both stories men are punished because they have knowledge equal to that of the gods suggests that the Quiche author was familiar with the Genesis story. Yet the Lacandon myth is obviously the same story. The Lacandon version is more simple, but the essential elements in the story remain the same. In Lacandon mythology the story of the creation is told in one myth, the dimming of men's sight another. Taking Bruce's transcription of both myths (1974:112-124, 128-131), I have translated and combined the relevant sections.

Hachäkyum Made the Lacandon

1. Hachäkyum made the Lacandon with his wife. They made the Lacandon.

2. The wife of Hachäkyum made all the women. Hachäkyum made men. He made the Lacandon of clay.

3. Our eyes, all made of clay. Our teeth were not clay... our teeth were maize...

10. At dawn, Hachäkyum went to scrape up clay. He scraped up clay, he went to bring sand.

11. At dawn of the second day, he mixed it with sand.

12. Hachäkyum said, "Ah, very good. Tomorrow soon...my work is not hard."

13. The wife of Hachäkyum mixed it with sand. Hachäkyum said, "Have you finished mixing it?"

14. Hachäkyum's wife said, "I finished mixing it. It was not hard to mix."

15. Hachäkyum answered, "Tomorrow, finally...the spider monkey will be the onen of my first grinding. (Onen is an animal name passed patrilineally in a family-RJM.)
16. Next the boar will be the onen I mix. I mixed the Nawâto, the pheasant is their onen."

17. Hachâkyum's wife said, "I mixed those with the deer as their onen."

18. "Eh true! Deer is their onen. Jaguar is another onen, Weasel is an onen, Macaw is an onen, Dove is an onen... No more. I distributed them all."

21. One day passed, where the clay from which he made us became dry...where he dried it.

22. Hachâkyum rested himself. He went to eat...

33. After two days he picked us up (caused them to awaken-RJM).

34. Hachâkyum took a palm leaf, He lit it in the fire. He passed it over everyone. All stood. All stood erect.

35. Hachâkyum called, "Eh, are you awake children?"

36. The Lacandon answered, "We are awake, Lord."

37. Hachâkyum's wife picked them up. She picked up a palm leaf, she passed it over them all. All stood up.

38. Hachâkyum's wife called, "Eh, are you awake?"

39. The Lacandon answered, "We are awake mother."

40. Hachâkyum said, "Stand erect so I see it." They stood.

41. Hachâkyum said, "Eh, now its very good. Here are your clothes."

42. Hachâkyum's wife said, "Stand so I see you. Eh, very true...here are your clothes. There is a skirt, there is a smock. Very good."

Our Eyes

1. When he awoke us, Hachâkyum said to us, "Watch, you see if you can see far (literally, "go your eyes"-RJM)."
2. The Lacandon answered, "Eh, good." They watched. "Eh, very far I see."

3. Hachâkyum said, "Eh, good. I am going with your mother."

4. The Lacandon answered, "Eh, good. Go Lord."

5. He left. The Lacandon saw him. Arriving he spent half a day with our mother.

6. He returned. He returned to the Lacandon...to his creations.

7. Hachâkyum called, "Is it true you saw where I stayed with your mother children?"

8. The Lacandon answered, "We saw Lord." We saw things you did with our mother."

9. Hachâkyum said, "It is true that you saw things I did? Bring your eyes for me to see."

10. He pulled out the stones (pupils-RJM) of their eyes. He put a griddle on the fire. He saw it was very hot. He placed the pupils of their eyes on the griddle.

11. He pulled them out. He waited, he cooled the pupils of their eyes. When cold, he replaced them in their sockets.

12. He said a second time, "Watch, I am going." He went in the jungle.

13. When Hachâkyum returned he again asked the Lacandon, "Did you see from where I came?"

14. The Lacandon answered, "We did not see. We saw nothing."

15. Hachâkyum said, "Speak to me and I will hear."

16. The Lacandon answered, "We cannot see far."

17. Hachâkyum said, "Eh, good. Very good. So it will be for your descendants...for all time."

Through the examples of mythology, and contemporary Lacandon rituals compared with historical accounts of ancient Mayan ritual
behavior, I have attempted to demonstrate the conservative nature of contemporary Lacandon ritual and symbolism, and suggest that ritual and mythology form a point of stability in Lacandon society which, although ancient, is still a useful adaptive mechanism for them. It provides a foundation from which they have successfully begun adapting to the encroachment of the modern technological world.
Chapter XI

Conclusion

I do not believe the general prophecies of doom sounded by anthropologists, who view the "commercialization" of the Lacandon as a sign of their imminent cultural destruction. A representative example of this belief, written by the anthropologist Didier Bormanse says, (1981:256):

Chan K'in seemed quite happy with his life and not the least bit worried about the future. His father, Old Chan K'in, no doubt felt the change more painfully. The old man was doing his best to keep the traditions alive and prevent his people from yielding too quickly to the tempting and easy ways of acculturation, but he knew that he was fighting a lost battle. The world he was clutching at was drifting away and would soon be annihilated...It seems now that due to the circumstances described above, the work of destruction which the Spaniards started some 450 years ago is going to be completed quite soon."

As I have illustrated, at least in terms of religious symbolism, the Lacandon continue to be quite conservative in the face of a rapidly changing environment. Most of the changes in Lacandon culture have been superficial, such as adopting new technology. When changes have had to be made--for example, altering their traditional settlement pattern and banding together in villages--the traditional patterns of interaction are preserved and adapted to the new environment, the underlying patterns and social symbols remain unchanged. One tenet of anthropology is that cultures cannot remain static. The Lacandon, no matter how much some may dislike it, are rapidly being enveloped by the twentieth century. Their traditional isolation can no longer be maintained with the opening and exploitation of the jungle. Yet
they are adapting rapidly, and I believe remarkably well, to pressures which have destroyed many other aboriginal cultures.

Lacandon Maya ritual behavior and symbolism has remained remarkably stable in the face of many changes, and I believe that they will continue to remain stable. Old Chan K'in, the man Bormanse cites as "doing his best to keep traditions alive and prevent his people from yielding too quickly to the tempting and easy ways of acculturation...," the to'ohil, traditional ritual leader of the village and a vast storehouse of Lacandon mythology, was, as a young man, actively involved in the construction and selling of bows and arrows to tourists. I recently witnessed him pay 4,000 pesos for a portable AM-FM short-wave radio and cassette tape player so he could listen to music with his wives. Obviously, the "tempting and easy ways of acculturation," do not necessarily lead to cultural disintegration. Some cultures are stronger than others, more resistant to change. A look over the Mayan area where Yucatecans still offer "ba'alche" to the Chacs at the ruins of Mayapan, where in the highlands of Guatemala some indians still follow a simple form of the ancient Maya ritual calendar, and finally in the jungles of Chiapas, where the Lacandon Maya have retained their traditional dress, appearance, rituals, and mythology after almost 500 years of acculturation by Spanish-Mexican forces, and whose ritual symbolism is even older than that, indicates the Maya seem to be such a people. Lacandon culture as evidenced by the persistence of traditional rituals and symbolism, may be far more stable than is generally realized.
APPENDIX I

NOTES ON THE FILM OF THE BA'ALCHE RITUAL ACCOMPANYING THIS WORK.
Appendix I

The film of the ba'alche ritual accompanying this dissertation is meant to be an integral part of the complete work, to be watched in conjunction with the reading of the chapters on Lancandon ritual. It is intended to serve several purposes. First it is illustrative, it complements and adds visual detail to the behaviors that I describe. Second and most important, it provides a texture that the written word lacks. It gives a glimpse of the pace and atmosphere of a Lancandon ritual and illustrates the devout yet informal nature of the event. It is one thing to write that Lancandon men pray in a high pitched, nasalized voice, it is quite another to watch Chan K'in Viejo burning incense and praying to his godpots in an uninterrupted ten minute sequence.

The film was shot using synchronous sound, with super 8mm. film. I used a Chinon camera with a 200 foot film cartridge capability which allowed the uninterrupted recording of long sequences of behavior, a fact which becomes obvious when viewing the film. My purpose was to show complete sequences of action, not demonstrate cleverness as an editor. The film, once processed, was transferred and edited on videotape.

The film is a composite of two ba'alches, combining the best footage of each to illustrate the behavior I discuss in the written part of my work. The first ba'alche was filmed by Brian Huberman of the Rice University Media Center in the summer of 1979. I filmed the second in the spring of 1982. Both were filmed in Naha' and involve the same group of men. The film follows the events, in chronological
order, that constitutes the ba' alche ritual, from making the ba' alche
the day before the ceremony, to washing the drinking gourds at its
conclusion. The editing which was done was primarily to cut out
unnecessary repetition of identical events. For example, during
ba' alche making, to fill the ba' alche chem requires filling and
emptying the Bol jar ten times. It is not important to show all ten
trips, so one only sees the Bol jar filled and emptied into the ba' alche
chem two times, but the integrity of the process is preserved. In
the same manner the actual ritual, which takes 8-10 hours to complete,
is compressed into one and one half hours of film time, yet its
essential elements are all represented.

The film can be divided into the following sequence of events.

1. Repairing a crack in the ba' alche chem and making
   ba' alche.

2. Preparation for the ritual: washing drinking gourds,
   setting out offerings for the godpots, and the initial
   prayers to the gods.

3. The first ba' alche offerings to the godpots, the
   libation to the four directions, the distribution of
   ba' alche to the assembled men, and the first round
   of ba' alche drinking.

4. Chan K'in Viejo's incense offering and prayer to the
   gods.

5. The completion of the ba' alche drinking.

6. Cleanup of the godhouse at the end of the ceremony.
Many of the men discussed in my dissertation appear in the film. For example, Kayum, the man whose mek'chul ceremony is discussed in Chapter IX, is the host of this ceremony. He made the ba'alche and served it. The old man who oversees the repairing of the ba'alche chem and is pictured burning the incense offerings in his godpots is Chan K'in Viejo. K'in II, the oldest unmarried son of Chan K'in Viejo, appears at the end of the film, bottling ba'alche and helping Kayum clean up the godhouse. Finally, the boy who washes the drinking gourds is Chan K'in, the oldest son of Chan K'in Viejo's third wife.

It is also necessary to point out that I was responsible for the ritual that I filmed. In essence I was the sponsor for the ritual. I asked that it be held, and I bought the honey with which the ba'alche was made. Though the sequence of events viewed in the film is identical with a true "religious" ba'alche ceremony, its "spirit" is essentially secular. This is reflected in two events that are seen in the film, drinking ba'alche from metal pails and bottling ba'alche. In a true religious ceremony ba'alche can only be drunk from gourd bowls, and is never saved, it must be finished the day of the ritual. In effect, this ba'alche ceremony would be like a Christian baptism where tap water was used instead of holy water. Though the sequence of events is correct, it is not the real thing. In the same sense, although this ba'alche was technically correct, it was not spiritually correct.

Copies of this film, on videotape, can be borrowed from the Woodsen Research Center in the Fondren Library or the Department of Anthropology, Rice University.
APPENDIX II

MAYAN TEXTS OF LACANDON MYTHS AND PRAYERS
U Lak' Mensäbkäk.

The Wife of Mensäbkäk (English translation pp. 33-34)

1. Lat'i' Mensäbkäk päytan ti'an u yatoch yok'ol Wits Pala'iso'.
2. Yan ka'tul-o' u lak'. Päytan, u yankäch lak' toop'i yok'ol bæk-nikte'.
4. Tu k'a'atah ti' u tet. Tu k'a'atah ti' u na'. Tu ya'alah u tet, "He'elel ah ch'a'-ik. In ts'a'-ik tech." Mensäbkäk, ne tsoy u yol.
5. Bin tu meyah Mensäbkäk ka'p'el k'in. Tu ch'a'ah ta'k'in, tu bo'oltah ti' u tet. U päy-ik u lak', u bin tu yatoch.
6. U tet ma' u k'aat. Y ya'alah-ik u tet, "Way ah kul-tal ah kahal... xoko1 way."
7. Mensäbkäk u nuk-ik, "Bay...eeh, bay."
8. U y-äkän Mensäbkäk tu ya'alah ti', "Meyah-n-en. Tech ah bin ah wil-ik, ah t'än-ik in winik. Tech ti'an ah wil-ik wa ne tsoy u meyah, ti' ah bo'ol-t-ik in winik."
9. Mensäbkäk hak' u yol. "Ma' k'uuch-ul in muk'tu meyah. Ha'as in wol tin w-äkän."
11. Tu ya'alah San Antono', "Way k-ah meyah. Ma' ah bin t-ah watoch."


14. U ti'al San Antonyo' tan u p'o'-ik u nok' u tet. Mensábak tu yilah tu hun-a'an yan tu' p'o' nok'. Tu t'änah, "Eeh, ko'ox!"


17. Y känän nah u muk-ik, "Xen."

18. Bini báhe he' yok'ol petha'. Tu tákah u bel. Tu mákah.

19. U tal-el San Antonyo' tu yatoch, män-a'an. U ya'al-ik ti' känän nah, "Män in ti'al? Tu' yan Mensábak?"


22. Y nuk-ik u känän nah, "Ma' in wohel ti'."

23. San Antonyo' ne pim yet u winik. Ne poch u k'äx-al u k'äb Mensábak ti' u mák-al yok'ol nah.


25. U nuk-ik u känän nah, "Ma' in wohel. Ma' tu' kin w-ees-ik."


27. K'uch-i ka'-p'el-o ya'ax k'in, bin tu yil-eh u y-äkän. K'uch-i tu yilah u yatoch u y-äkän tu ka'-ten, ne tsoy u yol.

28. Tu yilah u ti'al yan u paa'l-ä Mensábak, to ya'alah u y-äkän, "Eeh, ne tsoy."

29. U lak' Mensábak k'uch-i tu tsikbal yet u na'. Mensábak, ne tsoy u yol. Tu yuk'ah Tlako yet u y-äkän. U y-äkän Mensábak ne tsoy u yol.
30. Hum-p'el-i k'in yan tu yatoch u y-äkän, sut-päh-i tu yatoch Mensäbäk. Tu tänah u y-äkän, "Eeh, bin in kah."

31. U nuk-ik, "Eeh, xen. He' ah ka'-tal."

32. Mensäbäk u nuk-ik, "He' in ka'-tal."
The Horses for the Lacandon.

U Tsimin ti' Hach Winik. (English translation pp. 43-45)


2. Tu meentah wakäx. Tu meentah kay k'ek'en. Tu meentah pek'. Tu meentah mis, tu meentah ulum yetel kax. Tu meentah yetel Äkyantho'.

3. Äkyantho' tu meentah ti kah tsimin. Tu meentah wakäx...Äkyantho' yetel Hachäkyum.

4. Tu meentah äh meh, tu meentah chibuh, tu meentah pek', tu meentah mis, tu meentah ulum, tu meentah kax, tu meentah kay k'ek'en ti' kah.

5. Tu meentah ta'k'in ti' wes.

6. Tu meentah ts'ak. Tu meentah yahil yetel ts'ak. Hachäkyum ma' u meent-ik. Äkyantho' tu meentah tu wolol yahil.

7. Ts'ök u meent-ik Äkyantho' yetel Hachäkyum, tu ts'a'ah ti' hach winik.

8. Tu ya'alah Hachäkyum, "He' tsimin; mak-eh, känänt-eh, 'uk'-uls-eh, hans-eh.

9. He' k'ek'en. Tech kay k'ek'en. Tech äh kax...ulum. Läh ch'a'-eh."


11. Äkyantho' u k'ub-ik-t-ik ti' kah. "He' tsimin, wakäx, kay k'ek'en, meh, tu wolol tech. Läh känänt-eh tech."

13. Tu wolol y-äläk', tu läh känäntah. Tu läh hansah, tu y-uk'-ul-sah.
14. Ākyantho' ne tsoy y-ol. Ma' tu puuts'ah.
15. Hachäkyum u ya'al-ik, "Eeh, ne tsoy tech. Tsimin lati' y-äh kuch-il kah...bin-et-k'ìn.
16. Wakäx, yan ti' u hit-ik che'. Yan ti u bäk' ti u chi'-ik."
17. Ākyantho' u ya'al-ik ti' kah, "Wakäx, yan ah chi'-ik u bäk'-el. Tsimin, ma' ah chi'-ik u bäk'-el...ti' u kuch."
18. Tu ts'a'ah tu'k'ìn. "Ti ah bo'olt-ik ah winik ti' u meyah ti' tech."
19. Ākyantho' u ya'al-ik, "Yan hum-bu-k'äb k'ìn, ne tsoy."
20. Hachäkyum u ya'al-ik, "Eeh, bähe' ten ma'tsoy.
22. Yan u käxt-ik tunich ti' u meent-ik u kol.
23. Yan u käxt-ik u muul äh say. U päk'-ik u nal yok'ol u muul äh say.
24. Yan häläl...mäx ts'on. Bin u ku meent-ik chulul yetel tok'. Yan u bin u käxt-ik tok'."
25. Ākyantho' u nuk-ik, "Ma', Yum-eh. Yan u bin u män-ik maska'... tu-men ten, in läh ees-ik tu wolol ba'al meent-ik."
27. Hum-bu-k'ä'b ya'ax k'ìn yan u bin tu män-än.
28. Yan u meent-ik häläl, u kan-ik. Yan u meent-ik kib, kib-ih kab, u kan-ik. U ch'a'-ik u baat...u ch'a'-ik yetel kib-ih kab...yet u maska'. Tu wolol ba'al u män-ik. Tu-men hach winik, män-a'an ta'k'ìn...bin-et-k'ìn."
29. Hachäkyum u ya'al-ik, "Eeh bay. Ne tsøy. 'uts yan. Yan ch'och'
...Eeh bay. Yan u hant-ik u taan-in kun...u taan-in che'."
U K'ayil Ti' Box

Song To The Gourd (English translation pp. 93-94)

1. Ka'tin ts'iotahaech, lak' chan neh.
2. Hunp'eli' ah p'is.
3. Ma' ah pul-ik-en, lak' chan neh.
4. Ka'tin wilahaech, lak' chan neh.
5. Manan pich-ik' yan ah wimme', lak' chan neh.
7. Ka'tin ts'iotahaech.
8. Ma' ti' in pul-ik-ech, lak' chan neh.
10. Ma' ah pul-ik-en lak' chan.
11. Ki' patkuntin wol lak' chan.
12. Ma' ah pul-ik-en lak' chan.
13. Ki' mek'en lak' chan.
15. Pichik' yan ah wim.
16. Hunp'eli' ah p'is, lak' chan.
17. Ki' tän-en lak' chan.
18. Ki' patkuntin wol, lak' chan.
19. Ma' ah tench'int-ik-en, lak' chan neh.
20. Hunp'eli ah p'is.
22. Manan pich-ik' yan ah wim me' lak' chan.
23. Tan nih ki' mek'-ik-ech, lak' chan neh.
24. Ma' tin pul-ik-ech, lak' chan.
Prayer for Incense Offerings (English translation p. 102)

1. Tan in kub-ik in pom k'ech,
2. ti' ah la kub-ik ti Yum.
3. Ti' ah la naas-ik, ti' ah la ku matan.

Prayer for the Ba'alche Offering (English translation pp. 102-103)

1. Ha' tan in luuch-s-ik t-ah chi.
2. tan in ts'a-ik tech ha' uhel, ah kunya,
3. ti' al ah kub-t-ik Yum.
4. Ha' tan in luuch-s-ik t-ah chi, ti' al ah tal ah wil-ik.
6. Ha' tan in luuch-s-ik t-ah chi, ti' ah la w-uk-ik uhel, ah kunyah.
7. Ha' tan in ts'ai-ik tech, t-ah chi uhel, ah kunyah.
8. U kuxtal in pa'älal.
9. Ha' tan in ts'ai-ik tech.
10. U kuxtal in watan.
11. Ha' tan in ts'ai-ik tech t-ah chi, uhel ah kunyah.

Ba'alche Libation Prayer (English translation p. 104)

1. Tal u hol tech Yum-eh. much-ite ti' ah yol in pa'älal in Yum-eh.
2. Ti' ah yol in watan. Ti' ah la māk-ik, ti ah la w-uk-ik.
3. Ti' ah la māk-ik, ti' ah la w-uk-ik.
4. Ts'ai-ik ha' ti ah la matan.
Prayer For the Offering of Nahwah (English translation pp. 113-115)

1. He'-la', Yum-bil Mensäbk-eh!

2. Ts'ibatna he'! Il-eh tuun.

3. Ne ti' ku man u ximbal Säkapuk-eh!

4. Il-eh ah wo'och wah. Il-eh tu' ho' ts'ulu'.


6. K-ah ch'a'-ik lahe'-la, ka bin ti' Nak'uh. K-ah w-okol ti'.

7. He' bin-a'an hun-ts'it-il, Itsanok'uh. Hun-ts'it k-ah ch'a'-ik.

8. K-ah ch'a'-ik hun-ts'it, he' Na'-ten.

9. K-ah bin ti' u Yum-bil-il Ka'an. He' bin-a'an kex ti'.

10. Kahin äh k-il-e bin ho' ts'ulu'. Sa'as-eh! Ma' su' bin.

11. Kimi tu meen-t-ah u sukuno'. Ka mul-i bin.

12. Bay u tal bin. Ka' k'uch y-aaka' bin.


20. Läh mul-ik-o to'an.

22. Ne' ti' k-ah w-ok ah w-il-ik ah wo'och bu'ul-il-wah, ah wo'och muk-xiw-bāk', a sikil-il wah. Ne ti' k-ah w-ok a w-il-ik tuun-eh.


25. Ma' yokla kah-in chen lāh muk-eh, ma' ts'ok ah man ah lākil k-in chen muk-eh.

26. Eeh, tumben tu meen-t-ah wah, tu meen-t-ah sāk-ha', tumben tu meen-t-ah tuun.

Chant for the Division of the Nahwah and Beans. (English translation p. 115)

1. Tan in ts'ai-ik tech humpe läk buul, uhel ah kunyah.
2. Tan in ts'ai-ik tech humpe läk nahwah, uhel ah kunyah.
Song For the Awakening of the Rubber Figures¹ (English translation pp. 129-130)

**U Chisht-ik Pom**

1. Sahak in w-ok beh.
2. Sahak in k'ap.
3. Ahen.
4. Ten t-in wäsunkah tu y-ok xikal.
5. Ten t-in täkäh u tamen.
6. Ten t-in täk u bakel.
7. Ten t-in täk u satot'.
8. Ten t-in täk u pixan.
9. Ka t-in wäsän kun tal tu y-ok xikal.
14. U tenen-ech Äkyantho'.
15. Bahon k'uh.
16. Ka t-in disah ku tal tu y-ok xikal.
17. Ti'tulis k'ik'.
18. Ti' läh le làreh.
19. Tu xokol u pâyats.
20. Tu xokol u hol.
21. Bahon siwolis pom

¹In several cases I have changed Davis' spelling of Mayan words to keep them consistent with my own.
22. T-in lāh lis-ah ku tal tu y-ok xikal.
24. Hirih tian ah w-atoch, ten ah yum.
25. He ah w-atoch ten ah nah.
26. Chāk op che'-ih beh.
27. La chāk op che'-ih beh.
28. La u hir ah w-atoch ten ah yum.
29. La u hir ah w-atoch ten ah nah.
30. Chāk op che'-ih beh.
31. Kun ah w-atoch ten ah yum.
32. Xa'an ah w-atoch ten ah nah.
33. La ah w-atoch ten ah yum.
34. Ka t-in wasunkun-tal tu yok xikal.
35. T-in disah ka' t-in na'as-ah tātā'.
36. U tech ku mantan-ech ākyum.
37. U tenen-ech na'ahplil.
38. U tenen-ech ya'ahk'in.
40. Ka t-in w-asah-ech ku tal,
41. tu y-ok xikal.
42. u tenen-ech tikenwah.
43. La t-in lis-ah ku tal,
44. tu y-ok xikal.
45. Eh ti' tsereh ti' tikenwah.
46. Chen ma'ats tik yum.
47. Chen wah tik yum.

48. T-in wäsunkun-tal tu y-ok xikal.
The Mole Trapper's Return to Earth
Sut-päh-i Y-äh Leh-i(k ä)h Bah yok'ol Lu'm (English translation pp. 145-146

9. Pach-il Y-äh Leh-i(k ä)h Bah t-u y-il-a tan u tuk(u)l-ik u bäh-o' u lak' kim-in.

10. U y-a'(al)-ik Y-äh Leh-i(k ä)h Bah, "Ne' otsil-ech. Ko'ox äh k-il-ik. Wa yan u nok' a lak', taa(l)-s-eh."

11. U nuk-ik u bāho, "Yan. He' in taa(l)-s-ik."

12. K'uchi to'-an u baak-el, Y-äh Leh-i(k ä)h Bah t-u pit-ah u y-a-s-āb, t-u tāk-a t-u baak-el u ni'.

13. U tāk-ik, seeb u lik'-il u ha'atsin. U bāk'-el, u y-o('o)t'-el, u tsotsel u ho'ol, lāh yan.

14. U hok'-ol u t'an, "Eeh, ne ka'(a')n-en ti'-in wen-en."

15. Chen mān u nok'. Y-äh Leh-i(k ä)h Bah u y-a'(al)-ik ti' u lak', "K'uch-en ts'ah u nok'."

16. Ts'a-bil u nok', u buk-(k)in-t-ik. Sut-päh-i y-et u lak' t-u y-atoch.

17. Xilal k-u y-a'(al)-ik, "Ko'ox." Ch'uplal u nuk-ik, "Ko'ox."

18. Ka'-t(u)l-o' winik kim-en tu y-a-s-ah.

19. Chen ka bin-ih u bāh-ik u pom, kah u yankāch lak' t-u pit-a tub u tap-mān.

20. T-u y-il-ah. T-u lāh t'ūn-ah u bāh-o' ti' u cha'an-t-ik bik u y-a-s-ik winik.


22. La'-ti' ti' xi(b-a)l-al, as sā(k)-sāk; ti' ch'uplal, mas ne chāk.
23. Uul-i tu pom, u y-il-ik. "Eeh, t-a pit u ba'al im bäh!"
24. La'-ti u nuk-ik, "Ma'. Ma' im pit-ik."
t-en ma' in w-el-el. T-ech k-a w-el-el."
26. T-u ka' nuk-ah, "Ma'. Ma' t-im pit-ah."
27. Uhe'i k'in, u tal huntul u bäh-o. U k'a'at-ik ti' u y-ä-s-ik u lak'
kim-in uch-ik.
29. T-u pan-a t-u muk-nän. T-u hal u baak-el. t-u läh naax-ik u
baak-el. U täk-ik u ho'ol.
30. U y-a'(al)-ik ti' u lak', "P'us a pach. Ma' a päk-t-ik."
31. U täk-ik u y-ä-s-äb t-u baak-el u ni'...chen bähé, máx-ba'al.
32. T-u y-a'al-a Y-äh Leh-i(kä)h Bah, "Eeh, t-u pit-ah in lak'. Ne
ma'tsoy.
33. Ma' he'-t lay. Bähé' in w-oh-el. Bin in ka kim-in."
35. Chen ma' tukul-ik u kim-in. Ne poch u sut u y-il-ik u ti'al
Kisin.
The Ancient One/Ancestor Saw the Underworld (English translation pp. 149-152)

Nukuch Winik tu y-il-ah Yalam Lu'-um.

1. Päy-tan u Sukunkyum tu y-a'al-ah ti' Nukuch Winik, "Ko'ox in w-ees-ik-ech ti' a tsikbal-t-ik a bäh-eex."

2. Tu nuk-ah Nukuch Winik, "Bay, ko'ox."

3. Tu y-il-ah ne tsoy k'ax Yalam Lu'um. Tu y-il-ah k'ek'en Yalam Lu'um. Yan u halal Nukuch Winik, tu hul-ah.

4. Ma' u y-ohel wa u pixan k'ek'en. U hul-ik, ma' u kimin u pixan.

5. Tu y-il-ah yuk, tu y-ii-ah keh, k'ambul, koox, wan tu wolol bäh u pixan. Tu y-il-ah u pixan ma'ax, tu y-il-ah ba'ats, aak'a-ma'ax, kan, balum.

6. Nukuch Winik u y-a'ai-ik, "Eeh, ne yan bakän bäh' yok'ol k'ax way." Tu-men u y-a'al-ik, "Ma' in w-ohel wa u pixan bäh'."

7. Sukunkyum tu y-a'al-ah ti' Nukuch Winik, "U pixan bäh'. Tu wolol bäh' u pixan. Ma' a hul-ik u pixan bäh'. Ma' u kimin."


10. Pach-il, äh kax tu y-il-ah. Tu ximbah-t-ah. Ka'-bu-k'ää(b) tu hit-ah u y-ok, k'uch-i to'an kax. Tu maan-s-ah kax, man-ih.

11. Lat'i bay, u naach-il yân-in uk'.

12. Ka'-bu-k'ää(b) tu hit-ah u y-ok, ha' tu y-il-ah yetel uk'um.

13. Sukunkyum, lat'i tu y-a'al-ah, "Eeh, tak'-al a pixan-eex. Il-eh a w-il-eh. Chant- al a w-il-ah bik a man-eex."

14. Yok'ol beh u ch'äkt-ik.

15. "Päy-tan pek'...il-eh a w-il-eh bik u pul-ik ti' pek' u baak-el bäh'. Wa mänan u baak-el bäh', u chi-ik-eex pek'."

17. K'uch-i to'ana kax, tu ch'a'-ah näl, tu pul-ah. Man-ih.


20. Pixin u nuk-ik, "Mäx-ba'al. Ma' in ch'äkt-ik ha'. Ne bul-ul ha'. Ne chich y-ok ha'. Ne p'enkäch yan ayim."


22. Tu y-a'al-ah Sukunkyum ti' Nukuch Winik, "La-e bin-i tuun tin w-atoch."


24. Pek' tu y-a'al-ah ti' pixin, "Ba'al-inkil k-a w-il-ik way, yaatsil?"

25. Pixin u nuk-ik, "Mäx-ba'al. Ma' in ch'åk-ik ha'. Ne bul-ul ha'. Ne chich y-ok ha'. Ne p'enk'åch yan ayim."


29. Sukunkyum tu y-a'al-ah ti' Nukuch Winik, "Pek", män-a'an u
   chi-ik-eex. Māx-ba'al u men-t-ik kax t-eex.

30. Uk', män-a'an chi'-ik-eex. Chen ti'an u ha'as-ik u y-oI a
   pixon-eex. Tu-men ma' u sut a pixon-eex.

31. Ha', māx ha'. Mān-a'an uk-um...chen tu 'ok'-nāh-eex. Tu
   'ok'-nāh-ih a lak'; to 'ok'-nāh-i tu wolol a bāh-eex.

32. Lati' a w-il-ik ch'ik-yum uk'um, tu men a pixon u y-il-ik yan
   ayim yok'ol uk'um. Mān-a'an ayim. Tu-men ti' u ha'as-ik u y-oI
   a pixon-eex, tu-men ma'u sut a pixon-eex.''

33. Bāhe' tu y-a'al-ah u Sukunkyum, "Eeh, ko'ox. Ko'ox ti'an u pixon
   a bāh-eex t-in w-atoch.

34. T-a w-il-a bāhe' bik a man-eex yok'ol u beh kimin-eex. Yan a
   tsikbal-t-ik a bāh-eex.''

35. Nukuch Winik u nuk-ik, "Eeh, hah, Yum-eh."
Lacandon Prayer for the Dead (English translation pp. 157-158)

1. He' xtabay, x-winik-eh.


3. Xen wal-mul-eh, wal-mul-eh, x-winik xtabay ma way.

4. Xok, xok beh a man-en winik xtabay-eh.

5. Ten wa t-in pul-ech ku tal ti u y-alam lu'um, ti' xtabay wa ma' way he' ti a hokol ah pāk-t-eh u saas-il.

6. Ti u y-alam lu'um ah w-il-ik; t-in pul-ech, bin et k'in.

7. Kul- lu-k-ech y-alam lu'um kah t-in ts'a-ah.

8. T-in ment-ah a w-atoch, t-in ment-ah ah ti'.

9. Ment-ah a w-atoch ti' u y-alam lu'um.


11. Ten, tin ts-a-h sākpet, ah sāk ha', ah lučh'; ten ti' ts-a-h.

12. Ka-bin-ech u nah u Sukun y-alam lu'um.

13. Ah wenen yet u Sukun, Sukun ak Chan Yum.

14. Ma' la' ah w-il in man. La' tu pul-ech, ku tal tu y-alam beh.

15. Yetel xtabay- x-winik-eh, bin et k'in ku lik-en.

16. Ma' he ti' ah hokol xtabay x-winik.

17. Ma' ah w-il in w-ok in tal, tan in man.

18. T-in ts-a-h ah wāh-lak pek'.

19. Ten ti' lāh ts'a-ah ti tech.

20. Tu wolol ah kib t-in ts'a-ah ti ah bin y-alam lu'um.


22. li' yan Chan Yum K'in-eh.

23. Eahon ti', xuli xtabay winik lu'um ti' u lu'um, y-alam, lu'um-eh.
Prologo (English translation p. 65)

Prologue


2. Äkyum u y-ohel K'akoch. Lati', K'akoch u k'ul.


5. Bähe' tu men-t-ah k'in. Tu men-t-ah äkna' ti' k'in.

K'akoch tu men-t-ah woloj k'uh (English translation pp. 165-166)

K'akoch Made All of the Gods


2. Pach-il Äkyntho', Hachäkyum too-p'-ih.


4. Sukunkyum ma' y-emen ti' kul-a'an tu too-p' bäk-nikte'. Äkyntho' ma' y-emen. Hachäkyum, lati' ne poch u y-emen yok'ol lu'um.

5. Emi Hachäkyum, lik'-i ch'ik-tal. Bin u ximbal ti'. U t'än-ik u sukun. "Ko'o-ten k-äk ximbal-t-eh äh kuy-ik wa ne tsøy lu'um." U sukun-äk-yum u nuk-ik, "Bay, w-its'in."


7. Päy-tan Hachäkyum tu y-il-ah ti'an y-atoch yetel Sukunkyum.

Hachäkyum u y-a'al-ik, "Lati' äh k-atoch, t-in t'an."

8. Sukunkyum u nuk-ik, "Ma' in w-ohel."


11. Ts'ok u tsikbal, bin-ih K'akoch. K'akoch ma' u y-ees-ik u bëh tu ka'-ten.

12. Yan ox-tul-o' yok'ol lu'um way. Yan u tsikbal yetel ox-tul-o'. Tu y-a'al-ah, "Eeh, ma' chich lu'um. Bik men-t-ik?"


14. Ti'an chichin puuk wits, tu y-a'al-ah Hachäkyum, "Eeh, sa'am. Päy-tan im pul-ik sa'am." Tu ch'a'-ah sa'am, tu pul-ah he' yok'ol lu'um. "Eeh, san-sa'am-chäh-ih."

15. Bähe' Hachäkyum tu men-t-ah ka'x. Ne tsoy...tu y-il-ah ne tsoy. Tan u y-il-ik hok'i tunich. Yan tunich yok'ol k'ax.

16. Tsok u men-t-ik k'ax, tu wolol ch'ik-bin-ih. Bähe' ne tsoy lu'um.
U K'ak'-il Metlan. (English translation pp. 174-176)

The Fire of Metlan.

1. Pāy-tan Sukunkyum tu ya'alah ti' hach winik, "K'o'ox ah wil-ik u k'ak'-il Metlan, ti' ah wil-ik maskay ti' ah w-elel-eex.

2. K'uch-ih u yees-il ti' hach winik. U Sukunkyum u ya'al-ik "Il-eh ah wil-eh."

3. Xok'ol yan, chi' u k'ak'-il Metlan, maska'. Māka' u yees-ik Sukunkyum. "Il-eh ah wil-eh u maskay ah xikin-eex." U yees-ik hump'el. "U maskay ah chi'-eex. He' hump'el, u maskay ah wich. Hump'el u maskay u chuh-ik u cha-ch'ul-eex...tu mentah wilah ah kik, ah wits'in, ah na'...ti' u chuh-ik-eex.


15. Pixan u ya'al-ik, "Ma' in tal."


17. Sukunkyum u ya'al-ik ti' nukuch winik, "K'o'ox ah wil-eh. He' in w-uul tu ka'tan tin hanan. Ko'ox ah wil-eh bik ah w-elel-eex."

18. U nuk-ik hach winik, "K'o'ox."

19. Yet bin Kisin yetel Sukunkyum, yetel hach winik, yetel pixan. K'uchi to'an u k'al.'-il Metlan.
20. Lati' ēh lehi-kāh-bah kah tu yilah ch'a'-e maska' Kisin. Tu yilah tu tokah maska' pixan. Lati' tu yilah bik tu mentah Kisin.

21. Tu ch'a'ah Kisin tu xīkin u pixan. Kisin tu ya'alah ti' pixan, "Ma' tah wuyah u t'an ah tet, ah na'." Tu tokah u xīkin pixan.

22. Bāhe' tu ya'alah Kisin ti' pixan, "Ts'ik ah wich tu' tah pākt-ik ah tet, yet ah na', yet ah bāh-eex. Ts'ik ah wich." Pach-il u wich u chuh-ik yetel maska'.

23. Bāhe' u chi' tu kāpah yetel chāka' maska'. U t'ān-ik Kisin, "Uy-eh ah wuy-e yah...ta pay-t-ah ah tet...ta pay-t-ah ah bāh-eex."

24. Pixan u ya'al-ik, "Ti'-bil! Ma' sambl-en."

25. Kisin u nuk-ik, "Uch-ūl kah ta meentah. Ta nukah u t'an ah na'."

26. Uhel u tok-ik u k-u-ch'ul yetel chāka' maska'. U tok-ik chen chāk-t'īnen maska'.

27. Pixan u ya'al-ik, "Aay! Ti'-bil!"

28. U ya'ai-ik Kisin, "Ba'ik ah wuy-ik? Ta meentah ah wits'in..."

29. Pixan u nuk-ik, "Ma' sambl-en. Ma' su'-en!"


31. U nuk-ik pixan, "Ma'. Ma' su'-en!"

32. Kisin u nuk-ik, "Mān-a'an! Tul ah lāh el-el." U ch'uk-ik u k'āb. Tu wolol tu kap-ch'īnt-a tan chumuk u k'ak'-il Metlan.

33. Pixan u ya'al-ik, "Uyi! Ne yah in wel-el!"

34. Kisin u nuk-ik, "Wa yah ah wel-el? U siis, siis ha'-il Metlan..."

35. U ya'al-ik pixan, "Ne siis ki'!"

36. Kisin u ya'al-ik, "Eeh, hay. Ne siis?" Tu kap-ch'īntah yok'ol k'ak'-il Metlan.
37. Pixan, "Ne yah in we-el."

38. Tu ka'-ten Kisin u nuk-ik, "Ne yah ah we-el? Te' la'...tu siis-siis ha'-i: Metlan."

39. Toh hal-ik Kisin, u pul-ik yok'ol k'ak'. U hal-ik tu ka'-ten, u pul-ik yok'ol siis-siis ha'...tul u bin chichin ba'ik maas...U yankäch pixan, läh el-ih. Hok'-i tu halah Kisin kax-il pixan.

40. Sukunkyum u ya'al-ik, "Ah wil-ik bik u hok'ol ah pixan-eex. Kisin ku hal-ik tsimin, ku hal-ik pek' ah pixan-eex. U hok'ol wakax... Bāhe māna'an winik u hok'ol ah pixan-eex."

41. "Wa ta kinsah ah bāh-eex, ma' ah hok'ol-eex. Ti' kah lāh bin-eex...ts'ok-ol yok'ol k'ak'-il Metlan."
Hachäkyum tu Meentah Hach Winik. (English translation pp. 185-186)

Hachäkyum Made the Lacandon.

1. Hachäkyum tu meentah hach winik yet u Na'il Hachäkyum. Lati' tu meentah hach winik.

2. Tu wolol ch'upiai tu meentah u Na'il Hachäkyum. Xilal, Hachäkyum tu meentah. K'ät tu meentah hach winik.

3. Äh kich-eex, läh la'-e ti' k'ät. Äh koh-eex ma' k'ät...u koh näl.

10. Hachäkyum, sa'asi bin u hoots-e k'ät. Hootsah k'ät. bin u taal-se sa'am.

11. Sa'asi tu ka'-ten hump'el k'in, u yaacht-ik yetet sa'am.

12. U ya'al-ik Hachäkyum, "Eeh, ne tsoy. Saman toh...ne ma' chich in meyah."

13. U na'-il Hachäkyum tan u yaacht-ik yetel sa'am. Hachäkyum ku ya'al-ik, "Ts'oki tech ah yaacht-ik?"

14. U Na'-il Hachäkyum u ya'al-ik, "Ts'oki ten in yaacht-ik. Ne ma' chich tin yaachtah.

15. Hachäkyum u nuk-ik, "Saman toh. Läh chuk-a'an tin yaachyah. Tin pankäch yaachtah, ma'ax u yonen."


17. U Na'-il Hachäkyum u ya'al-ik, "Ten tin yaachtah yuk yonen."

18. "Eeh, hah! Yan yuk yonen! Yan balum yonen, yan san-ho'ol yonen, yan mo' yonen, uuk yonen...mäna'an toh. Läh ch'uk-pähi in meent-ik."
21. Tu maansah hump'el k'in, ti' al u chix-tal u k'ät tu meent-oon-eex... ti' al u tih-il.

22. Hachakyum tu he'-sah bäh. Bini ti' u hanan...

33. U k'uch-ul ka'p'el k'in, u yähs-ik-oon-eex.

34. Tu ch'a'ah u le'xa'an Hachakyum, tu t'äbah yok'ol k'ak'. Tu läh maansah tu wolol. Läh lik'i to'on-eex. Läh lik'i ku-tal.

35. Tu t'änah Hachakyum, "Eeh, aah-ech, paalal?"

36. U nuk-ik hach winik, "Aan-en, Yum-eh."

37. U Na'-il Hachakyum u yä-ahs-ik. Tu t'äbah xa'an, tu läh maansah tu yok'ol. Län lik'-ih.

38. U Na'il Hachakyum ku t'än-ik, "Eeh, aah-ech?"


40. Hachakyum u ya'al-ik, "Lik'-en ch'ik-tal in wil-ik." U lik'-il.

41. U ya'al-ik Hachakyum, "Eeh, toh ne tsøy. Yan ah nok'."

42. U Na'-il Hachakyum u ya'al-ik, "Lik'-en in wil-eh. Eeh, hah tiich...yan ah nok'. Yan pik, yan xikul. Ne tsøy."

Our Eyes.

1. Kah tu yásah-oon-eex, tu ya'alah to'on-eex Hacha'kyum, "Pák-t-eh ah wíl-eh wa bin-en ah wich."

2. U nuk-ik hach winik, "Eeh, bay." Tu päktah. "Eeh, ne bin-a'an in wich!"

3. Hacha'kyum u ya'al-ik, "Eeh, bay. Bin in kah yet ah Na'."

4. U nuk-ik hach winik, "Eeh, bay. Xen, Yum-eh."


6. Sut-päh-ih. Uuli to'an hach winik...to'an u meyah.

7. Hacha'kyum tu t'änah, "Hah wa tah wilah tu' xul-en yet ah Na', paal-el?"

8. U nuk-ik hach winik, "Tin wilah, Yum-eh. Tin wíl-ah ba'al tah meentah yet ük Na'."

9. Hacha'kyum u ya'al-ik, "Eeh, hah tah wilah ba'al tin meentah? Taal-s-eh ah wich ti' in wíl-eh."

10. Tu làh halah u tun-en u wich. Tu tach-kun-tah xámäh yok'ol k'ak'. Tu yilah ne chák-o', tu täh kuntah u tun-en u wich yok'ol xámäh.


13. Kah uu'l-i Hacha'kyum, u ka' k'a'at-ik ti' hach winik, "Hah ta wilah tu'tal-en?"

15. Hachākyum u ya'al-ik, "Tsikbāl ti' in wuy-eh."

16. Hach winik u nuk-ik, "Ma' bin in wich."
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