KUNA STORIES, MYTHS, CHANTS, AND SONGS. FROM THE GATHERING HOUSE TO THE INTERNET

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1. Introduction

This paper is an exploration of Kuna stories, myths, chants, speeches, songs, and, more generally, Kuna voices, which are an expression of and performance of Kuna social and cultural life and identity and an excellent way to enter into the Kuna world. I will proceed autobiographically, presenting particular moments and experiences I have had in my investigations of the Kuna verbal world. I conclude with a discussion of tradition and change in Kuna verbal practices, what older forms continue to exist and what new possibilities are emerging, including a project I am involved in to maintain Kuna voices, by means of an Internet archive.

Palabras clave: kuna, habla ritual, internet, archive, mitos, cantos.

Key words: Kuna, ritual speech, internet, archive, myths, chants.
I began my research in Kuna Yala, then called San Blas, in 1970, mainly on the island of Sasardi-Mulatupu. I was trained in both anthropology and linguistics and my goal was to study the Kuna language, in all of its aspects, in social and cultural context. My primary method was to record people speaking and chanting, songs, myths, stories, conversations, speeches, meetings, lullabies, curing chants, and jokes, from men and women, young people and old people. I spent a lot of time in the gathering/meeting houses of the intertwined villages of Sasardi and Mulatupu. The gathering house is the verbal nerve center of any Kuna village, thus part of my title. These recordings, and many I have made since, along with many recordings James Howe has made, and many made much more recently by participants in the igargan (Kuna ways) project, have or soon will be archived on the Internet site AILLA (The archive of the indigenous languages of Latin America: www.ailla.utexas.org), often with transcriptions, translations, and commentaries, the other part of my title.

2. Moments observed, moments recorded, moments lost

Here are some examples from my own research, along with a discussion of their significance. These represent a selection of events and activities, from 1970 to the present.

In 1970, while I was living on the island of Mulatupu, one of the Mulatupu chiefs, Mastaletat, came to my house and asked me if I wanted to accompany him to the nearby island of Tupwala, where he would attend an evening gathering (political meeting) and perform a traditional chant. I jumped at the opportunity. We crossed over in a motorboat in the setting sun and were greeted by Tupwala officials who served us a plate of avocado and rice as we sat outside in front of the gathering house.

Then as evening began we entered the gathering house. Mastaletat sat down in a hammock in the center of the house, next to a very elderly chief in the next hammock. This was Yapilikinya, then first cacique of all Kuna. I was told to sit in a nearby hammock, also in the center of the place, a hammock usually reserved for chiefs. Yapilikinya and Mastaletat chatted as gradually men and women entered. After a while Mastaletat began to tell a Kuna traditional story.

It was the lobster story. The lobster was called not by his ordinary name, tulup, but by his traditional, ritual, and play name olopiskaliler. This name is a punful play on the physical characteristics of lobsters. The audience loved the telling and I did too, but was sorry I did not have my tape recorder with me. I had recently arrived in Kuna Yala and even though I was easily granted permission and indeed invited to tape record this kind of event in Mulatupu, I was cautious about taking my tape recorder to the gathering house of the traditional island of Tupwala. I told this to my good friend Mastaletat later and he promised that one day he would tell me the story of olopiskaliler, and I could tape it. After the telling of the story, Mastaletat chanted a traditional chant for the gathered audience and then we went back by motorboat to Mulatupu.
As it turns out Mastaletat never did tell me the story of olopiskaliler. The occasion never presented itself and he is no longer living. And I have never found anyone else who knows it, though my colleagues in the igargan project have. However, Mastaletat’s wonderful version of this story seems to have disappeared along with him.

But fortunately, Mastaletat’s voice still exists. He was an extremely knowledgeable and generous person and wanted to share his knowledge with others. I recorded several of his chants and speeches. In particular, that same year, I recorded the extremely long inna sopet ikar “the way of making chicha,” which he performed in order to ensure that the chicha, prepared under his direction for girls’ puberty rites, fermented properly (Sherzer 2003: chapter 9).

As far as I know I am the only person to have recorded this very important Kuna chant. I also subsequently recorded many Kuna stories (kwento), spoken and chanted, often learned from other groups, including Spanish, as the name suggests, but transformed into quintessentially Kuna performances, moralistic and political, as well as humorous.

In spite of the fact that Yapilikinya was a well-known Kuna leader, no tape recording of his voice, his speeches, or his chants, exists to my knowledge. He died many years ago. I now realize that what happened on that seemingly ordinary evening was a cultural, expressive, and indeed political act of identity for the Kuna. It was an expression and affirmation, through the Kuna language and especially through its discourse of who the Kuna are and what makes them special. This event expressed that wonderful combination of seriousness, friendship, and humor so typically Kuna. And, also of political, as well as historical significance, that critical moment of Kuna life is now lost forever. We do not have and will never have a record of it, beyond my words here.

Also in 1970, on the island of Mulatupu, one night a man who was working in the mainland jungle was bitten by a snake. He was brought back to the island and for several days a traditional cure was performed for him. In addition to the use of medicinal plants, this cure involved special chants and a community wide interdiction on making noise. Outboard motors were silenced, people walked barefoot so that their rubber thongs did not make flapping noises, and the usually talkative Kuna kept their voices in low tones. At night a curfew was in place and in the evening gathering men made speeches in a whisper. It turns out that the traditional curing was not successful.

After a few days the family of the stricken man took him at night to the island of Ailigandi by motorboat to be treated in the missionary run hospital. This western treatment was successful and the man returned, fully cured, to Mulatupu. Ironically, during this same time a well-known traditional curing specialist from Mulatupu, Olowiktinappi, had been given funds from the village to travel to the Bayano region of the Darien in order to study snakebite-curing practices. On his return to Mulatupu he gave a gathering house speech reporting on his trip.

On this occasion I made a tape recording of this artistically performed, valuable ethnographic document, which describes in detail Kuna learning and teaching curing practices (Sherzer 1990: chapter 5). Mulatupu then had a snakebite-curing specialist ready in case a
snake bit another person. Among many other chants, Olowiktinappi knew and performed The way of the Rattlesnake, used to protect against snake bites (Sherzer 2003: chapter 8). We have here a playing out of the clash between two worldviews and sets of practices – western and Kuna. While what is at stake is curing, the issue is also political. In the end both sides won.

In 1970, Kuna visitors to Mulatupu from the island of Niatupu, where a close friend and colleague of mine, James Howe, was working, came to see me to tell me the bad news that Jim was very sick. I quickly readied myself to go see him by boat when they informed me that they were only joking. The situation became more elaborate when the Niatupu visitors returned to their village and reported the whole episode in the form of a Kuna trickster tale transforming Howe and me into two animal protagonists.

Howe recorded this telling and we wrote an article about it (Howe and Sherzer 1986). Through this event I came to realize the significance of Kuna play, joking, and trickster behavior as a way of dealing with outsiders. Kuna living in Panama City have reported to me that this important feature of Kuna verbal and social life, and identity, is disappearing in the urban environment.

Also in 1970 I was present for the visit of a very elderly chief from another part of Kuna Yala to Mulatupu. He stayed for many days, visiting with many people. One morning he chanted to a gathering house audience filled with mainly women, and asked me to come and photograph and record him, much to the surprise of others present. And we are fortunate to have that recording, of the myth of white prophet. It presents the Kuna view of the afterworld, constructed and performed with many features of traditional gathering house chanting. It can be heard in its entirety on AILLA.

In 1971 I was fortunate to be a witness of and participant in a remarkable complex of events. An elderly, erudite, and well-known chief was forced out of office because of some misbehavior on another island. The village decided to replace him with man who had been his student for many years. As is Kuna custom, the new chief was inaugurated in a ceremony in which village leaders counseled him in a series of speeches. Since this particular inauguration was considered to be very important, well-known chiefs were invited from the nearby island of Tupwala and many individuals from Sasardi and Mulatupu spoke. The event lasted all day and into the night. I was invited to record it all. There is so much material on the many tapes I recorded that I am still in the process of transcribing, translating, and analyzing them.

As is custom in such inaugurations, the speeches are counsels to the new chief and are constructed in terms of a series of metaphors, traditional, manipulated, and invented. Chiefs are described as trees, poles in houses, animals, carriers of the village, and captains of a boat (Howe 1986, Sherzer 1990: chapter 4). I will have more to say about these metaphors below.

Returning to 1970, one evening I went to the home of Kantule Ernesto Linares, who was teaching two students the ritual chants he performs at girl’s puberty rites. He did this in a way that surprised me. Instead of performing by shouting out the words, as I have seen him do during girl’s puberty rites, a performance I found basically unintelligible and, I now realize,
unfortunately I never recorded, he chanted them in a beautiful melody that the students then repeated. I was later able to transcribe this performance, but never to translate it, because the language was so esoteric and so different from the other genres of Kuna speaking and chanting I was becoming familiar with. Then, having kept the translation in a notebook for many years, I went one day in 1978, eight years after the original recording, to Kantule Linares’ house, with my tape recorder, and asked him if he would help me with the translation into everyday Kuna. Linares did not speak Spanish. Several remarkable things happened.

First, without hesitation, he was willing to do this, in spite of the esoteric and secretive nature of the language involved. Second, since Kantule did not read or write, I read him my transcription, one line at a time, and he rapidly rattled off a word by word translation, with no difficulty whatsoever. Third, often he did not wait for me to read the next line, but said it himself, exactly as it was in my notebook, and then translated it into ordinary, everyday Kuna. This was very significant to me at that time, because a popular theory circulated in anthropological and linguistic circles that non-literate peoples did not memorize texts word by word, but rather constructed them anew each time. Kantule Linares demonstrated the opposite; he had this text memorized and had no difficulty producing it for me.

I stated above that I have heard a performance of the lobster story but never recorded one. Here I want to mention several of the many stories I have recorded, and their significance for an understanding of Kuna culture and society, past and present. One morning in 1970, on the occasion of the celebration of a Mulatupu anniversary, I recorded Chief Muristo Pérez’s telling of an entire cycle of a popular trickster tale, The Agouti Story (Sherzer 1990: chapter 7). This superb performance is a wonderful example of Kuna humor. Chief Muristo told me at the time that he could also chant this story in the gathering house in the evening. I was very interested in hearing such a chant, since I never had, even though I had read about the possibility of doing this. The occasion never presented itself, so one afternoon in 1976, Muristo invited me to his house and chanted The Agouti Story. The two performances, six years apart, are remarkably similar in content, but quite different in style, the first typical of the spoken language of story telling and the second that of chief’s chanting. The result of having both of these recordings is a laboratory-like comparison of Kuna styles of performance (Sherzer and Woodbury 1987: chapter 4).

In 1971, on the occasion of entertaining a visiting chief in the Mulatupu gathering house one morning, Chief Mastayans told The Hot Pepper Story. This story mingles several events and episodes and ends, somewhat surprisingly, with a moral about taking care of children. The moral is ambiguous and open to different interpretations. It is perhaps an expressive reflection of changing Kuna attitudes toward birth and child raising (Sherzer 1990: chapter 6).

In 1970 I also recorded Chief Spokesman Pedro Arias’ telling of The One-eyed Grandmother. This story has elements of the European Hansel and Gretel, combined with other themes. For many years I never listened to this recording or translated it, because I mistakenly interpreted it as an uninteresting case of acculturation. I was totally wrong. While
part of the story is derived from Hansel and Gretel, an interesting phenomenon in and of itself, it mingles with it other story elements and themes and all together is a very Kuna telling, including a moral (Sherzer 2003: chapter 2).

Several years ago I attended a conference on bilingual and bicultural education. For my presentation, I talked about AILLA and invited the participants and others to contribute to it. This led to a lively discussion of Kuna intellectual property rights, with different positions taken. Reuter Oran, a pioneer in bilingual education, told a story in Kuna, the story of Rooster and Agouti, the moral of which is that Kuna should be bilingual and bicultural. To do otherwise would be to cut off one’s head like Agouti did. Oran actually heard this story told by a Mayan at a conference he attended; he translated it into Kuna. It raises intriguing questions with regard to intellectual property rights. It is archived in AILLA. Another version of the story is published in Kungiler (1997), without the moral.

A Kuna verbal practice I have made several recordings of, and to my knowledge no others exist, is arkan kae, literally “hand shake,” the chanted ritual greeting between two chiefs. Recording these greetings requires the researcher to happen to be in the gathering house where these events take place, or else see the arrival of a boat carrying visiting chiefs. Recording also requires obtaining permission before or during the event from the participants, not always an easy task logistically. I am indebted to my friends the Mulatupu chiefs for their collaboration in this process by explaining to the visitors who I was and why the recording was important. If it were not for this collaboration, we would have no recordings of arkan kae.

A genre of Kuna chanting I am most fortunate to have been able to record is magical, especially curing chants, often called by the Kuna igargan, or, using the English, Spanish, and increasingly Kuna term, therapeutic chants. In spite of their esoteric and secretive nature, and potential monetary value, I found that knowers of them usually asked me to record them. I think that this is both because such recordings are a recognition of the knowers’ importance in the community and because of the value of documenting them as forms of Kuna knowledge and tradition.

Two of these curing chants are particularly meaningful to me because they were known and performed by my close friend and associate, Anselmo Urrutia. They are The Way of the Cocoa Counsel (Sammons and Sherzer 2000) and Counsel to the Way of the Devil Medicine (Sherzer 2003: chapter 6). Anselmo learned these late in life, building on knowledge he had acquired from his father and brother, Olowiktinappi, as well as from listening to and assisting me in transcribing, translating, and analyzing the recordings I had made.

3. Kuna traditional verbal practices and changes

As I hope to have demonstrated with this set of examples, from the beginning of my Kuna research to the present, I have been concerned with language in relation to culture and society, in all of its aspects. And the way I have done this is by focusing on forms and processes
of speaking, chanting, shouting, and singing, their recording, transcription, translation, analysis, and, increasingly, archiving, and this focus became the model for AILLA, The Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America, which I direct. I hope that this presentation offers insights and understanding into Kuna life, Kuna culture, society, history, and interpersonal relations. Complete versions of these events can be heard and read on AILLA, as well as in my publications.

These events provide excellent illustrations of Kuna traditional verbal practices, and enable me as well to point to changes that are occurring. Examples of practices which are present in the events I have just described are ritual dialogue as a form of interaction and performance; repetition and parallelism as poetic and rhetorical devices; quotation and embedding/reporting of voices; framing devices -- words and phrases, which work together with pause and intonational patterning and speaker interaction to create a line and verse poetic structure; and the use of special, esoteric languages and metaphors.

These practices are particularly nicely illustrated by the performance of the myth of White Prophet. White Prophet was a Kuna culture hero, who went to the afterworld and returned to tell the Kuna still alive what their world would be like after death. While this myth was fairly well known when I recorded it, I am not sure there are any knowers of it today.

The myth was performed in the way Kuna myths are traditionally told, in the form of a ritually chanted dialogue in which one chief tells the story to another, followed by a monologic translation and interpretation by a chief’s spokesman. Curiously the whole event is synchronic expression of a diachronic (= historical) movement, from dialogic to monologic, from ritual Kuna to more everyday Kuna. I recently thought of this and its significance in the playing out of changes occurring in Kuna verbal life.

The very small portion of the long chant that is represented at the end of this paper is a kind of ritual greeting between the two chiefs (see above). It is the opening of the chant, which describes, reflexively, the arrival of members of the community to the gathering house where the event is taking place. Parallel projection of aspects of the social organization of community enables the generation of a long portion of performance (here represented by text). The parallelism involves repetition with slight variation of words, phrases, and grammatical elements. Framing words and phrases are used to structure lines and verses, as is the interplay of the voices of the myth telling and responding chiefs. Voices are quoted and embedded into the performance. Various metaphors are transmitted, created, recreated, adapted, and interpreted.

Some of these discourse forms and processes are still common among the Kuna, some are rapidly disappearing, due especially, but not only to the extensive migration of the Kuna to Panama City, with the result that we have a situation not all that unusual in the world - a language which is relatively robust (there are almost 100,000 speakers of Kuna), but a system of language use, including poetry and rhetoric, which is in danger or at least rapidly and drastically changing.

It turns out that these forms and processes, which I study among the Kuna, as well as changes in them, are widespread in indigenous Latin America, especially in the large tropical,
Amazonian region, which includes such groups as the Kalapalo, Shokleng, Shuar, WaiWai, Yanomami, as well as the Kuna.

The changes that are occurring include:

1. A movement from indigenous monolingualism (sociolinguistically and cognitively, as a way of thinking about or conceiving the world) to bilingualism with the language of the nation state to monolingualism in the language of the nation state, the extinction of first discourse forms and processes and then whole languages (with the concomitant sociolinguistic and cognitive result).

2. A movement from oral to written, radio and TV, and electronic, including the Internet, as modes of verbal practice and thinking.

3. A movement from dialogic to monologic discursive practice.

4. Loss of parallelism, framing devices, and metaphors (or the creation of new ones), in discursive practice, in both the indigenous language and the new, European language, which disfavors them and militates against them.

The western educational model and schooling practices are no doubt responsible for some of this. At the same time a bilingual educational program is being developed and the Kuna are involved in this.

Metaphors provide a particularly interesting case. As I discussed with regard to the inauguration of a new Kuna chief, the Kuna are particularly fond of metaphors, old ones, new ones, invented ones, and ones that are creatively and humorously applied to new contexts. The Kuna share this with other indigenous groups in the Americas, and in fact, like stories, they learn metaphors from one another. I am not sure how many young Kuna, especially those who live in Panama City, know that a chief who is represented as an ikwa tree is hard and inaccessible, while a chief who is represented as an isper tree is soft and generous but susceptible to rotting. These were repeated metaphors in the speeches I recorded and in 1970 understood by many individuals.

In one speech, however, as I recently discovered as I went through the texts, the speaker, the new chief himself in fact, compares a chief first to a swiswar tree and then to a yucca plant. I do not know what chiefly characteristics this tree and plant represent and I do not know who does. For the Kuna, metaphors blend into etymologies, not far from puns as well. A popular recent example is the name of the country Panama that, with a trick of pronunciation, can sound like Bannaba, which means “far away.” Thus a couple of years ago I heard a chief speaking in favor of bilingual education saying that the Spaniards came from far away and thus named the country they found Panama, and just like the punful, metaphorical origin of the word, education should be blended, bilingual. Note also the use of Bannaba in the Bannaba project, a musical fusion created by a very creative Kuna, non-Kuna group. I can’t resist relating this to an analogous playful, punful, metaphorical use of language by another
indigenous leader, Evo Morales, now President of Bolivia, who, in a recent speech, talked of the two greens, the green of the coco leaf and the green of the dollar, which Americans are using to try and stop indigenous people from planting coco leaves, traditional to their culture, but also of course to buy coco (aine) with.

At the same time there are other developments. New forms and processes of discourse are emerging, such as oral and written poetry, in both Kuna and Spanish; new and published versions of Kuna traditional discourse; illustrations, cartoons, and mural paintings; talk on the radio; emails; internet sites; interactive electronic dictionaries; published calendars; PowerPoint presentations; and code-switching with Spanish and English. A new Kuna-developed orthography has also been created (Price 2005).

Sometimes new forms of discourse are the result of contacts with other groups, indigenous and non-indigenous, actually a very old phenomenon. Traditional vocabulary is being readapted and new words are emerging. Verbal and musical projects are being created. Examples include a Kuna calendar focusing on ecological degradation, a weekly radio broadcast, moralistic folk tales learned at conferences from other indigenous people translated into Kuna (mentioned above), and an avant garde music project on CD, combining traditional Kuna music and Latin jazz, the Bannaba project. Forms of poetry are being created, drawing on and mixing traditional Kuna verbal styles, such as therapeutic igargan, and contemporary Spanish poetic styles. An example is the bilingual poem by Aiban Velarde that is archived on AILLA.

I turn now to my final example, which is ongoing, a collaborative project I am engaged in. The project is called the igargan project (igargan means ways, chants, stories, or myths). The project involves the recording, transcription, translation, Internet archiving, and publication of Kuna forms of discourse, in particular ritual and traditional forms that are in the greatest danger of disappearing.

The project began with a census of therapeutic curing chants, which the Kuna find most effective and are afraid of losing. The project noticed for example that The way of the devil, used to cure mental derangement, has very few remaining performers. More recently other forms of speaking and chanting have been recorded, including lullabies and other women’s songs, and totoeti, playful songs which are related to Kuna curing and the Kuna spiritual belief system.

The plan is to work with performers of these chants, record them, transcribe them, translate them, archive them with AILLA, and make copies of the recording available to individuals who want to learn them. Booklets are also being prepared with the chants in Kuna and translation. These booklets are another way of preserving tradition and are available for use in bilingual education.

One can only imagine the complex questions such a project has raised. In meeting after meeting in village after village in house after house, there have been long discussions and debates about what this means for traditional ways of learning and teaching, intellectual property rights (both individual and collective), ethical issues, and orthography and translation. There
is not a monolithic, uniform Kuna point of view on these issues. For example, since there are traditionalists who believe that the only way to learn curing chants is the traditional way, with a human teacher, the project offers small scholarships to individuals who apprentice themselves to teachers, in the traditional way.

The work is not always easy, but we are proceeding, with fascinating results. I recently received a box of 21 mini disks with recordings by men and women of all ages, containing chants and songs of various kinds, and discussions of the project, the performer’s opinion about it, and related matters. Now all of this is being transcribed and translated. The individuals in the project realize how difficult transcription and translation can be, and have devised some rather ingenious ways of dealing with the difficulties. For example, they sometimes create a new chant, midway between the esoteric original and the everyday, in order to aid in translation and, in some cases, protect the esoteric original from being learned and used by people who are not yet ready for it, a kind of “R rating,” so to speak. We have worked closely with traditional leaders, both in villages and in Panama City. On the AILLA site there is an agreement signed by the Caciques, expressing collaboration in the *igargan* project.

4. Conclusion

My role in all of this has been to volunteer my services when asked for - to conduct workshops on techniques of recording, transcribing, translating, and archiving; to consult electronically; and to offer AILLA as a place to archive recordings. One aspect of this I have found fascinating is how similar my approach and the Kuna approach are to the importance of discourse in language and culture. There is no question that traditional Kuna discourse as the Kuna and we know it is in danger of disappearing, just as new forms are emerging. At the same time the Kuna, and I and other non-Kuna when asked, have taken an activist and dynamic approach to becoming involved in maintaining the traditional and encouraging the new.

Kuna is a Chibchan language, as clearly documented in the work of Adolfo Constenla Umaña. For this reason I feel it is most appropriate to offer this paper to the memory of Adolfo, whose work on Chibchan languages and literatures has been so prolific, erudite, and significant.

References Cited


Annex

**Myth of White Prophet (Chief Olowiktinappi)**

**Opening (Kuna)**

(Responding chief chants: *tekii*)

al emite tule tummakanakwalee.
sunna nase nonimaryee.
    tekii.
tule saylakanakwai arkarmalakwalee.
na nase nonimaryee.
    tekii.
tule polisiakanakwaletee.
nase nonimaryee.
    tekii.
papa olokansupilli mesisakwatse na siknonimaryee.
    tekii.
al inso sunna sia tulekan kapur sikkwimala panse nonimaryee.
    tekii.
tule inatulekanakwar tule kanturkanakwar nase nonimaryee.
    tekii.
al inso tule purwa ikar wisimalatti noniteee sokee.
    tekii.
papa oloittokunnekaki olokansuseka l upononimartee.
    tekii.
sikwa l ammalakwa si amalakwale panse l upononitee. 
tekii.
tule sikkwikaemala nase noni kacisopemalatee.  10 
tekii.
tule mornattulekan noni wini onimalat nonitee. 
tekii.
amma iete panse nonimartee. 
iamalakwar nase nonimaryee. 
tekii.
pela olokansuse pani ampakkunimartee. 
olokarta nikkapukkwamaryee. 
tekii.
papati oloniptolapa tule tummakan otenonimartee. 
tekii.
tule ankermala aktenoni.  15 
paliwitturmar aktenoni. 
an palititokeka kumartee. 
tekii. 
papati l ittoket neka upepepartee. 
olokalalatupa opaksa nasiktee. 
tekii. 
papa oloittokuna upepepartee. 
na olotupa otenoniyee. 
tekii.

**Opening (English)**

(Responding chief chants: So it is)
Now all the great people.
Truly have come together.
So it is.
The people who are chiefs who are spokesmen.
Have indeed come together.
So it is.
The people who are policemen then.
Have come together.
So it is.
They have indeed come to sit in the golden benches that Father placed here.
Thus truly cacao men and hot pepper birds you have come to me.

So it is.
The people who are medicine men the people who are kantules have come together.

So it is.
Thus the people who are knowers of The way of the wind have come I say.

So it is.
They have come to enter the golden benches in Father’s golden listening house then.

So it is.
For a short while aunts and nieces you have come to enter to me then.

So it is.
The people who catch birds have come together those who make hammocks then.

So it is.
The people who are mola people have come and those who string beads have come then.

So it is.
Aunts who are hair cutters you have come to me then.
The hair cutters have come together.

So it is.
You have all come to congregate in the golden benches then.

“The golden papers are present.

So it is.
And Father came from among the golden dwellers above to lower down the great people then.

So it is.
The angel people have come to descend.

The holy people have come to descend.

They are here in order to listen to us then.

So it is.
And father from the front of the listening house then.
Hung a golden listening wire across then.

So it is.
Father from the front of the listening place then.
Indeed came to lower a golden wire.

So it is.

Chief’s spokesman Armando González

Opening (Kuna)

“tule nuy nikka nikka taylekutina.
we neyse upononi” takken soke.
“tule saylakanakwar tayle nase nonimala, tule arkarkanakwar takkenye,” sayla anmar owiso takken.

“tule taylekuti polisiakanakwar” takken soke.
“tule kapur tule kanakwar tayle nase upononimala.
we neyse kup” ittosursoke soy takken.

inso taylekutina.
“inaturkanakwar tayle nase nonimar” takken soke.
“pap ittoet neyse” pittosursoke takken.

“papti taylekuti anka ittoet nek mettenatmala.

e nuy piekar” pittosurso pittosursokene.

“ ‘ipakwenpa tayleku panse wis korpukkwa taylekuti nanamaloe.’
papti kottenat” takken soke.

“nan tummatti kottenat” pittosursoke soy takken.

“papti taylekuti we nekki taylekutina.
anka kan nuekan taylekutu urpisnatmala.
aa kanse an ampakunonimarye,” anmarka soy pittosursokene.

“inso taylekuti punmar upononikki.
nuy nikka nikka tayleku panse upononimarye.”
sayla anmar owiso pittosursokene.

inso taylekutina.
“kwena kwena panse pe upononima taylelekuti.
tule kaci wisimalat noni” takken soke.

“tule moray tulekan tayleku nonikki.
we neyse” pittosursoy takken.
inso taylekutin win onimalat noni takken soke.
“iemalat nonikki, timimmimalat noniye,” sayla anmal oisomar takken.

“pela taylekuti nuy nikkatpi” pittosursoke soy takkenye.

Opening (English)

“The people with names with names indeed. Have come to enter this house” see it is said.

“The people who are chiefs indeed have come together, the people who are spokesmen see,” the chief informs us see.

“The people indeed who are policemen” see it is said.

“The people who are hot pepper men indeed have come to enter together. Into this house” don’t you hear it is said it is said see.

Thus indeed.

“The medicine men indeed have come together” see it is said.
“To Father’s listening house” don’t you hear it is said see.

“And Father indeed left us this listening house as he departed.

So that we may pronounce his name” don’t you hear it is said don’t you hear it is said.

“You must go around indeed calling to me a little indeed from time to time.’ Father himself called as he departed” see it is said.

“And Great Mother called as she departed” don’t you hear it is said it is said see.
“And Father indeed in this house indeed.  
Left us indeed good benches. 
To those benches we have come to congregate,” he says to us don’t you hear it is said.

“Thus indeed the sisters have come to enter. 
You who have names indeed have come to enter here to me.”
The chief informs us don’t you hear it is said.

Thus indeed. 
“One by one you have come to enter to me indeed. 
The people who know hammocks have come” see it is said.

“The mola people these people indeed have come. 
To this house” don’t you hear it is said see.

Thus indeed “those who string beads have come” see it is said.

“The haircutters have come, the water sprinklers have come,” the chief informs us see.

“All of them indeed each have names” don’t you hear it is said it is said see.