Taking Out the Salt

This text is a sample of an extended monologue. It is one of the procedural texts that were dictated to me by Francisco Santizo Andrés in the early days of our work together. In order to get extended samples of speech that I could scan for grammatical and lexical material, I would request that he tell me about some aspect of San Mateo Chuj life. He related a brief conversation with a compatriot he ran across in the Huehuetenango market. He told me about his own life. He discussed maize agriculture. And one day I asked him to tell me about the famous salt trade of San Mateo, the economic mainstay of the town, producing a renowned black salt that is widely sought after for medicinal uses, among others.

The mines lie below the main part of town, between the houses and the river that flows toward Barillas. The area is called Tits’am (ti’ ats’am) “the mouth of the salt.” Deep shafts have been dug into the hillside, and the salt at the bottom is in the form of salty water. The salt water is dipped out into pots that are passed up to the surface, and there the liquid is distributed to carriers who take the salt solution to the houses where it will be boiled down into small cakes.

This is no simple matter. The extraction and production of the salt is intricately interwoven into the fabric of San Mateo life. “Chosen men,” who have more than usual strength, perform the heavy labor of getting the salt water to the mine heads, but women do much of the surface carrying and the work of boiling down the saline solution. Special clay pots are required for the extraction process, the carrying process, and the process of reduction to salt cakes. The production of these ceramic vessels occupies a considerable population, just as the labor of transportation requires even more labor. Firewood for the reduction process involves another labor force. And marketing the final product is accomplished by local merchants, but entails long-term relationships with buyers from other towns. Care and feeding of the traders and pilgrims who come for the salt from as far away as Mexico adds another source of income.
The salt trade is intimately tied to the local social structure. The right to take out salt at any given time rotates around the population so that in theory everyone gets a chance to profit. On the other hand, certain mines are held by certain factions for their own use, and one mine is the sole property of the chief prayermaker for the town, the alcalde rezador, the icham alkal (literally, the “elder-mayor,” a term formed by the opposition of “elder,” a semireligious office, and “mayor,” a political office). These individuals and groups finance their activities and accrue profit by taking out salt. The salt thus supports individual households, neighborhood organizations, civil political officers, and religious groups, the latter traditionalists not affiliated with the Catholic Church. The networks that form through these activities firm up the social structure of the town as well as increasing its income.

The salt mines support important collective activities, and they also provide funds to individual families to pay for advice from diviners. As the narrator remarks, the better the pay, the more favorable the advice given.

One traditional ceremonial round that is supported by funds from the salt is the annual Five Days, the hoye k’uh. This period corresponds to the pre-Columbian period called Uayeb in sixteenth-century Yucatán. The Mayan calendar counted eighteen months of twenty days each, plus this period to bring the calendar into rough synchronization with the solar year of three hundred fifty-five days. The days of each “month” were numbered. Alongside this calendar was a divinatory almanac of twenty day names, each representing a supernatural power, that cycled against thirteen numbers that altered each appearance of a day name; this formed a cycle of two hundred sixty days that beat against the three hundred fifty-five-day calendar. The expected nature of each day was determined by its day number and day name and its place in the solar calendar, in a system in which no combination of these four elements repeated for fifty-two years, roughly the average length of a human life.

When I learned that the day names were still remembered, I asked Francisco, who didn’t know all the names, to find out more about this. He himself was a progressive Catholic and a member of the priest’s staff at times, but he had a grandmother who was definitely not. He returned from a trip to San Mateo with the news that his grandmother had refused to talk about the day names with him. “What do you want to know that for?” she asked. “You don’t believe in any of it.”

In neighboring Chiapas, Mexico, the solar calendar survives in many Tzeltal and Tzotzil communities, but the two hundred sixty-day divinatory almanac has been lost. The opposite is true of most Guatemalan indigenous communities, where the divinatory almanac flourishes, but the solar calendar has been abandoned. In Chuj country, the day names are well known and their combinations with the set
of numbers is the basis of shamanic consultation. In the story of Oedipus Rex, above (An Old Man Whose Son Killed Him), it is this sort of divination that predicted the fate of the newborn child (and, of course, of his father).

In San Mateo Ixtatán, however, along with the day names there is still one remnant of the pre-Columbian solar calendar, the Five Days, the last calendric period of the solar year. It now falls somewhere around the beginning of Lent, a period in which the Catholic Church tolerates activities like Carnaval or Mardi Gras. Like many year-end ceremonies, the Five Days is devoted to prayers and renewal. On each of the first four days, the traditionalist leaders visit the crosses that mark the conceptual boundaries of the town. This is done in traditional Maya sequence, following the movements of the sun. They gather for food and drink to make preparations; animals are slaughtered for food, drink flows freely, and marimbas play. Then the first day of *hoye k’ub* they go to the east boundary of the town (in the direction of the sunrise, called *tsél k’ub*, “[where the] Sun exits [the Underworld]”). The second day the group goes to the north boundary, in the direction where the tropical sun reaches its zenith (like the south, the direction is unnamed, as in many Mayan languages; see Josserand and Hopkins 2011). The third day they visit the crosses to the west (*ts’och k’ub*, “[where the] Sun enters”). The fourth day the crosses to the south are visited. Each day, if the crosses need repair or replacement, this is done with ceremony. Finally, on the fifth day, the ancient end of the year, the traditionalists gather in the plaza next to the entrance of the church where there is another cross. More prayers and offerings are made. The performance of this ceremonial round is considered to be necessary for the well-being of the community and its inhabitants. Income from the salt mines funds all these activities (candles, incense, liquor, slaughtered animals, maize foods, and so forth). Thus, part of the economic gain that derives from the salt mines is put to work for the good of the community, a concept that drives the tradition of civil service all over the Maya area.

Note: A version of this text was published in a collection of Mayan texts edited by Louanna Furbee (Hopkins 1980b). That version, done when Mayanist scholars were trying to find out more about each other’s languages, includes a transcription of the tape in a technical orthography and a morpheme-by-morpheme glossing of the entire text. The transcription into modern orthography and the translation presented here are new, as is the formatting of the text.
Taking Out the Salt

Narrator: Francisco Santizo Andrés
Location: San Mateo Ixtatán, Huehuetenango, Guatemala
Date: September 7, 1964 (recorded in Huehuetenango)
Chuj Text [CAC 002 R008]

T’a jun k’utik, ol wala’,
chajtil skutej sk’eta ats’am ats’am,
chajtil yaj ats’am ats’am (t’ay)
t’ayin chonhab’.
Yuj chi’,
ol wala’ chajtil ts’ikan sk’eta ats’am
  t’a pekataxo,
i chajtil ts’ikan sk’eta ats’am
tik ne’ik.

[Opening]
Today, I’ll talk about
how we bring up the salt,
how the salt is
in my town.
So,
I’ll talk about how we bring up the salt
in the past,
and how we bring up the salt today.

[Background: In the past]
[The salt comes up]
In the past, to bring up the salt,
there were men called “pot carriers.”
Those pot carriers
were chosen men only among them,
because only those men
had great strength.
They were very select men,
they were big men.
Those men
went in to bring out the salt
from the bottom there
where it is gathered.
Because there is a hole
where the salt is.
It goes down in steps.

Yuj chi’,
hata ts’em tsolan heb’ winh,

So,
there they go down forming a line,
slechk’eta ats’am
t’a yich chi’.
Ay winh sb’ut’an lum ch’ub’
t’ay yich chi’,
syak’an’k’eta lum winh (t’a winh)
t’a winh ayemk’och chi’
t’ay sb’ab’elal chi’.
Haxo winh xcha’an lu’um,
smeltsaj winh,
syak’an’k’eta lum winh,
t’ay winh ayb’at t’a spatik chi’
t’ay xchab’il.
Hanheja’ ichachi’ sk’ulej winh chi’,
masan sk’ehul yuj heb’ winh,
t’ay sti’ holan chi’.
Haxo winh sekan pan (t’ay)
t’ay sti’ chi jun,
Haxo winh sk’echn’elta,
ts’elul t’ay sti’ wertah.
Haxota’ xekchajih.
Xcha’an winh mach skuchanih.
Porke to,
ch’ok yaj heb’ winh
slechank’eta chi’.
Ch’ok yaj pax heb’ winh
skuchan kotih.
Yuj chi’,
ha heb’ winh slechank’eta chi’,
ha heb’ winh sekan’em
t’a yol xch’ub’,
heb’ winh skuchankot chi’.

they dip out the salt
at the bottom there.

There are men who fill the pots
at the bottom there,

they hand up the pot
to those who are down there above
those first ones.

That other man takes the pot,
he turns,

he gives the pot
to the man who is above him there,
to the second one.

Thus they do it,
everything comes up through them,
to the mouth if the hole there.

Another man empties it again
at the door there.

That other man lifts it,
and goes out to the doorway.

There it is emptied.

The man who is to carry it takes it.
Because still,

separate is the man who dips it out,

separate also is the man who carries it.

So,
those men who dip it out;
those men who empty it
into the bottom of the pots,
they carry it away there.

And in the past,
there was a wooden pot rack—
cedar, in the past—
that rack was there for them,
there they set down
those pots, the men,
Skuchan lum heb’ winh.
I hanheja’ heb’ winh skuchankot chi’,
sik’b’il tseltah heb’ winh,
porke ha heb’ winh
te ay yip chi’ skuchanik.
Porke tato ha winh malaj yip jun,
max k’elaj skuchan winh,
porke te al.
Porke ha ats’am ats’am chi’,
mas te al ats’am t’a yichanh ha ha’. Ha ha ha’, seb’nhej ko k’e chan
chanh ha’,
xal ats’am ats’am chi jun,
te al ats’am.

The men who carry the pots.
And the men who carry the pots there,
chosen are those men,
because those men
great is their strength for carrying.
Because if those men have no strength,
they can’t lift it to carry it,
because it is very heavy.
Because that salt water,
salt is heavier than water
That water, easily we can lift up water,
but that salt,
salt is very heavy.

Yuj chi’,
sik’b’il ts’och heb’ winh skuchan chi’.
Heb’ winh slechank’eta ats’am chi’,
pax heb’ winh slechank’eta ats’am chi’,
siepre ay jab’ yik heb’ winh.
Porke slajwi slechank’eta ats’am heb’ winh,
syik’an jun jun ch’ub’ yik heb’ winh.
Pero ha jun jun ch’ub’ chi’,
jun ch’ub’, xchih,
porke te niwan,
ayam jun oxe kintal yalil,
te al.

So, chosen they go in to dip it out.
The men who dip out that salt,
and the men who dip out the salt,
always there is a little benefit for them.
Because when they finish dipping out salt,
they take benefit from each pot.
Because each of those pots,
one pot, they say,
because they are very big,
they are probably three hundred pounds in weight
very heavy.

[Today: Women carry the pots]
So, in the past,
the pots were very big.
And today, well,

Yuj chi’,
hat’a pekatax chi’,
te niwak lum ch’ub’.
Xal tik ne’ik jun,
manh xo ichok chi laj,
ix k’exmajih.
Ha tik ne’ik,
ha xo heb’ ix
skuchan ats’am.
Porke ha lum ch’ub’
t’ay pekatax chi’,
ix lajwel lu’um.
Ha xo lum ch’ub’ tik ne’ik,
ha lum kotak xo,
yunetak xo nhej lu’um.

Yuj chi’,
ox’e’ lum chi’ (t’a lum)
t’a jun lum niwan.
Porke ha jun lum niwan t’a
pekatax chi’,
ox’e’ lum yunetak chi’ sb’at t’a
yol lu’um.
Yuj chi’,
ha chi’ ix poj heb’ winh tik ne’ik,
entonse ox ch’ub’ ix k’ek’ochih.
Yuj chi’,
ox ch’ub’ jun jun kantaroh.
Jun ch’ub’.
Yuj chi’,
ha heb’ ix ix chi’,
skuchan tik ne’ik
I ha xo b’at lechhajk’eta
t’a yol chi jun
ha heb’ winh winak chi’
b’at lechhank’eta t’a yol chi jun,
heb’ winh mayor,
heb’ winh polinsiah.
ha heb’ winh b’at lechhank’eta t’a
yich chi’.
Mach smananih,
entonse sinhkwenta sinhku sentawu

they aren’t like that any more,
they are changed.
Today,
those women
carry the salt.
Because the pots
in the past,
you have ended.
Those pots today,
they are small already,
just little baby pots.

—

So,
three of those pots
to one big one.
Because those big pots of the past,
three little pots go into their bottom.

So,
then, the men today divided them,
so three pots came out.
So,
three pots, each cántaro. One pot.

So,
those women there,
carry them today.
And so, those who go dip it out
from the inside,
those men who
go dip it out of the insides
are those more important men,
the policemen,
those men go dip it out at the bottom.

Whoever is buying
then [pays] fifty-five centavos
Taking Out the Salt

jun jun ch’ub’.

Yuj chi’,
ha heb’ winh slechank’eta chi’,
sentawu skotup jun jun ch’ub’.
Tato jun ch’ub’ entero niwan skik’a,
entonse oxe sentawu skotup
heb’ winh,
yik heb’ winh lechwajum.
Ha xo heb’ ix ix chi’,
skuchank’eta jun, sj’a t’a ko pat,
hoye sentawu sko tup heb’ ix.
Tato najattak ayonh, ha chi’,
syala jantak b’aj ayonh.
Tato najat ayonh,
mas niwantak sko tupu’.
Ay t’ay (t’ay) siete ocho sentawu,
hasta ay t’ay dies sentawu.
Tato lak’an ayonh jun,
ay t’ay oxe sentawu,
t’a chanhe sentawu.

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[The salt is boiled down]

Yuj chi’,
hata’ syala’ jantak b’aj ayonh.
B’at yak’ankan heb’ ix t’a ko pat,
sko tupan heb’ ix.
Sk’och ats’am ats’am (t’ay) t’a ko pat,
ay jun te ko jukib’,
hata’ ts’em ats’am.
Sjakan ats’am,
skik’ankot te k’atsits,
sko manan lum lu’um
b’ajtil ol ko payej ats’am.
Tato jun ch’ub’ ats’am,
jun nhej lum sko mana’,
yet’ jun xo lum yune nhej.

—

each pot.

So,
to those men that dip it out,
one centavo we pay for each pot.
If it’s a whole big pot they bring out,
three centavos we pay them,
the benefit of the dippers.
Also to those women
who carry it, who come to our house,
five centavos we pay the women.
If it’s far where we are, then,
we talk about how far to where we are.
If it’s far where we are,
we pay more.
There are some for seven,
eight centavos,
up to ten centavos.
If it’s close where we are, well,
there are some at three centavos,
at four centavos.

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[The salt is boiled down]

So,
there we talk about how far we are.
They go to leave it at our house,
we pay them.
When the salt arrives at our house,
there is a wooden trough,
there the salt goes down.
When the salt arrives,
we gather firewood,
we buy ceramics
where we will heat the salt.
If it is one pot of salt,
we buy just one vessel,
and just one other little pot.
Tato cha ch’ub’ ats’am jun,
entonse chab’ lum sko mana’.
I siempre hanheja sko man
jun lum yune nhej chi’.
Porke yik sti’.

If it’s two pots of salt, well,
then two vessels we buy.
And always even so we buy
just one little pot.
Because its mouth is right.

Ts’el ats’am ko payanih,
b’at ko chonhan ats’am,
e tato ay winh manum ats’am,
ts’ek pax t’ay kal pat jun.
Ay heb’ winh, heb’ winh hula’,
ha heb’ winh smananb’at
ats’am t’ayonh,
t’a pilonhal.
Snunal smanb’at ats’am heb’ winh.
Porke ha ats’am ats’am chi’,
nab’a ha’ ats’am.
Hato sko payan ats’am,
hatota’ swinakej sb’a ats’am,
i sk’enan sb’a ats’am.
Yos, (ts’och) b’o jun nun ats’am.

[Buyers come for the salt]
The salt comes out as we heat it,
and if there are salt buyers
they come around the houses.
Those men buy the salt from us,
in lumps (pilones).
In “mothers” they buy the salt.
Because that salt,
it’s pure liquid salt.
So we heat the salt,
then the salt forms a solid,
and the salt turns to stone.
So, it makes a “salt mother.”

Pero hat’a yik heb’ winh
peka winak,
ay skostumra heb’ winh.
Hasta hanheja’ tik ne’ik,
syak’ kostumra winh yet’ok.
Porke winh icham alkal,
ha winh ayuch lesalil,
yak’ slesalil masanil ats’am ats’am.
Yak’ slesalil heb’ winh chonhab’,
yak’ slesalil masanil awal,
masanil ixim,
masanil trawaju.
Ha winh ayuch yak’ slesalil
tato may junh ilya

[Skin surrounds the salt]
But with the men of the past,
there was a custom of theirs.
Even up until today,
they make rituals with it.
Because the alcalde rezador,
that man prays,
he prays for all the salt.
He prays for the men of the town,
he prays for all the fields,
all the maize,
all the work.
That man prays
that there be no harm
Taking Out the Salt

Yuj chi’,
hanheja’ ay skostumra heb’
winh yet’ok.
Pero ha winh icham alkal chi’,
ha heb’ winh chonhab’,
ha heb’ winh smolan yik
skantela winh,
yik spom winh,
yik staj winh,
yik b’aj syak’ lesal,
a na ch’ok yaj jun yats’am winh,
wal ayuch (t’ay) t’ay semanail.
Ha winh ay yik xch’okojil,
ha winh sjakani munil,
ha winh xcha’an stojol,
yik winh sch’okojil.
Yuj skostumre winh chi’,
ay jun yats’am winh chi’
t’a xch’okojil.

Xal ats’am spukax
 t’ay heb’ winh chonhab’ chi jun,
 chab’ nhej ats’am.
Ha ats’am Yochul, xih.
Ha tun atz’am
meru wal mayor minax chi’
yet’ ats’am Snanhal, xih.
Ha ats’am Yochul chi’,
jun jun k’uh,
sk’eta jun wake kantaro.
Wak ch’ub’, jun jun k’uh.
Xal ats’am Snanhal chi jun,
ha to t’ay xchanhlabjunhejial,
t’ay yolahunhejial,
hatota’ ts’el ats’am.
Pero ts’elta jun holajunh ch’ub’,

that comes to the town.

So,
just so there have their rituals.

But that alcalde rezador,
the men of the town,
they collect money for his candles,
for his incense,
for his pine shavings,
for whatever he prays for,
and set apart is a salt mine for him,
it is there every week.
He has a benefit set aside
he goes in to work,
his benefit apart.
According to their custom,
there is one salt mine for him,
set aside.

And of the mines distributed
among the men of the town,
there are only two salt mines.
The mine Inside, they call it.
That mine
is the very best mine
and the mine Middle, they call it.
That Inside mine,
every day
comes up about six cántaros.
Six pots, every day.
And the Middle mine,
every fourteen days,
fifteen days,
salt comes out.
But some fifteen pots come out,
jun waklajunh ch’ub’. some sixteen pots.
Ha heb’ winh ichamtak winak, The elders
 t’a yol chonhab’, in the town,
ha heb’ winh chi’ those men
ayuch t’a yujal, go in monthly,
yik’an ats’am masanil yempu. they take out salt all the time.
Ha heb’ winh chi’ Those men
ts’och t’ay ats’am Snanhal chi’ . . . go in to the Middle mine . . .

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[Tape ends; a new tape begins]

Yuj chi’, [The officials take salt]
ichachi’ yaj ats’am ats’am chi’. so,
Pax heb’ winh opisyal, that’s the way the salt is.
heb’ winh ayuch t’ay justgadu, And the officials,
siempre syik’ ats’am yik heb’ winh. those who are at City Hall,
Malaj stojol heb’ winh, always take salt for their benefit.
hanhej serwisyo heb’ winh They don’t get a salary,
syak’ t’a yol schonhab’. it’s just their service
Yuj chi’, that they give to their town.
ha heb’ winh chi’, So,
jun jun semana those men,
syik’an oxtak ch’ub’ ats’am every week
yik heb’ winh. take out three pots of salt each
Ha jab’ chi’ stojol heb’ winh yajoh, as their pay.
yik b’aj ts’elta sgasto heb’ winh. That little bit is their pay,
Pax heb’ winh chi’, where they take out their expenses.
ay pax skostumra heb’ winh. And those men,
Te niwan skostumra heb’ winh chi’, they also have customs.
porke yik t’a b’ajtil They make really big rituals
may tas kot t’a yib’anheb’ winh, so that
 t’ay k’inh, nothing comes down on them
 t’ay (jan) tastak sk’ulej heb’ winh. in fiestas,
May jun howal, in whatever they do.
may tas ih.

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Yuj chi’, No fights,
So,

No nothing.
Taking Out the Salt

hata’ syak’ kostumra
yuj yik chi’.
Ha heb’ ix yistsil heb’ winh yob’sial,
syak’an (e) ja’at heb’ ix.
Smolchaj heb’ ix,
syak’an jun tsijtum lesal heb’ ix.
Sh’at heb’ ix t’a tits’am t’ay jun k’uh,
jun k’uhal sb’at heb’ ix
yak’ lesal t’ay sti’ats’am ats’am.
Slajwi heb’ ix t’a sti’ats’am
ats’am chi’,
sb’at heb’ ix t’ay kulus,
t’ay titak chonhab’.
Ixtota’ sk’och heb’ ix t’a tepan.
T’a jun xo k’uh, ak’wal to,
sb’atxi heb’ ix,
sk’och heb’ ix t’ay yamak’il tepan,
t’a yib’anjun kulus.
Haxota’ syak’ lesal heb’ ix
ts’ek’ k’uh.
Yob’xial, syak’an jun chi heb’ ix,
yik t’a b’ajtyil malaj tas kon
t’a yib’anheb’ winh.

there they do rituals
for their benefit.
The wives of the officials,
they make rituals.
They are gathered,
they make some prayers.
They go to the salt mines one day,
one whole day the women go
and pray at the mouth of the mine.
Finishing at the mouth of the mine,
they go to the cross
at the edges of the town.
Thus they arrive at the church.
The next day, early in the morning,
they go again,
they arrive at the patio of the church,
at the foot of a cross.
There the women pray all day.
Every five days, they do this
so that nothing comes
down on them.

Yuj chi’,
ha heb’ winh chi’
wal ts’ak’an tsijtum kostumra
yet’ats’am ats’am tik.
Ha heb’ winh ts’ak’an jun
kostumra chi’,
yik t’a b’ajtil malaj mach
sb’at peresu,
malaj mach ts’ak’am jun es palsoh
t’a yib’anheb’ winh.
Yuj chi’,
ha chi’ syak’ slesalil heb’ winh.
Pax heb’ ix ix chi jun,
slajwi jun yik heb’ ix chi’

So,
those men
are making a lot of rituals
with the salt.
They make one ritual
so that none goes to jail,
none makes false testimony
against them.
So,
thus they make their prayers.
And those women,
when they finish praying
for everything,
they do it for themselves.
If they know
there is a husband of theirs
in jail,
then the women
pray for him.

[Diviners are consulted]
But there is a place where
they ask for advice,
for how to make their prayers.
To the male diviner,
to the female diviner,
there they go ask for advice.
Thus,
the women go to ask for advice
so there is nothing that befalls the men,
so there is no prisoner,
no fine,
then they go ask for advice.

And that diviner, well,
he takes twenty-five,
some fifty centavos
he takes.
And, he will speak,
he will tell them how it is.
If there is no money,
only some ten centavos,
some fifteen,
he doesn't speak well,
he won't say
how things are,
because it's too little money.
If it's a lot of money,
then he will say everything,
he will say choice things
Taking Out the Salt

Chajtil ol ek’ opisyu chi’. Yuj chi’,
ay yik’ti’ej winh,
chajtil ol aj opisyu chi’.

about how the office will go.
So,
there is a conversation
about how the office will be.

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[Political factions take salt]
So,
they have their customs,
there are prayers,
and,
again those people,
how many men of the town,
have a little salt they take out.

Porke ay b’aj ay
smol tuminal yuj heb’ winh.
Tato ay jun tas sn’elta heb’ winh,
smolb’anb sb’a heb’ winh,
syak’an mol tumin heb’ winh.
Smolchaj k’en tumin,
syalaneb’ winh b’ajtil sk’och k’e’en.
Tato t’a winh icham alkal sb’at tumin,  
e mato ay jun skostumra heb’ winh,  
oł yak’ t’ay yol yik t’a xch’okojil jun.  
If it goes to the alcalde rezador,  
and if there is some ritual of theirs,  
they put aside money for it.

Ichok syak’ heb’ winh  
t’ay hoye k’uh.  
T’a hoye k’uh, jantak heb’ winh  
yichamtak winakil jun jun partidu,  
ay (winh) winh sat,  
t’a b’ajtil smolchaj heb’ winh.  
Ha ta’ syak’ jun sja’at heb’ winh,  
syak’ lesal heb’ winh,  
syak’ jun tsijtum kostumra  
heb’ winh.  
[The Five Days]  
Thus they do  
on the Five Days.

On the Five Days, however many  
elders of each faction,  
they have a chief,  
where they gather.  
There they make rituals,  
they pray,  
they make a lot of ritual.

Molchaj heb’ winh,  
ts’och son,  
xcham nok’ kalnel,  
syuk’an anh heb’ winh,  
jantak tas sk’ulej heb’ winh.  
Once they are gathered,  
the marimba comes in,  
a goat dies,  
they drink alcohol,  
however many things they do.

Yuj chi’, semra  
ay slesalil jun ats’am chi’  
yuy heb’ winh,  
porke hat’a jun hoye k’uh chi’,  
ha ta’ ay smodo heb’ winh,  
yawan kulus.  
Ha ta’ hoye k’u chi’,  
ha ta’ ts’el heb’ winh  
ichamtak winak  
t’ay yol chonhab’ chi’,  
t’ay b’aijakil ay jun kulus,  
t’a b’aj ay jolomtak wits.  
B’at yak’an lesal heb’ winh,  
t’ay sk’inhib’i hoye k’uh.  
Tato k’axo kulus chi’,  
syawanxi heb’ winh,  
So, always,  
there are prayers for the salt  
on their behalf,  
because on the Five Days,  
then they have the custom  
of planting a cross.  
On those Five Days,  
then the elders go out  
to the center of the town,  
to wherever there is a cross  
where there is the peak of a hill.  
They go to pray,  
on the dawn of the Five Days.  
If the cross is rotten,  
they plant it again
Taking Out the Salt

Yuj chi’,
they plant some crosses.

Porke ha (jun) jun tsanh k’u chi’,
Because on those days
mas te niwan t’ay heb’ winh,
it goes better for them,
mas ay swale,
it is of more value,
porke yik kostumre yajih.
because of the benefit of the ritual.

Slajwi yawan jun tsanh kulus chi
They finish planting some crosses,
heb’ winh,
if they are rotten,
tato sk’aeli,
and if it’s so the next Five Days
e hanheja’ t’a jun xo hoye k’uh,
then they will plant again
hatota’ ol yaweje pax heb’ winh
another replacement for the rotten one.
jun xo sk’exul jun sk’ael chi’.
It’s not usual that they plant things
Manh komonlaj syawej heb’ winh,
all the time.
masanil yempuh.

Komo ha jun hoye k’u chi’,
Since that Five Days
jun jun hab’i’l ts’ek’ih,
every year,
jun jun hab’i’l ts’ek’ih.
every year it comes to pass.
Yuj chi’,
So,
ha jab’ slesal
they pray a little
heb’ winh ichamtak winak chi’,
those elders.
ha jab’ chi’, sb’o heb’ winh.
a little bit they do.

Yuj chi’,
So,
ayuch heb’ winh,
among those men,
t’a yujal yik’ ats’am ats’am chi’,
monthly they take salt,
chatak ch’ub’ syik’ jun jun.
two pots each they take.
Ayam junok kwarenta homre
taking out salt,
heb’ winh,
two pots each
ts’ik’an ats’am,
every month.
chatak ch’ub’ chi’
t’a jun jun uj.

Yuj chi’,
[Closing]
ichachi’ yet’nak yik ats’am
So,
ats’am chi’.
that’s the way it is with the salt.

Yuj chi’,

Yuj chi’,