

TEXT AND COMMENT ON THE MORAL ORDER:
A TESTIMONY FROM THE TZOTZIL OF CHAMULA, CHIAPAS

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*Introduction*¹

At the periphery of the distribution of folk Catholic traditions of Hispanic Latin America lie tens of thousands of local religious traditions that belong neither to the pre-Columbian nor to the Christian moral universes. These highly localized spiritual expressions —called by Robert Redfield “little traditions” to contrast them with the “great traditions” of the universal or national religions— are best understood as unique belief systems. Each community represents an ever-evolving present that derives from particular pre-Columbian roots and particular experiences with Hispanic-Catholic missionization.

A Voice from the Hinterland

This is a native Tzotzil Maya text that testifies to popular faith and belief in a community of this type. San Juan Chamula is one of thousands of contemporary peasant communities in Mesoamerica and South America that still speak Native American languages and retain significant elements of pre-Columbian custom and belief. This community and its religion, cosmology, ritual, and oral traditions are described at length elsewhere (Gossen 1971, 1972, 1974a, 1974b, 1974c, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1989; Pozas Arciniega 1959; and Vogt 1973). Also, for comparative purposes, the reader may be interested in several other major studies that consider religious belief, ritual practice, and related art forms in Tzotzil -speaking communities that are adjacent to San Juan Chamula (see Bricker 1973 and 1981;

¹ The introduction is based on that in Gary H. Gossen, *Telling Maya Tales, Tzotzil Identities in Modern México*, New York: Routledge, 1999, which in turn is drawn from “On the human condition and the moral order: A testimony from the Chamula Tzotzil of Chiapas, Mexico”, in *South and Mesoamerican Native Spirituality: From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation*, edited by Gary H. Gossen and Miguel León-Portilla, pp. 414-35, Vol. 4 of *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*. New York, NY: Crossroads Press, 1993.

Guiteras-Holmes 1961; Holland 1963; Laughlin 1977; Ochiai 1985; Vogt 1969b and 1976).

The text that is considered here reflects at length on the human condition, spirituality, and the moral order, as they are understood by a sensitive and intelligent chamula Tzotzil named Xun Méndez Tzotzek. The narrative begins with an account of the creation of the universe from the primordial void. The Sun/Christ deity proceeds to organize the earth and its life forms in the first of four cyclical epochs, or "earths," that the community recognizes. Although it is not mentioned in the present text, this initial moral universe evolves through three subsequent destructions and restorations (a cyclical sequence that is extremely common to the cosmologies of both Mesoamerica and Andean South America) that yield the present era, the Fourth Creation, according to Tzotzil historical reckoning.

The text, written by Mr. Méndez Tzotzek in 1969, testifies to the eternal present that sacred narratives witness. It belongs to a genre of speech performance known in Tzotzil as "true ancient narrative" (*batz'i antivo k'op*). Stories of this type provide what is regarded as a true account of the formative experience of humankind in the first three epochs of creation, destruction, and restoration that lead to the present era.

While the narrative that follows belongs to a well-recognized and much-practiced art form, it is nevertheless unusual in several ways. First, it is relatively complex in that it has several episodes rather than a single story line. It also assumes a great deal of cultural knowledge that is not stated in the text itself. The text is also unusual in that the rhetorical style goes well beyond standard narrative exposition to provide what might be called native exegesis. That is, we are given a sequence of primordial events together with an interpretation of their significance for people's lives today. The content is thus text and homily; text and exegesis of text. The two modes—narrative and interpretation—are in fact implicitly present in all Tzotzil narrative performance, for stories are never told, to my knowledge, for their amusement value alone. They are always told for a purpose—that is, to explain or interpret something. The present text accomplishes this didactic function with unusual clarity and strength. Most other narrative performances have such a "purpose," but I have seldom heard a more artful blend of narrative discourse and teaching in my many years of living and working in Chamula.

Still another dimension that makes this text unusual is that of the circumstances under which it was recorded and transcribed. I served as the audience. Needless to say, I was far from being a "natural audience," for the information related in the text—as in all narratives, sacred and secular—does not get told in a native setting until particular circumstances make the information relevant to the social context. Otherwise, the information remains latent in the reservoir of collective memory, to be

recalled as the need arises. The “need” that was created by my interest must therefore be understood to be nontypical.

At the time I collected and annotated this text, I was in the early stages of ethnographic fieldwork, a time when I was eager to learn all I could find out, in any medium, about Tzotzil Maya mythology and religion. Mr. Méndez Tzotzek was one of several Chamula men with whom I worked intensively in an effort to obtain a broad sample of narratives about the past. Mr. Méndez Tzotzek, about the age of thirty-five in 1969, was never a religious leader. He was what one might call a sensitive “layperson.” Not possessing the economic resources to finance a career as a civil or religious official in the community’s governing hierarchy, he made a modest living as a day laborer, corn farmer, and part-time shaman. His only remarkable traits were his keen and poetic intelligence and his ability to write Tzotzil. This text represents over two-hundred hours of transcription and subsequent dialogue, as I worked with him translating the Tzotzil to a working draft in Spanish. The supplementary information that appears in the form of numbered endnotes resulted in large part from discussions that occurred during these translation sessions. It should be understood, therefore, that Mr. Méndez Tzotzek’s narrative is not presented as a “recitation of the faith,” for such a canonic expression of Tzotzil belief and practice does not exist as such. Rather, this testimony can most profitably be read as a personal reflection on the sacred moral order of the Chamula Tzotzil universe, as it is understood by one who lives in its midst.

The Tzotzil Maya

Over six million Maya Indians live today in southern Mexico, Yucatan, Guatemala, and Belize. They are the modern-day descendants of the ancient Maya. Of over thirty Maya languages that were spoken at the time of European contact, about twenty survive today. Tzotzil is one of these survivors, and its number of speakers (approximately two hundred thousand in 1980) is increasing. It is the principal language of nine *municipios* (administrative units below the state that are comparable in some ways to counties in the United States) of the State of Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico. Tzotzil is also widely spoken in twelve other *municipios* of Chiapas (see Vogt 1969a; Laughlin 1969).

San Juan is the largest of the Tzotzil-speaking *municipios*. Its population in the home *municipio* and in dozens of immigrant colonies is well over one hundred thousand, most of whom were still, as of 1980, monolingual in Tzotzil. Spanish is spoken as a second language by perhaps 20 percent of the population. Chamulas work as corn farmers, artisans, and day laborers, and most live patrilocally in

scattered rural hamlets consisting of fifty to one hundred people. One such hamlet, Nab ta Peteh, is Mr. Méndez Tzotzek's home.

Chamula public religious life focuses on the municipal administrative center, where there is a church that looks superficially like thousands of other village churches in Latin America. It is unusual in that it contains no pews or chairs, and the dirt floor is typically covered with a carpet of aromatic pine needles. An image of the patron saint, San Juan (John the Baptist), dominates the high altar, and some twenty images of saints occupy lateral positions on both sides of the nave. All of the saints are maintained by religious officials called stewards (Tz. *martoma* from Sp. *mayordomo*) and standard bearers (Tz. *alperes* from Sp. *alférez*), who, with their assistants, perform an elaborate round of annual rituals in their honor, focusing primarily on their days of commemoration as dictated by the church calendar. While public ritual life appears to exhibit a full complement of folk Catholic custom, it should be noted that all of the saints and their human sponsors in fact constitute a highly complex, though loosely articulated, cult in honor of the founding deity, "Our Lord in Heaven" (Tz. *jtotik ta vinajel*). Our Lord in Heaven is at the same time the sun deity and Jesus Christ. The Moon, his mother, is associated with the Virgin Mary, and is known as "Our Mother in Heaven" (Tz. *jme?tik ta vinajel*). The saints are vaguely classified as younger siblings of the Sun/Christ deity; hence, they, too, are children of the Our Mother in Heaven.

The public sector that governs corporate community affairs also includes a civil hierarchy of the type that Spanish officials imposed during the colonial period. This group includes an elected chief magistrate (Tz. *peserente* from Sp. *presidente municipal*), and a ranked set of officials who represent the three *barrios* (submunicipal units) of the community. These positions, like those of the religious stewards and standard bearers, are rotating, tenure usually being for one year. Together, these civil and religious hierarchies constitute a variant of local administrative and church authority that is well known throughout Hispanic Latin America in those areas that had significant Amerindian populations at the time of European contact.

While the religious and civil hierarchies of the administrative center are, by our own premises of historical reckoning, the creation of the Spanish colonial authorities (Wasserstrom 1983), the religious practices and beliefs of the small outlying hamlets, where most people live, derive in part from antecedent pre-Columbian forms. Among these are ancestor cults, agricultural deities, earth lords (associated with rain), and animal-soul companions. These latter beings—animal souls—are associated with the health and destiny of each individual and are thus the principal foci of shamanistic practice (and its counterface, witchcraft) at the local level of the domestic unit (Rachun Linn 1989, and Gossen 1999, chapters 6 and 9).

Chamulas do not conceive of these sectors —public and domestic— as separate; the whole of Chamula life and being is a body of custom that was created and ordained by the Sun /Christ deity. This moral order is sustained by a cosmology and pantheon of deities that exist under his purview. Thus, although it is easy for the Western observer to note that the public religious sector is predominantly Hispanic-Catholic in its visible expressions, while the domestic sector preserves vital remnants of the belief system of the pre-Columbian Maya, this bifurcated view of Chamula Tzotzil religion bears no resemblance to the sacred moral order in which people believe they live. The text that follows speaks eloquently about this native spirituality and comes closer to expressing its coherent logic and power than scholarly analysis alone could possibly achieve.

The reader will be immediately struck by the apparent similarity between the first chapters of the Book of Genesis and Mr. Méndez Tzotzek's account of the origin of the earth, human beings, sexuality, reproduction, good, and evil. On closer examination, however there emerge some striking differences. First, the creator deity, Our Father Sun/Christ, who is the protagonist of this narrative, was born of Our Holy Mother Moon. This episode—including his birth, death, and resurrection as the sun god— precedes the present narrative and is not explicitly discussed here at all. (See Gossen 1999, chapter 2.) Thus, the ultimate creative force in the universe is neither the Sun, nor God, nor Christ, but the female Moon, who is understood to be the same as the Virgin Mary. Second, although Our Father Sun/Christ performs major creative acts, as this account testifies, he is but one of a powerful pantheon of life-giving, life-sustaining, and life-limiting forces. These include Our Holy Mother, the demon Pukuj, the earth lords, and the animal-soul companions. Their joint presence in the Tzotzil Maya spiritual universe is clearly apparent in the following account.

Of How the World Began Long Ago

The verse format of the following translation follows the stylistic conventions of Tzotzil formal style, the foundation of which (as in so many oral traditions of the world) consists of dyadic structure of ideas, sound, and syntax. Details of stylistic patterns of Tzotzil oral tradition, and the details of my translation strategy, are discussed at length in two studies (Gossen 1974b and 1985). Chamula views on the history of language and speech appear in Gossen 1999, chapter 4. Here it suffices to say that the dyadic structures (and multiples thereof) that characterize Tzotzil narrative style are marked linguistically; therefore, my decisions regarding how to render the verse structure of narrative texts in translation are for the most part suggested by the original Tzotzil.

K'UXI LIK TI BANOMIL TI VO?NEE

SHUN MÉNDEZ TZOTZEK

1. jun kuento k'uxi lik ti banomil ti vo?nee.
veno, ?a ti vo?ne lae ch'abal to?ox la jech ?oy banamil chak k'ucha?al ta ?ora.
2. puru to?ox la nab ti vo?nee.
mu?yuk la kirsano.
3. veno, lik la snop ti jtotike.
"pero li?e mu xch'i kalab jnich'nab ma ta ba nabe," xi la ti jtotike.
4. "ja? lek ta jbek' ?ech'el ma nabe," xi la ti jtotike.
"mo?oje mu?yuk k'usi xch'i.
5. kalab,
jnich'nab," xi la ti jtotike.
6. lik la sbek' batel ti nabe.
k'alal la ti la sbek' batel ti nab ta jujot xokon banomile.
7. puru xa la banomil kom ta ?ora.
pero puru la stenlej.
8. mu?yuk la vitzetik.
mu?yuk la kirsano.
mu?yuk la ton.
mu?yuk ta te?etik.
puru la batz'i banomil.

OF HOW THE WORLD BEGAN LONG AGO

FIRST CREATION

1. Here is a story of how the world began long ago.
How, in olden times the world was not at all like it is today.
2. Long ago, there were only seas.
There were no people.
3. Well, Our Father started to think about it:
“My children, my offspring, could never thrive here on top of the sea,”
reflected Our Father.
4. “It would be better for me to sweep away the sea,” said Our Father.
“If I don't, nothing will thrive,
5. Neither my children,
Nor my offspring,” declared Our Father.
6. He proceeded to sweep away the sea.
When he had swept away the sea, there remained empty land on all sides
of the earth.
7. There remained nothing but land,
But it was very flat.
8. There were no mountains,
No people,
No rocks,
No trees.
Only the earth itself, nothing more.

9. “pero bu ta jtabe tal stz'unobal ti kalab, jnich'nabe,” si la ti jtotike.

“pero k'usi ma xkut” xi la ti jtotike.

10. lik la sjoc' ?ach'el.

k'alal la ti la sjoc' ti ?ach'ele, lik la spat ti ?ach'ele.

11. lik la spasbe shol.

lik la yak'be sat.

12. lik la yak'be sk'ob.

lik la yak'be yok.

13. veno, k'alal la ti la slok'ta,

chak munyeka ti ?ach'ele.

14. lik la smeltzan ta banomil.

k'alal la ti la smeltzan ta banomil, ti munyeka ?ach'ele sk'el la yil mi ta xbak'.

15. ja? to la yil mu la xbak'.

staoj ?o la yav ta metzel ti munyeka ?ach'ele.

16. lik la sva?an, ta la sk'el yil mi ta xanav.

ja? to la yil staoj ?o la yav te va?al. mu la xanav.

17. “pero k'usi xkut tajmek?” xi la ti jtotike.

veno, lik la snop.

18. “ja? lek ta jpetkik,” xi la ti jtotike.

veno lik la spet ti munyeka ?ach'ele.

19. k'alal la ti te spetoj ti munyeka ?ach'ele, lik la sjuch' ta?ox.

juch' ta?el.

20. k'alal la ti la sjuch' ta?ox, juch' ta?ele.

lik la k'opojuk.

21. lik la pasuk ta bek'et ti ?ach'el to?oxe.

lik la ?ayanuk xch'ich'el.

lik la ?ayanuk sbakik.

22. k'alal la ti yil ta xk'opoje,

lik la cha?va?an ta la sk'el yil mi ta xanav.

23. yil mu la xanav.

staoj ?o la yav te va?al ?o.

24. lik la xcha?meltzan.

ta la sk'el yil mi ta la xlik.

25. ja? to la yil mu la xlik.

staoj ?o la yav te metzel ?o ta lumtik.

9. "But where shall I find the seed for my children, my offspring?" wondered Our Father.
 "Whatever shall I do?" said Our Father.
10. He began to dig up some clay.
 When he had dug up the clay, he started to mold the clay.
11. He started to make the head,
 He started to give it a face.
12. He started to give it hands,
 He started to put on its feet.
13. Well, when he had fashioned it,
 This clay was in the form of a doll.
14. Our Father started to make the earth ready.
 As he was preparing the land, he watched the doll to see if it moved.
15. When he saw that it did not move,
 He went there to the place where the clay doll was lying.
16. He stood it upright and watched to see if it could walk.
 Finally he saw that it remained standing there where he found it.
 It was not walking at all.
17. "But whatever am I going to do about this?" asked Our Father.
 Well, he started to think about it.
18. "I had better take it in my arms," said Our Father.
 Then, he proceeded to lift the clay doll into his arms.
19. When he had taken the clay doll into his arms, he started to rub it.
 He kept on kneading it.
20. Once he had kneaded it, he did it again and again.
 Then it started to speak.
21. That which had been clay turned into flesh.
 Its blood started to form.
 Its bones started to form.
22. When he saw that it could speak,
 He proceeded to stand it up again to see if it could walk.
23. Then he saw that it did not walk.
 He found it standing there in the same place.
24. He began to remake it.
 He watched to see if it got up.
25. Then he saw that it did not get up.
 He found it in the same place, lying there on the ground.

26. "pero k'usi van chkut tajmek xlik xanavuk, xlik bak'uk?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "ja? lek ta jbojkik ta ?ek'el" xi la ti jtotike.
27. lik la sbojta ta ?ek'el.
 lik la sbasolan ta ?ek'el.
 sjunul sbek'tal ti ?ach'el to?ox pas ta viniketike.
28. k'alal la ti la sbasolanbe ta ?ek'el sjunul sbek'tal ti vinike
 ja? to la lik bak'uk.
 ja? to la lik xanavuk.
 ja? to la lik ?ayanuk stzakalul, sbakil.
29. k'alal la ti ?ayan stzakalul ti sbakile,
 k'alal la ti pas ta vinike.
 k'alal la pas ta kirsano ti ?ach'el to?oxe.
30. veno, lik la snop ti jtotike.
 "pero k'usi van xkak'be xve?" xi la ti jtotike.
31. ta la xvi?nah ti vinike.
 ta la xve? ya?i.
32. "pero k'usi van ta skak'be?
 yipan tajmek" xi la ti jtotike.
33. nop la tajmek.
 lik la yak'be lum.
 spak'be la ta sti?il ye ti vinike.
34. ja? to la yil mu la sk'an slek' ?ochel ta yok' ti lume.
 te la pak'al ?o ta sti?il ye ti vinike.
35. "pero k'usi ta xkak'be?
 yipan" xi la ti jtotike.
36. st'olbe la lok'el ti lum ta sti?il ye ti vinike.
 lik la stul vomol.
37. spak'be la ta sti?il ye ti vinike.
 mu la sk'an slek' ?ochel ta yok'.
38. "pero k'usi van ta xkak'be xve? tajmek?" si la ti jtotike.
 te la va?al ta snop.
39. "pero k'usi ta xkak'be tajmek xve?" xi la ti jtotike.
 lik la snop.
40. lik la st'ol lok'el juteb sbek'tal.
 spak'be la ta sti?il ye ti vinike.
41. k'alal la ti la spak'be sbek'tal ta sti?il ye ti vinike,
 jlikel la ?i slek' ?ochel ta yok sbek'tal ti jtotike.

26. "But how can I get them to start walking, to start moving?," asked Our Father.
"I had better shape it with an axe," said our Father.
27. He began to shape it with an axe.
He began to hew its fine details with an axe.
And its whole body, which had still been of clay, turned into a man.
28. Then, when he had sculpted its fine details with an axe,
It then began to move,
It then started to walk,
Its whole skeleton started to take shape.
29. When all the bones came together.
Then it turned into a human being.
It was then that which had been clay turned into a man.
30. Well, Our Father began to consider things.
"Whatever shall I give him to eat?," asked Our Father.
31. He was hungry.
He wanted to eat.
32. "But whatever shall I give him?
He's getting very sick," said Our Father.
33. He thought very hard.
He began by offering him dirt to eat.
He patted it on at the side of the man's mouth.
34. Then he saw that he didn't want to lick the dirt with his tongue.
There it remained, stuck by the side of the man's mouth.
35. "But what shall I give him?
He is getting sick," said Our Father.
36. He peeled off the dirt from the side of the man's mouth.
Then he began to gather grass.
37. He pressed it firmly onto the edges of the man's mouth.
But the man did not want to take it up with his tongue.
38. "But what on earth shall I give him to eat?" wondered Our Father.
He stood there, pondering this problem..
39. "But whatever can I give him to eat?," asked Our Father.
He entered into deep thought.
40. He then started to peel off a little bit of his own body.
He pressed it beside the man's mouth.
41. When Our Father put his own body next to the man's mouth,
The man quickly took Our Father's body with his tongue.

42. k'alal la yil ti jtotik jlikel slek' ochel yok' sbek'tal ti jtotike:
 "ʔa... pero mi jaʔ chak'an chaweʔ li jbek'tale.
 pero jaʔ to xaveʔ ti mi tzotz la ʔabteje.
43. mi xanaʔ spasbel yav ti jbek'tale?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "mi xanaʔ xachaʔbahe.
 mi xanaʔ xapas ʔasoke.
44. jaʔ to xaveʔik xchiʔuk ʔavajnil xchiʔuk ʔanich'nab,"
 "xuʔuk ta xiabtej" xi la ti vinike.
45. "veno, ta jk'eltikik mi xanaʔ xʔabtej,
 mi xanaʔ xavich' ta kux ti jbek'tale" xi la ti jtotike.
46. "tana, ta xkich' ta kux" xi la ti vinike.
 "veno, ta xabat ta ʔabtel.
47. ta xkak'bot hun ʔavasaronana.
 ta xbat kak'tik ʔavil k'uxi chapasbe yav ti jbek'tale," xi la ti jtotike.
48. "k'uxi ta xachaʔbah.
 k'uxi ta xatz'un ti jbek'tale," xi la ti jtotike.
49. "ʔilo ʔavasaronana.
 chijbat kak'tik ʔavil k'uxi chapas k'alal chachaʔbahe," xi la ti jtotike.
50. veno bat la yak'be yil ʔabtel ti vinik.
 k'usi ta pasel yav ti sbek'tal ti jtotike.
51. k'alal la k'otik ti bu ta xich' pasbel yav ti sbek'tale,
 k'ot la yak' ʔiluk k'uxi ta pasel ti yav chobtikte.
52. "xi xapase.
 xi xavute.
 xi xaloke" xi la ti jtotike.
 yak'be la yil chob ti vinike
53. k'alal la xchan ti chobe:
 "ʔa... jech k'a xal ta chan ti ʔabtele," xi la ti jtotike.
54. k'alal la xchan ti ʔabtele k'uxi ta pasel ti yav chobtikte,
 lik la yak'be yil k'uxi ta tz'unel t chobtik ti vinike.
55. "xi xav te.
 xi xatz'une," xi la ti jtotike.
56. k'alal la xchan ti tz'un chobtikte,
 lik la ʔak'batuk stz'unob ʔixim.
57. "k'alal chatz'une,
 jaʔ chatz'un ʔo liʔe," xi la ti jtotike.

42. When Our Father saw that he quickly took his body with his tongue, he said:
 "Ah! Can it be that it is my body that you crave as food?
 But be assured that you will not eat more of it if you do not work hard.
43. Do you know how to prepare a place for my body?" asked Our Father¹
 "Do you know how to break the ground?
 Do you know how to cut weeds?
44. You will not eat until you learn this, you and your wife and children."
 "Very well, I am willing to work," said the man.
45. "Well, let's see if you know how to work,
 If you know how to honor my body," said Our Father.
46. "Very well. I will honor it," said the man.
 "Good. You are going to work.
47. I will give you a hoe.
 Let's go out so I can show you how you are to prepare the place for my
 body," said Our Father.
48. "I will show you how to break the ground,
 How to plant my body," said Our Father.
49. "Take a good look at your hoe.
 I will show you how to use it when you break the ground," said Our Father.
50. With this, he proceeded to show the man how to work,
 How to prepare the place for Our Father's body.
51. When they came to the place where they would prepare the place for his body,
 Our Father came to show him how to make the maizefield.
52. "This is how you do it.
 This is how you proceed.
 This is how you clear the field," said Our Father.
 He showed the man all about the maizefield.
53. And so, when the man had learned about the maizefield, Our Father spoke:
 "Ah, he really has learned to work," said Our Father approvingly.
54. And when he saw that the man had seen how to prepare the place for the
 maizefield,
 He started to show the man about sowing.
55. "This is how you do it,
 This is how you plant it," said Our Father.
56. And so, when he had learned about the sowing of the maizefield,
 The seed maize was given to him.
57. "When you sow it,
 You are to sow it like this," said Our Father.

58. lik la ?ak'batuk hun yavente? sventa la ta stz'un ?o ti chobtique.
 "k'alal chatz'un ti chobtique, ja? chahom ?o li banomil li?e," xi la ti jtotike.
59. "veno" xi la ti vinike.
 veno, lik la stz'un chobtik ti vinike.
60. k'alal la ti ta xk'ot ta tz'un chobtik ti vinike:
 "mi lek ?avo?nton?
 mi kontentot?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "lek kontentoun," xi la ti vinike.
61. "mi chak'an ?achi?il?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "mo?oj," xi la ti vinike.
62. "veno, pero k'usi xkut ta sa?be xchi?il" xi la ti jtotike.
 "pero mi mo?oje, mu?yuk k'usi sbol ma kalab, jnich'nabe," xi la ti jtotike.
63. "ja? lek ta jsa?be xchi?il.
 pero mi mo?oje mu?yuk k'usi xve?,
 mu?yuk buch'u spasbat vah xve?," xi la ti jtotike.
64. "ja? lek ta jsa?tik ?achi?il.
 mo?oje chavat ?avo?nton" xi la ti jtotike.
65. "pero bu ta jtatik xana? ?un?" xi la ti vinike.
 "mo?oj jna?oj xa bu xtal ma ta ?achi?ile," xi la ti jtotike.
66. "pero bu xtal xana? ?un?" xi la ti vinike.
 "la?" xi la ti jtotike.
67. "xu?uk" xi la ti vinike.
 "?ixtal ?ach?ilte?" xi la ti jtotike.
68. lik la lok'esbatuk jun xch'ilte? ti vinike.
 k'alal la ti lok'esbat ti xch'ilte? ti vinike,
 lik la sjuch'.
 ta ?ox juch' tael ti jtotike.
69. k'alal la ti la sjuch' ta ?ox,
 juch' taele.
70. toj pasel la ta ?antz ti xch'ilte? to?ox la vinike.
 "veno li? ne ja? me ?achi?il ?un."

58. And so he was given a planting stick for sowing the maizefield.
When you sow the maizefield,
You are to open a hole in the ground," said Our Father.
59. "All right," said the man.
And so it was that the man started to sow his maizefield.
60. And when Our Father came to where the man was sowing his maizefield, he asked:
"Is your heart pleased?
Are you happy?"
"I am quite happy," said the man.
61. "Do you want a mate?" asked Our Father.
"Not really," said the man.
62. "Well, now, how am I going to get him to look for a wife?" wondered Our Father.
"If he doesn't, there will be no way for them to multiply, my children, my offspring," said Our Father.
63. "It would be better for me to find a mate for him.
If I don't do this, he will have nothing to eat.
No one to make him his tortillas," said Our Father.
64. "We had better look for a spouse for you.
If we don't, you are going to be sad," said Our Father.
65. "But where shall we find her? Do you know?" asked the man.
"Perhaps I know where your spouse will come from," said Our Father.
66. "But where will she come from? Do you have any ideas?" asked the man.
"Come," said Our Father.
67. "All right," said the man.
"She is to come from your rib," said Our Father.
68. With this, he began to take a rib out of the man.
When he had taken the rib out of the man,
He started to stroke it.
Our Father kept on stroking it.
69. Then he stroked and stroked it.
Our Father kept on stroking it.
70. And, surely, that which had been the man's rib turned into a woman.
"Good, here is your mate," said Our Father.

71. "li? ne ja? me ta spas vaj ?ave? ?un.
 li? ne ja? me ta xkom ta ?ana ?un.
 li? ne ja? me ta spas ?ak'u? ?un.
 li? ne ja? me ta spas ?ave?el ?un.
 li? ne ja? me ?achi?il ta vayel ?un.
 li? ?une ja? me ?achi?il ta ve?el ?un.
 li? ne," xi la ti jtotike.
 "veno," xi la ti vinik.
72. "?o?ot ?une chabat ta ?abtel.
 chabat ta pasbe yav chobtik.
 ta xabat ta sa? tael si? sventa k'alal ta slakan ?o panin,
 sventa k'alal ta lakan o ve?lil ti ?antze," xi la ti jtotike.
73. "veno, ?o?ote chabat ta ?abtel."
 x?utat la ti vinike.
74. "?o?ote, chabat ta lup tael ?o?."
 x?utat la ti ?antze.
 xi la ti jtotike.
75. "xu?uk chibat" xi la ti ?antzee.
 ?ilo ?ak'ib chabat ta lup ?o tael ti ?o?e," xi la ti jtotike.
76. "jech mi ?o bu la sk'opon jun pukuje,
 mu me xatzakbe mi ?oy k'usi,
 sayak'be ?alo? ti pukuje.
77. mi mo?oje ta stub ?alusalik.
 mi mo?oje mu xa xil x?abteh li vinike," xi la ti jtotike.
78. "veno, mu me xach'unik k'usi xayalbik ti pukuje," xi la ti jtotike.
 "veno xu?uk," xi la xchi?uk vinik ti ?antze.
79. mu la na?ik k'usi spasik xchi?uk ti ?antze.
 "mi ?oy k'usi chapasik" xi la ti jtotike.
 "mu?yuk k'usi ta jpaskutik," xi la xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike.
80. veno te la ?oyik ta x?abtejik.
 mu?yuk la mu la sna?ik k'usi ta spasik xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike.
81. "k'usi van chkut sbolik," xi la ti jtotike.
 k'alal la ti te xchi?inoh sbaik ta svayik xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike mu la sna?ik
 k'usi ta spasik.
82. k'ot la ti pukuje.
 k'ot la k'oponatikuk ta pukuj xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike.

71. "Here you have the one who will make tortillas for you to eat.
Here you have the one who will dwell in your house.
Here you have the one who will make your clothes.
Here you have the one who will make your food.
Here you have the one who will sleep with you.
Here you have the one who will share your food with you.
Here you have her," said Our Father.
"Very well," said the man.
72. "As for you, you will go to work," said Our Father.
"You are going to prepare the maizefield for sowing.
You are going to bring wood for boiling the maize,
so that your woman can cook the food," said Our Father.
73. "You, then, you are to go to work."
So it was said to the man.
74. "You, then, you are going to carry water."
So it was said to the woman.
So Our Father said.
75. "Very well, I am willing," said the woman.
"Take care of your jug when you go to carry water," said Our Father.
76. "Also, by the way, if the demon Pukuj should talk to you when you are out,
Don't take that which he has,
That which the demon offers you to eat.
77. Otherwise, your radiance will be put out.²
Otherwise, your husband will no longer be able to see to do his work," said
Our Father.
78. "So, then, ignore what the demon Pukuj tells you," said Our Father.
"Very well, then," replied the man and the woman.
79. The man and the woman did not know anything about sex.
"Do you know how to do anything?" asked Our Father.
"No, we have no knowledge," said the man and the woman together.³
80. Well, there they were working and trying to accomplish something.
But the man had no knowledge of the woman.
81. "Well, now. How am I going to get them to multiply?" wondered Our Father.
For when the man and the woman were sleeping together, they did not
know what to do.
82. Then the demon appeared.
The demon Pukuj came up to talk to the man and the woman.

83. lik la sjak' ti pukuje:
 "ʔa leʔe, mi muʔyuk k'usi chapasik xchiʔuk li ʔantze,"
 xʔutat ti vinike.
84. "muʔyuk k'usi ta jpaskutik" xi la xchiʔuk ʔantz ti vinike.
 "ʔa.... pero moʔoj ʔunbi.
 mi moʔoj mu xabolik," xi la ti pukuje.
85. "pero k'usi ta jpaskutik ʔun," xi la ti vinik xchiʔuk ti ʔantze.
 "moʔoj mi xak'ane ta xkak' ʔavil k'usi ta pasel" xi la ti pukuje.
86. "veno, ʔak'bun kil k'usi ta pasel chaʔe" xi la ti vinike.
 "veno ta xkak' ʔavil," xi la ti pukuje.
87. "puch'lan ta ʔora.
 ta jpastik ʔavil k'uxi ta pasel" xi la ti pukuje.
88. puch'il la ti ʔantze.
 k'alal la ti puch'i ti ʔantze, jlikel la muy ta ʔora ta sba ʔantz ti pukuje.
89. k'alal la ti te kajal ti pukuj ta sba ti ʔantze,
 te la vaʔal sk'eloy ti vinik k'usi ta spas ti pukuje.
90. k'alal la ti laj yak' ʔat ti pukuje:
 "mi la ʔavil k'usi la jpase" xi la ti pukuje.
 "laj" xi la ti vinike.
91. "ʔora pasoʔ ʔek ʔun.
 jec xapas k'usi la jpas ʔavile" xi la ti pukuje.
92. veno, lik la spas ti vinike.
 jech la lik spas ti k'usi la spas jech ti pukuje.
93. k'alal la ti laj spas jech ti vinik k'usi la spas ti pukuje,
 lik la sjak' ti pukuje.
94. "k'uxi. Mi lek ʔavaʔi ta pasel?" xi la ti pukuje.
 "ʔu... toj lek ta pasel tajmek!" xi la ti vinike.
95. "veno jech chapasik ʔo ʔun jaʔ to te xabolik.
 mi la chan lek spasel ti ʔantze?" xi la ti pukuje.
 "veno," xi la ti vinike.
96. veno, k'alal la ti la jyak' ʔiluk komel ti pukuje sut la batel.
 k'alal la ti stukik xa la komik xchiʔuk ʔantz ti vinike, k'ot la ti jtotike.
97. "k'usi la pasik,
 ta xanak' ʔabaik?" xi la ti jtotike.
98. ta la snak' sbaik xchiʔuk ʔantz ti vinike.
 ta la xk'exavik tajmek yuʔun ti jtotike.

83. The demon Pukuj began by asking:
 "You, there, don't you and the woman know how to do anything together?"
 So it was said to the man.
84. "We don't seem to be accomplishing anything," said the man and the woman.
 "Oh, but that will never do.
 If you don't do anything, you will not multiply," said the demon.
85. "But what should we do?" asked the man and the woman.
 "If you want, I will show you what you should do," said the demon.
86. "Fine. Show us what to do, then," said the man.
 "Good, I am going to show you," said the demon.
87. "Lie down, now.
 Let's have you see what to do," said the demon.
88. The woman was lying down.
 Then, when the woman was lying down, the demon lost no time in climbing
 on top of the woman.
89. When the demon Pukuj topped the woman,
 The man stood there and watched what the demon did.
90. Then, when the demon had finished poking in his cock:
 The demon Pukuj asked, "Did you see what I did?"
 "I did," said the man.
91. "Now you do it also.
 Do it just like I showed you," said the demon.
92. So, the man started to do it.
 He proceeded to do what the demon had done.
93. When the man finished doing what the demon had done,
 The demon started to ask him questions.
94. "How was it? Did it feel good when you did it?" said the demon.
 "Oh! It felt great to do it!" replied the man.
95. "Well, you have to keep on doing it like that until you have children.
 Did you learn well what to do with the woman?" asked the demon.
 "Yes," said the man.
96. Well, when the demon Pukuj had finished giving the lesson, he went away.
 And when the man and the woman were alone, Our Father arrived.
97. "What were you doing?
 Why are you hiding?" demanded Our Father.
98. The man and the woman were indeed hiding.
 They were very ashamed in front of Our Father.

99. "k'ucha?al chak'esavik?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "ch'abal yu?un ?ay jun vinik.
 li? ?ay yalbunkutik mantal sob naxe" xi la ti vinik xchi?uk ti ?antz.
100. "k'usi ?ayalboxuk ti vinike?" xi la ti jtotike.
 "?ayalbunkutik 'mi ?oy k'usi chapasik' xiyutkutik vulele," xi la
 xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike.
101. "mu?yuk k'usi jna? jpaskutik' xkutkutik ti vinike."
 xi la yalbik ti jtotik ti vinik xchi?uk ti ?antz.
102. "?a... pero ma?uk vinik.
 taje pukuj ma taj ?ay ?utilanoxuke," xi la ti jtotike.
103. "li yalbekutik 'mi mu?yuk k'usi xana xapasike mu xabolik' xiyutkutike.
 'mo?oj ja? lek ta xkak' ?avil k'uxi ta pasel' xiyute," xi la ti vinike.
 "lik yak'bun kil k'uxi ta pasel.
104. 'jech xapas k'ucha?al ta jpase' xiyut ti pukuje" xi la yalbe jtotik ti vinike.
 "ja? yu?un jech laj jpaskutik jech ti k'usi la jyak'bun kil ti pukuje,"
 xi la ti vinik.
 yalbik ya?i xchi?uk ?antz ti jtotike.
105. "veno, mi jech la chanike,
 stak' jech xapasik, ja? to te xabolik" xi la ti jtotike.
106. "pero ja? no?ox ?un ta xakalbe ?ava?i mu me sa? yan ?antz.
 ja? no?ox sapes ?amulik xchi?uk li ?antz la jkak'bot ta ba?yele," xi la ti
 jtotike.
107. "pero mu xak'opon yan ?antz.
 ti mi yu?un la k'opon yan ?antz k'alal' ?oy yajval, te xavil k'usi xava?i.
108. mi xava?i majel,
 ?o mi xava?i bojel ta machita,
 ?o mi xava?i jomel ta kuchilu,
 ?o mi xava?i jomel ta punyal,
 ?o mi xava?i tuk'ael ta tuk',
 ?o mi xava?i tuk'ael ta pistola,
 ?o mi xava?i tenel ta ton.
109. xavil pukuj la jyak' ?avil.
 ja? chask'an chaxchi?in ya?i ti pukuje."
 xi la ?albat ti ba?yel vinik yu?un jtotik ti vo?nee.

99. "Why are you ashamed?" asked Our Father.
 "It's nothing, only that a stranger came here.
 He came here earlier to leave us a message," said the man and the woman.
100. "What did the man tell you?" asked Our Father.
 "Are you doing anything' he asked us when he came," said the man and the woman.
101. "No, there is nothing that we know how to do'," we said to the man."
 So the man and the woman said to Our Father.
102. "Oh, but that wasn't a man.
 It was that demon Pukuj who came to torment you," said Our Father.
103. "He said to us: 'If there is nothing you know how to do, you will not multiply,' he said to us," said the man.
 "'I'd best show you what to do' he told us," said the man.
 "So, he started to show us what to do.
104. 'Now, you are to do what I do,' the demon said to me," the man said to Our Father.
 "That is why we did just what the demon showed us," said the man.
 He told this to Our Father in the company of the woman.
105. "Well, if you learned it that way,
 You can go on doing it until you have offspring," said Our Father.
106. "But I tell you, it is only proper to continue if you do not seek another woman.
 You may only commit sin with the woman I first gave you," said Our Father.
107. "But don't have an affair with another woman.
 If you have an affair with a married woman who already has a husband, then you will pay dearly for it.
108. You might be beaten up.
 You might be cut up with a machete.
 You might be stabbed with a knife.
 You might be stabbed with a dagger.
 You might be shot with a rifle.
 You might be shot with a pistol.
 You might be stoned.
109. You see, it was the demon Pukuj who taught you.
 So it is that the demon wants you to walk with him forever."
 So it was said to the first man by Our Father long ago.

110. ja? yu?un ti jech komem ?asta ?ora ti mu stak' lek jk'opontik li ?antz k'alal mi ?oy yajval.
jtatik li ?antz, ja? yu?un ta jmilan ?o jbatik.
111. xavil la ti vo?nee ja? la ti pukuj la jyak' ?iluk ba?yel k'uxi ta pasel li jmultike.
ja? yu?un ti ta jmilan ?o jbatik k'alal mi la jk'opontik mi ?oy yajval li ?antz.
112. "veno jechot le? ?eke ?antz.
lek ?ava?i la spasbot ti pukuje.
113. te savil k'usi xava?i," xi la yal ti jtotike.
"ja? no?ox mi xava?i xacham ?alajel ?o mi sa? yan ?amalal.
114. te xavil mi xalaj ta majel.
?o mi mo?oj te xavil mi xasmil ?amalale k'alal mi la pas ?amul ta yan vinike.
115. ?o mi mo?oj te xavil k'usi xava?i, k'alal xalah ta milel.
mi xavil bojel ta machita.
?o mi mo?oje te xavil mi chukbil la nuk' xalah ta ch'ohon.
?o mi mo?oje te xavil mi tuk'ael ta tuk'.
?o mi mo?oje mi tuk'ael ta pistola.
?o mi mo?oje jomel ta kuchilu.
?o mi mo?oje jomel ta punyal.
?o mi mo?oje jomel ta na?uxa.
ja? ti k'usi xava?i xacham ?oe.
?o mi mo?oj mi balch'ujel xava?i.
ja? ti k'usi xacham ?oe.
116. ?o mi lekil chamel xacham ?o.
ti mi yu?un lekil chamel la cham ?oe.
117. yu?un lek ?avich'ojbe smelol yu?un.
mu xana? xapas ?amul.
118. ti mi yu?un milel la cham ?oe,
yu?un toyol xapas ?amul."
119. x?utat la yu?un jtotik ti ba?yel ?antz ti vo?ne.
k'alal lik ?o ti ba?yel kirsano,
ti k'alal lik ?o ti banomil ti mas vo?nee.
120. ja? yu?un ti jech la komem ?asta ?ora.
k'alal mi la sa? yan smalal ti ?antz, ta xalaj ta milel yu?un smalal.

110. That is why it remains even now that we should not fall in love with women who have husbands.
Whenever we seek women out, there are bound to be killings.
111. You see that long ago it was the demon Pukuj who taught us how to get in trouble.
That is why we kill each other when we have affairs with married women.
112. "Well, the same goes for you, woman.
That which the demon did to you felt good.
113. You will see what you have gotten yourself in for," said Our Father.
"You must understand that you will die an awful death if you seek out a casual lover.
114. You will see how hard your husband hits you.
Or, even worse, you will find out that your husband will kill you if you do wrong with another man.
115. If you do not heed this warning, you should consider the ways you might meet your death.
You might be cut up with a machete,
Or, if not that, you might be choked to death by a rope tied around your neck;
If not that, you might be shot with a shotgun.
If not that, you might be shot with a pistol.
If not that, you might be stabbed with a knife.
If not that, you might be stabbed with a dagger.
If not that, you might be cut up with a razor.
That is how you will meet your death.
Or, if not that, you might even get thrown to the floor.
That is how you will die.
116. Otherwise you will die a natural death.
Your end will come from an ordinary sickness.
117. Such will be your reward if you have heeded this warning,
Knowing this, you will not be inclined to commit adultery.
118. Otherwise, your end will be sudden and violent;
If so, it will be because you do too much evil."
119. So it was said by Our Father to the fault of your own sin.
At the time when the first people emerged,
At the time when the earth began in the most ancient times.
120. And that is why it has stayed that way into the present time:
That if a woman seeks another husband, her husband will kill her.

121. jech xtok mi toyol sa? skumpare ti ?antze,
ta xlah ta milel yu?un skumpare.
122. xavil la li ?antze pukuj la xchi?inoj k'ajomal.
la xchi?inoj jtotik ?o?lol k'ak'al.
123. mi tz'e?bubuj jtotike pukuj xa la xlik xchi?inik li ?antzetike.
xavil la ti vo?nee ja? la ti pukuj ba?yel la jyak' ?iluk k'uxi ta pasel
ti jmultike.
124. ja? yu?un ti ta jmajan ?o la jbatik ti ta jmilan ?o jbatik.
k'alal mi ka?itik ta xich' k'oponel ta yan vinik mi kantztik.
125. ?o mi kajnilitik ta sk'opon sbaik xchi?uk yan vinik.
?o mi mo?oj mi ja? la sa? yan smalal, ta xlah ta milel li ?antze.
126. xavil la ja? la ti pukuj ta sok joltike.
ja? yu?un ti jech komem ?o ?asta ?ora mu stak' jk'opontik yan ?antz,
?i mu xtak' jchi?intik yan ?antz.
127. ja? yu?un mi yilik ta jk'opontik,
?o mi yilik jchi?inotik yan ?antze,
ta x?ich'vanik
ta ?it'ixal li kirsanoe.
128. jech' ?a?al mu stak' lek k'oponel li ?antzetike.
mu stak' lek chi?inel.
129. xavil ja? yu?un ti pukuj xchi?inojike.
jech' ?a?al mu stak' chi?inel li yan ?antzetike.
mu stak' k'oponel.
130. lek xavil ja? la ti pukuj ba?yel kobvan ti vo?nee.
ja? yu?un la mu stak' pas jmultik buch'uk no?ox ?antzilal jtatik.
?i xchi?uk mu stak' jpas jmultik ta satilal.
131. xavil la ti vo?nee k'alal la ti la jyak' ?iluk' ti pukuje,
lik la k'exavikuk ti vinike ti ?antze.
132. k'alal la ti laj spas ti smulik xchi?uk ti pukuje
k'alal la ti la xchan jech ti vinike.
133. lik la k'exavikuk k'alal la ti k'ot ti jtotik ta stz'elik ti vinike ti ?antze.
mu xa la stak' ?a?yel cha?ik ti ?antze ti vinike.

121. So, also, if a woman looks too eagerly for *compadres*,
Her *compadres* may be the cause of her death.⁴
122. You see, it was the demon Pukuj himself, he alone, who accompanied
the woman for a while.
For the other half of the day Our Father accompanied her.
123. When Our Father passes his zenith, the demons begin to accompany
women.
You see, long ago it was the demon who first showed them how to
do sinful things.⁵
124. That is why we fight with one another and kill one another.
When we find out that our women receive compliments from other men.
125. Or, if our wives talk with other men,
Or if they seek lovers, these women will be murdered.
126. You see, it is because of the demon Pukuj that we lose our tempers;
That is why it remains to this day that we should not speak to other
women,
That we should not go around with other women.
127. That is why, if they see us speak to other women,
Or if they see us going around with other women,
It bothers them,
It makes them jealous.
128. That is why women ought not to receive compliments.
They ought not to accept romantic company.
129. You see, it is because of the demon who goes with them;
That is why one ought not to give them compliments.
130. You see clearly that it was the demon who first made love to a woman long ago.
That is why we ought not to commit sin with just any woman we meet,
Why we ought not to commit sin in public.
131. You see, long ago when the demon showed them about it,
The man and woman started to be ashamed.
132. When they committed sin in the company of the demon,
That was when the man learned how to do it.
133. The man and woman started to feel ashamed when Our Father approached
them.
The man and the woman felt they ought not to come out.

134. ta la sk'exavik xchi?uk ti ?antze.
k'alal ta sk'exavike, mu la stak' ?a?yeluk cha?ik.
mo?oj la ?un, ya?ik la ti bu ta sk'exavune.
135. "pero k'usi xkutik xana?
ta jmak jbatik ?un," xut la sbaik xchi?uk ?antz ti vinike.
136. "pero ?ak'o xa jmak batik ta jkobtik,
pero mu stak' jech ?o xixxanavotik," xi la ti vinik.
yalbe la sbaik xchi?uk ti ?antze.
137. "ja? lek la jsa?tik yanal te? jmak ?o jbatik," xut la sbaik xchi?uk ti ?antze.
lik la smak ?o sbaik ta yanal te?.
138. ja? la lik smakik yanal te? ti xchakike.
k'alal la ti la smak ta yanal te? ti xchakike,
ja? to la lok' xanavikuk ti vinik xchi?uk ti ?antze.
139. "pero ma? le? ne mu stak' jech ?o xanavik ma li kalab jnich'nabtik ?une.
?a li t'anajtik ?une," xi la ti jch'ulme?tike.
140. "pero mo?oj, yabtel ?oy xa talem li jk'exole," xi la ti jch'ulme?tike.
"ja? lek ta xkak'be yil k'usi xlik xchan spasel li sk'u?ike," xi la ti
jch'ulme?tike.
141. k'alal la ti lik yak' ?iluk ti jch'ulme?tike.
lik la sa? talel tuxnuk'.
142. "ja? lek ?ilo ?avabtel.
ja? xa?abteh ?o ?achi?uk li tuxnuk'.
ja? to te xak'u?ilajik xchi?uk la ?amalale," xi la ti jch'ulme?tike.
143. "k'alal xlik ?apas ta ?avabtele ba?yel xlik ?asiun.
chat'ujbe lok'el sbek' li tuxnuk'e.
144. k'alal mi laj ?asiune,
ja? to xlik ?ajax.
145. k'alal mi laj ?ajaxe,
ja? to xlik ?anaun.
146. k'alal mi laj ?anaune,
ja? to xlik ?apis.
146. k'alal mi laj ?anaune,
ja? to xlik ?apis.
147. k'alal mi laj ?apise,
ja? to xlik ?ani ta komen.
148. k'alal mi laj ?ani ta komene,
ja? to xlik ?avak'be ?ul.

134. They were both ashamed.
They were so ashamed that they felt they ought not go out from the shadows.
Had they done so, they would have felt even greater shame.
135. "But what shall we do?
We'll cover ourselves," said the man and the woman to each other.
136. "But even though we cover ourselves while having sex,
We still can't walk around like this," said the man.
So the man and the woman said to each other.
137. "We'd better look for leaves to cover ourselves with," he said to his wife.
So, they started to cover themselves with leaves.
138. So it was that they started to cover their nakedness with leaves.
When they had covered their nakedness with leaves,
It was then that the man and the woman went out to take a walk.
139. "But my children, my offspring, can't go about like that.
They're naked!" exclaimed Our Holy Mother.
140. "This just won't do. Now the weight of work has come to my successor,"
said Our Holy Mother. ⁶
"I had better teach her so she can start to learn to make
clothing," said Our Holy Mother.
141. With that, Our Holy Mother Moon started to teach her.
She began by bringing in cotton.
142. "You had better concentrate on your work.
You will be working with cotton.
You will then clothe yourself and your husband," said Our Holy Mother⁷
143. "When you start your work, you begin by fluffing it.
You must sort out the seeds from the cotton.
144. When you have finished fluffing it,
Then you start to card it.
145. When you have finished carding it,
Then you start to spin it up.
146. When you have finished spinning it,
Then you start to wind it up.
147. When you have finished winding it up,
Then you place it on the warping frame.
148. When you have finished placing it on the warping frame,
Then you wet it with atole. ⁸

149. k'alal mi ta ?avak'be ti ?ule,
ja? to xlik ?amuyes ta te? ta jolobe.
150. k'alal mi laj ?amuyes ta te? ta jolobe,
chamala xtakij.
151. k'alal mi takij ta jolobe,
chlik ?achiu.
152. k'alal mi laj ?achiu ta jolob,
ja? to chlik ?ajal.
153. k'alal mi laj ?ajal,
ja? to chlik ?achuk' ?amutzes.
154. k'alal mi laj ?amutzes,
chak'i? takijuk.
155. k'alal mi takije,
chlik ?ak'u?inik.
156. ja? jech ?o ?avabtel.
mu?yuk yan ?avabtel.
157. ja? chapas skotol ti k'ak'ale.
ja? ?avabtel ?o skotol k'ak'al ja? to te xak'u?ilajik ?un kalab.
158. teke? ?ilo ?avabtejeb ?une.
ja? me cha?abtej ?o ?un.
159. ?ilo ?apetet.
?ilo ?ajalabte? ?un.
?ilo ?akomen ?un.
ja? me cha?abtej ?un."
160. xi la ti jch'ulme?tik k'alal la ti yalbe ya?i ti ?abtel ti ba?yel ?antz ti mas vo?ne.
ti k'alal lik ?o ti banomil ta mas vo?nee.
161. jech la la jyal ti jch'ulme?tike.
ja? yu?un la jech komem ?asta ?ora ti ?oy ti jk'u?tik komeme.
ja? yu?un ti mu xu? t'ant'an xijxanave.
ja? yu?un la ti chijk'exavotik k'alal ch'abal jk'u?tike.
ja? yu?un la ti jech chanik ?o ti ?abtel ti ?antzetik ?asta ?ora.
162. xavil la jech la la jyak' ?iluk ti jch'ulme?tik,
ti k'alal la ti lik ?o ti ba?yel kirsano,
ti k'alal la ti lik boluk tael ti kirsano, ti mas vo?nee.

149. When you have finished wetting it with atole,
Then you start to stretch it on the sticks of the loom.⁹
150. When you have finished stretching it on the sticks of the loom,
Then you wait until it dries.
151. When it has dried on the loom,
Then you start to separate the strands from one another.¹⁰
152. When you have finished separating the strands from one another,
Then you start to weave.
153. When you have finished weaving it,
Then you start to wash it to shrink and felt it.
154. When you have finished shrinking and felting it,
Then you stretch it out to dry.
155. When it is dry,
Then you start to make clothes.
156. That is the task which you will carry with you.
You have no other duties.¹¹
157. You must do this every day.
It will be your work every day until you have clothed my children.
158. Well, take care of your tools.
You are to work with them.
159. Take care of your spinning bobbin,
Take care of your loom,
Take care of your warping frame.
You are to work with them.”
160. So said Our Holy Mother when she explained her tasks to the first woman long ago.
That was when the earth was created in the most distant antiquity.
161. That is what Our Holy Mother told her.
That is why it has remained like that until today, that we have clothing.
That is why we no longer walk about naked.
That is why we feel shame when we have no clothes on.
That is why women keep on learning this kind of work even today.
162. You see, Our Holy Mother taught it in that way,
Back when the first people came forth,
Back when people first began to fill the earth in the most distant antiquity.

163. ti k'alal la ti lik boluk ti kirsanoe,
lik la ?ayanuk bolom,
lik la ?ayanuk ?ok'il,
164. lik la ?ayanuk chonetik.
lik la ?ayanuk k'usitikuk chanulal ta banomil.
165. li bolome ja? la ba?yel lok'.
xchi?uk li ?ok'ile,
xchi?uk li leone,
xchi?uk li ?osove.
166. li bolom ja? la ba?yel lok'e.
xavil ja? la li ?oy xch'ulelinojik j?olol li kirsanoe.
xchi?uk la li ?ok'ile.
ja? yu?un ti ba?yel lok' ti muk'tik chonetike.
167. xavil la ti kirsanoe syakel la ta bolel talel,
k'alal la ti ta xvok' ti kirsanoe.
168. ?o la yan bolome xch'ulelinoj.
?o la yan xch'ulelinoj ?ok'il.
?o la ti yane ?o la xch'ulelinoj sa?ben ti kirsanoe.
169. Pero li yan kirsano, bu la xch'ulelinoj bolome,
ja? la mas jk'ulej.
170. bu la xch'ulelinoj ?ok'ile,
ja? la mu masuk jk'ulej.
171. bu la xch'ulelinoj sa?bene,
ja? la mas povre ti kirsanoe.
172. bu la xch'ulelinoj vet ti kirsanoe,
ja? la mas povre.
ko?ol la povre xchi?uk sa?ben.
173. kapal la xtok bu la xch'ulelinoj sa?bene
mu la jaluk xch'i.
174. ti kirsanoe ja? la li ?oy ta sti?an viche.
k'alal mi yil ti yajval viche.
ta smil ta tuk' ti sa?bene.
175. k'alal mi cham ta tuk' ti sa?bene.
?osib xa la k'ak'al kuxul ti buch'u xch'ulelinoj sa?ben ti kirsanoe.
ta xch'ulel ta xcham ta ?ora.

163. At the time when people first began to multiply,
 Jaguars started to be born,
 Coyotes started to be born.
164. Animals started to be born.
 All the animals there are on the earth started to be born.
165. The jaguar was the first.
 He emerged with the coyote,
 With the lion,
 With the bear.
166. The jaguar was the first one to come into being.
 So, you see, jaguars came to be the animal soul companions of half
 the people.
 The other half had the coyote.
 This was because the large animals came first.¹²
167. You see, the people were occupied in increasing their numbers.
 So it was when the first people emerged.
168. Jaguars accompanied some of them;
 Coyotes accompanied some;
 Weasels accompanied others.
169. But those whom the jaguars accompany,
 These are the richest.
170. Those whom coyotes accompany,
 They are not so rich.
171. Those whom weasels accompany,
 These people are poorer.
172. Those whom foxes accompany,
 These are the poorest,
 Just as poor as those of the weasel.
173. Furthermore, those human counterparts of both the fox and weasel,
 They do not live for very long
174. There was once a person whose baby chicks had been eaten by some animal.
 Then the owner of the chicks saw this.
 He shot the culprit, a weasel, with a shotgun.
175. After the weasel died,
 It was only three days until the owner of the chicks, whose soul companion
 had been that very weasel, died also.
 He has shot his own animal soul, and so died quickly himself.

176. ja? no?ox jech li vet xtok.
buch'u xch'ulelinoj ti kirsanoe mu jaluk xch'i.
177. ja? la li ta sti? ?alak'e.
k'alal mi yil ti yajval ?alak' ti bu ta stzak ?alak' ti vete,
ta xlah ta milel ta tuk'.
178. k'alal mi cham ta tuk' ti vete,
k'ajomal xa ?oxib k'ak'al kuxul ti buch'u xch'ulelinoj ti vete.
179. mi vinik, mi ?antz ja? ti buch'u xch'ulelinoj vet ti kirsanoe.
ja? yu?un ti ?oy chijcham ta jch'ulelike.
180. xavil la ti vo?nee ja? la ti jtotik k'usi la snop.
ti k'usi la chanulal xak' jvayujelintik ti jtotik vo?nee.
181. ja? yu?un la ti jech komem ?asta ?ora.
ti mu jkoltotikuk jch'ulelinoj tik puru bolom.
182. ja? ti k'usi chanulal xak' jvayujelintik ti jtotike.
ja? yu?un mu jna?tik k'usi jvayujeltik yak'ojbotik ti jtotike,
mi bolom,
mi ?ok'il,
mi vet,
mi sa?ben.
183. ja? ti k'usi xak' jvayujelintik ti jtotike.
ja? yu?un ti jech komemotik ta ?orae.
184. xavil ti vo?ne ti k'usi lik snop ti jtotik,
k'alal ti lik smeltzan ti banomile.
185. xavil la ti vo?nee, mu?yuk la vitzetik, muk la te?tik,
puru la stenlej.
186. muk la ton.
puru la banomil.
187. ta yoxibal la k'ak'al lik ch'iuk ti te?etik.
k'alal la ti ?ul ti nab ti vo?nee .
188. lik la ch'iuk te?etik.
lik la ch'i?uk vomoletik.
189. ti ta yoxibal k'ak'ale
k'alal la ch'i ti te?tike.
190. ja? la te bat nakluk ti chonetik.
ja? yu?un ti ta te?tik sna li chonetike.

176. So also with the fox.
He who has the fox as a soul companion does not live very long.
177. This one, the fox, likes to eat chickens.
When the owner of the chickens sees that the fox is catching his chickens,
The fox quickly meets its end at the point of a shotgun.
178. Then, when the fox dies of shotgun wounds,
He who has this fox as a soul companion lives for only three days.
179. The person who has the fox as a soul companion may be a man or a woman.
In this manner, whoever we are, we die just as our soul companions do.
180. You see, long ago it was Our Father who thought about all this.
Our Father long ago gave us dreams about our animal soul companions.
181. That is why it remains the same even to this day,
That not all of us have jaguars as animal souls.¹³
182. There are several kinds of animals which Our Father has given to us as soul companions.
For this reason it is often unclear what soul companions Our Father has given us,
Whether they be jaguars,
Whether they be coyotes,
Whether they be foxes,
Whether they be weasels.
183. These, then, are the kinds of soul companions that Our Father provides.
That is our heritage, even into our time.
184. You see, long ago this was what Our Father thought about,
At the time when he started to prepare the earth.
185. You see, long ago there were no mountains, no forests,
Only flat land.
186. There were no rocks,
Only the earth itself.
187. On the third day trees started to grow.
This was when the seas dried up long ago.¹⁴
188. Trees started to grow;
Grass started to grow.
189. This was on the third day of creation.
It was when the forest started to be.
190. The animals went to live there.
So it happened that the animals have their homes there in the forest.

191. veno, jech la ti puru batz'i banomile.
ti puru stenleje.
192. mu la x?ul lek ti nabe.
mu la xch'i lek ti te?etike.
toyol la ta xlom ti banomile.
193. "pero k'usi van chkut syihub li banomile," xi la ti jtotike.
"pero mi mo?oje, mu xch'iik ma jnich'nabe," xi la ti jtotike.
194. "ja? lek ta jsa?be yoyal ma banomile.
pero mi mo?oje ta xlom tajmek," xi la ti jtotike.
195. "ja? lek ta xkak'be yoyalin ton," xi la ti jtotike.
"pero ta jlomes yalel.
ta jk'elkik tana, bu k'alal xk'ot ta lomel tana," xi la ti jtotike.
196. lik la svuy yalel ti banomile.
k'alal la ti la svuy yalel ti banomile,
jlikel la lom yalel ta ?ora ti banomile.
197. k'alal la ti syakel ta slom ti banomile,
jlikel la ch'i talel ton ch'enetik.
jlikel la ?ayan vitzetik.
jlikel la ?ayanuk ?uk'um.
198. lik la ?ayanuk sat ?o?.
lik la ?ayanuk yochob, bu ta x?och yalel ?uk'um.
lik la ?ayanuk xab sventa sna pukuj.
199. k'alal syakel xch'i li tonetike li ch'enetike,
lik ?ayanuk nail ch'enetik sventa la sna ?anjeletik.
200. k'alal la ti ?ayan ti tonetik ti ch'enetike,
ja? la sventa yoyal banomil sventa la mu slom ti banomile.
201. ja? yu?un la ?un ?oy la ton ch'iem ta banomil.
?oy la muk'tik ch'enetik ch'iem ta banomil.
202. ja? la ti jtotik jech la la snop ti ?oy tonetik, ti ?oy ch'enetik.
komem ?asta ?orae.
203. ja? la ti vo?nee toyol to?ox la slom ti banomile.
ch'abal to?ox la ti tone.
ch'abal to?ox la muk'tik ch'enetik.
ch'abal to?ox la vitzetik.

191. But, the fact was that there had been only land.
It was just flat land.
192. The seas had not fully dried up.
The forests could not grow well.
The surface of the earth was constantly caving in.
193. "But how am I going to harden the earth?" wondered Our Father.
"If I don't do it, my children won't survive," said Our Father.
194. "It would be better for me to look for supports for the land.
If I don't do this, it will surely fall apart completely," said Our Father.
195. "It would be better for me to place rock supports," said Our Father.
"I shall pull things down.
Let's see where the landslides end up," reflected Our Father.
196. He proceeded to make the quake and tremble
Once he had provoked the landslides,
The earth's surface itself quickly collapsed.
197. Then, as the earth continued to cave in,
Suddenly stones and caves emerged.
Suddenly, mountains were born.
Suddenly, rivers were born.
198. Springs came forth.
Sinkholes came forth, places where rivers sink into the earth.
Small cracks for the door to the demon's house began to appear.¹⁵
199. Then, as the rocks and caves kept forming,
Caverns for the homes of the earth lords started to form.¹⁶
200. When the rocks and caves had been created,
They acted as supports for the earth so that the earth would not collapse.
201. That is why there are rocks in the earth itself,
Why there are huge caves lacing the earth.
202. It happened that Our Father thought there ought to be rocks and caves.
And so it has remained to this day.
203. Long ago, the earth was still unstable.
There still were no rocks;
There still were no great caves;
There still were no mountains.

204. k'alal la ti ?ayan ti vitzetike,
 ja? la te bat nakluk ti muk'tik chonetik,
 ti k'uyepal puru vayujelil ti ta
 vitzetike.
205. jech la li muk'tik ch'enetike ja? la sna ?anjeletik.
 xchi?uk la li nail ch'enetike.
206. ja? yu?un ti ?ayan la ti vitzetike,
 ?ayan la ti muk'tik ch'enetike.
207. veno jech la la snop ti jtotik ti k'alal la lik smeltzan ti ba?yel banomil.
 ti mas vo?ne ti k'alal la lik ?o ti banomil yu?un ti jtotik ta vo?ne.
208. jech laj ti jlo?ile.

§ § §

204. So, when the mountains were formed,
 The large animals went to live there,
 Those who were animal soul companions found their homes in the
 mountains.
205. So the great caverns came to be the homes of the earth lords.
 So, also, the great caves.
206. That is why the mountains were created,
 Why the great caverns were created.
207. So, all of this is what Our Father decided when he started to prepare the First
 World long ago,
 Back when the earth was created by Our Father, long ago.
208. So the story ends.

Notes

¹ This line and in fact this entire passage assume that the listener or reader knows that Our Father's body is maize, and the "place for his body" is the maizefield. While there is general agreement among all Chamulas that maize came originally from Our Father's body, there is no general agreement about which part of his body it came from. The most common version is that maize came originally from the inner thigh, thereby explaining maize silk as coming from Our Father's pubic hair. Other explanations identify the biceps of Our Father's arm as the part of the body which provided the first maize, in which case the underarm hair is given as the origin of maize silk.

The extraordinary attention given to the origin of maize in this and other Tzotzil narratives reflects the central place of maize in the diet. Tortillas and other maize-based foods are eaten three times a day all year. Maize, supplemented by beans, cabbage, chili and tomatoes, is the staple without which life as Tzotzils know it would be inconceivable.

² The reference to light here is a metaphor for Our Father Sun's light, heat, blessing and good will. To follow any evil inclination is to invite destruction, which is, even in modern times, associated with the death of the Sun/Christ. Solar eclipses occasionally remind people of this threat, for these events are explained as demons who come from the edges of the earth seeking to bite the sun to death.

³ This whole passage refers to knowledge of sex.

⁴ In Chamula the custom of seeking godparents to help a couple baptize their child is typically the father's responsibility. For the mother to take the initiative in the search for *compadres* invites the accusation that she is interested in her *compadre* for other than the accepted reasons of ritual solidarity, economic security and friendship. As in Mexican national society, *compadrazgo* in Chamula establishes a special relationship between the godchild and godparents as well as between the parents and the godparents. Where it is common in Mexican society to seek *padres* for several ritual events in one's child's life (baptism, first communion and marriage), Chamula gives importance to the *compadrazgo* tie only for baptism. It is in Chamula a bond of special friendship and is usually accompanied by formal gestures of respect and consideration, not only upon establishment of the bond, but throughout the lives of the participants. It is thought that women who seek *compadres* too enthusiastically may not be as interested in the respectful and formal ties as they are in extramarital affairs.

⁵ In addition to the general notion that sex is evil, for it was first taught by the demon, there is in Chamula a general acceptance of the belief that women are accompanied by Our Father Sun from midnight to noon —the time of his rising aspect— and, potentially, by demons from noon to midnight —the time of the falling aspect of the sun, when he moves from the zenith of the sky to the nadir of the underworld. Thus, women are believed to be virtuous from midnight to noon and vulnerable to sin and evil from noon to midnight. This is one of the reasons that Chamula men give for their preference that women carry water and wood —tasks that take them away from home— in the morning. Women who wander about in the afternoon are believed to be more prone to commit adultery than those who remain at home in the afternoon. The explanation is a

clear legacy from the first creation, when the first woman first learned about sex from the demon, probably, some Chamulas say, in the afternoon.

⁶'Successor' comes from the Tzotzil *k'exol* which is a ritual term which also means "substitute". It is typically used in change-of-office rituals, the new office-holder being called the *k'exol* or replacement for the past office-holder. In this passage, then the moon (Our Holy Mother) refers to the first woman as her "successor", the bearer of feminine tasks and responsibilities for humankind.

⁷It is interesting to note at this point that contemporary Chamula outer garments are made of wool, which of course was introduced only after the Spanish Conquest. The earlier, First Creation time dimension of this narrative is indicated by Our Holy Mother's teaching of weaving with cotton, which was native to the New World and which was no doubt used by the precolumbian Maya. Chamula women continue to be expert weavers, the loom being of the backstrap, portable type, but they now weave almost exclusively in wool, producing women's skirts, outer blouses, shawls and head pieces and men's outer tunics. Women's inner blouses, men's shirts and pants are now made from machine loomed cotton or bought ready-made. It is important to mention, however, that several neighboring Indian communities continue to produce high-quality cotton textile on looms of the back-strap type. The thread for this cloth is machine-produced and sold in skeins in Mexican trade centers such as San Cristobal de las Casas. For comparative purposes it is important to note that in the community of El Bosque, which was settled by migrating Chamulas in the 19th century, hand-spun cotton is still used in their weavings. Chamula women themselves use (or used?) a large ceremonial blouse that was woven out of cotton, but this type of blouse is no longer made in Chamula. Cotton blouses are made in all the neighboring communities and hand-spun cotton is still made in Pantelho and Venustiano Carranza.

⁸Atole (*?ul* in Tzotzil) is a thick maizestarch gruel which is used as a stiffening and adhesive agent for thread, both wool and cotton. Recently spun thread is soaked with atole to make it less fuzzy and easier to handle. It also keeps it from breaking easily.

⁹The stiffened thread is attached to the pieces of the loom for the original vertical threads (warp) of the cloth. These of course must be stronger and stiffer than the horizontal threads (weft).

¹⁰There is a discrepancy here between the information in the text and actual modern practice, in which the threads are separated while still wet with atole.

¹¹This apparently means no other duties besides weaving, cooking, wood-carrying and water-carrying. The latter duties had already been assigned to her earlier in the narrative.

¹²There is in Chamula a complex body of beliefs about animal soul companions which, in its totality, amounts to a kind of philosophy of individual being (see Gossen 1975 and 1999). Of precolumbian origin, the concept involves the association of an individual—not of a group, as signified by the concept of totemism—with a soul companion, given at birth, who shares for a lifetime every stroke of fate of its human counterpart. Several animals enter into this classification scheme, ranging from jaguars and coyotes for the rich and powerful to rabbits and skunks for the poor and humble. Much of individual fate and fortune, as well as personality differences, are explained in this way. With regard to this text, it is interesting to note that Our Father created the large and powerful animals first, perhaps thinking that the task of populating the earth

required strong people. Hence the necessity of first creating strong animal soul companions and later the weaker ones.

¹³ This line is a fairly direct commentary on human inequality in the Chamula world view. The fact that jaguar souls are not the soul companions of all people explains why some are richer and others poorer; why some are more powerful and others weaker; why some die as respected elders and others die early in life without accomplishing much at all.

¹⁴ It is not clear here just what sequence of days is referred to. I believe, however, that it refers to the four-day cycle which led to the victory of the Sun/Christ ("Our Father") over the forces of evil. At the beginning of this cycle, Our Father is killed by the monkeys, demons and Jews, for they fear his power to give light and heat to the world. He comes back to life, however, and on the first day after his burial and resuscitation goes to the western edge of the earth. On the second day, he goes from the western edge of the earth down to the nadir of the underworld. On the third day he began his upward swing toward the eastern horizon, where he emerged at dawn of the fourth day. By noon of the fourth day, he reached the zenith of the sky, thus giving the earth for the first time the full benefit of Our Father's light and heat. He also at this time burned to death most of his enemies—the monkeys, demons and Jews—and frightened the survivors into retreat outside the moral universe of the sun. Henceforth, the sun's path delimits the spatial limits of the universe and maintains the elementary units of time, day and night. Therefore, the "third day" referred to in this narrative seems to be the turning of the tide to "cosmic optimism," as the sun on the third day emerged upward from the depths of the underworld to begin his trip to the eastern horizon. Ultimately, on the fourth day, he completes the cycle by emerging from the eastern sea in a ball of heat and light, causing the primeval oceans of the earth to evaporate. Hence, returning to the text, the third and fourth days of the sun's emergence cycle would have been the first time when plants could have survived on earth.

¹⁵ This passage refers to the emergence of typical features of the karst-type limestone topography of the Chiapas Highlands. It is an area of heavy rainfall but without many surface drainage features, such as creeks and rivers. The area is very mountainous, but for the most part internally drained, typical features being subterranean streams, sinkholes, springs, deep waterholes (cenotes), shallow waterholes, seasonal swamps and ponds. The relatively heavy rainfall combined with the limestone substructure has caused a pattern of weathered limestone surface features such as steep cliffs, landslides, and thousands of basins, large and small which have been formed by collapse of the limestone substructure. There are thousands of cave openings and rockshelters, large and small, including some that lead to immense limestone caverns.

The cracks in rocks, referred to in the text as the "door to the demon's house" in this passage are often, in fact, small cave openings which lead to great cave networks inside the earth. These doors sometimes appear to be mere vertical cracks but Chamulas note that they are "meant" to deceive, being just large enough for a curious person to enter to explore—sometimes, Chamulas say, never to return.

¹⁶ Earth lords (*yabval banamil*) and their external manifestation as *anbeletik* (from Spanish *ángel*, "angel") live in medium to large caves, often those with prominent rock shelters. They are intimately associated with rain, thunder and lightning. The tie between caves and rain is explained in part by the internal drainage system of the

Chiapas Highlands, as well as by the fact that rainbearing clouds appear to emerge from the mouths of caves.

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Resumen

El texto, publicado por primera vez con la versión original tzotzil, da testimonio de la fe y las creencias populares de la comunidad de San Juan Chamula. Contiene extensas reflexiones sobre la condición humana, la espiritualidad y el orden moral, según los entiende Xun Méndez Tzotzek, chamula sensible e inteligente. La narración empieza con el relato sobre la creación del universo a partir de la nada primordial. La deidad Sol/Cristo organiza la tierra y las formas de vida que tiene en el primero de los cuatro ciclos, o "tierras", que reconoce la comunidad.

El Sr. Méndez Tzotzek escribió el texto en 1969. Perteneció al género de habla que es conocido en tzotzil como "la narración antigua verdadera" (*batz'i antivo k'op*). Relatos de este tipo proporcionan lo que se considera una versión auténtica de la experiencia formativa de la humanidad durante las tres primeras épocas de creación, destrucción y restauración que conducen a la era actual.