

The Lacandón Song of the Jaguar

PHILLIP and MARY BAER

Summer Institute of Linguistics

The song¹ given below is sung by the Lacandón Indians of Chiapas when a person meets a jaguar (*tigre*) on the trail in the jungle. The rhythm of the song is imitative of the walk of the jaguar. It is believed that when the animal hears the song it will go away.

THE SONG

1. jujuntsit in jitik in wok 2. jujuntsit in jitik in k'ab 3. tan u pek in nej 4. tin wu'uyaj u tar a k'ay ch'iknach 5. netak in wenen 6. tin kashtaj u pachtakih che? 7. oken tin wenen yokor jenen che? 8. tu yek'er in nok' tu yek'er in k'ab 9. tu yek'er in shikin.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

1. Each I lift-up my back-feet 2. Each I lift-up my front-feet 3. Continually it moves my tail 4. I heard it come your voice very-far 5. Very-almost I sleep 6. I looked-for its back-fell tree 7. Went-I I slept on fallen tree 8. Its stripes my hide its stripes my front-feet 9. Its stripes my ears.

FREE TRANSLATION

I pick up each of my feet and let them fall on the trail. My tail moves. I heard your voice come from a distance. I am sleepy. I searched for a fallen tree to go to sleep. I went to sleep on the fallen tree. My hide and feet and ears are striped.

¹ Dictated by Mateo García of the Petha (Pelha) region.