# EIGHT

When Thomas Anderson and his sons Paul and Jack decided to build their mission at the site the Sirionó called the place of high ground, Ibi-ato, they had four families with them from Buen Jesús, near what would become Casarabe. This was about 1932. Shortly after Ibiato was founded, an ererecua nicknamed "Choco" (light-skinned) brought his band of 40-50 people to Ibiato. They had been enslaved on the Arias ranch in Santa Cruz but had escaped and made their way north to the Beni. When Choco and his band arrived, they vastly outnumbered the other inhabitants at Ibiato and so Choco became the new ererecua. He stayed in power just a few years, dying of pneumonia when he was 35 or 40. In the meantime, another ererecua and his group were brought by Jack to Ibiato. This was Eo (hand) who had a full beard. Ha was dark-skinned, very intelligent, and very kind. Eo had five wives and was considered to be at least as powerful as Choco. While Choco was alive, he had to share some of his power with Eo. And so began the tradition of having two ererecuas serving simultaneously in Ibiato.

Anderson recited this history for me when I asked him why Ibiato had two leaders. The Sirionó in Ibiato either did not remember or, more likely, did not associate the historical precedent with the current leadership structure. They answered the question in another way, but one which from their perspective is equally correct. Since the Sirionó are now sedentary horticulturists, the ererecua cannot be continually present among them as was true in the past. Nowadays, an ererecua must spend weeks at a time out in the chacos clearing his fields for planting and additional time caring for his crops until harvest. Then there may be periods of two or three days when he goes on a hunt or must leave the village for other reasons. During these times it is expected that the other ererecua will remain in Ibiato to

take care of any problems which might arise. Still, I found it a curious custom which grew out of the mission environment where several bands that normally would have remained autonomous were forced to live together. During Ibiato's early years, each ererecua would enter into competition with the others to achieve control over the entire population. While a "first" and "second" ererecua would be acknowledged, each band leader retained a following among his own local group. Loyalties to individual bands, however, became more diffuse over time. Public recognition of the pecking order of ererecuas occurred during the circle dance and accompanying chants. Each leader would give over to one of higher status, with the most powerful ererecua finishing the chant.

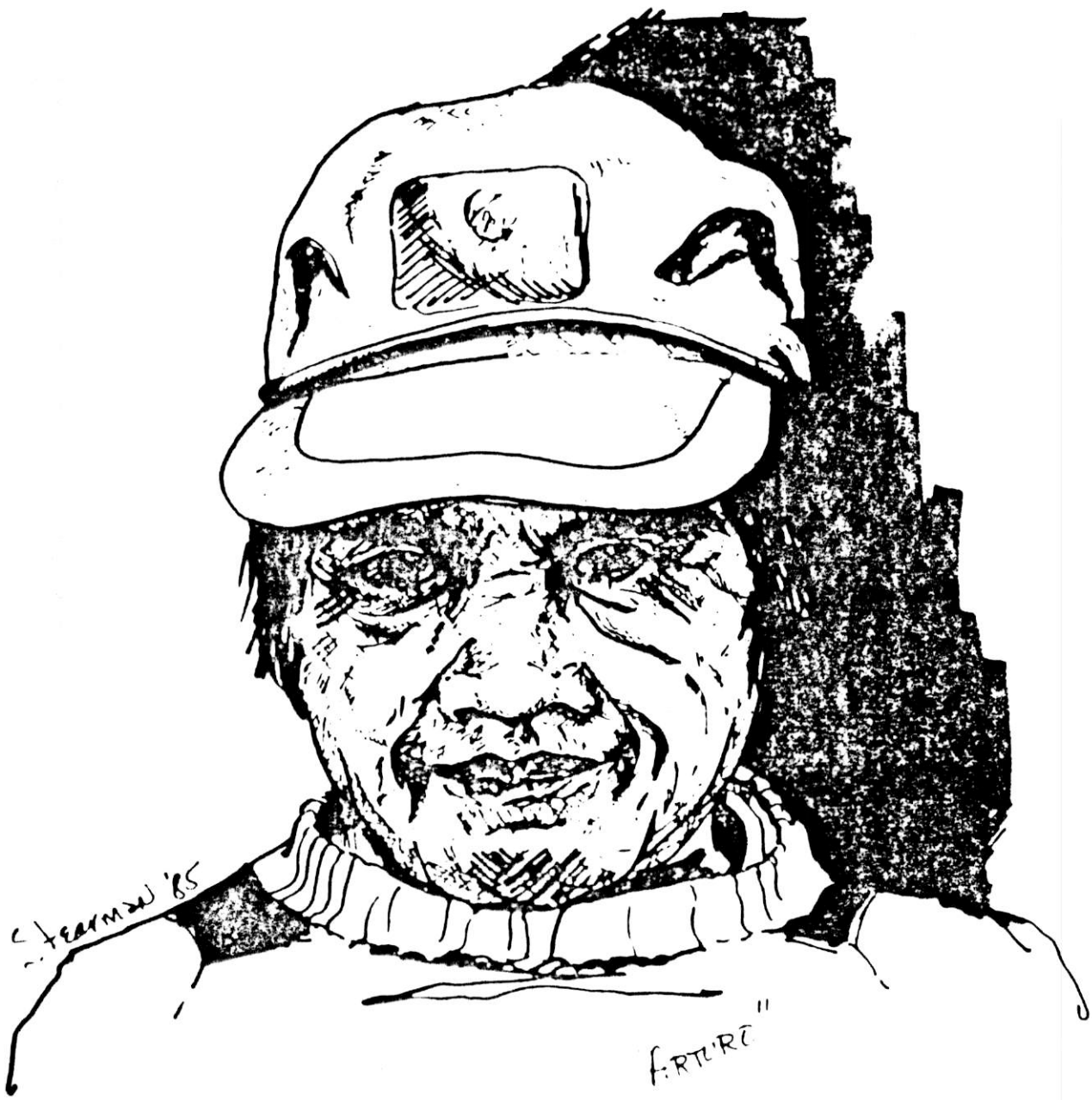
In the tradition of band political organization, leadership is by consensus. Men lead only as long as people are willing to follow. To a large extent, the Sirionó ererecuas are also consensual leaders, depending on personal attributes and charisma to maintain their positions of authority. Nonetheless, as Chiro explained, these qualities alone were not enough. A man had to come from a "chiefly" family to be considered a potential leader. These were men who could trace a direct relationship to a former ererecua, preferably through an unbroken male line. Ideally, an ererecua was the son of an ererecua. If his father had been powerful, then the son had a better chance of being selected, assuming he also had the necessary personal attributes for leadership. I asked Chiro if a case had ever occurred where someone who was personally popular but not of the "chiefly line" had attempted to become an ererecua. He answered that several of the younger men, particularly those who had spent time away from Ibiato and chafed under the old traditions had attempted to gain office but failed. In the end, even those who originally had supported the young contenders agreed that they could not be taken seriously--no one would ever

obey them. Age was also a factor in selecting a leader, since the ererecua was "paba", father, of the band. While age was not venerated, it was respected; and most people I talked to agreed that part of being a successful ererecua was being able to project an image of wisdom and experience--qualities, they felt, which normally came with age.

I would also discover that many of these leadership characteristics were often defined in terms of the individuals presently in office. If sweetness and kindness were attributes of one ererecua, then these were admirable qualities. If toughness and meanness described the other, then these too were acceptable--assuming, of course, that each leader was in favor at the time. If not, these same qualities could be used as points of criticism. The position of ererecua, once achieved, had no guarantees of longevity. It was apparent from conversations I had with many of the villagers that their leaders would remain in office only as long as their constituents suffered their presence. One or two, I was told, simply quit out of frustration with the job. Because of the nature of the system, the ererecuas were always subject to being pressured by factions in the village, attempts to manipulate them and inevitably, the playing off of one ererecua against the other. It seemed a very divisive system, but one which nevertheless was consistent with Sirionó personality and attitudes. Having two leaders meant that neither could claim absolute authority, hence a system of checks and balances of sorts. Then too, if one ererecua refused to support a certain point of view, there was possible recourse with the other. Leadership was therefore very fluid, just as it had been during precontact times. While people might have been critical of a particular ererecua in office, no one challenged the system itself. No matter the origin of the tradition of having two leaders, it has become accepted and institutionalized in Ibiato.

Although I did not witness the ouster of one leader and the installation of another, such a case occurred shortly before my arrival. Eloy Erachendu, one of the ererecuas, went through a long period of drinking bouts, angering people and failing to meet his responsibilities and obligations as a leader. In spite of the years of prohibition against alcohol, once Anderson had left, drinking in the village became commonplace. But because of Ibiato's protestant origins and continuing identification with fundamental Christianity, alcohol use has never been condoned or accepted as proper behavior, even by those who drink. Drinking by an ererecua is criticized but for the most part tolerated unless the man becomes abusive or the drinking becomes excessive. In Eloy's case, his frequent drunkeness became a source of disgruntlement among the villagers. As continues to be the practice in times of extreme crisis, word was sent to Jack that he was needed in Ibiato. Upon his arrival, the community was convened to discuss the problem. As far as I could determine, Anderson's role in this meeting was basically that of mediator. Names were presented, discussed, or challenged. At the end of the evening a consensus had been reached: Arturo Eanta, son of the deceased ererecua Eanta (hard, mean) would be the new leader. His nomination had been accompanied by considerable dissent because he, too, was a known drinker. The names of some of the younger men had been proposed but for the most part had been dismissed for lack of maturity or confidence in their abilities. The impression left was that Arturo won by default. He would take his place, nonetheless, beside Daniel Mayachare, a weak but kind ererecua who was generally viewed as a peacemaker.

The most frequent responsibility of the ererecua is the settlement of disputes; and if both are present, this is done in tandem. If a particularly troublesome case is presented and one of the ererecuas is absent, the other may put off attempting to resolve the issue until his counterpart

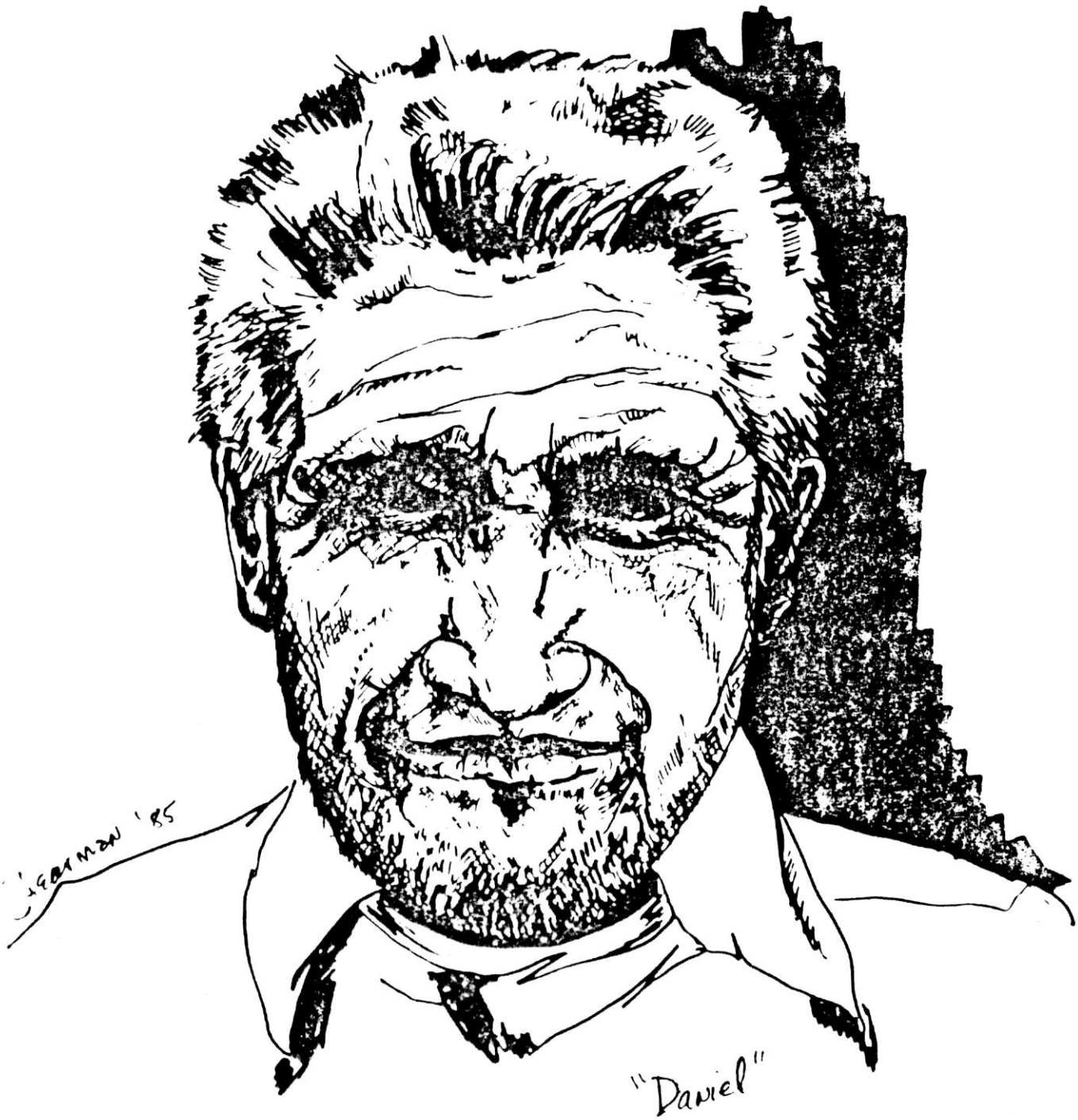

Arturo

returns. Vary few incidents are brought into the public domain. While nothing can be kept secret in Ibiato, most problems are dealt with in the privacy of the houses of those involved. Once apprised of a dispute, the ererecuas will walk together to the litigants' houses and then try to obtain an acceptable, equitable resolution.

Because ererecuas have no real coercive power unless backed by the entire village, their role is that of mediator and counselor, not enforcer. Much of their time is spent in arbitrating domestic disputes during which the counseling role becomes paramount. In these cases, the two religious leaders, Chiro and Vicente, may also be consulted, making the domestic disturbance a moral issue as well. Because Ibiato continues to be a religiously-based community, an attempt will always be made to deal with a particular situation in the context of Christian philosophy and teachings, albeit with a Siriono interpretation of meaning.

From the perspective of state or provincial government, the ererecuas at Ibiato are officially recognized civil authorities. Therefore, it is they who must interface with the outside world as representatives of their village in the national political system. Ibiato is fortunate in one respect, and that is as an indigenous community it is not involved with political parties. In mestizo communities, the mayor (alcalde), police chief (intendente), and possibly other officials will change with each new government in power. It is also not uncommon for these offices to be filled by outsiders as part of the political patronage system. So far, Ibiato has maintained its autonomy in selecting leaders, without outside interference.

The remaining duties of the ererecuas relate to the organization of labor for community work projects. It is in this area that their authority may be put to the greatest test. Again, as consensual leaders, they can only request that people work but can do little if they refuse as was the

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case with the need to resettle Santa Fe. Communal labor was not an element of aboriginal culture, having been imposed as part of the mission routine. Nowadays, the church bell may be rung once or twice a month calling the men to work so that weeds can be cut down, a fence line replaced, the school or church roof repaired, or the old bridge crossing the arroyo at the base of the mound refitted. Depending on the nature of the task or the time of the year, the turnout may range from 40-80 percent of the male population. If several work days go by with unusually poor attendance, the ererecuas may call on the two pastors, Chiro and Vicente, to admonish and encourage their parishioners to become more involved in community affairs.

The fact that the pastors may be asked to intercede in secular matters is an indication that a parallel system of authority now exists. In recent years, religious leadership is being viewed more and more as equal in importance to that of the ererecuas. It is also possible that the position of pastor may become a stepping stone for civil leadership. Both Chiro and Vicente are sons of deceased ererecuas and so are eligible for the office. With their experience as religious leaders they have gained public visibility, making them strong contenders as future ererecuas. To date, the role of pastor is treated as complementary to that of ererecua, not competitive. For the time being, at least, the two systems coexist peacefully side by side.

Religious leadership among the Sirionó is a relatively recent phenomenon. When Anderson lived in Ibiato, he was the acknowledged head of the village and religious leader. The ererecuas answered ultimately to him and he had a great deal to say in their selection. The need to have Jack present even today is an affirmation of his continued influence in legitimizing the process. The practice of training Sirionó as religious leaders came with Perry Priest, a missionary with the Summer Institute of

Linguistics (SIL). Perry and his wife Anne had lived periodically in San Pedro de Richards, returning to their headquarters in Riberalta, "Tumi Chuqua," with several Sirionó families to assist with Bible translation. While producing a Bible in Sirionó was the manifest reason for bringing the Sirionó to Riberalta, they would also receive formal training in Christian dogma and leadership

When conditions at San Pedro began to deteriorate with the change in ranch management, Perry arranged for several of the families to move to Ibiato. Because the Andersons had long since gone to Trinidad, the Priests felt free to relocate their translation work in Ibiato where they were assured a stable supply of informants. It is also likely that the Priests viewed Ibiato as a last refuge for the Sirionó; and since so much time and effort had been invested to that point in linguistic studies, it was reasonable that they would want to focus on this remaining settlement for their missionary work. Once in Ibiato, Perry selected several of the younger men to assist him with Bible translation and also to train as future teachers and religious leaders. These men, along with their families, were taken to Tumi Chuqua for several months at a time. To be selected to go to Riberalta became extremely sought after among the Sirionó. It was rather like winning a free trip to summer camp. Since wives and children could be brought along, there was no wrenching loneliness. Participants received expense money, were given clothing, had comfortable but familiar housing, and ate well. There were almost continuous activities scheduled between classwork and linguistic sessions: volleyball, soccer, singing, and of course, prayer meetings. While at Tumi Chuqua, the Sirionó also met representatives from other lowland Bolivian native peoples who were there for the same purpose. For most, this was a first experience with thinking in a positive way about their Indian heritage.


"Chiro"

One of the early participants in the Tumi Chuqua project was Chiro Cuellar. Perry almost immediately singled him out as a potential leader because of his easy manner in dealing with his peers and his quick intelligence. Ciro became Priest's primary informant and was rewarded with trips to various conferences, including one in Panama. Later, when I met Perry in Ibiato, he said he now believed it was wrong to remove native people from their own environment. "It ruins them," he said. "They become misfits in their own culture." But, he admitted, Chiro was an exception. He had taken all the travel and attention in stride, storing it away for perhaps some future reference, but sliding easily back into life in Ibiato. This, according to Perry, was not due to anything he might have done, but was a reflection of Chiro's unique character.

Of all Ibiato's leaders, past or present, secular or religious, Chiro has the potential of becoming the most influential man in his community. Like most Sirionó at Ibiato below the age of 40, Chiro is literate and bilingual. But because of his special relationship with Priest, he has gained a broader perspective of the world and consequently possesses a great deal of self-confidence in dealing with non-Sirionó. Once outside Ibiato, many of the other men, including the ererecuas, succumb to old patterns of humility and deference toward mestizos; hanging back, mumbling, staring at their feet, and always speaking carefully. While not appearing aggressive or cocky, Chiro does none of these things. He treats mestizos as equals, not superiors, looking them straight in the eye. With his over six foot frame, he is an imposing sight, particularly when mounted on his big bay stallion. But it is the frequent smile and easy manner which ultimately wins people over. All this, of course, is simply a measure of the level of his acculturation. He has learned to function in the larger Bolivian society to a degree many of his peers have not yet attained.

Perhaps because his is a wider universe, Chiro consciously reflects on the precarious situation of Ibiato. He fears that when Jack Anderson dies, Ibiato may not be able to hold itself together. Perry Priest left Bolivia in 1984 with the phasing out of SIL in that country. Anderson and Priest were the village's most affective advocates in dealing with Bolivian society, Jack in the realm of regional politics and Perry at the national level. With or without his knowledge or consent, Chiro has been groomed to take over at least some of this advocacy. In talking with Chiro about his becoming an ererecua, it was clear that he is uncomfortable with the responsibilities the office may bring. Because of his charisma, his ability to deal with mestizos, and his position as pastor, Chiro, in spite of his age, has already been asked to consider becoming an ererecua. He has refused. When the time comes when he must accept the nomination, he will not disappoint his people; but he is aware that Ibiato's very survival may ultimately rest on his shoulders alone. He knows that his particular skills, matched by no one, could eclipse those of any other ererecua in power; and that by emerging as the single most powerful ererecua of the village he could also radically alter Ibiato's long-standing system of dual leadership. Chiro contemplates this possibility with both anticipation and dread. For now, he is prudent in not letting his personal power undermine the authority of the ererecuas. There seems to be an almost innate understanding that part of keeping Ibiato intact and therefore able to fend off continuing pressure from the outside is in preserving those traditions which act as a binding force in community life.

In his role as pastor, Chiro remains very low key. It took several Sundays in church to understand how his power as a religious leader is orchestrated. The service invariably consists of opening hymns, announcements, individual or group presentations in front of the congregation, the

Bible reading and sermon, and closing hymns. Vicente, not Chiro, opened and closed the service, made the announcements, and generally regulated the pace. At first, I perceived Vicente's role as being the more important, primarily because he stood in front of the church and was heard from most often. As time passed, it became evident that Vicente was more like a master of ceremonies whose primary task was to introduce the main event. This was Chiro. The most meaningful and significant part of the service is the reading, explanation, and commentary of the day's Bible passage. Because of his extensive training, Chiro is considered the most qualified to do this. He was well instructed by SIL to interpret passages from the Bible in terms that the Sirionó can understand and relate to. Chiro also has a certain presence when speaking to the congregation that others recognize. Without appearing pretentious, he projects a depth of understanding and confidence which can only come from intensive study. When the Bible portion is over, Chiro returns to his seat at the back of the church, but it is clear that his was the most important part of the service.

Because he is gregarious by nature, Chiro takes his pastoring seriously, spending each morning and afternoon visiting one or two families. These are not pastoral visits in a rigid sense, where moral issues or religious topics are discussed. They are visits that primarily affirm friendship, trust, and unity--and that everyone matters. These visits are often accompanied by storytelling and peals of raucous laughter, which greatly enhance Chiro's standing as a leader among equals. There are family rivalries and divisions between drinkers and non-drinkers, but Chiro somehow manages to cut across these lines by offering friendship to everyone.

In addition to his pastoring duties, Chiro more and more is expected to play the role of cultural broker. Because the ererecuas are the official agents of the community in dealing with the outside world, Chiro must be

careful not to appear to be superseding their authority in this realm. On a community level, most interactions are with Casarabe, the only settlement within easy walking or riding distance from Ibiato. Since Casarabe is located on a major market route, it is the service center for the region surrounding it. Many staples such as sugar, salt, lard, flour, and kerosene may be obtained in Casarabe; and there are places to buy cold beer, sodas and gelatin dessert; and of course, drinking establishments to purchase and consume cane alcohol. The Siriono frequent Casarabe to buy supplies and to "go to town." Repeated efforts to form a community store in Ibiato have failed. The relationship between the two towns, however, is guarded. The mestizos of Casarabe consider the Siriono to be inferior, they are "Chori," and they have the audacity to hold their own land. The Siriono distrust the Casarabe residents because they are mestizos, and mestizos always denigrate and take advantage of Indians.

Through their various interactions with the Siriono, it has become known among the Casarabenos that issues concerning Ibiato are best dealt with through Chiro. They express this in terms such as, "He is more like us, you know, entendido [logical, intelligent]." It is also common for Chiro to accompany Daniel and Arturo to Casarabe or even Trinidad when official documents are involved. Neither of the two older ererecuas is literate, and their expertise with government matters is limited. Thus there is an expectation among local mestizos and Siriono as well that Chiro will be the go between, the bridge between their two cultures.

During my four months in Ibiato, three mestizos visited the village. On each occasion, Chiro was their initial contact (as he was mine). The first visitor was Don "Vilo" (Wilfredo) Saucedo, one of the "elite" of Casarabe. He is a member of a well-known Santa Cruz-Beni family and owns the largest store and bar-restaurant in town. Vilo asked Chiro if Ibiato

had a corregidor (magistrate). Chiro responded in the negative; there were only the two caciques (this term is used with outsiders who are not familiar with the Sirionó word, ererecua). I noted with interest that Chiro named Arturo Eanta first, the more aggressive of the two. Chiro offered Vilo a chair in the shade and the two sat down to discuss the problem. Pedro "Chuchú" Pepe, Chiro's closest neighbor, had sold the same cow twice during an extended drinking bout in Casarabe. Although none of the Sirionó have large cattle holdings, some of the men have acquired a few head which are run on the savanna between Ibiato and Casarabe. Others may acquire a cow or two from time to time, usually in payment for labor. The bar owners, including Vilo, know when the Sirionó have cattle and will ply them with drink until they are unable to think clearly. At that point, the Sirionó is encouraged to trade his cow to pay for the alcohol already consumed and to buy more. This time, however, Chuchú sold the same cow twice, once to Vilo and later to another man to cover his drinking debts. The second buyer actually got the cow, infuriating Vilo once he realized he had been duped. Chuchú was so drunk he probably was unaware of having sold his cow to two different people. Vilo Saucedo was in Ibiato to bring Chuchú to justice.

After Chiro understood the details of the case, he took Vilo to Arturo's house. Since Chuchú was away from Ibiato, the problem had to be resolved in his absence. Later, Chiro told me that Chuchú would not be arrested. He, Vicente (who now takes care of the town's cattle herd), Arturo, and Daniel offered Vilo the pick of the herd in exchange for dropping the matter. Vilo got his cow and Chuchú was off the hook. He would be asked to work some land for the community to pay back the value of the cow, but Chiro said Chuchú probably would forget about it by then. Chiro obviously disliked the entire affair as did the ererecuas; but if they could

intercede in any way, no Sirionо would ever be turned over to mestizo justice.

The remaining two visitors were local ranchers who stopped by Ibiato to look for ranch hands. Again, each man went directly to Chiro who, after offering them his hospitality, directed them to the two ererecuas. All three of these visitors were noticeably uncomfortable with being in a village of "Choris." They stayed close to Chiro as someone they felt they could relate to. Chiro was also one of the few people in the village who could offer visiting mestizos some of the comforts they were accustomed to receiving; a real chair, not a log stool or a string hammock; a table, china dishes, and forks; not a big spoon and a chipped enameled tin plate.

While Chiro is well-liked and respected, his greater economic success and material possessions are also a source of envy among the villagers. Ibiato, like most peasant communities, ascribes to what George Foster calls the "Image of Limited Good," the idea that worthwhile things come in limited amounts--if someone has more, then it must be at his neighbor's expense. Chiro is a successful cultural broker and advocate for Ibiato because in many ways he has bought into the white man's system, which includes a desire to accumulate wealth. In keeping with their aboriginal traditions, most Sirionо do not delay gratification. Consequently, if they acquire cattle, the animals are usually slaughtered and eaten soon after, or sold for cash which can be spent. The same is generally true of wages earned or money which comes from crops or game animal skins--it is spent almost as soon as it is in hand. Chiro, however, saves his money and manages his resources carefully, contrary to the patterns of his neighbors. He invests in cattle, horses, and riding oxen which are accumulated over time.

For a while, Chiro managed the communal herd, eventually becoming disgusted with the town's attitudes and turning the chore over to Vicente.

This herd, started by Anderson to help with mission expenses and to provide beef on special occasions, at one time numbered over 150 head but has been rapidly depleted over the years from too frequent consumption and cases like Chuchu's. The villagers, however, could only see Chiro's herd increasing while the communal herd diminished in size. It was obvious from their perspective of Limited Good that Chiro's success must be at their expense. When the gossip reached disturbing proportions, Chiro in exasperation handed the job of managing the herd to Vicente. The result has been an even faster decrease in animals from lack of proper attention and Vicente's tendency to give in to requests to slaughter more frequently.

The communal herd has been a long standing source of friction in Ibiato stemming again from the Sirionó desire for immediate gratification. The fact that the herd acts as a reserve bank account and safety net for the village is largely unrecognized by the inhabitants. For them, it is simply unexploited meat. Arturo, Daniel, Chiro, and Vicente are constantly under pressure to divide up what cattle are left and distribute them among the residents. Because there has never been a real shortage of meat, the village leaders, with Jack's support, so far have resisted. Hunting continues to provide almost 90 percent of the community's animal protein intake, a tradition which is not likely to be replaced by animal husbandry. The Sirionó have always been hunters and hunting continues to give pleasure, satisfaction, and status in a way that farming or ranching never will.

# NINE

In 1940 when Allan Holmberg studied the Sirionó, they were above all else, hunters. Although at that time they did practice some horticulture, the Sirionó never were enthusiastic farmers. Their techniques were rude, consisting of little more than finding a place in the forest where a large tree had fallen, leaving clear a small space of ground that could be planted to corn, manioc, or sweet potatoes. A few months later, the Sirionó would return to harvest what was left after insects, rodents, and weeds had taken their toll.

Vegetable foods, both cultivated and wild, were important to the Sirionó diet; but the desired food was meat, and to obtain it in sufficient amounts required almost constant movement. Sirionó men hunted with a longbow made of chonta palm wood and arrows of reed, bamboo, and chonta. The bows reached two meters or more in length with arrows of equal size, a characteristic peculiar to the Sirionó. Although killing game was a man's task, the women frequently accompanied the men to help call monkeys, spot animals and track them, and to carry meat back to camp. After a few days or a week at most, the game would thin out in that particular area and the group would move on. A man's worth was measured by his ability to hunt. If he were of a chiefly line, his skill as a hunter would guarantee that he, too, would become paba, an ererecua. In time, his expertise as a hunter might also gain him additional wives, a badge of high status. Now, the Sirionó have given up their nomadic existence, but the importance of hunting continues to dominate their lives. Men no longer have multiple spouses and bow hunting has largely been abandoned, replaced by shotguns and rifles. But just as in the past, the young men who are good hunters earn respect

from their peers; and although hunting ability alone does not confer leadership, it is a positive factor in selecting any man otherwise qualified.

Hunting in modern day Bolivia has taken new directions for the Sirionó. In addition to supplying meat, many game animals have skins that can be sold for money or supplies. While I was in Ibiato, the period between crops, the sale of skins provided the primary source of cash income to villagers other than wage labor. Unfortunately, the Sirionó do not reap the profits they could from their hunting efforts. Many of the animals they hunt are on endangered species lists; and unlike other nations that give indigenous peoples the right to selectively hunt many of these animals, Bolivia makes no such distinction. Consequently, in order to sell their hides, the Sirionó must work through a contraband network that consists of dealers who pay the necessary "fees" to government officials. Next to cat skins, the jaguar being the most prized, caimanes, or South American alligators, bring in the highest returns. Still, it is the contrabandistas, not the hunters, who make the greatest profit from the sale of animal skins.

One afternoon, Nancy asked me if I would like to go caiman hunting with Chiro and her. I had been on other types of hunts, but had never seen how alligators were taken. At dusk, Chiro saddled up his two riding oxen. He rode the smaller one and Nancy and I took the larger. Chiro had his .22 rifle, machete, and a flashlight. We rode down the trail from town toward the road, cutting off into a large mango grove before reaching the junction. By now the last daylight was gone, and once we were under the cover of the trees, it was pitch black. Even the normally placid oxen were anxious at the darkness around them.

When we reached the far edge of the mango grove, Chiro stopped, dismounted and told us to do the same. We tied the oxen and started out on foot. Soon we were in the midst of a swamp. The trail was now under water

and the growth very dense. It was like walking through a tunnel as we moved along single file. At one point Chiro stopped and cut a long pole. I wasn't certain what it was for. Then he told Nancy and me to wait while he went deeper into the swamp. In a few minutes he returned, pulling a canoe behind him. The pole was to propel us through the shallow water. Once in the canoe I felt more at ease. I poured the water out of my boots and soon my feet were warm again. Gliding through the swamp in a canoe was much less threatening than slogging through it on foot, so I sat back and enjoyed the sounds and smells of the night. Suddenly we broke out of the swamp into a spectacular universe of stars. For an instant I wondered if we had crossed some threshold of reality; it was as if we were floating through the sky. Then I realized we were on a yomomal, a lake covered with floating grass, and that the grass was infested with hundreds of thousands of lightening bugs. In the black of the night, they looked just like the stars above them. Even Nancy and Chiro who had seen the sight many times before hesitated a moment to take in the scene around them.

We poled slowly and quietly through the grass, Chiro sweeping the light back and forth over the lake. He was looking for the telltale reflection of eyes peering above the water. We came upon two or three small caimanes but Chiro passed them by. He told me to listen for their barking, imitating the sound to call them nearer to us. Finally, after two hours of poling, we pulled up beside an animal of acceptable size. It wasn't much of a hunt: Chiro simply held the animal with his light, put the rifle to its head, and pulled the trigger. The caiman rolled over on its back and Chiro grabbed it by the tail, throwing it into the bottom of the canoe. I was disappointed. It couldn't have been more than a meter long. Chiro told me that most of the full grown animals had been hunted out on this lake because it was so

close to the village. The caimanes did travel from one water source to another, however, so there was always hope of bagging a large one even here.

We got only one more caiman that night and it was only slightly larger than the first. I was bothered that such immature animals were being taken. But I also realized that conservation is a luxury the Sirionó can't afford. As part of Bolivia's consumer economy, they need cash to buy clothing and kerosene; flour, sugar, and medicines; and guns and shells to continue hunting. Under these circumstances, anything is fair game.

It was nearly 2 a.m. when we returned to the oxen for the ride back to Ibiato. When we arrived in the village, Chiro tied the two caimanes up in a tree so the dogs wouldn't rip into them. Early the next morning he took off the soft side strips of the hide, the only part which is of value since the back and belly are too horny for use. The four strips of hide were salted and rolled up--the only skins treated in this way. All others, from fur bearing animals, are stretched and pegged to the ground or put on racks to dry in the sun.

A few days later, Don Adolfo arrived from Casarabe. Adolfo Mercado is a florid, heavy-set man who makes his living as a trader among the small settlements around Casarabe. Although Don Adolfo "buys low and sells high," as is customary among itinerant merchants, he is considered honest and trustworthy. He has been coming to Ibiato for almost ten years and depends on his reputation among the villagers for much of his business. Adolfo also engages in a certain amount of credit trading, particularly for the promise of hides. Dealers such as Adolfo speculate in this market and can make huge profits simply by waiting for prices to go up for specific animals. The most common item bought on credit is alcohol, and many Sirionó will gladly go into debt for a few days drinking and merrymaking.

When Adolfo rode into Ibiato as he usually did once or twice a week, he had two pack horses loaded with supplies. Chiro brought out his alligator skins, a collared peccary hide, and one large deer skin. Adolfo examined them carefully for damage and measured their length and width. There was no haggling over the price. Adolfo offered US $12 for all and Chiro accepted the money. Some he spent on supplies which Don Adolfo had spread over a rubber rain poncho laid on the ground. Chiro purchased six .22 shells, a liter of kerosene, a kilo of sugar, and some salt. The remainder of his money he put away in his house. Other men followed this same pattern, exchanging hides for cash and merchandise. By midmorning, Adolfo had exhausted his supply of customers and so loaded up his horses and departed for Casarabe. He carried with him three deer skins, six peccary, and one ocelot hide in addition to the caiman skins sold to him by Chiro.

When they were available, Don Adolfo also received other products the Sirionó had to offer: wild honey collected in the forest and placed in old bottles with a corn cob stopper; roasted palm fruits or other fruits in season; coffee and cacao beans; ostrich (rhea) feathers; and some specialty items requested by residents of Casarabe or Trinidad that could only be procured in the forest by those who knew where to look--herbal remedies, turtle oil, the fat from sting rays, and other products of the wilderness. Folk remedies are still in great demand by the peasantry as well as by many urban people, and they will pay good prices for those items. Don Adolfo acts as a middleman in the marketing of forest products, making a small profit; but more than anything, enjoying the goodwill of his clientele.

Although animal hides provide an important source of income to the Sirionó, their primary interest in hunting continues to be in obtaining meat. Like other peasant farmers in the lowlands, the Sirionó keep pigs, chickens, and a few ducks. Some, like Chiro, also have a few head of

cattle. Nevertheless, these animals do not provide a constant source of animal protein. Most peasant families I have known do not eat much meat; it is expensive to buy if it is available at all. Since farm animals compete for resources such as grains, relatively few are kept. Meat thus becomes a "feast" food, and animals are slaughtered infrequently. The typical lowland Bolivian peasant diet consists mainly of rice, corn, plantains, and manioc. The Sirionó, on the other hand, continue to have diets rich in meat. Most families I surveyed had meat in their houses an average of four days a week. Part of the explanation for this is that the Sirionó will search for and consume animals which most lowlanders consider starvation food only: tortoises, monkeys, and small, bony fish. The other reasons behind their high animal protein intake are to be found in the particular social and environmental situation in which they live.

From the earliest times of European settlement, the Beni has been a cattle region. With grasslands comprising as much as 80 percent of the department's territory, ranching became the leading source of income for the non-native population. Farming has always been of secondary importance primarily because savannas are difficult if not impossible to cultivate using traditional slash-and-burn techniques. Nonetheless, some crops, primarily for subsistence, are grown in the bands of forest along waterways and on "islas," the patches of wooded areas interspersed among the pampas. Typically, it is the European population which has controlled the cattle industry while the indigenous peasantry produced the foodstuffs necessary to feed themselves and ranch personnel.

The area of the Beni that the Sirionó inhabit, the east-central region, is about evenly distributed between forest and pasture. It is also more sparsely populated, particularly by indigenous groups, than the area west of Trinidad. This is noteworthy because it is the native peasantry which is

most dependent on game animals as a source of meat and income. In the western region, the competition for those animals has, according to anthropologist James Jones, led to the virtual extermination of many species.

For the Sirionó, hunting continues to be good. They are not competing with significant numbers of other people in the region for game resources. Sirionó land is surrounded by large ranches whose owners supply adequate beef to workers as part of their "ración" (kerosene, salt, sugar, flour, etc.) each month. These workers are also earning salaries along with their monthly rations so have no need to hunt for food or pelts. The competition between cattle and wild ruminants is also minimal. Disease, lack of attention, periodic flooding, screw worm infestations, predators and harvesting tend to control herd size, preventing overgrazing or even optimal use of pasture land. It is common to see native fauna such as deer (four species), peccary (two species), tapir, and capybara grazing right along with range cattle. Most ranchers permit Sirionó to hunt on their land, increasing the territory available beyond the limits of Sirionó holdings. Some ranchers are particularly eager to have the Indians go after predators such as jaguars and puma which kill calves and it is commonly held by many mestizos in the region that the Indians are "naturally adept" at stalking and killing this type of prey. While certain prejudices about the Sirionó may work for them, others do not. At least one rancher I met did not allow the Sirionó on his land because he said they "spooked" his cattle from their bad smell (an observation which I found totally unfounded); but then, he was also one of those individuals who resented the Sirionó having land contiguous to his own. In spite of this injunction, the Sirionó continued to hunt on his property, merely waiting for the ranch owner to return to his home in Trinidad. They then gained permission from the mayordomo (overseer), to look for game. Most ranch workers are themselves indigenous people or

descendants of mixed unions, making them more sympathetic toward the Sirionó and their need to hunt. As long as the cattle are not threatened, ranch personnel willingly look the other way. It is also common for Sirionó hunters to be given a place to stay on local ranches when they are on long hunts, and in return they will provide the ranch hands with some delicacy from a game animal they have killed.

Thus low population and a lack of competition for game resources as well as compatibility among ruminants have all contributed to ongoing successes for Sirionó hunters. But perhaps of even greater significance is the fact that the Sirionó are now mounted. This has impacted the group in several ways. First, and perhaps most obvious, the Sirionó can range farther afield, covering more territory and thus increasing their chances of finding game. Second, they can be more selective in the animals they hunt since they have greater range and mobility. "Trash" animals such as small birds and rodents, normally taken in the past, are usually ignored in the hopes of finding something larger. And third, greater amounts of meat can be packed on animals and brought back to the village, lessening the frequency of hunts and also the likelihood of taking immature animals (except, as we saw, in the case of caimanes).

All of these factors help explain why Ibiato has remained a stable and viable community for more than fifty years, contradicting normal patterns and expectations. For example, researchers such as William Vickers, Daniel Gross, and Raymond Hames have found that resource depletion will force most Amazonian villagers to move to another site after 20 years or less of habitation. Still, Sirionó success rests on a precarious balance of circumstances. An increase in population, a shift from ranching to plow agriculture, or more sophisticated cattle management could alter the delicate equilibrium which has maintained Sirionó hunting for so many years. If

hunting began to fail, they could theoretically become ranchers, since much of Sirionó land is savanna. But as yet, there has been little incentive to concentrate on cattle production while game remains plentiful.

As I noted earlier, the Sirionó focus on hunting as a meaningful and preferred way of life has made them less than diligent farmers. Most men and quite a few women would rather spend their time in pursuit of game than on clearing and working land. Part of the problem lies in the distance the Sirionó must travel to their chacos. In order to maintain vigilance over their holdings, the Sirionó no longer farm the land near the village but instead walk the 10 kilometers to the parcel known as "La Esperanza" located on the other side of the lake. Before the road to El Carmen was begun, the lake had to be crossed by canoe, with pack animals swum across, a tedious and time-consuming chore. Now there is an earthen levee which can be traversed in much less time, but the trip still takes three hours or more. This alone discourages constant attention to agricultural activities. But, according to Anderson, even when farms were close to the village, the Sirionó had to be prodded into working them. During mission years, only two days out of six were allotted to hunting, the remainder to be devoted to farming. Nowadays, there are no such constraints and consequently much more time is given to hunting or just relaxing in Ibiato than is to farming.

Most of the men in Ibiato clear only three or four tareas each year (a tarea is 10 by 100 meters). If they have selected a good area of virgin forest where the soil is "strong," they will harvest up to 90 arrobas (a measure of 25 pounds) of rice and about half that amount in corn that is planted at meter intervals among the young rice plants. When this crop is harvested, the land will be carpido, weeded, and then planted with manioc, plantains, and perhaps some sugarcane, papaya, or citrus trees. The virgin forest felled each year offers the advantage not only of fertility, but that

it may not have to be weeded at all before harvest. Once perennial crops are established such as plantains or sugarcane, they can survive with very little maintenance. The Sirionó chacos I visited were rather haphazardly cared for, especially in comparison to those of most lowlanders who live on their farms and are continually looking after their crops. The Sirionó have built small shelters on the land they farm and will remain in the chaco for several weeks at a time during the felling, burning, sowing, and later, harvesting seasons. But as soon as these chores are completed, the Sirionó return to their "town" homes in the village. A few of the older people, mainly those who lived much of their lives as nomads, remain in their chacos indefinitely, preferring the wilderness to life in Ibiato. Their continual presence on their small plots of land, however, seemed to have little effect on the condition of their fields which were as unkempt as the rest.

Chiro told me that the previous planting season, September-November, several of the men had put in a hectare or even two in anticipation of the new road to Casarabe being improved and the one to Trinidad graveled. Their plan evidently was to try to market larger amounts of rice and to take advantage of the better prices offered in the city. Since both roads remained in poor condition from a lack of funding to continue the project, getting these crops to market became impossible. In the past, farming in Ibiato was done cooperatively since Anderson organized work teams with overseers to teach the Sirionó to farm. Today, as in the case of the men who put in a hectare or more of rice, work may also be done collectively, but it is not the norm. In spite of years of training to work in teams, Sirionó men would rather work individually. The complaints about collective work are typical of those expressed to me by other lowland peasants: some men don't work well; others aren't "cumplido" (responsible); and still others may not see the work through. But even with only one man working,

one and a half hectares is not considered by most lowlanders to be an excessive amount of land to farm in any given year. The typical lowland peasant works one to two hectares himself, and up to five if he has help, again pointing to Sirionó lack of commitment to farming. Then too, it is normal to take two or perhaps three weeks at most to rozar (cut brush) and tumbar (fell trees) one hectare in preparation for burning. The Sirionó take one to two months to do the same work because they do not keep at it consistently, taking time off to hunt or gather.

The exceptions to this are the mestizo men living in Ibiato. One of these is Aiquiles Céspedes, the husband of Juana Eirubi, daughter of the ererecua Carlos Eirubi and half-sister to Chiro. Juana met Aiquiles in Trinidad, had a child by him while still married to Pablo Sosa, a half-Sirionó from Casarabe, and then married Aiquiles after Pablo died. Aiquiles is a good Camba, lowlander, born in Trinidad but brought up in Santa Cruz. He spent a number of years wandering around the lowlands from one job to another and from one woman to another, finally ending up in the Beni with Juana. Aiquiles, like most of the other mestizo men in Ibiato, seems content but somehow out of place. He has been there longer than most, about five years, and is accepted and respected by the Sirionó. Still, he remains on the periphery of village life, spending most of his time with Chiro and other younger, more acculturated men. I had the impression that he and the other non-Sirionó men have sought some sort of refuge in Ibiato, a self-imposed exile from the more intense problems of the outside world. It is as if the time in Ibiato were simply a hiatus in their lives before deciding to return to the demands of daily existence in the larger context of Bolivian society. All of the mestizo men in Ibiato eventually leave, tiring of its lack of activity or "movimiento" and of the "Indianness" of its residents. It is this latter point which underscores the perseverance of what is

intrinsically Sirionó in the culture of the community. On the surface, Ibiato and its people appear no different from other peasant communities found in remote areas of the lowlands. They dress, cut their hair, and except for very few of the older Sirionó who have not learned Spanish, talk like Benianos. In many respects, I as well found the Sirionó similar to people I knew in the Santa Cruz village of San Carlos where I lived and worked for four years as a Peace Corps volunteer. After a while, however, subtle differences begin to emerge, what I suppose might be termed the indigenous substrata, or their Sirionó culture that had never been totally suppressed or erased. I found this interesting--it was what I had come for in hopes of finding. The mestizo men found it only strange and disquieting.

In the meantime, Aiquiles Céspedes continues to make his life in Ibiato, conforming to the norms of expected behavior. He drinks only rarely and attends church regularly although he was raised a Catholic. He is a good hunter and a hardworking farmer, planting at least one hectare of rice a year. Although Aiquiles seems to genuinely like the Sirionó, he like the other mestizos considers them poor and lazy farmers; consequently he is driven to outperform the Sirionó simply to show them what a "real" farmer can do. Aiquiles, however, does not walk 10 kilometers to his chaco. He solicited and received land only four kilometers from the village and fenced it (another reason the Sirionó work the land on the other side of the lake--the town's cattle do not range there). As a result, he spends one or two days a week working his land and so tends his crops on a regular basis. Even so, his standard of living is about equal to that of the rest of the community; Aiquiles' house is small with few furnishings, and Juana dresses no better than the other women. They do have more money to spend on items such as sugar, lard, and coffee; but then, as a mestizo, Aiquiles is accustomed to three meals a day, not one or two, and having rice on his plate

consistently rather than a roasted ear of corn, fruits, or palm nuts. Aiquiles, unlike the Sirionó, will store his rice and when he does sell it, will look for the best price.

Most Sirionó sell their rice right in Ibiato, and consequently at low prices, to the rescatadores who scavenge small communities. Rescatadores are entrepreneurs with a little working capital that they invest in rice with the hope that the price will go up enough to give them a healthy profit. They will search the most remote areas of the backlands, bringing along their own sacks and pack animals, and offering rock bottom prices to people who have little interest in making the long trip to Trinidad with a few arrobas of rice to sell. Thus people like the Sirionó are likely to accept the offer of ready cash even though the price is far below market value. Normally, by three to four months after harvest, the Sirionó have consumed or sold all but the seed needed for next year's crop--and at times this goes as well. Another crop or two of corn will be planted for subsistence, with manioc, sweet potatoes, and plantains taking up the slack. In spite of their taste for, and dependence on cultivated crops, the Sirionó still rely on wild foods periodically. Unlike mestizos who will eat these products as a type of snack food, the Sirionó may spend days eating little else but motacú fruit, or aguaí, a large pear-like fruit which can be eaten raw or cooked. For the Sirionó these fruits are delicacies, and while they are in season, even rice, if it is available, will take a back seat.

In recent years, the Sirionó have begun receiving products from CARITAS, the Catholic Relief Service which distributes surplus food donated by the U.S. government. The villagers refer to these supplies as "los productos" and eagerly await their arrival every two months, assuming the road is passable and they can be brought from Trinidad. The products received include wheat and corn flour, CSM (corn-soy milk in powdered form),

powdered cow's milk, and cooking oil. Having wheat flour means that bread can be baked, and for days on end the two big adobe ovens will be used almost continually. Although flour can be bought from time to time in Casarabe, it is always expensive. While I was in Ibiato, there was never any flour available in Casarabe's stores since the little that came in was hoarded by the mestizos for their own use and to bake bread for sale. Ibiato's young women have learned to bake well, and after weeks of a very monotonous diet, I too, began to look forward to the arrival of "los productos" and the variety they offered.

In most respects, the Sirionó get along quite well on their own in terms of subsistence although they like to consume many of the items which others consider necessities. Most of all, they want to be able to purchase salt and sugar, having become accustomed to both after more than fifty years of use. There is no substitute for salt which is usually obtained in the cheaper form of a block, mined in the highlands and shipped to the oriente. Sugar, however, is still somewhat of a luxury, since it can be replaced by honey or cane syrup. In precontact times, the Sirionó hunted for and consumed enormous quantities of wild honey, taken from bee holes in trees. In fact, according to Silva, Anderson, and the older Sirionó, the major reason they wanted metal tools, particularly axes, was to be able to extract honey more efficiently. Today, the Sirionó spend less time searching for honey than in the past; now they produce sugarcane and can boil the juice into syrup.

For years the villagers had only a crude hand press consisting of a hole bored into a post with a long pole inserted to crush one section of cane at a time. Then in 1980, the people of Ibiato met and decided to hire a man in Casarabe who could make them a trapiche, a large geared press turned by horses or oxen. The trapiche cost 25,000 pesos, in 1980 about US

$350. Two cows were sold and the remainder came from a head tax, or cuota, paid by every family. This was done without Jack's knowledge, and he was displeased to learn that he had not been consulted concerning the disposition of the town's cattle. Chiro was openly ambivalent about this issue when we talked about it, supporting the old missionary's desire to maintain the herd, but also understanding the need for his people to provide more adequately for themselves. The trapiche took work and sacrifice to obtain and remains the pride and joy of the community.

Rather than have it built in Ibiato proper, the trapiche was placed in the chacos where the sugarcane is readily accessible. Nancy, Chiro, some of the children, and I went out one day on horseback during my first visit in 1982 to give the press a try (it was still too early to harvest cane during my second trip). We cut the cane and pressed it rapidly, using the horses that we had ridden to drive the gears. The juice was cool and frothy and made a refreshing drink in the dry heat of that day in July. We pressed more, enough to fill several containers we had brought along to take back to Ibiato to make syrup. After we returned to the village, Nancy boiled the liquid slowly for several hours, reducing it to a thick brown syrup which would keep for months. For many Sirionó, this is not only an acceptable substitute for white sugar (and certainly much more nutritious) but also for honey, which is harder to find and then not always in satisfactory amounts.

Interestingly, many of the Sirionó, or at least those taken by Perry Priest to Tumi Chuqua, have learned beekeeping. But in spite of the fact that honey has always had a good market in Bolivia and would be an additional source of income, beekeeping among the Sirionó hasn't really caught on. Like farming, successful beekeeping requires almost constant attention and vigilance, something that the Sirionó do not want to be saddled with. To date, Chiro is the only Sirionó who keeps hives, working about six or

eight. Since Chiro is no better farmer than most, it may be that his devotion to beekeeping is more out of deference to his friendship with Perry. But then, given Chiro's level of acculturation, he may also perceive that if he sticks with it, he may reap some future profit as is the case with his cattle herd.

Perry Priest continues to support Chiro, or anyone else who might be interested in beekeeping by providing hive bodies, wax foundation and an extractor which are kept in the Priest's house. Over the years, Chiro has become quite an experienced beekeeper, depending less on Perry's visits for advice. In recent years these visits have become more infrequent I was told; but according to Hernán Eato, one of the teachers, Perry and Anne were due for another shortly. Although the Priests had not spent the time in Ibiato that Anderson had, I knew their impact had been significant. Their presence in the village would no doubt offer new insights into the nature of the community.

# TEN

We learned of the imminent arrival of Perry and Anne Priest from the radio they had in their house. It was powered by a 12-volt car battery kept charged by a small solar unit nailed to a tall post outside. Hernán Eato would tend the radio once a week to see if there were any messages. One morning he was informed that the Priests would be flying in from Cochabamba in a week. When Nancy delivered this news to me I was certain there must have been some mistake. The airstrip was unusable. She responded by saying that the men would go out and patch it up, and sure enough, the next morning Daniel and Arturo called the men to work. For the next four days a few of the men would take turns throwing dirt in the holes dug by pigs and cutting down brush. After they had finished I walked the length of the strip. It still looked like a death trap. It had been raining almost every day, and the dirt covering the holes had only soaked up the rainwater and turned to mud.

The morning of the Priests' arrival was partly cloudy with rain not long off. I wondered if they would cancel the flight. At 10 a.m. Hernán turned on the radio for the latest bulletin. The Priests were on their way. Shortly before noon a small plane flew over the village, banking sharply to the south in preparation for landing. We all ran down to the airstrip to meet the visitors. I still found it inconceivable that anyone would attempt anything but an emergency landing on the field. Images of a plane catapulting end over end flashed through my mind as I watched the craft coming down near the treetops. The Sirionó were smiling and talking loudly, trying to mask their obvious concern over what was about to happen. I walked over to Chiro and Nancy. Chiro looked solemn.

"Will they make it? I asked.

"I think so. The mission pilots are good at this sort of thing," Chiro said.

"Well, I hope so."

The plane was headed straight in now, the motor barely audible as the pilot throttled back and lowered the flaps. When they touched down there was a huge spray of mud that partially obliterated our view. The pilot fought his craft as it plunged in and out of potholes and skated back and forth across the slick field. After what seemed hours the plane finally came to a halt at the far end of the airstrip. The entire fuselage and the underside of the wings were covered with dripping, black ooze.

The pilot taxied the plane up the field toward the throng of people waiting there. The Priests climbed out, looking pale and shaken. Their grim faces quickly turned to smiles as the Sirionó rushed in to greet them. Both Perry and Anne looked at me briefly a few times, obviously not remembering me and for an instant, letting show a small frown of concern as they rapidly tried to assess who I might be and what I was doing in Ibiato. I took that moment to approach them and introduce myself. At the mention of Gainesville, Perry remembered me, and again there was that quick flash of assessment. They were warm in their greeting, but I had the feeling that they would rather have had the village to themselves.

The Priests' few supplies for their two week stay were unloaded and carried up to their house. I dropped out of the crowd to say hello to the pilot. I expressed concern about the condition of the field. He told me that it was one of the worst he had seen in a long time and that if it didn't dry out in the next two weeks, the Priests would have to get to Trinidad by land where he would pick them up. Then he asked me if he could bring me anything if he made the return trip. I demurred. Just as I had at first hesitated to accept the Andersons' hospitality, worrying that I might

somehow be compromising myself, I didn't want to expose myself to this same possibility with SIL. I knew that I was overreacting; but I was still gun-shy from an earlier experience with missionaries who had at first treated me miserably in hopes of encouraging me to leave; only after it became obvious that I couldn't be forced out was I extended civility. The entire experience had left me paranoid about accepting even common courtesies from any missionary.

The pilot repeated his offer, and I again refused. He looked at me oddly. I told him I was an anthropologist, apropos of nothing, really. I suppose my logic was to test his sincerity. I knew that once I delivered this information, he would probably be less inclined to offer assistance. He just smiled, asking me about the type of work I was doing and if I had found "anything interesting." I relaxed a little. We talked a few more minutes and then he went to the Priests' house, no doubt to discuss the return trip.

An hour later the pilot walked back to his plane to prepare for the flight to Cochabamba. After checking over everything, he had the men roll the airplane as far back off the end of the strip as possible, gaining every inch of footage available. With the brakes set, he pushed the throttle wide open. The wings and fuselage began to vibrate violently. When it seemed as if the plane would tear itself apart, the pilot released the brakes and the plane began to move forward. At that moment, he pulled up the nose, using a maneuver I had never seen before. The plane sped down the field on just the two rear wheels located under the wings, which would reduce the chance of flipping over should it hit a deep hole. With a tremendous roar and a spray of mud, the plane lifted off the field, circling back over the village before heading off toward the west and Cochabamba. I saw the pilot look down and wave at us. I waved back.

The Priests spent their first few days in Ibiato making their house liveable. It had been many months since their last visit and the place needed repairs: a new fence around the small porch to keep out the cattle that liked to sleep there at night--the same cows that kept me awake when I had stayed in the house; some adobe in a large hole in a side wall where the pigs had rooted; and a few new tiles to replace the ones that had cracked from the falling limbs of the huge tamarind tree that shaded the house. During this time, I kept my distance, still wary of these new arrivals and concerned at how I would be treated by them. I was also worried that the Priests might try to isolate me from the Siriono by encouraging them to avoid me--a tactic I had experienced before. These fears, fortunately, turned out to be unfounded. As the days passed, I would walk by their house on my way to Nancy's, always greeting them but still remaining aloof. If there was a strategy to this, I suppose it was to avoid any interaction that could put me in an adversarial position with the Priests. Nancy was a little curious why I didn't seek out these people who were her friends and my countrymen, and I really didn't have an answer that would make sense to her.

Then, after lunch one day Nancy and I were working in her house on a hammock. The Priests had brought in a Guarayo woman several years ago to teach the women how to weave cotton hammocks using a homemade loom. Several of the Siriono women still practiced this art; and when thread was available, they would make hammocks that could be sold in Trinidad. Anne Priest usually brought thread with her from Cochabamba and would sell it to the women at cost. Nancy had purchased enough to make a large hammock for Chiro, taking the time to instruct me in the different designs they used. There was a knock at the door and Anne Priest walked in. Nancy was a little shy, as she always is around visitors and especially those who are of higher

social status. Anne sat down and began to chat with us. She was cheerful and pleasant, but I had a hard time moving freely into the conversation. Then she asked Nancy if she would "let me go" for the evening so I might have supper with them. Nancy replied that she hadn't planned anything special for dinner that night. It was a neat trick. At first I was resentful at having been so deftly maneuvered into a social occasion with the Priests, especially on their turf. Finally, I realized that my somewhat irrational response to their presence in the village was only serving to restrict access to information necessary to my research.

At dinner that night I opened the conversation by asking Perry why the Sirionó called him "Taita Eoco." He told me that his given name is almost impossible to pronounce and there is no Spanish equivalent. Thus the Sirionó gave him a nickname according to their custom which is to choose some outstanding physical characteristic. Since Perry is well over six feet tall, the Sirionó call him Long-tall Elder. Anne, whose name has a Spanish counterpart, is simply referred to as Señora Ana. I judged the Priests to be in their mid- to late-fifties. They had worked in Bolivia most of their adult lives, dividing their time at first between San Pedro de Richards, Tumi Chuqua and later, Ibiato, translating the New Testament into Sirionó, a task which took 25 years. During that time, several informants, including Chiro, were taken to Tumi Chuqua to help with the work and also to receive instruction in Christianity. In recent years, Perry had been named the SIL director for Bolivia, but the program was now being phased out. Tumi Chuqua had been turned over to the Bolivian government and the Priests would be leaving the country in a matter of months. These two weeks, they explained, were part of their annual leave that they had elected to spend with the Sirionó in Ibiato.

When I questioned the Priests more closely about the nature of their work, they carefully avoided the religious aspects. Although SIL is a mission group, the field branch of Wycliffe Bible Translators, its influence and longevity in many nations are largely due to concerted efforts by its members to present themselves as linguists not missionaries. By and large, SIL missionaries are better educated and somewhat more liberal in their views toward fundamental evangelical Christianity than other groups. Unlike New Tribes, for example, a mission that demands rigid adherence to its particular Biblical interpretations, SIL is willing to make certain accommodations with native peoples, claiming to work within native cultural contexts. Still, it would appear that their effects on indigenous peoples have been uneven, causing alarm and criticism from protectionist organizations such as Survival International.

After this first meeting, I spent additional time with the Priests, visiting with them on their porch along with any Sirionó who happened by. Both Anne and Perry speak fluent Sirionó and unless they are with those who never learned it, will insist on using only Sirionó (Nancy, like several others, cannot speak Sirionó. She was brought up on a ranch north of Ibiato where her mother was the only Sirionó speaker). Perry is very much a proponent of seeing the Sirionó language preserved and has been instrumental in keeping Spanish only a second language in the community. Much of his influence has come through the schooling of the children who receive bilingual education until the fourth grade. Two of the three Sirionò bi-lingual teachers were trained at Tumi Chuqua.

Perry has been able to achieve state-sanctioned, bi-lingual education in Ibiato because of the influence SIL has in Bolivia's Ministry of Education. With expertise needed in areas of indigenous instruction that Bolivian educators could not supply, SIL linguists were able to establish a

firm niche in this administrative sector. With this leverage, they could, of course, see that many of their own converts and trainees were given teaching positions throughout the country. From one vantage point, it became an insidious means of infiltrating a public system with individuals bent on proselytizing their particular ideology. But from another, it also insured that the Sirionó as well as other indigenous groups would have their own teachers and that native languages would be taught in school. In order for this to occur, all of the materials used by the bilingual teachers had to be prepared and printed by SIL, with the approval of the Ministry of Education. These teaching aids are secular in nature and many of them focus on themes of traditional Sirionó culture.

The village of Ibiato receives government salaries for four teachers: three are Sirionó and one is a "fiscal," sent from Trinidad. Given the paucity of Bolivia's resources, it is highly unusual for a village with only 70 school age children to have four full-time teachers. Again, this can only be attributed to Perry's influence within the Ministry. Before the Priests arrived on this latest visit to Ibiato, word was sent from the Ministry of Education office in Trinidad that two of the <u>items</u> were to be discontinued, those lines held by Hernán Eato and Eddy Ino, both trained in bi-lingual education at Tumi Chuqua. The reason given for releasing these lines was that neither man had attended a state normal school and so was not properly certified. The third Sirionó teacher, Nataniel Enía, had been sent by Perry to the normal school in Riberalta when it opened and so holds a legitimate teaching certificate. When it seemed as if Ibiato would indeed lose two of its teachers, Perry arrived to say that the problem had been "worked out." Both Hernán and Eddy were on the payroll when the school year began.

Although Nataniel is much younger than Hernán and Eddy, his status as a "normalista" has given him greater respect than his age might normally merit. He is the appointed Director of the school and keeps all the records. Nata, as he is known, is also a skilled hunter, adding to his status as respected teacher. The salaries received by the Maestros rurales (rural teachers) are very low, usually no more than US $20-25 a month, when salaries are paid (lately a sporadic process). As a consequence, quality and motivation among rural teachers tend to be poor. Eddy and Hernán both fall into this category, a fact that is recognized by the villagers who frequently grumble about the two men's lack of interest in their work. Nata, on the other hand, not only has received probably better training, but is young and enthusiastic, taking his job as a teacher very seriously. His efforts have paid off in the praise he receives from students and parents.

Although the three teachers receive the only salaries in the community, their pay is not enough to set them above the others. In fact, because Eddy and Hernán not only are poor teachers but poor hunters as well, preferring instead to buy meat from others when they have money, their positions as schoolteachers have failed to give them any additional prestige in the village.

Being of a chiefly line, Nataniel is the only one of the three teachers who could at some point vie for the position of ererecua. He, like Chiro, is well educated and highly acculturated, but his youth (24) precludes much real decision-making at present. Nata likes to listen to his big stereo radio, play soccer, and teach school. For the moment, he gives no indication of seeking power or threatening the existing authority of Daniel and Arturo. The villagers perceive him as a competent teacher but not yet someone to be reckoned with.

The fourth teacher is always an outsider and always a problem. None has lasted more than one school year and several haven't made it more than a few weeks. Again, it is the issue of placing a mestizo, albeit from a rural background, in an Indian community. The complaints from both sides are always the same. The mestizo teacher invariably tries to seduce his students or the wives of the men; in the one or two instances where the teacher was a woman, the same held true. And particularly in the case of the male teachers, there is the drinking problem. It would appear that as the situation in Ibiato becomes more difficult for them and hostilities arise, the teachers drink more often and to greater excess. At that point, they will be asked to leave and a replacement requested.

From the teacher's side, he or she expects adequate accommodations during their tenure in any village. The Sirionó's ideas about adequate housing and a mestizo's are usually quite disparate. The teacher who arrived during my stay and who was to have taught the 5th and 6th grades was given space in the Anderson house. The Sirionó began construction of a separate dwelling but the men were unenthusiastic about completing it. The teacher tired of the bats and lack of privacy and left after one week. He was also to have been supplied with meat, but no one could decide whose turn it was to do this. His disgust was apparent when he loaded his few belongings on a borrowed horse and rode to Casarabe. In spite of Ibiato's reputation as an undesirable post, the government continues to provide fiscal teachers each year. This again can be attributed to Perry's influence at higher levels in the Ministry of Education.

There are six grades taught in the brick and tile schoolhouse built by Anderson many years ago. When Jack was in the village, he paid to have teachers work there since the government at that time was not willing to invest its resources in an Indian mission. Perry Priest changed that when

he took his work to Ibiato. The present system is set up so that Hernán and Eddy teach the lower grades, and these mostly in Sirionó. Nata takes the third and fourth grades which are taught in Sirionó and Spanish, and the outside teacher has the two upper grades, both in Spanish only. Every child in Ibiato attends school whose importance was stressed first by Anderson and later by the Priests. Parents living in the outlying areas will send their children to Ibiato to live with relatives so that they might attend school, or they may actually move the family to the village during the term. Even older children, 14 or 15 years of age, may continue to attend classes simply because there is so little to do.

When the school year finally began in 1984 after several prolonged national strikes, the children were eager to go to class. Although their clothing may be stained and mended, they will be sent to school in clean clothes and with combed hair. I watched to see if these efforts at appearance would begin to falter as is frequently the case in small villages once the newness of school wears off, but it did not. Getting ready to go to school each day was a frenzied hour of dressing and getting hair braided or slicked down, collecting a pencil and notebook (purchased from Don Adolfo), and finding a stool or chair to take along to sit on. Education is taken very seriously in Ibiato.

In spite of the formality in which education is viewed, school in Ibiato, like most rural villages in Bolivia, is a makeshift affair. There are no books other than the three or four owned by teachers, and the only classroom equipment other than a few old desks consists of a painted piece of plywood used as a chalkboard. The school receives one box of chalk a year that Nata carefully hoards, handing out only what is absolutely necessary. Most of the learning involves rote memorization--copying down lessons from the blackboard and then reciting them from memory. A great deal of

time is spent in repeating these lessons aloud, and as I passed by the school I would laugh at how the children's high voices sounded just like the creek frogs singing in unison. In spite of these obstacles, the students do learn to read and write, and in two languages. I remember the young people I knew in San Carlos who, after five or six years in school, soon lost their literacy from simple lack of practice. In Ibiato, however, all but the old and recent arrivals can read, and read well. Once out of school, most of their reinforcement comes from reading the Bible. In contrast to mestizo communities that are predominately Catholic, the people of Ibiato read their Bibles frequently. Bibles are rare in Catholic towns since Catholicism has never stressed their use. If people do own them, most are incapable of making out more than a few simple words because of the infrequency of use. In light of my previous experience in Catholic villages, I found it more than a little strange to be in a predominately evangelical community surrounded by people who routinely sat around and read their Bibles.

In spite of his past involvement in the religious formation of the community, Perry kept a very low profile in this area. I had to wonder if some of this was due to my being there. His wife, Anne, however, took a dominant role in the religious life of the village. Whether this was thrust upon her as a last minute accommodation to the presence of an anthropologist, I have no idea; but it certainly gave Anne the lion's share of work. In addition to teaching a week long "Vacation Bible School" for the children in which they learned hymns and Bible passages in Sirionó, Anne, a registered nurse, tended the sick from the front room of their small home. While this was going on, Perry puttered around the house and had a few apparently intense counseling sessions with several of the village men. One of these was Raúl, also a onetime student at Tumi Chuqua. Raúl had been drinking steadily for months, depriving his family of necessities, abusing his wife,

and generally making a nuisance of himself. He spent several afternoons with Perry on the porch, huddled over in earnest conversation. I could only guess at the content of these discussions; but the following Sunday Raúl got up in church and with eyes brimming over, begged forgiveness of everyone for his past behavior, promising to reform his ways. I thought the entire episode humiliating. When I looked around, however, I realized I was the only one in the congregation with any misgivings. Raúl had slowly been alienating himself from the community. The confession of guilt may have been couched in religious terms, but it was more a public expression of social transgressions. When it was over, there was thunderous applause and Raúl was welcomed back into the community, forgiven and a new man. I had never seen anything quite like it.

On their second and last Sunday in Ibiato, the Priests played an active role in the morning's service. Perry was careful in explaining to me beforehand that the people had asked him to preach, and that he was only complying with their wishes because he and his wife would be leaving soon. Perry delivered the sermon in Sirionó, and after the service, Anne had her Bible school students present the hymns and passages they had learned. John 3:16 was very popular this year. The recital delighted the Sirionó who enjoyed watching their offspring show off what they had learned.

For many Sirionó, I suspect attendance at church on Sundays and weeknights is more an act of comunitas than faith. In spite of years of teaching, Christianity seems to have layered over, rather than replaced, earlier animistic beliefs. The Sirionó consider themselves creyentes (true believers as opposed to Catholics who are not); but from a purely fundamentalist perspective, they retain many "superstitions." Christianity for the Sirionó is a new set of beliefs and ideas, many of which they cannot relate to in terms of their specific situation. It seems to work best in

the church on the mound, in the cleared space connected to the outside world by trails and roads and radio waves. It also works very well in the big church in Trinidad that Anderson built and where he still preaches every night and most of the day on Sunday. But once the Sirionó move outside the civilization that fits so well with its Christian ideologies, things are different. In the wilderness God still exists, but now there are also other beings: strange, unexplainable malevolent spirits that inhabit the recesses of the forest. The Sirionó drift back and forth between these two worlds easily, never questioning whether one ideology might conflict with the other. They are both necessary and useful. Even the most acculturated Sirionó like Chiro, Vicente, and Nathaniel still pay heed to the mysteries of the wilderness.

One evening we were sitting at the small table finishing our supper of masaco and tea when we heard a loud crashing sound from the woods nearby. Chiro's house is located at the base of the mound, close to the wooded arroyo that flows around it. During the rainy season, like now, much of the creek becomes a tangled swamp. Again, there was a thrashing sound. We stopped eating and listened carefully. I said it sounded like a cow. Chiro shook his head no, cattle never went into that area. It was too thick and mucky. Maybe it was an anta, a tapir. Chiro got out his flashlight and .22 and then called to Wilson, Nancy's brother, who lived only a few yards away. Wilson, too, had heard the sound, and met Chiro half way. He was joined by his wife, Doroty, some of their older children, Nancy's mother, Elena, and stepfather, Demetrio. Our group walked silently toward the low spot where the noise seemed to be coming from. A few more people, Eddy Ino, his wife Asunta, and Pedro Pepe caught up with us. The talk was hushed and speculative as Chiro and Wilson worked their way into the tangle. Every now and then the thrashing could be heard. Nancy and Demetrio told me it must be

something bad, a jaguar but not a jaguar. An evil spirit in the form of the tiger. Or even a sorcerer who had taken the form of a jaguar. At this an older man, Julio Bei, approached to agree with the latter suggestion.

"A few years ago," he said, "I went hunting with a Guarayo. Everyone told me not to hunt with him because he was a brujo. But I decided to go anyway. When we were well into the forest, he turned and told me, 'Don't be afraid at what you are going to see. Don't run away.' Then he walked on ahead and before I knew it there was a tiger standing there. The tiger went off into the forest, returning shortly with a taitetú [collared peccary] it had killed. It left the taitetú and returned to the woods. The Guarayo came out. He walked over to the animal, picked it up and motioned for me to come along. I never went hunting with that man again."

Julio Bei's story was met with knowing looks from the members of the slowly increasing gallery of onlookers. Finally, Chiro and Wilson came crawling back up a fallen tree trunk they had used as a pathway into the swamp. All they could see, Chiro said, was some reddish fur.

"It's the tiger!" whispered Demetrio. Fear seemed to grip the onlookers. "Kill it! Shoot it now before it gets anyone!"

"No," Chiro said, "The fur doesn't look right to be a jaguar. I want to try to get a better look."

Two of the younger men joined Chiro and Wilson as they tried to clear away some of the undergrowth and heavy vines. Then one of the men shouted that it was a cow. It had mired itself in the swamp and became so entangled it was immobilized. But rather than calm people's fear, this news only seemed to increase it.

"It's not a real cow. Cows never go in there," one woman said, repeating Chiro's earlier pronouncement. "It must be a brujo."

The men brought machetes, axes, and lassos and after about 20 minutes' work, extricated the animal. Covered with mud and wild-eyed from fear, I had to admit that the poor cow looked like some terrible apparition. Once freed, it raised its tail and ran down the trail into the forest.

"I knew it!" said Demetrio. "It's not a cow. No cow would head into the woods alone on a dark night like tonight. It would join the others in the village!"

There were murmurs from the crowd. Slowly, people began to return to their homes, but there was concern in their voices as they quietly talked among themselves. Nancy, Chiro, the children, and I went back to the house as well. The in-laws and a few neighbors congregated in the room while we finished our now cold supper. After we had eaten, Chiro told this story:

"When I was about 19, I went on an ito [long hunt] with several people including my grandfather's brother. At the pascana [camp] the women made chicha from palm heart and honey, and let it stand for a few days. Then the men got drunk. My grandfather's brother got very drunk and sick. He would go off for a while and then return. Then he got into his string hammock. At that moment a strange sound was heard in the forest, a whistling wind. It came closer and closer and then swirled through camp, upsetting everything and frightening everyone. Even the dogs were barking furiously. When the wind left, the people noticed that the old man in the hammock was breathing strangely--then he stopped breathing entirely. People were very frightened. When dawn came they dug a shallow grave as quickly as possible. At this time they noticed that all the patujuces [a broad-leafed plant that grows in low areas] near our camp had been flattened down, and that the old man's tracks were everywhere. It was as if something had dragged him around in there. Another man and I were the last to leave the place because we had to look for our dogs that had run off after some pigs. As we were coming

through the forest we heard several cries. Ai...ai...ai.... I thought perhaps my grandfather's brother wasn't dead after all and was coming back to life. I tried to convince the others to go back and see, but no one would come with me. No one has ever gone back to that place."

Others that night told similar stories of the unknown, linking death, sickness, and bad luck with the evil woods spirits. Interestingly, these malevolent beings were never equated with Satan or his messengers, a frequent practice among people who have received teachings in Christianity. For the Sirionó, the world of the forest is something very distinct from that outside, they are two separate domains of experience. The old ways and beliefs must be respected and heeded if one is to survive in the wilderness; but in the day to day struggle of being modern Bolivians as well, Christianity is the Sirionó's passport to move among those who make the rules. In many ways, the duality of their beliefs is a metaphor for life as a whole. The Sirionó straddle the old and the new and must be able to function in both.

Just as the Sirionó move deftly from one set of religious beliefs to another, they also manage to juggle traditional with contemporary concepts of sickness and health. Because the Sirionó had no shamans or other religious specialists, the introduction of modern medical practices did not create any conflicts of interest as it has among the Guarayos. The Sirionó readily make use of western pharmaceuticals if they are available, particularly antibiotics and vaccines. They will also seek hospitalization in Trinidad in the case of serious illness or accident. In an effort to have health care available in Ibiato, Nancy and some of the other women had been attending classes in Trinidad to be trained as village health specialists. The government pays for the instruction, room, and board of the participants during the one week of classes held four times in the course of a year.

When the women have completed this training, one of them will receive a small salary and a supply of medicines. In the meantime, Anne Priest supplemented this instruction by working with them and anyone else interested in learning how to deal with injury, sickness, and childbirth.

At first glance, it would appear that the Sirionó have become completely modernized in their concepts of medicine and illness, but their ready acceptance of western practices can be somewhat misleading. Operating on another level are the folk beliefs the Sirionó continue to hold. In most instances, the two systems do not come into conflict. If modern medicine is available, old methods and beliefs will be set aside. The Sirionó are well aware that in most instances, it simply is more effective. The one exception to this is witchcraft, which is not native to the Sirionó but is greatly feared by them. As was the case with the baby who died from pneumonia after the mother gave in to the bruja, witchcraft won out over modern medicine. It was not that the child's mother preferred witchcraft but that pressure put on her by the bruja was too much to withstand. Had the child survived, the incident would have given the sorceress a stronger foothold in the community and a potential source of income.

Unlike their traditional animistic beliefs that exist outside of Christianity, the Sirionó equate witchcraft with the forces of evil, or Satan. Brujos have crossed that boundary between nature and civilization, placing them in opposition to those beliefs that operate in the modern world. It is trespassing and therefore dangerous, threatening the equilibrium the villagers have established between their two worlds. Several Guarayos were literally run out of town for practicing witchcraft. One, a young male, was stripped and publicly whipped by the ererecuas before being escorted to the trail out of the village. The Sirionó bruja from Salvatierra who was now residing in the community presented a different sort of problem--she was one

of their own. Still, she received a formal visit and a stern warning from the two ererecuas as well as one from Chiro and Vicente to cease her activities or face expulsion from Ibiato.

There is also distinction now made between brujos, or sorcerers, and curanderos, or healers, a difference most probably learned from other peasant peoples in the area. Again, because the Sirionó had no tradition of shamanism, they do not have specialists adept at curing practices. This knowledge, which remains rudimentary at best, is shared by all. The closest the Sirionó have to a real curandero is Pastor Mateo Pópole who is actually a partero (male midwife), something very rare in the lowlands or anywhere for that matter. But since men were never excluded from witnessing childbirth (although women traditionally handled the deliveries) the Sirionó see nothing strange or improper in having a male in this role. Pastor explained that he had little choice but to assist his wife in her deliveries since they were alone for so many years on a ranch with only males in residence. As each child came along, he learned a little more, eventually being called to other ranches to help with deliveries. Over time, he became very skilled at his craft, having remarkable success in diagnosing potential complications and accurately assessing fetal position by external palpation. He also experimented with externally manipulating the fetus to avoid breech presentations. Now, people as far away as Casarabe will seek out his aid in a difficult birth. He is credited with a great many successful deliveries of difficult cases and for having saved numerous lives. As his fame spread, his fees got higher so that now only those with adequate resources can afford his prenatal care. Pastor has never refused an emergency summons, however, and will come at any hour to attend someone in need of his services.

Most births in Ibiato occur without complication and are attended by one or two of the older women or a few of the younger. Today, the Sirionó are aware of the hazards of infection and will be careful to use only a sterile knife or razor blade when cutting the cord. During the first years of contact, many infants were lost to tetanus infections because steel knives began to replace the bamboo sliver customarily used for this purpose. The bamboo cutting blade was always taken directly from a growing stalk so in most cases was clean because it had to be peeled. Once knives became common, they would just be picked up off the ground and used. Now, the Sirionó understand the connection between tetanus and unclean objects and so are careful in what they use to sever the umbilical cord. As a consequence, the numbers of children are increasing, and once vaccinated, they have a better chance of surviving to maturity than in the past.

Many of the old beliefs concerning sickness and health that have persisted are based on a simple transference of the physical characteristics of plant and animal foods to people, particularly pregnant women. Thus a pregnant woman should not eat double fruits or she will have twins (usually smaller at birth and therefore more likely to die); she should not consume animals with "turned" feet such as anteaters or sloths or she will have a clubfooted child; deformed animals should not be eaten because they cause deformed children; turtle eggs are also taboo--they are covered with a membrane and this bears a resemblance to a woman's womb when it extrudes. Intestines are another forbidden food item because they cause the cord to wrap around the infant's neck. Neither should a woman eat from the sides of the rice pot where the grain has stuck since it will cause the placenta to remain attached after birth. Children should not eat ears of corn with worms in them because their teeth will rot.

While these taboos are known by even the younger girls, they are seldom observed with any regularity. The older women may exert some pressure to do so if they are in residence with a daughter or daughter-in-law, but there is a tendency now to ignore these restrictions. Still, when a child is born with a deformity such as a clubfoot, there will be talk that it was because the mother ate an anteater or a sloth.

Perhaps because many of these old beliefs don't come into direct conflict with Christianity, the Priests have not preached against them. There seems to be a recognition that they belong to a "folk tradition" that is basically innocuous and at times, even worth preserving. Some of Perry's linguistic work has entailed the transcription and publication of Sirionó customs and the old tales related by Jeje and others. Unlike other missionaries I have known, the Priests seem to value much of what is Sirionó culture and are concerned with its survival. I would like to think that their motives are genuine, and not simply a selfish desire to have someone left to read the New Testament translation that took them a quarter of a century to complete.

The weather improved enough during the Priests' two-week stay for the plane to return. It was another rough landing, but not as bad as the first. The pilot climbed out of the cockpit, reached into his pocket, and with a grin handed me an enormous Swiss chocolate candy bar. I already had the wrapper off and was savoring my first bite when the small plane lifted off and droned into the distance.

# ELEVEN

It didn't take very long for Ibiato's company manners to wear off. After the Priests left, things pretty much settled back to normal. While the missionary couple was in Ibiato people were on their best behavior--no drinking and no squabbling. There had been a similar reaction at first to my presence in the village; but once the Sirionó realized I wasn't a missionary and wasn't there to oversee their behavior, life went on as usual.

Ibiato is in many respects an idyllic place. The location is marvellously picturesque with its towering mound and tidy thatched houses spread among glossy green citrus trees. The ground is carpeted with grass kept short by the cows that quietly graze there. Above it all stands the church, now in disrepair but still a proud sentinel overlooking the community. Most of the days in Ibiato are quiet, its residents going about their chores in a kind of monotonous harmony. Days may go by without any clear distinction between them, making time seem almost nonexistent. Nestled on top of the mound and surrounded by the endless expanse of forest and pampa, Ibiato often seemed alone in the universe, the true center of nature and reality itself, as indeed it is for the Sirionó who live there.

But this harmony and tranquility are disrupted on occasion by tragedy and dissent. The Sirionó struggle constantly against the misfortunes of illness, accidents, death, and the petty and not so petty disagreements they hatch among themselves. In this then, the Sirionó of today are faced with resolving the same day to day conflicts and internecine strife that confronted the isolated, homogeneous bands of their forebears. Like their relatives of the past, the Sirionó expend a considerable amount of time in disputes over women, men, and their relationships with each other.

"The Church-
Ruins"

In precontact times, the better hunters and more important ererecuas had the right to more than one spouse. Today, that custom no longer exists although both men and women may engage in serial monogamy, the successive acquisition of mates. One old custom that does persist is the sharing of partners, or what in modern usage is termed spouse swapping. In the old days, it was common for brothers to share the sexual favors of their wives; and on occasion, even close friends might also do the same. Although this was a male prerogative (women who on their own sought extra-marital sexual relationships would, if caught, be punished by exclusion from the conjugal hammock for a day or two), the women frequently enjoyed the variety as well. This practice certainly has not been condoned by either of Ibiato's missionaries, but in the way of cultural persistence, continues among many of the people. The Sirionó refer to the custom of spouse swapping as repasando, a Spanish word meaning literally "to pass back and forth." I had never heard of either the practice or terminology among lowland mestizos. Later, I presented the question to two older Camba friends in Santa Cruz, one of whom had spent many years in the Beni. Neither had ever heard of the custom or the term. Thus I had to conclude that the Sirionó coined this word themselves.

Normally, repasando is a casual alliance, one which occurs sporadically and then only lasting a night or two. During my stay in Ibiato, however, the swapping between two pairs of partners became serious, resulting in one pair wanting to remain together while the other wanted to return to their spouses. This disagreement quickly became public, requiring the involvement of both of the ererecuas and the two pastors.

Again, the tendency of the village leaders, both religious and secular, is to ignore people's private lives. Only when minor disputes become public scandals are they inclined to interfere. I thought it interesting that the

missionaries had no such inhibitions but that their Sirionó proteges refrained from imposing moral judgements unless public opinion forced them into it. Daniel, Arturo, Chiro, and Vicente took turns visiting and counseling the four individuals involved in the repasando case. Although all four leaders chastised the couples in terms of moral principles of right and wrong, their primary concern was the stability of the community. This problem was initiating open commentary and families were beginning to take sides, always a serious consequence of any dispute. Since virtually everyone in Ibiato is related through ties of blood or marriage, disagreements have the potential of dividing the community. Thus the concern of all the leaders is to preserve unity. And if the issue requires concessions and compromises to reach a peaceful agreement, religious ideology may have to be temporarily laid aside. The loyalty of the Sirionó is first to themselves and then to their religion. Although the ererecuas and pastors would have preferred to resolve the repasando case by having the partners return to their original status, this was not going to happen. The couple was allowed to remain together, their spouses were given a small property settlement, and tempers finally cooled.

As was apparent from the repasando incident, relationships between Sirionó women and men can be quite fluid. Although the missionaries have attempted to instill the idea of the sanctity and permanency of marital union, the Sirionó treat these bonds rather casually. Typically during their young adult lives, women and men will have a series of spouses, ultimately settling down into a more or less permanent relationship. It is also common for men and women to seek sexual relationships outside of a present union. The frequency of these "affairs" makes excellent grist for the gossip mills, the primary source of entertainment in Ibiato. If these casual affairs should become serious, the pair will usually leave the

village for a while, moving out to the chacos or taking a job on a ranch. Once the furor has died down, they will return to Ibiato and reestablish residence. These upheavals in social relationships keep the village leaders busy carrying out shuttle diplomacy among the individuals and families involved.

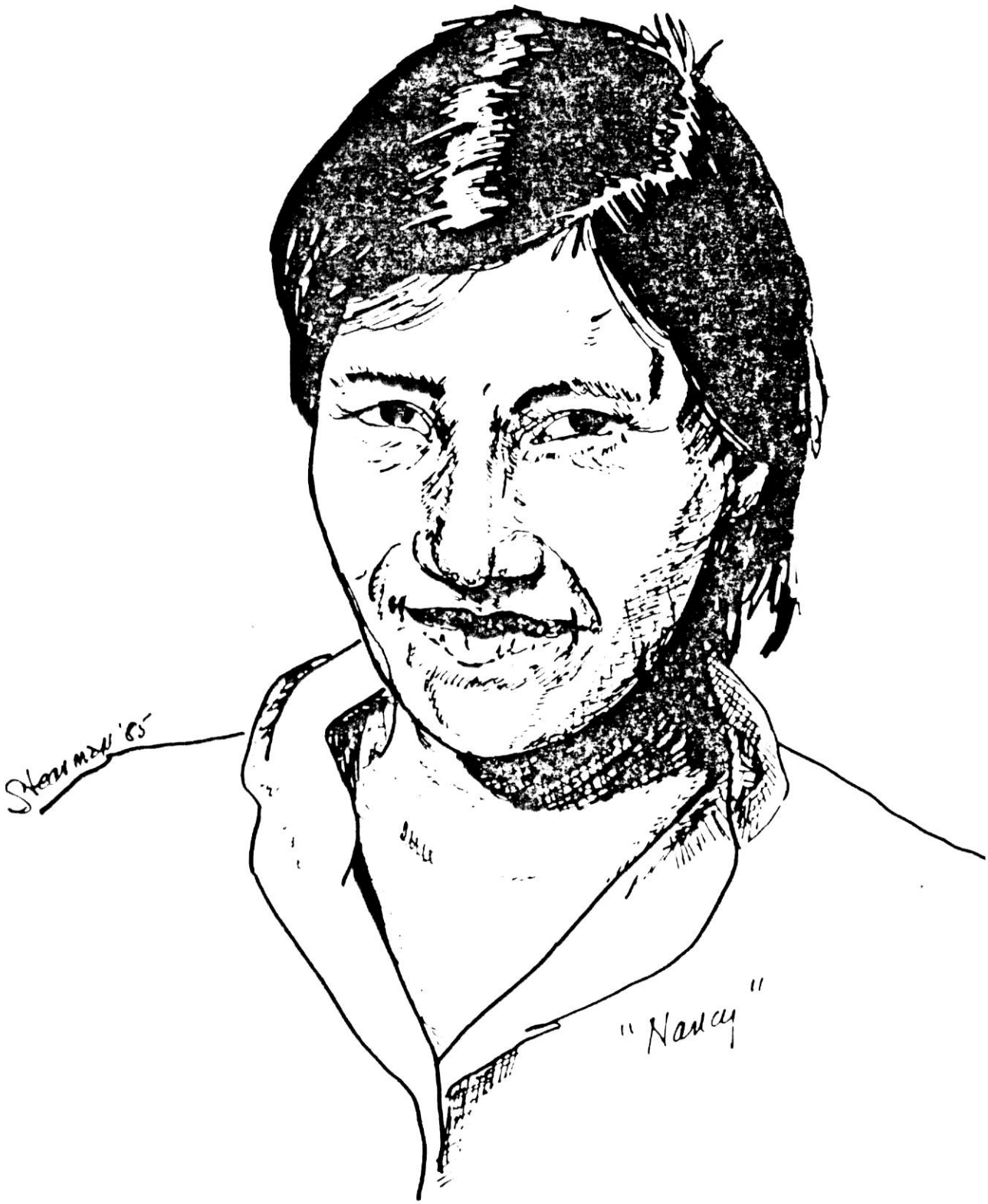
Nancy and some of her age-mates like Juana Eirubi, Petrona Jicarere, and the two sisters Mereya and Lila Suárez always kept abreast of the current status of particular relationships in the village and were eager to share these bits of gossip with each other and with me. Women like these play an important role in matchmaking, although it is an indirect one. Mostly, they pass information between the adolescent boys and girls, letting each know of the intents and interests of the other. If there is a general consensus among several of the women that a particular relationship would be a good match, encouragement, and at times even pressure is put on the pair to begin to cohabit, living at first with either with the boy's or girl's family. In this way the teacher, Nataniel, was encouraged by Juana Eirubi and her friends to marry Dalia, Juana's daughter.

Sometimes a young couple will be very discreet in their attraction for one another, and no one really is aware of the relationship until they run off together to live with a relative in the chacos or an understanding friend in the village. At times there are also courtships that do not meet with the approval of one or both of the respective families. The girl may be beaten by her mother to discourage any further involvement, but this usually is an ineffective measure. In these cases, the couple will simply elope, leaving Ibiato to work on a ranch or perhaps move to Trinidad for a time. After a while they too will return, the families by then having reconciled themselves to the match.

Nancy's marriage to Chiro fell into this latter category. She and Chiro had one of the more stable unions in the village so I was surprised to learn of its rocky beginnings.

When Chiro was in his early 20s, he lived for a while with a Guarayo woman and had a son by her. For about five years there had been a settlement of Guarayos near Ibiato and some intermarriage had taken place. But the Sirionó and Guarayo did not get along well together. The Sirionó were constantly accusing the Guarayos of thievery and drunkenness. There were also several violent incidents, including the killing of a Sirionó by a Guarayo during a drinking bout. Then too, there was the ever present problem of witchcraft. The group was finally forced out by Anderson and the Sirionó themselves. Chiro's spouse left as well, leaving him with his young son, William. Nancy at that time was about sixteen and had had her eye on Chiro for quite a while. But as she explained:

"Agustín Eatandu wanted me. He kept coming around the house, talking to my mother and bringing her meat. Then my mother took me to the chaco with Agustín. She wanted me to sleep with him. But I didn't want to, so I ran away and came back to Ibiato to be with Don Nancho and his wife (Nancho Justiniano and his wife were teachers hired by the Andersons and who lived in Ibiato for a number of years after the Andersons left). They took me in and gave me shelter. My mother and Agustín talked the two ererecuas into going to Don Nancho and asking him to give me to Agustín. Don Nancho asked me if I wanted to go with him and I said no. He kept them from taking me. I loved Chiro and not Agustín. One day, while my mother was in the chaco, Chiro came and took me to his house. My mother didn't want me to be with Chiro because he had lived with a Guarayo and had her child. He also didn't bring my mother gifts.


Stanmax '65
"Nancy"

"When my mother returned from the chaco and saw I was with Chiro she was very angry. Agustín was also mad at first too, but he married Petrona and we are all friends now. My mother accepted Chiro and loves him very much. She sat down with me and advised me to be a good wife and to serve my husband well."

When the women and I talked of marriage and courting behavior, I also questioned them about preferred marriage partners. During Holmberg's research, the Sirionó evidently engaged in what is known as cross-cousin marriage, or the preference of one's mother's brother's offspring or father's sister's child as a potential spouse. Try as I might, I could neither find evidence that this occurred in the past or that it was going on at present. When I offered the kinship term "yande," I was given the correct response that it meant potential spouse. However, when I attempted to link this term with a cross-cousin, I was simply told repeatedly. "We don't marry cousins, they are senongue (siblings)." Nonetheless, I am not willing to accept that Holmberg may have been in error here since most of my respondents also told me that they didn't marry cousins because it is "against God's will." The Sirionó at present marry according to western patterns; and like lowland mestizos, consider marriage to first cousins improper. If cross-cousin marriage did exist at one time, the Sirionó either do not remember it or choose not to. In this aspect of Sirionó culture, missionary as well as mestizo influence has been strong and they are acutely aware of conforming to the norms set by the larger society. There is also the possibility that over time, cross-cousin marriage simply became more and more difficult to carry out even without missionary injunction. The rapid depopulation experienced by the Sirionó during the early years of contact, those years in which Holmberg was among them, would have limited available marriage partners. Every family lost many of its members which would have greatly

reduced the numbers of individuals who fell into the category of cross-cousin. Also, during this period of contact and depopulation, dispersed bands of Sirionó were brought together as at Ibiato, opening up new possibilities for potential spouses. As far as I could determine, there was only one cousin marriage in Ibiato and that was between parallel cousins (marrying the offspring of one's mother's sister or father's brother). This marriage was accepted but considered unsuitable.

The women of Ibiato became my best informants since it would have seemed both improper and unnatural for me as a female to spend inordinate amounts of time among the men. As an outsider and a gringa I was permitted more freedom than would normally be allowed, but most of the time I chose to remain within the boundaries established by the Sirionó.

As a female, I was interested in the role of women in the village and their status relative to men. What I ultimately found was basically a continuation of Sirionó band society norms. There was the expected division of labor by sex, but it was also accompanied by the greater egalitarianism found among most foraging peoples of the tropics. In spite of mestizo influence and the strongly patriarchal Christian teachings, women have retained a great deal of power and autonomy in their village life. At first I had difficulty in understanding this because the domains of women and men are so different, with men more frequently playing public roles. But as time went on, I began to see the importance of women in both the domestic and public spheres.

For several weeks at least, I had the mistaken impression that women had very little decision-making involvement in matters that concerned the village as a whole. All I had seen was the two ererecuas meet with the men. And while I was not expressly asked not to attend these meetings, I felt uncomfortable about doing so. The women told me that nothing of real

interest ever went on anyway in the mens' meetings; and when something important needed discussing, the women would participate as well. At times, the men grumbled at being called to these meetings since they were usually going to be asked to work. I also noticed that now and then some of them, including Chiro, would conveniently plan a hunting trip if they knew in advance that a work day was in the offing.

General meetings, normally taking place inside the church, were called when a crisis arose or a matter affecting the entire community needed attention. One Sunday morning, a theft of money was reported to the ererecuas who then met with the townspeople following church services. This was my first experience with a meeting of this type; and I was curious to see that the women, particularly the younger ones, took an outspoken, aggressive role in voicing their opinions. The thief was never identified, but the public reaction to the robbery made it clear that no one was going to condone this type of behavior. Later on, another general meeting was held to discuss the opening of the school year. It was decided to build a house for the new mestizo teacher, a task the men would complete (but didn't), and to carry out a general cleaning of the school and the grounds around it, something the women would do (and did). This latter chore was entrusted to the Club de Madres (Mothers Club) which, I began to discern, was a source of significant political power in the village. The club had its own meeting place, an empty house that held the communal oven. The men, on the other hand, met out in the open, or in the case of inclement weather, took refuge in the school or church. The Mothers Club was also solely responsible for obtaining the food products in Trinidad from CARITAS, arranging for their transport, and overseeing the distribution once they reached Ibiato. When word was sent by radio that "los productos" were on their way to Casarabe by truck or tractor, I was amazed that first time to see the women, totally

unassisted, tracking down and catching the horses and riding oxen they would need, saddling them, and then riding off in a group to meet the tractor when it arrived. In a mestizo community, the men would have been expected to take care of this.

The president of the club, Rosa Chiriqui, another of the women who was attending the courses in Trinidad on public health, was instrumental in encouraging the club as a whole to start a latrine-building campaign in Ibiato. As a Peace Corps volunteer I had seen such projects met with only mixed enthusiasm, the result being that a few people, mostly the organizers, would go along with it while the majority ignored the project. the Mothers Club, however, carried enough clout to achieve 100 percent compliance. Every house now had a latrine and most were built by the men who had been prodded, bullied, and if necessary, shamed into completing the work.

On another occasion, one of the mestizo men, Miguel Barbosa, who had been living in his wife's mother's house, set out to build one of his own. He had asked the ererecuas for assistance in getting some of the men to help him carry the larger timbers to the building site. The response had been lukewarm, probably not so much because Miguel was an outsider, but because he had established few reciprocal relationships--in other words, he had no debts to call in. Finally in exasperation, Miguel asked that a general assembly be convened. Miguel stood up at this meeting and gave a short speech about how no one would help him so he was going to take his wife and two small children to Trinidad. The men were silent. First Juana, then Rosa, and finally several other women stood up and let loose a stream of anger at the mens' lack of responsibility and charity toward someone who lived in their community. One woman made the comment that people in Casarabe behaved like this, not those of Ibiato. The result was to promise

Miguel he would have the help he needed. The next morning the men turned out in force to cut and haul posts and thatch.

I also came to realize that it was the women who maintained an interest in the old customs and stories of Siriono past, truly treasuring the elderly Siriono as the keepers of tradition. The men were not generally reluctant to delve into the old ways, but rather just seemed to find them uninteresting. What was past was then, what is now is now. The women, however, loved to talk about the old beliefs and particularly the tales of precontact times. Nancy, Lila, and Mireya made certain that I met the older Siriono, especially the women, to share in these stories. One of these was Ignacia Cuasu, at least as old as Jeje and perhaps older. Some told me they thought she was the oldest living Siriono.

One afternoon, Nancy and her friends took me down to the house near the road where Ignacia was staying with Pastor Mateo Popole and his family. Ignacia is one of the few Siriono in Ibiato who never learned to speak Spanish although she comprehends it to some degree. When we arrived, Ignacia was in her hammock, toes intertwined in the strings. Her hair was cut very short, in the old style, although she no longer plucked the brow hairs. She was addressed by the women not as Ignacia but as Ari, Siriono for grandmother. This word is reserved for only the very old women and is a term of respect and endearment. Mireya immediately took the responsibility of translator, moving smoothly between Spanish and Siriono.

"Ari," Mireya said, "Tell us again about when the Yanaigua [Ayoreo] captured you."

"Yes!" Nancy and Lila said, "Tell us how that came to pass!"

Ignacia sat up in her hammock, reaching down to select a ripe mango from the small pile we had placed at her feet. After she had peeled at and sucked off some juice with her gums, she began her story:

"We were out gathering palmito [palm heart] one day. We were two women and a man. I had my young son with me. He was small, still at my breast. The Yanaigua were there in the forest. We didn't know they were around and so were talking and laughing while we gathered palmito. They must have heard us, because they were suddenly there, all around us. We were very frightened. I thought they would kill us, but they made us start walking to the south. We walked many days until we came to their camp where there were many, many Yanaiguas. Women and children too. We were made the women's slaves. The women made me nurse their babies as well as my own. My son wasn't getting enough milk and cried a lot. So they killed him because they said he made too much noise. I had to work day and night. I almost never slept. They beat me and only gave me scraps to eat. I didn't think I would live very long. The other two who were with me had already died."

Ignacia's eyes had misted over and had a far-away look. The rest of us were responding with sighs of sympathy. The old woman sucked again from her mango and continued:

"When I thought that I didn't have many more days left, the whites attacked. It was a comisión [she used the Spanish term] that had come to take revenge on the Yanaigua. They had been raiding farms and killing people. They had also stolen some children. The comisión began firing their guns. There was a lot of screaming and people were running around. I took my chance and ran off into the woods. No one noticed me. I began walking north, toward the place where I had been taken. I found things to eat and hid myself well at night. I was lucky, the jaguar didn't catch my scent. After many days, I made my way back to my own people. I had four more sons, but they, too, died. I have no sons and no husband to take care of me now that I am old."

Ignacia looked at us and for a while we said nothing. Then she smiled, and the silence was broken. She seemed content that for a few minutes at least, we had shared the tragedy of her past. Nancy asked her if she needed anything and Ignacia responded that she was fine, Pastor was looking out for her.

As we left the house, Nancy and Mireya suggested we visit a new arrival whom they referred to only as "La Gorda"--neither knew the woman's name. Her house was just down the road beyond Pastor's. "La Gorda" I was told was an enormously fat woman who had arrived a few weeks earlier with her husband. When we came to the house, the woman was sitting on a mat outside. With her legs folded in front of her, she looked like a hugely obese Buddha. I could see why the women had been curious about her; she was certainly an anomaly. She got up from the mat with great difficulty, and I wondered how she had made the trip from wherever she had come.

We all introduced ourselves. The woman's name was Mauricia Jurasayegua. She said that she had come from Salvatierra. I was surprised at this, since I certainly would have remembered her. She then explained that she had been living in her chaco at the time, but knew of my presence in the village. Since I had not included her in my Ibiato census, I asked her a few questions, including her age. She answered, "About 26." I had judged her to be in her late 30s, but decided that her weight must have made her seem older. Mauricia told me her father was a Guarayo (The surname hadn't sounded Sirionó. The Sirionó of Ibiato have taken the names of their fathers as surnames. Those brought up on local ranches took "slave names," the surnames of the people they worked for) and her mother a Sirionó, distantly related to Pastor Mateo. Her husband was Juan Chubirú, a Sirionó who had left Ibiato as a young man to go to Urubichá, eventually ending up in Salvatierra where he met Mauricia. They had not done well economically

in Salvatierra and so Juan had decided to return to Ibiato, bringing Mauricia with him.

She went on to say that they had no children. Mauricia had suffered several miscarriages, and once again, she was pregnant. About 8 months, she thought. Mireya, Nancy, and Lila looked at each other, obviously surprised that this had escaped their scrutiny, but later commenting that with women who are "muy gorda" it is hard to tell. Then Mauricia matter-of-factly told us that she would not bear this child as well. A bruja in Salvatierra had told her she would come to Ibiato to die in childbirth.

We visited a while with Mauricia and then walked back to Ibiato. Since she didn't come to the village, Mauricia wasn't a frequent topic of conversation. Most of the new arrivals chose to live as she did, far from the center of community activity. Mauricia and the others not brought up in Ibiato had been raised as nominal Catholics and no doubt were perplexed by the evangelical fervor of the community's residents. I wondered if she as well as those people who had experienced only popular religiosity felt uncomfortable in the town proper, and so chose to remain on the periphery of village life.

A few weeks after our visit to the houses on the road, we learned that Mauricia had died. The story of her death troubled people, both the suddenness and the manner, as well as the fact that she herself had predicted it.

We had had a period of almost continual rains when Mauricia died. During a particularly bad storm in the middle of the night, Mauricia had gone into labor. Juan, concerned about his wife's condition, went out into the storm to find Pastor Mateo, who accompanied him back to the house. Mauricia was not doing well. Pastor Mateo attempted to determine the position of the fetus, but Mauricia would not hold still. He believed the child was lying in a transverse position and would have to be turned.

Mauricia by now was down on the floor, apparently having convulsions. Juan and Pastor tried to control her, but her great size was too much for them. Her struggle did not last long. Her eyes rolled back into her head and she died.

The two men left Mauricia where she lay, trying to decide what to do now that she was dead. The rain continued. In this weather there would be little hope of finding the men necessary to carry her to the cemetery--almost three kilometers away. There was also no way to make a coffin, for it would take a great deal of wood to contain her. Mauricia would have to be buried right there and in a blanket. Three separate graves were started but had to be abandoned because they quickly filled with water seeping in from the low, sodden ground. In desperation, Pastor and Juan chose another site: the side of the road where the terreplein had been built. She was buried in the open on the road to Casarabe.

Not only had Mauricia died a terrible death, I was told, but she had been buried without ritual in an unsuitable place. Not surprisingly, there were soon stories that Mauricia was haunting the road. On his way back from his chaco one night, Cristóbal Eatandu claimed Mauricia walked with him as far as the cemetery and then disappeared. Even Don Adolfo said he saw a large shape, a bulto, beside the road early one day as he traveled from Casarabe to Ibiato. He began to leave Casarabe later in the morning, making certain that it was daylight when he rode by Mauricia's grave.

Nancy and some of the other women were curious about seeing where Mauricia was buried but were afraid to go alone. Then they had an opportunity to make the trip in a large group. I had asked one of the elderly women to show me how the kiakwas were made, the clay pipes used by men and women to smoke tobacco. Both Anderson and Priest have discouraged the use of tobacco, but the older people continue to grow a few stalks and smoke it

in their clay pipes. The only clay deposit nearby was along the road to Casarabe, past the place where Mauricia lay. About 15 women wanted to accompany us, deciding that they would like to gather clay to make some pottery ware for their own use.

We arrived at Mauricia's burial place at noon. The sun was very hot so we took refuge in her recently abandoned house nearby. We could see the three partially dug graves, dry now and beginning to fill with leaves. On the side of the road in front of the house was a large mound, Mauricia's grave. In the bright sunlight the women were not afraid. They gathered around the mound to discuss the tragic event. "Poor Mauricia, you came here only to die." "Oh, Mauricia, not even a coffin to rest in." "Poor Mauricia, look how the cattle have walked all over your grave." Cristóbal Eatandu, who had been visiting Pastor Mateo and saw our group pass by, joined us. He told about how Mauricia had walked with him. She had asked if he had any bread. There was never any bread in Ibiato she had said. It was clear that Mauricia's soul was not happy. The women seemed to want to do something to alter the situation, but didn't know what.

I suggested we mark her grave. In Salvatierra, I explained, there were crosses on all the graves and perhaps Mauricia would like this. Everyone agreed it would be a good thing to do. The women went into the forest and selected a hardwood sapling that Cristóbal cut with his machete. He cut a longer and shorter piece, notching them in the middle and tying them together with a piece of vine we had found. Then there was a brief discussion about where the head of the grave lay. Cristóbal volunteered that he thought it was at the western end of the mound. We planted the cross. All of the women gathered once more around the grave, speaking informally to Mauricia and telling her to rest now, there was no need to wander around

anymore. Word of our visit rapidly spread through the village, and soon the stories of hauntings ceased.

As an anthropologist, I viewed the episode in a social rather than supernatural context. Mauricia's death had not been dealt with properly and people knew this. They expressed their sense of guilt in terms of Mauricia herself--she was displeased and unhappy and therefore her soul would not rest. Once a death ritual had been performed, no matter how contrived, the community healed its own wounds. Life could now return to normal.

Death is something very familiar to the Sirionó; but in spite of their more than fair share of having to deal with it, they have not grown hardened. In the old days, the dying would be abandoned, simply because the survival of the group took precedence over feelings for the individual. There is no evidence that this was done callously, however. It was a reality of life, but still, a very painful one. Now that the Sirionó are settled, they are not spared the actual moment of death, and it is difficult for them to stand by and watch the passing of a close relative or friend.

For weeks we thought Lucio Irua would certainly die. He had been in the hospital in Trinidad for well over two months; but the doctors had discharged him, telling his family there was nothing more they could do. He was put on a truck and brought back to Ibiato. People said that Lucio had drunk himself into the grave. His years of consuming huge amounts of alcohol had finally caught up with him. His body was swollen from edema and his skin had a yellow cast. For several weeks, Lucio did nothing but lie on a cow hide on the floor of his house, unable to stay in a hammock and eating and drinking almost nothing. The Sirionó took turns visiting his house to stand a death watch. Except for some of the younger men who have bought into the macho idea of mestizo society that men do not cry, everyone who visited Lucio wept openly at his plight. One afternoon when it appeared

that he was about to die, his 13-year-old son lay down beside him and sobbed, begging his father not to leave him. Most of the villagers had gathered outside the house, joining in the boy's grief.

In spite of the incredible odds against it, Lucio began to recover slowly. The swelling in his limbs subsided and his skin took on a healthier color. Prayers for him were offered at every church service, and in the Cuellar house, Chiro and Nancy remembered him at meals when we said grace. People continued to visit Lucio, bringing him small gifts of food and drink, often preparing special items that might encourage him to eat. Before I left Ibiato, Lucio was on his feet, certainly not robust, but at least giving no sign that he was not going to survive.

At these times of great crisis, the small hatreds and disputes that seemed to go on without respite were tempered by a need for the community to pull together. Then the true solidarity of the village was evident, and for a while at least, animosities would be put aside in favor of the greater good of all. When the crisis had passed, the community would settle back into old routines of day to day existence: gathering firewood, cooking meals, going to church, bringing in produce from the chacos, hunting, and of course to lend spice to it all, gossiping about family and neighbors.

When the time arrived for me to leave Ibiato, I felt I had come to understand something about the rhythm of life there; to know something about the ways of the Sirionó; and to worry about their uncertain future. Many I came to know more than just casually, becoming involved in their lives as they did in mine. I was an outsider and an observer, two roles which always influenced my place in the community. But I was also accepted and welcome, and while the people may not have always understood the reasons for my many questions, they were always willing to try to explain their way of life to me. In this regard, it was consistent that Nancy would suggest that I

should not leave before seeing the older men perform the Hito-Hito, the circle dance and chant. We spoke to Daniel about it, and he agreed to call the men together the following Sunday, my last full day in Ibiato.

The afternoon of the dance was clear and warm. We had had several days of hot weather so the plaza was dry. Daniel and Arturo rang the church bell, but already people had begun to gather, word having spread of the impending event. When a good crowd had formed and the men were laughing and comfortable with themselves and the rest of us, Daniel, Arturo, and Edilberto locked arms behind their backs, threw their heads back, and began stamping their feet in rhythm. Soon the other senior men joined them, locking arms to form a larger circle. Daniel, the oldest and most respected male, chanted the Hito-Hito, an old dance performed in precontact times to celebrate a good hunt or a general feeling that all was well with the world. After a while, even the women and children joined in, some trying to follow the words as Daniel chanted:

Hito! Hito! Hito! Hito!
A cha jisare mose!
A jisu acha!
A cha ibachi cha!
A cha mimba mimba!
Hito! Hito! Hito! Hito...

Happiness! Happiness! Happiness! Happiness!
When there is palm fruit!
When there are many little toucans!
When the corn is young!
When there are little animals in their nests!
Happiness!
Happiness!
Happiness!
Happiness...

# PART THREE

# TWELVE

At a recent meeting of anthropologists, I delivered a paper on the current situation of the Sirionó. When I had finished, a colleague asked me the inevitable question: What did I think were the prospects for Sirionó cultural survival at Ibiato? Given that I had only a few moments to respond, I answered somewhat glibly that I thought there was a good chance for a positive future for these people as a society. But the question is a complex one, and I have real misgivings about being overly optimistic. Cultural survival in Ibiato hinges on several factors, most of which are beyond the immediate control of the Sirionó. Should the present generally positive situation begin to degenerate for any reason, the continuation of the Sirionó as a group would be severely threatened. I have mentioned some of these problems in the course of the narrative of this book. Now, in this final chapter, I would like to explore more fully those factors which I feel may ultimately determine Sirionó success or failure.

## LAND

The provision of land for native peoples is probably the single most important issue in their survival, yet it is the most difficult to insure. Typically, land occupied by hunters and gatherers is considered "vacant" by those who would like to exploit it. Particularly in South America where development has become the imperative of every nation, undeveloped land must be put to "productive" use. This usually means agriculture--farming or ranching. That good land should sit idle, to be used only by a handful of foragers or small-scale horticulturalists, is seen as contrary to most development objectives. Consequently, it is very difficult for Indian peoples to defend their rights to lands they have occupied for generations.

In this, the Sirionó are fortunate. While 10,000 hectares is not a great deal of land it provides for their present agricultural needs as well as those of the foreseeable future. The fact that they are not settled in an area widely suitable for horticulture has enabled the Sirionó to concern themselves only infrequently about losing their land to squatters. There is an interesting parallel here with the Panare of Venezuela who also inhabit a grassland that they have shared successfully with mestizo ranchers for over 100 years. Like the Sirionó, the Panare are free to hunt the grasslands and nearby forests, experiencing little competition from local mestizos who are provided with meat from their cattle herds.

In the Venezuelan case, the land is arid and therefore suitable only for cattle raising. Nonetheless, the fact that the region is considered "open" land has recently encouraged higher rates of mestizo settlement, stressing the normally peaceful relations between Panare and settler. In the Beni, the greatest threat to Sirionó hunting is the possibility of converting pasture land to plow agriculture. The high humidity of the region could make rice production a potentially successful alternative to cattle ranching. To date, however, the capital investment in equipment and the low market value of rice has precluded any large-scale shift in the traditional economy of the region. Cattle ranching remains highly cost effective: there is little inversion in labor, land, or equipment; and beef prices usually far outstrip those for field crops. Then there is always the problem of transportation. Low overhead and high market value of beef makes it possible to fly out the carcasses to Bolivian cities. It would be economically unfeasible to attempt this with rice or corn. If transportation networks in the Beni should improve, however, it is conceivable that frontier expansion such as that occurring in Santa Cruz would begin to impinge on the forests of the Beni as well. While ranchers would probably

continue to be involved primarily in the reproduction of beef, new transport routes would attract small farmers into the region at an unprecedented rate. Large holdings with forest reserves such as those of the Sirionó would come under immediate pressure for settlement.

At present, the major problem facing the Sirionó is obtaining a clear title to their land. The titling process in Bolivia is a long and arduous one, taking constant legal attention with its attendant costs. It is unlikely that the Sirionó themselves will be able to carry their case forward. Therefore, they, like so many native groups, are dependent on advocacy from other sources. If APCOB is successful in gaining title for Sirionó lands, the Sirionó will be in a much stronger position. It should also be noted that not all the Sirionó at Ibiato are in favor of designating the land an Indigenous Community (Comunidad Indigena). Just as the communal herd is a source of friction, to a lesser degree so is communal land. Some Sirionó would prefer to have separate title to their holdings, giving them the option of selling. However it might contribute to individual incentive, this approach would rapidly bring about the destruction of Ibiato as a community. It would not take the local mestizos long to figure out ways to divest individual Sirionó of their land.

Assuming the Sirionó are able to obtain a title to the lands of Ibiato, they will still be faced with the potential problem of squatters and non-Sirionó inhabitants. Bolivia recognizes squatters' rights once actual residence has been established. Thus, the Sirionó will have to maintain constant vigilance against invasions of their land. So far, they have been successful in doing this; but they also have had the benefit of advance warning and the encouragement and support of Anderson. Then too, the attempts at squatting have been localized and consisted of relatively few settlers--squatting has only presented minor headaches now and then. Should

it become more frequent and widespread, the Sirionó will have a much more difficult time dealing with the problem. Theoretically, they could be kept so busy trying to protect their boundaries in addition to their other subsistence pursuits that some areas could go unprotected. At that point, it would be relatively simple for squatters to establish a permanent settlement. Once this foothold had been secured, it would only be a matter of time before they spread over the land virtually unchecked.

Lastly, the Sirionó could lose control of their land by allowing greater numbers of non-Sirionó to take up residence there through marriage. Thus far this pattern has been tempered by present policies that prevent outsiders from remaining in Ibiato should the union be dissolved. Although the Sirionó generally agree with this practice, it was instituted by the missionaries. There is, therefore, no guarantee that once missionary influence is withdrawn the Sirionó will continue to enforce this rule. Unfortunately, except for perhaps Chiro and Daniel, the Sirionó do not reflect on the ultimate consequences of losing their land; many have even had to be goaded into confronting squatters. This somewhat cavalier attitude about the land may come as a result of Ibiato's longevity and, therefore, perceived inalienability. For some Sirionó, at least, it is inconceivable that Ibiato will not always be there. Others take a more fatalistic attitude. When I asked them what they would do if their land were to be taken away, they shrugged their shoulders and answered, "We would just go far out into the wilderness and build a new village." What they failed to comprehend is that there is less and less wilderness that does not have some prior claim.

## SUBSISTENCE

Land means not only having a place to exist but also being able to maintain a quality of life that is conducive to well-being. At present, the Sirionó have found an equilibrium between farming and hunting, allowing them to meet their subsistence needs as well as having minimal access to a cash economy. In terms of farming, the current land holdings worked by the Sirionó are more than adequate. The rotational requirements of slash-and-burn horticulture are being met with neither labor nor land being stressed beyond reasonable carrying capacities. And while Sirionó land itself does not meet their needs for successful hunting, they have not been restricted from going farther afield.

The importance of hunting to basic Sirionó well-being cannot be over emphasized. Hunting contributes most of their protein, lessening their dependence on outside sources or on having to rely primarily on less dependable and poorer substitutes of vegetable protein. The Sirionó at Ibiato are in relatively good health, in stark contrast to those at Salvatierra and elsewhere where food and meat supplies are much scarcer. Hunting also provides a stable source of income. Although the returns may be small, the selling of skins brings in enough income to purchase such necessities as medicines, kerosene, shotgun shells, salt, and other commodities. It should also be mentioned that hunting as a source of income is consistent with Sirionó patterns for achieving power and prestige. Rather than create a competitive situation where power is gained solely by economic superiority, hunting provides cash income without upsetting traditional values. Earning substantial income from hunting requires skill as well as luck, and the good hunter has always been esteemed. There also exists the understanding that anyone who applies himself steadily to hunting will become better at it and will simply have more opportunities to bring in game. Rather than incur

envy and hostility, such perseverance brings respect. Then too, hunting success is always limited to factors outside the control of the hunter: seasonality, weather, and game densities. Thus it is relatively difficult for any single individual to vastly outperform his peers in terms of economic advantages derived from hunting. Lastly, the psychological importance of hunting must be considered. To the Sirionó, hunting brings all those things that are worthwhile in life: status, respect, good health, and good times. Even the women look forward to going on an ito, a long hunt that takes them into the wilderness for a week or two. It is a time of renewal, a period away from the stresses of village life.

To date the continuity of life in Ibiato has been sheltered by the relative lack of development in the region of the Beni where they live. Ranching has been compatible with the Sirionó lifestyle, creating a symbiosis between rancher and hunter. The lack of competition between the Sirionó and their rancher neighbors has enable them to pursue a way of life that is rapidly disappearing in other areas of the lowlands where population pressure has been increasing. The perseverance of Sirionó life ways thus depends on a maintenance of the status quo. Should ranchers sell out to agriculturalists or themselves become farmers, all of this would change. In a worst case situation, the Sirionó of Ibiato would probably end up dispersed through the region, as many of them are now, working for others as peons.

## LEADERSHIP

The training of leaders who can deal effectively with internal as well as external problems is another key factor in the survival of any group. It is in this realm that missionaries most commonly cause havoc by creating new leaders who are not necessarily recognized as such by their own people. The

result frequently is to divide the group's loyalty between its traditional leaders and the new, religious leaders, the latter commonly having more power because of their contacts with the outside. Fortunately, this pattern has not developed in Ibiato although not as the result of any missionary insight. Rather, the preservation of traditional leadership and the gradual introduction of modern leaders derives from the rivalry between Anderson and Priest, and more specifically, from Anderson's greater influence in the community.

Jack Anderson is an old-style missionary, but different even from others of his era in that he had little formal training or education. Consequently, his "methodology" for establishing a mission was a seat-of-the-pants effort based on his own experience. Because of Anderson's lack of proper missionary indoctrination, he identified very closely with the Sirionó, often accepting their ways of doing things without critical evaluation--an evaluation that could only have come from a prior mind-set. Thus it never really occurred to Jack to try to create new leaders to guide the Sirionó into Christianity--that was his job. He respected the old leaders, many of whom were thankful for his protection and who became his loyal friends and compatriots. Jack gives as much credit to these early ererecuas as he does to himself for the establishment of Ibiato.

Perry Priest with his SIL training came from a different and much more cerebral tradition. He studied a body of mission doctrine that defined very clearly how to accomplish certain cultural changes designed to make people more receptive to Christianity. One of these was to select young men, remove them temporarily from the community, and train them as catequists and potential village leaders. In the Sirionó case, Jack's continued support of the old leaders and the maintenance of hereditary leadership through lines of ererecuas effectively blocked early attempts by some of the young

trainees to take over leadership positions. They were accepted as religious leaders, and Jack encouraged this as well; but the governing of the village remained with the ererecuas, perpetuating the continuity of power and authority according to tradition.

In another departure from SIL expectations, it is unlikely that those men who do not come from a "chiefly" line will ever be given an opportunity to become ererecuas. However, the schooling of Sirionó men in Tumi Chuqua covered a broad enough range that there will be no lack of possible candidates. Men like Chiro and Vicente possess many of the traditional qualifications for leadership, including birthright, in addition to their skills acquired at the SIL training camp. As I have shown, the younger, more acculturated men can move easily into brokerage roles when necessary; but they are also careful not to do this in a way that would threaten the status or respect of the ererecuas. By supporting the old system, these potential leaders now have a vested interest in seeing that the ererecua keeps his power and authority--after all, they will be taking over those positions in the near future.

The biggest question that remains concerns the leadership gap left by Perry Priest's leaving Bolivia and Anderson's advanced age. Both of these men have interceded on Ibiato's behalf on countless occasions, using their positions as missionaries and status as Americans to significant advantage. No matter how well trained in leadership even Chiro may be, he will never have the resources necessary to lobby for his people as effectively as the two missionaries, particularly at the national level. This ultimately may impact the Sirionó's ability to maintain their land rights and their educational advantages. The thought has often occurred to me that the Sirionó may be truly living in a house of cards, one which will collapse once the support of Anderson and Priest is no longer there to shore it up. Only time

will determine how effective the native leaders will be in fighting for those causes that will determine success or defeat of the Sirionó as a people.

## POPULATION

In addition to land, subsistence, and leadership, we also must consider sheer numbers of people. Anthropologists familiar with native populations know there is a "magic number" of 500 necessary for survival. While this need not always be a hard and fast rule, studies have shown that when a group has less than 500 members, it is difficult for it to continue as a cultural entity. Ibiato, with only 267 people, falls far short of this limit. The question then must be, what are the prospects for future population growth? Or is the village actually in a decline? According to Anderson, Ibiato at one time numbered over 600 inhabitants, but disease rapidly reduced this number to less than 400. Then there was a period when people left to go elsewhere, continuing a semi-nomadic existence. Some returned, but most were never heard from again. According to Priest who has visited the community regularly for the past 15 years or so, the population seems to have stabilized and may even be growing slightly. The number of children being born and their improved chances for survival give hope that Ibiato's inhabitants may be slowly increasing. While in-migration is not occurring on a large scale, it, too, is contributing to the base population as well as that of the future. The continuing growth of Ibiato will depend on the maintenance of dietary levels, preventative health care, economic and educational opportunities, and a sense of well-being that encourages people to remain there. If present population levels continue to increase, Ibiato could attain 500 residents in a matter of a few years.

There may, however, be other considerations. With 500 or more people, the village's resources may be stressed, particularly game animals. From all appearances, animals are being hunted at a rate that allows for reproduction and replacement. Hence, there has been no significant drop in hunting success during Ibiato's more than 50 years of existence. When the population reached 600, it did so for a very short time, giving no indication whether that number of people could be supported by the surrounding region. Having more people would also alter the relationship with local inhabitants, creating stresses that may not be in existence at present. This, too, could jeopardize the security of the village. Thus while population growth may be necessary to maintain some predetermined limit for cultural survival, it could also create problems that would threaten that very survival. Perhaps for the Sirionó in their current situation, 300 may be their "magic number."

## COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

Finally, we must discuss something really quite intangible--the ethos of the village. Is there a feeling of community in Ibiato adequate to bind the people together if they are faced with major threats to their continuation as a group? Is their sense of being Sirionó well-developed enough to stand up against pressures on them as individuals? In their precontact state, the sense of membership in a larger group was not particularly strong. They were simply "mbia," "people," whose primary loyalties were to their own local bands consisting of extended kin. There were no annual "tribal" gatherings or ritual assemblies that intensified sentiments of belonging to a unified society. The Sirionó had a long tradition of being pursued by other Indians as well as by mestizos, living a precarious existence of only fleeting stability. For most, being settled at Ibiato was

their first understanding that there were so many others like them, so many of their own kind.

Pride in being Sirionó still is not a universal sentiment among the Sirionó of Ibiato. While Jack was among them, he was basically unaware of such issues as ethnic solidarity. He kept the Sirionó separated from the larger society primarily because he recognized its "tainting" influence--he did not want the village corrupted by the outside world. As a consequence, most of the older Sirionó are unconcerned about problems of ethnic identity. They are who they are. There are more important things in their lives such as getting in a crop and securing enough meat. A few of the younger Sirionó, especially those who have been away from the village for some time are also unconcerned with their native origins. Ibiato is where their families live, their friends and relatives. It is not necessarily a sacred homeland. Being Sirionó for them is something you are while among your own people. Once in the world at large, they make every effort to be just like everyone else. But many others, primarily those who were schooled at Tumi Chuqua have been instilled with ideas of "native consciousness." The importance of maintaining the Sirionó language has always been stressed by Perry Priest, and along with it, the customs and traditions which make the Sirionó unique. These individuals now make up an outspoken majority in the community, publicly denouncing efforts to denigrate Sirionó heritage.

As a result of SIL influence, Ibiato adopted August 2, the national "Day of the Indian," as its feast day. As a protestant evangelical mission, Ibiato had no Saint's Day to celebrate, something which as time passed the Sirionó became more aware of, making them feel out of step with other communities. Thus, every August 2 the town holds a festival, inviting anyone who would like to attend, providing food and entertainment in the form of bow and arrow competitions and traditional dancing.

What has set Ibiato apart as a distinct community, however, is not only its native origins but its status as a protestant stronghold. This in and of itself makes the village "special" in the eyes of its residents. They consider themselves to be creyentes, "true believers" as opposed to their neighbors who are "only" Catholics. As a result, they are not only Sirionɔ, but Christians as well, singled out to see that the word of God is not lost. Therefore, the rewards for maintaining boundaries around their community are not just in preserving their purity as a people, but in stemming the flow of non-believers, heretics, who would threaten the very sanctity of the village. If this philosophy survives the withdrawal of the missionaries, it may act as another bond to preserve Ibiato's integrity as a Sirionɔ community. The combination of a strong religious as well as ethnic identity could prove invincible in the face of attempts to dismantle their solidarity. That the Sirionɔ can, and are willing to stand up to such threats is exemplified by an incident that occurred during the annual August fiesta. Nancy was standing next to a well-dressed woman from Casarabe who had come to share in the festivities. The woman leaned over toward Nancy and whispered, "I understand all these people are Choris!" Nancy leaned back responding, "Yes, you are right. And I am one of them!"

Figure 7. The People of Ibiato

At the time of Allan Holmberg's research, he estimated that there were 2000 Sirionó. These are the people of Ibiato, as counted in 1984. Many of the ages, especially of older people, are estimates.

| Name | Age | Name | Age |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Julio Cangue | 47 | 41. Ignacia Cuasu | 70 |
| 2. Ana María | 47 | 42. Victor Chiri | 60 |
| 3. Pascual Ajei | 23 | 43. Yesi | 50 |
| 4. Irma Etea | 16 | 44. Juan Eatosa | 21 |
| 5. Selinda Ajei | 5 | 45. Rafael Eatosa | 15 |
| 6. María Equatãya | 50 | 46. Rosana Eatosa | 9 |
| 7. Ismael Ajei | 8 | 47. Victor Chiri (son) | 2 |
| 8. Edilberto Yoseté | 45 | *48. Edgar Daza | 22 |
| 9. Marta Moreno | 36 | 49. Teresa Mateo | 25 |
| 10. René Antelo | 12 | 50. Juan Carlos | 4 |
| 11. Guido Sánchez | 35 | 51. Cleotilde Daza | 3 |
| 12. Marina Eato | 25 | 52. Edgar Daza | 9 mos. |
| 13. Darío Sánchez | 18 | 53. Pedro Yaves | 58 |
| 14. Milda Sánchez | 15 | 54. Rosa Chiriqui | 40 |
| 15. Chelo Sánchez | 10 | 55. Juliana Yaves | 13 |
| 16. Alicia Sánchez | 2 | 56. Casilda Yaves | 13 |
| 17. Hernán Eato | 42 | 57. Gabriel Yaves | 4 |
| 18. Rosa Mano | 32 | 58. Pedro Yaves (son) | 2 |
| 19. Ana Eato | 16 | 59. Jaun Eatandu | 50 |
| 20. Rufino Eato | 12 | 60. Darlene Ticuasu | 25 |
| 21. Rogel Eato | 7 | 61. China Eatandu | 4 |
| 22. Silvia Eato | 4 | 62. Yoni Eatandu | 10 mos. |
| 23. Milisia Eato | 2½ | 63. Bob Eatandu | 48 |
| *24. Serafín Varga | 30 | 64. Hilda Chiriqui | 45 |
| 25. Betty Chiri | 35 | 65. Victor Eatandu | 18 |
| 26. Babi Guirayka | 16 | 66. Raquel Eatandu | 9 |
| 27. Quitín Guirayka | 8½ | 67. Ovidio Ticuasu | 50 |
| 28. Lupe Guirayka | 6 | 68. Telma Eritaruki | 55 |
| 29. Elyda Churuka | 6 | 69. Robinson Ticuasu | 17 |
| 30. Chalfa Churuka | 24 | 70. Marvin Ticuasu | 6 |
| *31. Juan Chubirú | 34 | 71. Demetrio Guirakangue López | 42 |
| 32. Mauricia Jurasayequa | 29 (d. 4/4/84) | 72. Elena Ribera | 50 |
| 33. Germán Pópole | 53 | 73. Emilio López | 6 |
| 34. Marcia Señorita | 50 | 74. Marilu Parique | 18 |
| 35. Julia Chiriqui | 45 | 75. Erving Niko | 18 |
| 36. Humberto Monje | 50 | 76. Carina Niko | 9 mos. |
| 37. Félix Monje | 12 | 77. Bernarda Melgar | 15 |
| 38. Nego Monje | 4 | *78. Aiquile Céspedes Solano | 40 |
| 39. Florida Campo | 50 | 79. Juana Eirubi | 32 |
| 40. Pastor Mateo Pópole | 55 | 80. Damián Sosa | 14 |

| | Name | Age |
|---|---|---|
| 80. | Damián Sosa | 14 |
| 81. | Pablo Sosa | 11 |
| 82. | Erving Sosa | 9 |
| 83. | Juan Pablo Sosa | 3 |
| 84. | Manuel Céspedes | 6 |
| 85. | Odalí Céspedes | 1 mo. |
| 86. | Chiro Cuellar | 35 |
| 87. | Nancy Melgar | 28 |
| 88. | William Cuellar | 17 |
| 89. | Catalina Cuellar | 10 |
| 90. | Wilfredo (Pepe) Cuellar | 9 |
| 91. | Magdalena Cuellar | 8 |
| 92. | Mábel Cuellar | 6 |
| 93. | Emmy Cuellar | 4 |
| 94. | Priscila Cuellar | 1½ |
| *95. | Miguel Barbosa | 61 |
| 96. | Leti Nova | 20 |
| 97. | Dori Barbosa | 2½ |
| 98. | Angel Barbosa | 5 mos. |
| 99. | Julio Novachico | 40 |
| 100. | Zoila Quicuandu | 40 |
| 101. | Nataniel Jacinto | 24 |
| 102. | Dalia Sosa Eirubi | 16 |
| 103. | Claribel Jacinto | 2 |
| 104. | Natanael Jacinto | 1 |
| 105. | Vicente Ino | 65 |
| 106. | Isabel Nanguitendu | 46 |
| 107. | Barbina Ino | 1 |
| 108. | Irma Ino | 7 |
| 109. | Pancho Melgar | 50 |
| 110. | Mañuela Yacu | 55 |
| 111. | Carlos Eirubi | 60 |
| 112. | Susana Yicarere | 45 |
| 113. | Doroty Eirubi | 25 |
| 114. | Wilson Melgar | 25 |
| 115. | Ruth Melgar | 12 |
| 116. | Lorgio Melgar | 10 |
| 117. | Wilsito Melgar | 5 |
| 118. | Eduardo Melgar | 4 |
| 119. | Marilene Melgar | 2 mos. |
| 120. | Julio Bei | 60 |
| 121. | Dorotea Siririmo | 55 |
| 122. | Jaime Nacae | 15 |
| 123. | Kende Bei | 10 |
| 124. | Daniel Mayacharé | 52 |
| 125. | Modesta Ererededneña | 50 |
| 126. | Benjamín Mayacharé | 15 |
| 127. | Mery Mayacharé | 33 |
| 128. | Mario Eanta | 30 |
| 129. | Aramyo Eanta | 8 |
| 130. | Emilia Eanta | 4 |
| 131. | Ribana Eanta | 2 |
| 132. | Agustín Eatandu | 29 |
| 133. | Petrona Yicarere | 22 |
| 134. | Hugo Yicarere | 19 |
| 135. | Bera Nacae | 17 |
| 136. | Amaua Yicarere | 15 |
| 137. | Alfonso Yicarere | 11 |
| 138. | Fernando Yicarere | 9 |
| 139. | Angela Yicarere | 13 |
| 140. | Tomasa Carranza | 60 |
| 141. | Luisa Carranza | 35 |
| *142. | Roberto López | 40 |
| 143. | Edita López | 15 |
| 144. | Martita López | 9 |
| 145. | Roberto López | 6 |
| 146. | Pablo López | 4 |
| 147. | Mariano López | 2 |
| 148. | Epifanio Campo | 50 |
| 149. | Ernestina Ecabosendu | 50 |
| 150. | Zoilo Mikae | 25 |
| 151. | Mireya Súarez | 23 |
| 152. | Arminda Midae | 7 |
| 153. | Graciela Mikae | 4 |
| 154. | Ezekiel Mikae | 3 |
| 155. | Clemente Súarez | 60 |
| 156. | Pedro (Chuchú) Pep | 36 |
| 157. | Mari Irua | 27 |
| 158. | Mirian Pepe | 10 |
| 159. | Alejandrina Pepe | 8 |
| 160. | Pura Pepe | 5 |
| 161. | (Infant) Pepe | 4 mos. |
| 162. | Blanca Echevey | 50 |
| 163. | Lucio Irua | 47 |
| 164. | Orlando Irua | 12 |
| 165. | Ignacia Méndez | 46 |
| 166. | Edgar Quirindendu | 19 |
| 167. | Olinda Richards | 19 |
| 168. | Rosa Quirindendu | 7 |
| 169. | Esteban Quirindendu | 18 |
| 170. | Susana Moreno | 23 |
| 171. | Segundo Quirindendu | 17 |
| 172. | Selina Quirindendu | 16 |
| 173. | Cristina Quirindendu | 13 |
| 174. | Echavela Quirindendu | 10 |
| 175. | Samuel Quirindendu | 5 |
| 176. | Juan Balcazar Gamarra | 38 |
| 177. | Caludio Eanta | 50 |
| 178. | Victoria Naguandu | 50 |
| 179. | Lunchi Eanta | 30 |
| 180. | Marta Richards | 27 |
| 181. | Yamila Eanta | 6 |

| Name | Age |
|---|---|
| 182. Froilán Eanta | 3½ |
| 183. Erlán Eanta | 1 |
| 184. Hernán Eanta | 1 |
| 185. Miguelina Babandu Ciervo | 14 |
| 186. Echope | 50 |
| 187. Simona Richards | 55 |
| 188. Marcia Eanta | 14 |
| 189. Benjamin (Choco) Guarua | 30 |
| 190. Lila Suárez | 20 |
| 191. Alcides Guarua | 10 |
| 192. Davico Guarua | 6 |
| 193. Francisco Guarua | 3 |
| 194. Yolanda Guarua | 1 |
| 195. Rolli Guarua | 17 |
| 196. Isora Suárez | 19 |
| *197. Angel (Kollita) Umaday | 23 |
| 198. Carmelo Cahuana | 36 |
| 199. Justina Erachendu | 32 |
| 200. Ester Cahuana | 15 |
| 201. Angel Cahuana | 10 |
| 202. Rogelia Cahuana | 8 |
| 203. Clotilde Cahuana | 6 |
| 204. Bella Cahuana | 5 |
| 205. Carmelo Cahuana(hijo) | 9 mos. |
| 206. Eloy Erachendu | 60 |
| 207. Josefa Echivoy | 60 |
| 208. Nestor Moreno | 52 |
| 209. Cornelio Ino | 19 |
| 210. Román Ino | 15 |
| 211. Eddy Ino | 45 |
| 212. Asunta Babandu | 50 |
| 213. Cristina Richards | 55 |
| 214. Jorge Niko | 12 |
| 215. Jaime Echivó | 52 |
| 216. Ramón Babandu Ciervo | 48 |
| 217. Arturo Eanta | 52 |
| 218. Maria | 50 |
| 219. Ersilla Eanta | 20 |
| 220. Santo Ribero | 20 |
| 221. Raúl Eanta | 25 |
| 222. Nelsi Irua | 28 |
| 223. Eva Eanta | 3 |
| 224. Cristián Eanta | 11 mos. |
| 225. Elizabet Ribero | 2 |
| 226. Olga | 50 |
| 227. Cristóbal Eatandu | 48 |
| 228. Armando Eatandu | 18 |
| 229. Saida Quiragangue | 16 |
| 230. Armadito Eatandu | 6 mos. |
| 231. Hortensia Eata | 3 |
| 232. Erisón Añez | 30 |

| Name | Age |
|---|---|
| 233. Berta Baroto | 23 |
| 234. Chila Añez | 6 |
| 235. Guillermo Baroto | 21 |
| 236. Joaquin Yarasi | 63 |
| 237. Lucho Cuellar | 47 |
| 238. Martina Mañatingaré | 55 |
| 239. Juan Té | 47 |
| 240. Luís Yocoí | 62 |
| 241. Petrona | 50 |
| 242. Simon Cuellar | 60 |
| 243. María Arias | 60 |
| 244. Jesús Tachi | 45 |
| 245. Tomasa Rivera | 60 |
| 246. Alberto Ribera | 20 |
| 247. Dora Arias | 60 |
| 248. Abrahán Ribera | 5 |
| 249. Verónica Ribera | 10 mos. |
| 250. Sergio Sembiri | 45 |
| 251. Rosa | 60 |
| 252. Bautista Tiquise | 52 |
| 253. María | 60 |
| 254. Haroldo Yicarere | 40 |
| 255. Celia Eremondu | 39 |
| 256. Poly Yicarere | 6 |
| 257. Alfredo Yicarere | 3 |
| 258. Benancio Suárez | 50 |
| 259. Elsa Ticuasu | 33 |
| 260. Jelson Suárez | 17 |
| 261. Lisandro Suárez | 16 |
| 262. Jorge Suárez | 12 |
| 263. Freddy Suárez | 5 |
| 264. Andrés Suárez | 1 |
| 265. Antonio Quicuandu | 60 |
| 266. Margarita | 60 |
| 267. Agusto Mercado | 25 |

* Not Sirionó

# GLOSSARY

All words listed are Spanish unless otherwise indicated.

AGUAI (Sideroxylon spp.) A large, round fruit with a yellow skin and white pulpy interior, may be eaten raw, roasted, or boiled

ALCALDE Mayor of a town

ANTA (Tapirus terrestris) Tapir

ARI (Siriono) Grandmother, old woman

ARROBA A dry measure of 25 pounds

ARROYO A creek or small stream

ASAHI (Cocos botriofera) A tall, slim palm tree

BARBARO Uncivilized person; savage

BARRACA The term used for a small homestead built on the bank of a river

BISCOCHO A hard biscuit made from cornmeal; usually round like a small donut

BRUJO/BRUJA Sorcerer or sorceress; Someone who uses magic for evil purposes

BULTO A shade or formless shape; in eastern Bolivia the spirits of the dead are said to wander in this way

CACIQUE A village headman; the term is normally applied only to indigenous leaders

CAMBA Term used in Bolivia by lowlanders and highlanders to designate a person from the Oriente, or lowlands

CARPIDO Weeded; this is done with a scuffling hoe, or pala, which is run over the surface of the ground, cutting off the weeds at ground level

CAIMAN (Caiman) South American alligator

CASERO Someone charged with caring for a house or property in the absence of the owner

CEPE (Atta sp.) A leaf-cutter ant

CHACO The term given to cultivated land; in particular land worked by slash-and-burn horticultural methods

CHICHA A beer made from corn, manioc, or sweet potatoes. The alcoholic content will vary according to length of fermentation

CHONTA (Bactrus sp.) A palm used for its hard, fibrous wood as well as clusters of fruit

CHORI A lowland term of uncertain origin designating forest nomads. It is also used synonymously with bárbaro to mean savage.

CHUCHILLO (Ginerium sagitatum) A type of reed that grows along the edge of rivers. The flower stem is used to make arrow shafts

COMISION A "comission". The term used to designate a group of men formed for a particular task. The word was applied to groups of men sent out to hunt Indians

COMITE CIVICA "Civic Committee." A group in Trinidad formed to exert political pressure on the National government of Bolivia

COMUNIDAD INDIGENA Indigenous Community. A legal designation that provides for communal land holdings

CONTRABANDISTA A person engaged in some type of illegal trading activity

CORREGIDOR A town magistrate

CREYENTE A "believer". The term is applied to protestant Christians

CUMPLIDO Responsible; trustworthy

CUOTA A quota; typically a way of collecting money for a particular communal need; each individual or family is assessed a head tax

CURANDERO A healer; usually someone knowledgeable in the use of herbal remedies; or having some special healing power or skill

EMPANIZADO Hard, brown sugar made into a flat cake

ENTENDIDO Rational; logical; knowledgeable

ERERECUA (Sirionó) The leader of a Sirionó band; now, a village headman or cacique; a hereditary office

FIESTA PATRONAL Patron's feast; the days set aside each year to celebrate the patron saint of a community

FORESTAL A forestry agent

HECHICERIA Witchcraft; spell casting

HUASCA A braided, raw-hide whip; used to punish people

INTENDENTE A military officer or government official placed in a village to maintain order; similar to a police chief or sheriff

ITEM A line item in a fiscal budget

ITO (Sirionó) Also ITO-ITO; a long hunt; a hunting trip that takes several days

KIAKWA (Sirionó) A clay pipe used for smoking native tobacco

KIMBAI (Sirionó) Man; male

KOLLA A term derived from the Quechua word Kollasuyo, or that part of the Inca empire pertaining to modern Bolivia; designates a person of highland origin as opposed to Camba, or lowlander

MACHO Male, masculine, manly; the characteristics associated with qualities of manhood

MAESTRO RURAL Rural teacher; this is a special designation for those teachers trained to work in small, isolated villages

MASACO A lowland staple dish of plantains; the plantains are roasted or boiled and then mashed in a tacú, mortar, with hot fat and salt

MAYORDOMO A man placed in charge of managing a cattle operation

MESTIZO Mixed; a person of European, Indian, and perhaps African heritage. They also may be termed "white" (blanco) if they have achieved of place of social and economic importance

MOTACU (Attalea princeps) A large palm tree whose fronds are used for roofing; also has an edible fruit by the same name

MOVIMIENTO Movement; activity; applied to describe whether a town has social activity, places to go, night life, etc.

ORIENTE The east; eastern or lowland regions of Bolivia

PABA (Sirionó) Father; the father of the band; its leader or ererecua

PAJA CEDRON (Cymbopogon citratus) Lemon grass; made into an aromatic tea that is reputed to have medicinal qualities

PALMITO Palm heart; taken from the center of the palm crown; can be eaten raw or cooked

PANACU (Guaraní) A woven palm backpack used to carry meat, firewood, or other products. The Sirionó have adopted this word, their term was Jiracõ

PARIPARI (Sirionó) crazy; unbalanced

PARTERO A male midwife; relatively rare

PASCANA A campsite; an overnight stopping place on a journey

PATRON Landowner; person who keeps indentured laborers tied to the land; a feudal landlord

PATUJU (Heliconia bihai) A broad-leafed plant that grows in low, wet areas

PENSION A place where meals are taken; family-style hotel

PICARO Rogue; thief; untrustworthy person; shyster

PLATANO (Musa paradisiaca.) Plantain

RACION Ration; staple supplies given to ranch hands each month as part of their work benefits

REDUCCION A mission established originally by the Jesuits or Franciscans at which nomadic Indians were "reduced" or obliged to remain settled

REPASAR The custom of spouse-swapping practiced by the Sirionó

RESCATADOR A speculator in agricultural products, particularly rice

ROZAR The process of cutting low brush in the preparation of a field for burning and planting

SENONGUE (Sirionó) Sibling; literally, my sibling (enongue, his sibling)

SURAZO A souther; The cold wind and rain that moves through South America from the Antarctic

TACU A hollowed-out log used as a mortar to grind grain or mash food

TAITETU (Tayassu tajacu) Collared peccary

TAREA A measure of land 10 x 100 meters. The term derives from the word "task" and originally meant the amount of land that could be cultivated in one day

TIGRE (Felis onca) Tigre; the word used by most lowlanders when referring to the jaguar

TRAPICHE A large, wooden sugarcane press consisting of several carved gears through which the cane passes and is pressed. Commonly turned by horses or oxen .

TUMBAR To fell; the process of felling large trees in a field once the brush has been cut or rozado

TURUQUIA (Sirionó) Literally, sky; places where forest breaks into savanna and the sky can be seen; bare pampa

TUYUA (Sirionó) The crude shelter built by the Sirionó during precontact times consisting of palm fronds stacked up against poles

URU E (Sirionó) Deaf; also used to mean someone who doesn't comprehend or ignores the rules

VAQUERO Cowboy

YANDE (Sirionó) Potential spouse, fiance(e), sweetheart

YOMOMAL, YOMOMO Large areas of floating grass; grass lakes

YUCA (Manihot esculenta) Sweet manioc

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