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The Funeral Ceremony in Zinacantan

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Erin Vogel

THE FUNERAL CEREMONY
IN ZINACANTAN

by

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Submitted to the Department of Anthropology
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Introduction:

Zinacantan is a Tzotzil-speaking Maya community in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. This study presents an analysis of the funeral customs of that community. It relates those customs to the Zinacantecos' conceptions and feelings about the dead, death itself, and the afterlife. Further, it attempts to understand the functioning of the funeral customs both as a part of a larger system of interaction with the dead and as a rite of marginality or transition in Zinacantan culture. Thus the study shows, in several contexts, what the funeral as a ritual unit composed of dramatic and symbolic elements says to its actors.

The first chapter is an ethnographic description of the three parts of the funeral: the wake, burial, and novena. It is followed in the second chapter by a consideration of questions which arise immediately when one attempts to understand a funeral ceremony. What do Zinacantecos think about the dead person's body and his soul? What journey must the dead person make in order to reach the afterlife? What fate does he encounter there? What special treatment may he be accorded at his funeral, and why? Which parts of the funeral break the bonds connecting him with his past life; which ones incorporate him into his new existence; and which reconsolidate society? The next three chapters compare the funeral to certain other ceremonies of Zinacanteco social life. This rite is analyzed in relation to a ceremony of affliction (the curing ceremony), a fiesta (the reunion of the living and the dead on All Souls' Day), and two other rites of

passage in Zinacantan (birth and marriage). In the final chapter I attempt to synthesize my conclusions regarding the enduring values which the funeral expresses, and the disunities which it overcomes by reclarifying the categories of life and death.

Most of the descriptive data concerning the rituals of the wake, burial, novena, Sunday candle-burning, and All Souls' Day was collected during the summers of 1967 and 1968. It was largely derived from work with Harvard's long-time informant, Domingo de la Torre, although my observation of Sunday candle-burning occurred in many villages, especially that of Apas. Because my knowledge, particularly about the wake, needed supplementation I have explored the field reports of previous workers and incorporated their observations of death rites into my presentation. Extremely useful sources of information have been Professor Evon Z. Vogt and Robert M. Laughlin. For assistance in many ways, both in Cambridge and in Zinacantan, I am most grateful to Professor and Mrs. Vogt.

Chapter I

THE FUNERAL

The Zinacantecos say, "One's hour can be cut but it cannot be lengthened." A very old person, in their terms, dies when his allotted time has finally run out and the gods order his death. Every other person's life is shortened by either his own or someone else's guilt. Whether he encounters this premature end in the form of murder, illness, or accident, he goes with the gods' consent. For example, if he has committed a transgression of the social code, he may be punished by divinely brought illness. Either the gods send his "animal soul companion" (canul) out of its supernatural corral so that it meets some sort of disaster, or they, literally, jolt the person so hard (by having him experience a fall or fright) that some of the thirteen parts of his "inner soul" (c'ulel) are knocked out of his body. In either case, the displacement of soul element may cause him to become fatally ill. On the other hand, sickness may also come to a person through witchcraft, if someone who bears malice against him sells his c'ulel to the superhuman being known as the Earth Owner. Or if one is a child, he may lose part of his c'ulel, fall sick, and die simply because his parents have displeased the gods. No one's death, in Zinacanteco conception, is the outcome of merely biological processes.

At the moment of dying, however much c'ulel is still inside one is believed to depart from the body. Those persons who are present, both men and women, begin to wail and scream until neighbor women, taking up the cry, come running from their houses. In at least the village of Apas, a member of the family goes outside and pulls up the house cross, which he sets against the fence at the side of the patio. By doing this, he removes the ritual entrance to the house and ensures that the c'ulel of the deceased will not be able to find its way in again.

The corpse is laid on a mat on the ground in the corner of the house, and a blanket may be spread over it. The eyes are forced closed, because were they to remain open it is believed the deceased would want to take the living with him to the afterlife. If he was a man, his head is wrapped in his scarf so that his mouth is covered; if a woman, her shawl is used.

When an adult dies before sundown, his wake is usually planned for that night and the burial for the next day, unless the family wishes to hold a two-day wake. On the other hand, if his death occurs after sundown, the wake is not held until the following night and, thus, the burial will not take place until two days later. A child is usually buried the day following his death, even if he dies in the evening. An important exception to the above rules arises in the case of an adult who is killed violently; he is buried immediately, without even a short and hurried wake. Whether or not an elaborate wake is held for an ordinary adult's death, and whether it lasts for one or two nights, depends entirely on money. The close relatives of the deceased together assume the burden of the funeral expenses,

and if the person died leaving no inheritance, they are unwilling to spend more than the barest minimum on his burial. This relationship between inheriting and paying for the funeral is clearly revealed in the following passage:

The older sister of Matal's mother died in Nachih last night. Just before she died, she settled her will. This older sister owned her own house and several pieces of land. She lived in her house with a widow and the widow's child. Before she died, she called Marian (Matal's older brother and the oldest male in Matal's family) to her bedside and told him he could sell the house and land to pay for her funeral and burial. But, she said, if the widow would take care of the burial and of her soul, the widow could have the house and land. The widow agreed to pay for the burial and to wait for the dying woman's soul with candles every All Saint's Day, so the widow inherited the house and land [Laughlin, 1961:43].

A child, of course, leaves no property when he dies. Therefore, without any compensation his parents pay for his wake and burial, except for the purchase of the coffin, which the godparents are expected to buy.

No matter what time of day the death occurs, the body must be washed immediately, before it becomes too stiff to handle. Someone goes to find an old person, preferably an old woman, to do the bathing. According to some informants, an old person with a different Indian surname (that is, from another lineage) must be found. Others say that the elderly person could be the parent or grandparent of the deceased. All agree that the washing is an extremely dangerous task. One conception given is that an elderly person is selected because the deceased longs to take others' c'uleletik to the grave with him, and since those who live longest have the strongest inner souls, they can resist the danger best. An alternative explanation given is that if young people handle the dead body, their children will die.

The old person bathes the body using warm water which has been boiled with laurel leaves. Three times during the washing, the old person is given a large shot glass of pox liquor to drink. He starts with the head and, using downward strokes, washes the entire body, front and back.

After the old person has washed the body, he dresses it in new or clean clothes. Exactly which garments this entails seems to vary considerably, for field workers have collected the following descriptions:

The person is dressed in new clothes if he had any; if not, he is dressed in old ones which have been freshly laundered. If he had passed a cargo, he is dressed in the short pants and smock of that office (in fact, in any ceremonial clothes he possessed except the expensive black woven robe). The body is then covered with a thread-woven blanket, turned wrong-side to the body. A wool blanket cannot be used because it would be too hot and would burn the c'ulel of the dead person [Pope, 1968].

The dead is dressed in his wedding clothes if they have been saved, or in new clothes. A man's body is covered with his wool blanket, the bottom hem at his neck, while his head is wrapped in his scarf. A woman's body is covered with her child-carrying cloth, also bottom hem at her neck, while her head is wrapped in her shawl [Laughlin, 1963:95].

The person is buried in the best cotton clothes he has, never in wool clothes. A man is buried in his chak shonob [high-backed sandals] if he has them [Cancian, 1961:43].

For a funeral in Zinacantan Center, a poor man was dressed in his old cotton clothes, freshly washed, and in an old wool shirt donated by his son [Laughlin, text of May 19, 1965].

For another funeral in Zinacantan Center, a seven-year-old boy was wrapped in an old wool blanket; on his feet were placed his sandals and on top of those his hat. Around his head was a crown of flowers (geraniums and pensamientos), and on top of it was placed his scarf [Zabala, 1960:73].

The mat on which the body lies is turned upside down, and the area around it is fenced off with such household articles as stools and rolled-up mats and blankets. The axis of the body is oriented exactly east-west, with the head pointing west--unless the deceased was "young" (some

informants say unbaptized, others say of an age less than twelve, still others say unmarried), in which case, his head is pointed east.

As soon as possible after the death, a male relative must go into San Cristobal to buy a coffin, pox liquor, and candles. Most of the Indians buy coffins from one Ladino proprietor who runs an establishment near the market.¹ In his fancy parlor this man displays the coffins he makes for Ladinos, while in a closet in back he hides the simple, cheap, heavy pine coffins painted black, which he sells to Indians. These cost 85, 90, 100, or 110 pesos, and all but the 85-peso variety have two small glass windows, one at each side of the head--so that the dead person can see, say the Zinacantecos. Most Indians buy the 90 or 100 peso type, though a few very wealthy persons have been known to pay up to 500 pesos for a real Ladino coffin. Poor Zinacantecos, on the other hand, may simply go to a carpenter's shop and buy an unpainted pine box with one window, for perhaps 70 to 80 pesos. They may then paint it themselves, using ground carbon mixed with cold water, or black paint made from the insides of electric batteries.

Toward afternoon, while awaiting the arrival of the coffin, relatives and friends begin to gather in the house of the deceased. As each guest arrives, he kneels by the dead person and, crying hard, crosses himself. If he knows the pater noster (which few do), he also recites it. He then places some money, usually between fifty centavos and a peso-and-a-half, in a cup or plate by the deceased's head. Some of these "charity" coins will subsequently be put inside the coffin with the deceased, while the remainder will be spent on candles burned for the dead. Close relatives of the dead person are expected to bring a slightly larger gift: a quarter-liter of corn, a limite of pox, or several pesos. All

the women then sit on the ground by the fire and help grind corn and cook tortillas, while the men sit on chairs and talk.

Someone, meanwhile, has gone to summon a violinist, harpist, and guitarist--offering each a limite of pox while making the request,-- and the wake really gets under way when these three musicians arrive. They must perform almost continually throughout the wake and burial in order to "rest the hearts" of the deceased and the living and to "keep out evil."

Moreover, if the death occurred in or near Zinacantan Center, two sacristanes may be summoned (again with the offer of a limite of pox) to recite traditional Catholic prayers in Latin over the deceased. If the dead person was a cargo-holder, two regidores are also called in, to swear the dead man out of office.

When the man finally returns from San Cristobal, the corpse is immediately placed inside the coffin (with head still pointed west or east, as before). By the head is placed a meal of tortillas and salt, water, and a cooked chicken head sitting in broth. Also, a small candle is lighted there; throughout the night white-wax (symbolizing tortillas) and tallow (symbolizing meat) candles are alternated, so that a candle is continually burning as "food for the dead." Furthermore, periodically a crying woman (perhaps the dead's wife or mother) forces open the mouth of the corpse and with her finger or a red geranium flower sprinkles three drops of water from the cup of water into the dead's mouth. It is believed that for two days following the death, the c'ulel goes and retraces, "gathers up," all the steps the deceased made during his lifetime; some Zinacantecos think that during this journey one collects all the hairs, pieces of skin, toenails, and fingernails

he had left behind. Because the c'ulel is believed to get weary and thirsty on this hike, water must often be offered to it as refreshment. The chicken head, on the other hand, is given the dead to assist him on his later journey to the underworld; the c'ulel will not know how to get there, but the chicken will walk ahead of it and crow so that it can follow.

As the men sit and talk together, they consume a great deal of pox, always drinking in a semi-formal procedure. The musicians play continuously, stopping only when the sacristanes arrive and say the first responses, "for the people's coming, for the entrance of night, and for the dead one." The sacristanes kneel by the body, sprinkle it with holy water, and bless the dead to ensure the gods' opening the gates of heaven to him and forgiving his sins. They may further speak a bit about the nature of death; as one informant, Domingo de la Torre, poetically described it:

They did not cry over the dead man because they were not his relatives. They simply crossed themselves and talked about what happens to you when you die: what your soul sees there where it goes forever, whether you weep or scream to the gods when you come before them, whether you beg about your guilt, petition about your sins, whether you are permitted to eat or to drink water, and whether your soul sees, whether a dead person sees even though he is only a ghost, a corpse, submerged in the mud [Pope, text of July 15, 1968].

In the evening, the women serve a meal of tortillas, salt, and chicken soup, using the meat of the chicken whose head was offered to the dead.² The musicians again cease playing, but resume again as soon as the meal is over.

Another chicken meal is served at midnight, and the sacristanes again recite the responses. The men are getting quite drunk by this time as more and more rounds of pox are passed around. The women drink

also, though less than the men; however, they show consistently more emotion than the men. Close female relatives may hover near the corpse, taking turns weeping. Mostly the men just talk and joke, though from time to time a close male relative of the dead person may walk over to his coffin and burst into tearful shrieking. As Patrick Menget described this masculine behavior, speaking of Chamula, where the pattern of forced crying is similar to that of Zinacantan:

He addresses the deceased personally and sounds almost angry.
He needs no more than a drink to start laughing again [1968:20].

What is said by all these grievers undoubtedly varies; however, following is an example of the ritual speech a wife uses to mourn her dead spouse:

Yos k'usi capase
k'u yu7un ti cacame yos

Oh God, what are you doing?
Oh God, why are you dying?

kahval
mi htuk caviktaon 7un li7e

Oh Lord,
If you abandon me here all alone,

mi muk' 7onox yet'esel ti hun camele
mi muk' 7onox yet'esel ti hun lahel
7une

If sickness can be resisted no longer,
If the end can be avoided no longer,

hnup
hci7il

My husband,
My companion,

buc'u xa tahk'opon 7un li7e
buc'u xa tahti7in 7un li7e

Who will I talk with here?
Who will I speak to here?

kahval
sinyor santorenso
sinyor santorominko

Oh Lord,
San Lorenzo,
Santo Domingo!

k'u yu7un ti htuk 7aviktaon, 7une
hnup
k'u yu7un ti htuk 7aviktaone hci7il

Why do you abandon me, my husband?
Why do you leave me, my companion?

7isk'el xa 7elav ti htotike
7isk'el xa 7elav ti hme7tike

Our fathers have already seen our spectacle
Our mothers have already seen our spectacle

7ize7in xa ti htotike
7ize7in xa ti hme7tike

Our fathers have laughed,
Our mothers have laughed,

7ize7in xa ti bik'ite
7ize7in xa ti muk'e

The small ones have laughed,
The great ones have laughed.

7istom xa ti snicime
7istom xa ti syanal te7e

They have held flowers in their hands,
They have held leaves in their hands.

ti htotike
ti hme7tike

Our fathers,
Our mothers.

yec pasensya 7ak'o slok'es yo7on
htotik
ak'o slok'es yo7on hmetik yec
pasensya

Let our fathers patiently open their hearts.
Let our mothers patiently open their hearts.

sbatel nan 7osil ti htotike
sbatel nan 7osil ti hme7tike

Perhaps unto eternity.
Perhaps unto eternity.

muxa snaʔ ti xcamike
 muxa snaʔ ti xlahike

They [who have wronged us] do not die,
They [who have wronged us] do not pass away.

7ak'o sz'un ti yisime
7ak'o sz'un ti yibele

May they plant their corn,
May they plant their roots.

mu xa me sk'aʔalin ti lume
mu xa me sk'aʔalin ti ʔac'ele

Not yet are they food for the soil,
Not yet are they food for the earth.

yan li vo7otike hnup
yan li vo7otike hci7il

Instead of us, my husband,
In place of us, my companion,

sk'a7alotik 7osil
sk'a7alotik balamil

So we fertilize the soil,
We fertilize the mud.

yec pasensya te on ta pat
te on ta xokon

[i.e., we are the wronged ones who have been done in]
Patient am I here behind you,
Patient am I at your side.

mu to me xtal 7avik'on 7un hnup
mu to me xtal 7avik'on 7un hci7il

May I remain worthy, my husband,
May I remain worthy, my companion,

baltome hmala ta c'u'lele
baltome hmala ta vanimae

While awaiting your spirit,
While awaiting your ghost.

yec pasensya batan 7un hnup
batan 7un hci7il

Go patiently then, husband,
Go patiently, companion.

mu me k'uxal ta ahole
mu me k'uxal ta avo7one

May your head suffer no more.
May your heart suffer no more.

te me takk'el
li k'usuk ku7untike

Let me be the one who sees
Those things which belong to us,

teuk k'otuk k'ano ta mule
teuk k'otuk k'ano ta kolo7e

While you go and learn your sins,
While you go and ask your guilt,

k'usi hpasbetik ti htotike
k'usi hpasbetik ti hme7tike

And what we have done for our fathers,
What we have done for our mothers.

k'otuk k'opohan
k'otuk ti7ihan

May you arrive and talk,
May you arrive and speak,

k'otuk kehlan
k'otuk patlan

Arrive and kneel,
Arrive and lie down,

k'otuk 7ok'an
k'otuk 7avanan

Arrive and weep,
Arrive and scream,

ta yicon
ti kahvaltike

Beneath the gaze
Of God the Father.

7iyilxa nan ti 7ac'ulele
7iyilxa nan ta 7avanimae

Perhaps your spirit has already seen,
Perhaps your ghost has already beheld,

ti buc'u htotikale
ti buc'u hme7tikale

Who are our fathers,
Who are our mothers,

7ispas ti svokole
7ispas ti yik'te7e

Who brought the burden,
Who brought the pain,

ti ta pata
ti ta xokone

To your back,
To your side,

hnup
hci7il

Husband,
Companion,

pasensya
batan 7un

With patience,
Go.

Around three or four o'clock in the morning, people begin to prepare for the trip to the graveyard. The money offering in the plate is counted, and a bit of it is removed to be put in the coffin. Women make six little bags of cloth--three in which to put the coins, and three for burnt tortillas. About 60 centavos is put into each of two bags, while a little less, around 40 centavos, is put into a third. Theoretically, a deceased who was wealthy should receive slightly more than average (e.g. 75 centavos per bag), while a poor person should receive less (at most 50 centavos per bag); Zinacantecos assert that this is appropriate because the dead person remembers whether he was rich or poor in life. For the three other bags, special burnt tortillas are prepared. Three

miniature tortillas, about the size of a peso, are charred black in the fire and then ground into a powder; one of them is put into each bag.

My informant, Domingo de la Torre, explained that these tortillas are made small because "the soul sees as large that which is small"; similarly, he said they are charred because "the soul sees as white that which is black, and as black that which is white." On the other hand, he also commented that the black tortillas symbolize meat.

One of the bags of tortillas, and the bag which contains the smallest amount of money, are tied under the deceased's belt, where living Zinacantecos customarily carry their money. The other four bags of food and money are hidden at each side of the body. The explanation for this procedure is readily given by informants: when the soul arrives in the underworld, the other souls--at least, those "poor" and "hungry" ones for whom no one lights candles in the graveyard--attack and rob it. However, since Zinacantecos always carry their money beneath their belts, the hungry souls do not think to search under the new arrival's armpits, and thus he manages to escape with most of his provisions.

Besides the little bags, a number of objects are placed inside the open coffin. Usually these are put together in a net bag and placed at the corpse's feet. If the deceased had been male, these objects might be: the chicken head, a plate, a small bowl, a full gourd water bottle--one account (Laughlin, 1961:95) stresses that a gourd and a half-gourd, both chipped, should be included,--a needle and thread, and the man's nail parings, if he had saved them. If the deceased had been female, her spindle might be added to the above articles, along with a ball of all the hairs she had placed over the years in the chinks in the walls to show she belonged to the house.

When they have finished these preparations, they have a dawn meal, again of chicken soup and tortillas. Like the other meals, this one is not served at the table; rather, the food is put on the floor as is customary in everyday life.

After eating, the men cut the toenails, fingernails, and whiskers (if necessary) of the deceased, and put the shavings into the net bag. They say this is done to make the c'ulel more comfortable as it travels. The cutting must be done with great care so not as to injure and cause pain to the c'ulel.

At last, just before the deceased is taken from the house, attention may focus on the survivors in a striking way. If the deceased had been a married woman, her husband may be asked to announce publicly who is to be his wife's replacement. He is obliged to tell even if he has not yet spoken to the woman, because otherwise he will never have the luck to find another spouse.

Finally the coffin lid is closed, the responses are said, and the coffin is carried outside the house, while all the women wail loudly. From neighboring houses the women come out screaming. Men then tie two long poles to the coffin so that it can be borne on the shoulders of four pall-bearers. Meanwhile, a grown woman (some say the wife of the deceased, some say a grown daughter, others say the oldest woman assisting at the funeral) performs a rite intended to "loosen the soul from the house," "prevent the soul from returning to see his possessions," and "make him forget his house and not come back to frighten the living." The woman spits or blows salt water all over the inside of the house, especially where the deceased lay, and all around the yard outside. One of the men may likewise go and blow salt water on the household's animals,

to prevent the deceased's making them die. Moreover, close relatives may later perform the same operations at their own homes.

The funeral procession now forms, again to a crescendo of loud wailing. The musicians lead, followed by the pall-bearers, who may be married compadres or friends of the deceased, but who may not be his brothers, close relatives, or any young, unmarried men. After the coffin--which is carried with the feet in front, the head behind--go the other men, including the gravediggers bearing pick, shovel, pickaxe, and hoe. The women follow, with the widow (if the deceased was a married man) in front among the older women, and the younger women and children in the rear. The widow carries nothing, because at the rest stops she must give water to the corpse. The other women carry among them a jug of water and a number of cups, a basket of tortillas, posole (uncooked corn gruel), chicken soup, plates, and all those possessions of the deceased that are to be put in the grave. Only persons who have died violently (those for whom no wake is held), and babies who died before baptism, are buried without grave goods.

If the ceremony takes place in Zinacantan Center, one of the men in the funeral party goes to the church and rings the bell as the procession marches to the graveyard.

There are ordinarily three rest stops on the way. At each, the coffin is opened, and the women weep inconsolably. One of them (the wife, or godmother in the case of a child's death, or a grown daughter) approaches the coffin on her knees and three times sprinkles water into the deceased's mouth, as had been done during the wake. Candles, both wax and tallow, are lighted by the dead's head; when the entourage moves on, they are snuffed out, and relit at the next stop. At each stop,

furthermore, a round of pox is served to all. If the sun is bright, a hat or shawl may be placed on the deceased's head to protect it from the heat. Then the coffin is again closed, new pall-bearers take up the box, and the procession starts ahead.

When it finally reaches the cemetery, the pall-bearers set the coffin down on a clear spot near the entrance. The poles which were used to bear the coffin are unfastened and cut in half with a machete, so that they will not "carry away more souls." The head of the coffin is again oriented west or east as before, the lid is raised, and candles are burned. Discussion (sometimes angry argument) begins as to where the grave should be dug. After a few rounds of pox, the disagreement may be settled; usually someone is aggrieved because he felt close to whomever was buried in that particular spot before.

The coffin is measured with a rope, and then about ten centimeters is added to the length of each dimension. The pit is usually dug about a meter-and-a-half deep for an adult, a meter for a child.

It takes about two hours to dig the grave. Only one man goes in to dig the grave, while another goes in to throw out the dirt. Three intermissions are made; at each a round of pox is served and then new gravediggers take over the work. If they happen to disinter old wood or bones from previous burials, they remove them and put them aside in an old bowl. However, if one of the men finds a coin in the earth, he keeps it without telling anyone--the "coins of the dead" are considered to be very good luck.

After the pit is finished, a pick and shovel are laid crosswise over the hole, "so that it will not call in any more souls." Then the workers all drink posole, while the two sacristanes recite the responses.

When everything is ready, all the people begin to cry for the last time. Each little child is sent up to the coffin to kick the dead person's side--if he was an adult. Even the babies are carried up by their mothers and have their feet touched to the corpse. On the other hand, if the deceased was a child (up to ten or twelve years old), his parents kick him lightly on both sides with their left foot. Both of these procedures are believed to prevent the deceased's soul from stealing the souls of the living.

The corpse's wrists and toes are untied, and a candle (possibly with the wick blackened) is placed in the left hand. The dead carries this candle in order that he may speak to the gods in heaven and ask them to forgive his sins. The candle is not placed in his right hand because he will need to cross himself with it. Finally, more water is sprinkled into his mouth, and the coffin lid is closed for the last time. The sacristanes say the responses as the pall-bearers carry the coffin to the grave and remove the pick and shovel. With ropes they lower the coffin into the grave.

The filling of the grave is completed in six stages, with rounds of pox marking the end of each one. Nothing is buried in the first two layers, or "strips," on top of the coffin. However, on top the third, when the grave is half-filled, the grave goods are put in, either right under or right above the disinterred bones and wood. These grave goods include, for a woman, her old clothes, necklaces, blankets, comb, hair roll, rosary, and any special momentos she especially prized. Before her wool shawl is put in, its edges may be burned or cut, "so that it won't turn into a ram and scare the dead's soul." For a man, the appropriate grave objects might include his hat, with the black bands

ripped in three places "so that they won't turn into snakes and scare the soul on the path to the underworld," his sandals, wool poncho, and any other old clothes or objects especially associated with the dead man. These possessions are all believed to have the c'ulel of their owner.

Everyone, large and small, then steps up to the grave and throws three fistfuls of dirt, with both hands, into the pit while the sacristanes recite the responses. The people offer this dirt "in place of their own bodies." Some Zinacantecos further believe that if the pile of earth accumulated from the handfuls is large, the deceased should have lived longer and therefore was probably bewitched; if the pile is shallow, his hour was up and it was time for him to die (Vogt, 1969: 9-70).

The grave is then completely filled. Pine needles (xak toh) are spread over the mound, and a simple cross may be erected and placed in the ground at the head of the grave (the western end for adults, the eastern end for children). Pine boughs (tekel toh) and red geranium flowers are fastened to the cross, and a pine top decorated with geraniums is stuck into the ground at each side of the cross. Finally, a pit is dug in front of the cross, and between three and seven candles (about half wax and half tallow) are set down in it and burned to the ground.

Following is an example of the ritual farewell speech said by all the adults at the completion of the burial procedures:

yos k'elavil 7un c'ulelal
k'elavil 7un lahebal

May God watch over this ghost,
May God watch over this dead one,

7imak ti yol 7abae
7inak ti yol 7asate

Now when your face is covered,
Now when your sight is covered,

7inak' ti yol 7ahole
7inak' ti yol 7abakele

Now when your head is hidden,
Now when your bones are hidden,

7imak ti yol abae
7imak ti yol asate

Now when your face is covered,
Now when your countenance is covered,

helavikon ta ba 7un
helavikon ta sat 7un

We pass by this view,
We pass by before you,

c'ulelal
lahebal
tup'ebal

Now a ghost,
Finished
and struck out.

After the grave is completed, the entire family retires to a nearby spot where there is room to sit down together. They share a final chicken meal, and the close male relatives of the dead begin to drink with real abandon in order to make themselves forget their grief. The gravediggers also get quite drunk and then stagger off home. The musicians and sacristanes, however, try to retain some control because they must accompany the deceased's family when they return home. At the home, any remaining food is eaten and more pox is consumed. Late in the evening, finally, the musicians cease playing, and they and the sacristanes go home too.

For three mornings after the funeral, the close relatives of the dead and the same three musicians gather at the grave side to play music and burn candles. I came upon such a party at the graveyard of Sek'emtik. Standing around the grave on the north side were thirteen men, women, and children, while on the south side, on chairs, were sitting the musicians. A woman was lighting two candles at the head of the grave. No one was crying or praying, and there was no drinking going on, although in someone's open net bag was a conspicuous bottle of pox, as well as several oranges which were offerings for the dead.

For six more days (adding up to a total of nine, following the Catholic Novena), the closest survivors continue to make morning trips to the graveyard to burn candles. Moreover, on all these mornings,

a lactating mother of a dead infant pumps her breasts with her hands and collects the milk in a cup, which she offers to the baby beside the candles.

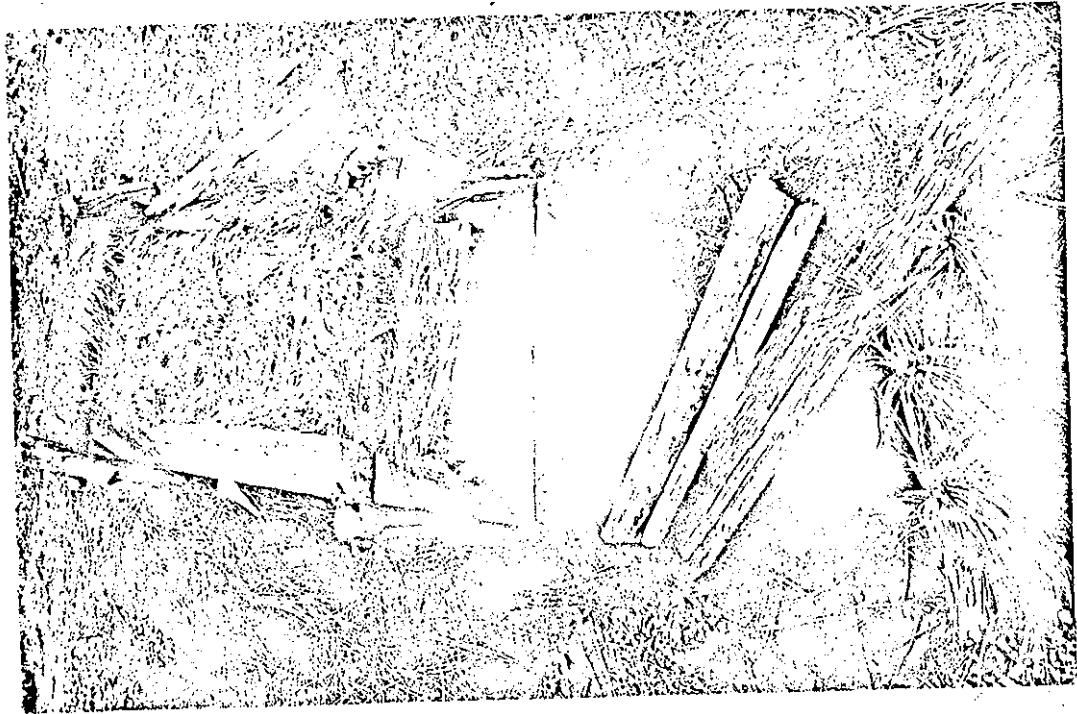
Each evening in the home, throughout the Novena, a similar process occurs. The area where the relative died remains fenced off, and inside the enclosure at least one candle is burned. If the deceased was a baby, the mother kneels, prays, and sobs as she pumps her milk into a cup.

No taboos are placed on the mourners, and ^{at} the end of the Novena the formal mourning ceases. Sometime during this period, in the village of Apas, sticks and pieces of board are used by one of the men to make a "house" over the grave. In other villages, four logs may occasionally be placed around the sides of the mound. Moreover, the very wealthy in any Zinacanteco village may (at the time of the Novena or for an All Souls' Day celebration) purchase in San Cristobal a stone block or an inscribed, wooden, blue or green painted cross for the grave. These expensive embellishments are considered "good," but they do not alter the grave in a symbolically significant way.

NOTES

1. In former years Zinacantecos could buy coffins from a Ladino Carpenter in Zinacantan Center. However, he died, and his son eventually discontinued the business.
2. If chicken cannot be afforded, then fish should be used. Beef meat is strictly forbidden.

The Cemetery of Apas



Chapter II

THE ZINACANTECO FUNERAL AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

At the moment of dying a human being alters his state more abruptly, radically, and problematically than he had at any previous time of his life^{cycle}. Perhaps that is the reason death recurs as the most prominent metaphor in many types of ceremonies of passage; for example, in Ndemu initiation rites:

The essential feature of these symbolizations is that the neophytes are neither living nor dead from one aspect, and both living and dead from another. Their condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories [Turner, 1967:97].

The person who has just died is, in a sense, the epitome of the marginal, transitional human being. His soul--completely bereft of all possessions, social roles, social connections, and everything else it held dear--wanders off physically, as well as structurally, invisible. His body remains and silently endures any sacred ordeal through which society puts it; surely no living person fulfills the following description as well as a corpse could be said to:

He does not perform actions, but passiones in the ancient sense of that term. He is passive to the action of the ritual and receives the stamp of its meaning [Turner, 1968:22].

In other words, the ambiguity of identity which arises during any type of structural transition can be especially intense in the case of death

because as the person crosses the threshold he also permanently separates into two parts--an intangible portion that will live on in some new way, and a visible portion that will just putrify and disintegrate. It is as if the two central qualities of the marginal human being, "unclearness" and "uncleanness" (Douglas, 1966:96ff.), become even more frightening and dangerous by each being descriptive of one of the disassociated aspects of the dead person. Ritual action of the most elegant kind must be performed to dispell the confusion of life and death, to impress a sanctified destruction on the impure body and a clarified set of new rights, activities and obligations on the obscure immortal soul.

A. The Corpse and the Soul in Zinacanteco Conception

Certainly I do not possess sufficient understanding of Zinacanteco thought to explain fully their concept of the "dead person." To elucidate it as directly as I can, I would like to consider the vocabulary used in reference to death and the dead. The following definitions are taken from Robert Laughlin's Tzotzil dictionary:

1. 7anima - dead person, ghost, soul, dream
2. c'ulel - soul of everything naturally created, and of manufactured objects that have been used and so receive the soul of their owner
bat c'ulel ("go the soul") - sleep, die
c'ulelal - ghost, dead person
3. cam - die, feel ill, pass out, lose consciousness
camel - sickness, death, deterioration of a house
4. lah - finish, end, die
lahebal - ghost, afterworld, time when action is about to end
hlahele - dead person
lah camuk - it finished dying, it died for good

- slaheb - his death, the last, the end, death
5. nel - die, end work
nelebal - moment of death, moment when work or religious post ends
6. tup'7ik - die, epilepsy
tup'eb(al) - corpse (ritual speech)
7. t'ab - die
t'abt'onab - dying
8. bakil - bones
9. bek'tal - flesh
10. pat - back
hpat hxokon - my back, my body; my side (ritual speech)
11. takopal - body (of a person, horse, sheep, cow, pig)

Thus there is no common Tzotzil word meaning simply "corpse"--only a metaphoric expression (tup'ebal) that is used in ritual speech. The words 7anima and c'ulelal are ordinarily employed to refer to the corpse, and yet both mean more than just "lifeless body," because both refer to the totality of the dead person. To illustrate the range of applications of these two crucial words, c'ulelal and 7anima, following is a list of phrases excerpted from the texts written by Domingo de la Torre:

<u>k'alal xlok' xc'ulel hun 7animae</u> "when the soul leaves the dead person"	<u>xkuxbeik yo7on li c'ulelale</u> "rest the heart of the ghost"
<u>k'alal 7icam ti 7anima mole</u> "when the old (dead) man died"	<u>yak'beik rexponxo li c'ulelale</u> "give the responses for the ghost"
<u>x7atitason li 7animae</u> "wash the dead person"	<u>xbat xc'ulel li c'ulelale ta vinahel</u> "the soul of the dead goes to heaven"
<u>xc'amaltak li 7animae</u> "the sons of the dead person"	<u>stihbeik svabel li c'ulelal</u> "play music for the ghost"
<u>sp'ahesbeik vo7 li 7anima</u> "sprinkle water on the dead"	<u>yok'itaik li c'ulelal</u> "cry for the dead person"

szobsba svula7anel li 7animae
"gather to visit the dead"

ti yo7 buy tuz'ul li 7animae
"the place where the dead lies"

xok'itaik li 7animae
"mourn for the dead person"

xak'beik rexponxo 7anima
"give responses for the dead"

li xevue ha7 la sbek'etik li 7animaetike
"the tallow (candle) is meat for dead people"

li sbakel ba7yi 7anima
"the bones of the first dead one"

tasibtasat ta be li 7anima
"(the hat bands turn into snakes and) scare the dead on the path"

smukel hun 7anima
"the burial of the dead"

cpohbat li yantik 7animatike stak'in li 7ac' 7animae
"the other dead rob the newly dead person of his money"

ha7xa me te yil'o ta c'ulele, ha7xa me te yil'o ta vanimae yec te k'alal c'ulelal lahebal tup'ebal
"whether (in the afterlife) the soul sees, whether the dead person sees even when he is a deceased, a ghost, a corpse"

xak'ik pexutik slimuxnaik li ta 7animae para ke smanbeik 7o skantelail ta z'akal li c'ulelale
"they give pesos as charity for the dead person so that they can later buy candles for the ghost"

yec'o ti mu parehouk xak'beik 7ec'el stak'in li 7animaetik porke sna7oh xc'ulel mi7oy ep stak'in xanav
"that is why they give different amounts of money to the dead--because the soul knows if he walked with much money (when he was alive)"

helavikon ta sat 7un c'ulelal lahebal tup'ebal
"We pass by your face, you ghost, finished one, corpse"

taxcik'e tahmek ti spat xokon ti hc'ulel
"they badly burn the body of our souls"

klub taxanbal ti hc'uleltik buy tszob ti yav kottik
"our souls tire on the journey where they gather up footsteps"

k'alal te tuz'ul li c'ulelale yak'ohbeik sve7el ta xokon shol
"while the dead person is lying there, they give him food beside his head"

ciyik'botik 7ec'el hc'uleltik li hol kaxlane
"our souls take the head of the chicken"

skuenta tasz'is'o sk'u7 li c'ulelale
"so that the ghost can sew his clothes"

yos k'elavil 7un c'ulelal kelavil 7un lahebal
"May God watch over this ghost, may he watch over this finished one"

The dead person is referred to as an 7anima in the context of his association with physical objects: candles, hat bands, water, bones, bags of coins, sacristanes, mourners, sons, wife, charity money, the grave, etc. He is referred to as c'ulelal in the context of his being influenced by or responding to physical objects or real actions: music entertains him, the sacristanes bless him, the mourners cry out to him, he sews his clothes, he receives food. Clearly there is some overlap between these words--for example, the c'ulel can be said to go out of either the 7anima or c'ulelal--but in general 7anima is used when the funerary object or ritual action is being emphasized, while c'ulelal is employed when primary attention is focussed on the dead person as an active or responding entity. The word c'ulel is used to refer only to the animate, thinking, immortal soul of the deceased: it leaves the body and goes to heaven, it sees things, gets tired, is uncomfortably hot when its body is buried in wool, gathers up its footsteps, feels pain when scissors are dug into the 7anima, and so on.

Perhaps three stories will illustrate in a more precise way how Zinacantecos feel about the bodies of the dead:

It is often claimed that strong bridges require human bodies to be buried in their foundations. Some people assert that electric light plants are fueled by the fat of human corpses [Vogt, 1969:19-12].

Chep reported to me that just before his father-in-law, Mol Antun, was buried, the eyes of the corpse watered with tears, the lips moved, and blood came out of the mouth. The reason was that Mol Antun was sorry not to have finished his duty as totil me7il for Chep's cargo year. [Mol Antun had been murdered by men of the community for witchcraft]. [Vogt, 1965:12]

no, this was not the case
F.R.

In the village of Apas, women reacted to a photograph of their cemetery with alarm and anger. They adamantly refused to identify who was buried in each grave because that would have been "giving away the souls of the dead."

In other words, although the inner soul is believed to exit from the body at death, it can still directly affect, and be affected by, the state of the corpse. Thus the physical remains are a possible source of strength or power. The Zinacanteco funeral transfers most of the power--we might say, life--from the corpse to the immortal soul. As I shall try to show, by reestablishing normal human balances within the components of the dead person, the funeral ^{also}overcomes cleavages within the corporate group of the living and their predecessors. We need to understand exactly which internal equilibria and social balances are upset by a death in Zinacantan, in order to see what is achieved, what is meant by, the funeral ritual.

B. The Afterlife

The different stages in the treatment of the dead are closely paralleled by the supposed movements of the c'ulel. This may be summarized in the following way:

First two days - Wake - C'ulel retraces life steps.

Second or third day - Funeral - C'ulel goes to graveyard.

Next nine days - Novena - C'ulel journeys to K'otebal.

Next 12 years or period corresponding to length of life of the deceased -

Candle burning on Sundays and All Souls' Day - C'ulel associated with grave, although usually residing in the afterlife.

End of above period - No more care - Rebirth of the c'ulel in another Zinacanteco.

The c'ulel's journeying, then, consists of two phases. First he must retravel the course of his life and gather up all the pieces of flesh, hair, or nail he left behind. This conveniently requires that his dangerous presence be out of his house, away from his body and possessions, during

the time that his family and friends are sleeplessly keeping watch there. Afterwards, he must make the arduous trip to K'otebal (the "place of arrival" in the underworld, translated into Spanish as Purgatorio by informants). Where K'otebal is in relation to Zinacantan, informants do not know; however, they do believe that before the dead reaches it he must be carried over a large river by a black dog. Once across the river, he continues following the trail until he comes to a crossing point, K'otebal. As the dead stands at this cross, his fate is decided according to his moral worth. Toward the left stretches a wide, straight path leading eventually to K'atin bak ("place warmed by bones"), conceived of as a deep hole, somewhere, in the earth. Toward the right lies a thin, almost unnoticeable, winding path which leads to Vinahel ("heaven"), a realm which is above this earth. If the deceased had committed no atrocious sins, the chicken travelling with him sings out and shows him the entrance to the righthand path. He then walks down the road until he meets an escort of relatives and friends, for whom he did favors in life, who show him the gates of Vinahel tended by a Ladino gatekeeper, Senor San Pedro. Once inside he is attacked and robbed of the food and money he carried at his belt.

Vinahel is not unlike Zinacantan. Special fates, however, are meted out to certain classes of persons. Different informants give somewhat contradictory reports; however, following are descriptions from two summary accounts:

From Robert Laughlin, Volume I, Tale 9, page 27--

Infants suck sap in the afterlife (they lie under a tree with their mouths open to catch the drops of sap).

Older children suck tree roots (from their mouths pour blood).

Lazy persons herd goats among the rocks (blood pours from their feet).

People who wanted to die have to endure lice breeding on their flesh (they sit under a tree which is covered with swarming masses of lice).

From Vogt, 1969, pp. 9-74 and 9-75--

Small babies are changed into flowers and hung on a cross.

Those who did not work on Sundays have little work in Vinahel.

Those who were murdered live easily in Vinahel; the murderers pay for their sins.

Those who missed fiestas, are imprisoned in Vinahel on All Souls' Day.

Those whose hands were not properly calloused are made to work until blood pours from their hands.

Those who were unreasonably fussy about drinking water are made to drink dirty water, blood, or pus.

Those who were not married in a church must live in darkness.

Widows rejoin their first husbands.

Those who died on All Souls' Day carry to Vinahel all the fruits which people left in the cemetery that day.

Those who died within a month of All Souls' Day must guard the houses of the dead in Vinahel while the others go visit the cemeteries in Zinacantan.

Although some of these fates do not seem especially pleasant, still Vinahel is much better than K'atinbak. The "place warmed by bones" is terribly hot--all the bones of sinners are burning "like firewood." Sent to this doom are witches, people who mistreated the corn plant, frigid and incestuous women, incestors, and murderers. The promiscuous women suffer the additional torture of having hot wires/poked up their vaginas until the flesh sizzles; then they are forced to eat the meat off the poker. Women who refused their husbands sexual satisfaction are condemned to eat their sexual secretions. Incestors and murderers are seized by demons, roasted, eaten, and then either disgorged or defecated--in a never-ending cycle.

Only a few types of ^{dead} persons elude this basic classification. Fetuses who were born dead and infants who die before baptism are believed by some to become demons, who persecute the living. Those who

died as a result of witchcraft (with their souls sold to the Earth Owner) and those who were struck dead by lightning (which is believed to come out of caves, the home of the Earth Owner) do not go^{to} the afterlife either, but instead become the slaves of the Earth Owner.

C. Differential Treatment of the Dead

The relation between one's destination in the afterlife and the special treatment he receives at his funeral can be summarized as follows:

CHILDREN

Unbaptised	May become demons	1. Buried the day after death (regardless of whether day of rest has transpired) 2. <u>Sacristanes'</u> responses unnecessary 3. Heads pointed east 4. No grave goods
Baptised	Go to Vinahel	Same as above, except grave goods included in burial

ADULTS

Major sinners		All heads pointed west All have grave goods, and a full night's wake before funeral
Known withches	Go to K'atinbak	May be denied responses
Known murderers	Go to K'atinbak	May be denied responses
Others	Go to K'atinbak	Responses desirable
Minor sinners		
Had violent death		
Lightning	Serve Earth Owner	{ 1. Buried without delay 2. No grave goods 3. Responses desirable(?)
Other	Go to Vinahel	
Non-violent death		
Bewitched	Serve Earth Owner	{ 1. Full night's wake 2. Grave goods 3. Responses desirable
Not witched	Go to Vinahel	

These practices are by no means invariable; they merely represent norms expressed by informants. At first glance, there seems to be little correspondance between these practices and the various afterlives.

In the following section I would like to offer hypotheses as to what variables do underlie the different practices.

In Zinacanteco belief, one's c'ulel is not at all firmly attached to his body until baptism. Thereafter, if too many parts of the c'ulel leave the body at once, or if one's animal soul companion (canul) gets loose from its home corral, then the person becomes sick and may even die. If so, we might say that the death is caused by soul-displacement. On the other hand, an accidental or violent death does not follow soul-displacement, but rather precedes and results in it.

		<u>Grave Goods</u>	<u>Death Caused by Soul-Displacement</u>
CHILDREN	Unbaptised	O	O
	Baptised	X	X
ADULTS	Violent Death	O	O
	Ordinary Death	X	X

It appears that grave goods are called for when the death results from soul-displacement. Since we know, furthermore, that all the grave goods are believed to possess the c'ulel of their owner, and that soul-displacement results from someone's moral guilt (either that of the victim, a close relative, or a witch), we might speculate that grave goods are dangerous or tainted goods. In point of fact, the wool clothes of a deceased are rarely interred with him, but if a family member wishes to wear them afterwards, he must leave them outside for three days and nights and then thoroughly wash them.

At baptism a child becomes incorporated into the social whole, but not until adulthood (roughly defined by marriage) does he become a full member of Zinacanteco society. From that point on he is no longer considered "innocent"--rather he will "pay for his crimes" when he dies.

If those crimes remain within acceptable limits, he will do his penance in Vinahel, a place much like the Zinacantan he knew in life. However, if his crimes are so enormous that he thrusts himself outside the moral limits of Zinacanteco society, he must burn in K'atinbak. If, in fact, he becomes a murderer or a powerful and feared witch, then he publicly outlaws himself from society, receives no blessing from the sacristanes, and is hence condemned by not only the gods but also his neighbors to exclusion from Vinahel.

	<u>Publicly Accepted, Full Member of Society</u>	<u>Responses</u>
CHILDREN	O	O
ADULTS - Minor sinners	X	X
ADULTS - Known murderers and witches	O	O
Other major sinners	X	X

Sacristanes, then, normally preside and purify only at the funerals of full citizens of the community.

There is a Tzotzil word, na?obil, that means "inheritance," "possessions left by the deceased," and "grief for the deceased." Accordingly, the amount of official emotion expended at a funeral is directly proportional, in most cases, to the amount of inheritance the survivors receive. Children, who leave no property, may be buried the day following their death even if they died after sunset; in other words, a regular, night-long wake is not required for them. Adults who were wealthy may be given a lavish, two-night wake. The exception to these principles is provided by the belief that adults who died violently should be buried immediately although, presumably, they have left some property to their families. I suggest that the reason for this is that such anomolous persons have not died from sickness. As shall be discussed in a later chapter, there

are a number of striking similarities between the Zinacanteco funeral and curing ceremonies. In fact, the wake may be referred to as "while they guard the dead as if he were a patient." Perhaps those who die of an illness must be somewhat 'cured' or 'revitalized' before they can be sent to the afterlife, whereas those who die of other causes may be sent off directly.

Differential treatment of the dead, it appears, is based on ideas about soul-loss, sickness, inheritance, and membership in society. On the other hand, the different destinations in the afterlife are conceived to correspond to the moral innocence of the dead--assuming that one dies with a soul. If he dies before baptism, or if his soul is owned by the Earth Owner, than he cannot enter either Vinahel or K'atinbak in the afterlife. It seems that conceptions of property, community, guilt, and the soul are central to both systems--funeral treatment and beliefs about the afterlife. Thus these two systems are rooted in similar concerns even though they are not direct functions of each other. The Zinacanteco funeral is not varied primarily to prepare a person for his particular afterlife, but rather to deal with disturbances related to the most crucial issues in Zinacanteco life--issues so fundamental that they cannot help but be reflected in their ideas about the afterlife.

D. The Structure of the Funeral as a Rite of Passage

Arnold Van Gennep, in The Rites of Passage, evaluates the funeral in the following way:

On first considering funeral ceremonies, one expects rites of separation to be their most prominent component, in contrast to rites of transition and rites of incorporation, which should be only slightly elaborated. A study of the data, however, reveals that the rites of separation are few in number and very simple,

while the transition rites have a duration and complexity sometimes so great that they must be granted a sort of autonomy. Furthermore, those funeral rites which incorporate the deceased into the world of the dead are most extensively elaborated and assigned the greatest importance. [1960:46].

To classify ritual actions according to their "purpose" requires an understanding of their symbolic value for the particular culture. In subsequent chapters of this paper, I will compare the funeral to other Zinacanteco ceremonies, to see how specific symbols in the former ritual function in other contexts. Certainly only a portion of the meaning of each symbol can be derived in this way, for I am primarily considering just the "positional dimension" of each symbol in relation to the several contexts:

In the positional dimension we see the meaning of a symbol as deriving from its relationship to other symbols in a specific cluster of gestalt of symbols whose elements acquire much of their significance from their position in its structure [Turner, 1968:37].

In this chapter I have been concerned with some of the most fundamental Zinacanteco ideas and feelings about the dead, and death itself, and the afterlife. In future chapters, as I attempt to elucidate the symbols brought together to deal with these things, I shift the focus from the post-mortem activity, taken as a dramatic unit, to other moments of life and to basic cultural values reflected in different aspects of the funeral. Before taking the funeral apart in this way, however, I would like to take an initial look at the funeral action as a whole.

Van Gennep's statement does, in fact, describe fairly well the Zinacanteco funeral ceremony. All the rites of separation (except the playing of music, which has several functions) consist of single actions.

<u>Rites of Separation</u>	<u>Rites of Transition</u>	<u>Rites of Incorporation for the dead:</u>
household cross uprooted	head oriented west or east	body taken to cemetery
eyes of corpse closed	body washed in laurel	hands and feet untied
corpse's mouth covered	body dressed in new clothes	responses, prayers said
area fenced off	mat turned upside down	old bones replaced
hands and feet tied	blanket reversed	little bags given to dead for himself and other dead
music played (keep out evil)	mat cross put in hands	holy water sprinkled
coffin lid closed	body put in black coffin with a window	candle put in dead's hand
salt spat around house	charities given	pine needles put on mound
pick and shovel crossed	music played (rest the heart of dead)	cross erected
poles cut	candles burned	flowers put on cross
handfuls of dirt tossed	water given to corpse	candles burned (for the gods)
side of corpse kicked	food given to corpse	
	net bag put in coffin	<u>for the living:</u>
	nails, hair cut	people gather for wake
	dead sworn out of office	music played (rest the hearts of the living)
	hat bands, shawl cut	<u>posh</u> served
	grave goods buried	chicken meals served
		<u>posole</u> drunk
		inheritance distributed
		"lucky" coins kept
		funeral procession

Several of the rites of transition are repeated a large number of times, while the others involve complex processes (e.g., the bathing and the preparation of grave objects). The rites of incorporation, finally, occupy most of the time spent at both the wake and the burial and are the focus of group attention. It is hard to say, however, which rituals are "assigned the greatest importance" by the Zinacantecos. Perhaps this is not a proper question to ask, because a large part of the meaning of each action derives from its place in the total structure.

Chapter III

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FUNERAL AND THE CURING

CEREMONY

The Tzotzil word for shaman is h7ilol, which means "seer." Only a shaman is believed able to see the gods and to hold direct communication with them. The symbols of his office and the bix--a bamboo staff which he cut in the lowlands ("hot country") as a novitiate, and which he always carries in his left hand while marching in formal processions-- and the baz'i camaroil, a red-trimmed, black blanket that is worn while he is praying.

The longest and most complex type of curing ceremony the shaman performs is called muk'ta 7ilel ("big seeing") or muk'ta nicim ("big flower"). These names refer to two important parts of the ritual proceedings: a visit to one or more mountain shrines to "see" the ancestral gods who live there, and the decoration of the sick person's bed with a large number of flowers. Silver (1966:156-192) has in great detail described the sequence of ritual steps involved in this ceremony. He concludes:

One interesting aspect of Zinacanteco curing are the markers which set off the sacred from the profane--especially when a sacred background has to be established in what is ordinarily a profane setting, e.g., the house. The prominent marker of a sacred situation in the house is the table. Placing an ordinary wooden table with its long axis running East-West, and placing on it candles with their wicks pointing East, in itself converts

the house from a profane to a sacred location. An even more definite marker, when used, is the mantrex. Placement of this ceremonial cover on a table unequivocally marks a ritual occasion.

Pine boughs and needles play a similar role. Pine boughs are the indispensable accompaniment of a sacred ritual at crosses. Pine needles freshly sprinkled before a cross prepare it for ritual use. When fresh juncia is placed before the patio cross it marks its conversion to sacred use. The incense burner, which invariable accompanies prayer before either crosses or the table, plays a similar role.

The proper ritual use of materials converts them into offerings to the gods. A simple principle explains something of the lavish expenditure of ritual materials that is made in the course of a curing ceremony. Everything--the flowers, candles, food, pox, gifts--are received by the gods, but only after it is transformed properly through its prescribed use in the curing ceremony. We can see the ceremony, then, as a vast transaction in which the participants offer the deities not only the ritual sacrifices but also the ceremonial labor necessary to convert them to divine use [pp. 235-6].

Incense, formal meals at the table, and sacred persons able to communicate with the gods are conspicuously absent at the funeral. Other features, however, such as chickens, pox, and pine needles, are shared by the curing and funeral ceremonies. A brief examination of the ritual steps involved in the major curing ceremony provides a way of seeing how the same symbols function in a context where Zinacantecos seek to avoid the very fate which must be faced in the funeral (I include only those details which have direct relevance for the comparison).

(1) Finding a shaman

(2) Preparations - The family of the patient procure two black chickens, the same sex as the patient, and construct an enclosure around the sick bed.

(3) Fetching the shaman - A male assistant goes to the shaman's house and gives him a bottle of rum and two rolls. The shaman prays, shares the rum with the assistant, and prepares his staff and black robe. Meanwhile,

at the house of the patient, other men turn the table east-west and place candles on it with their wicks pointing east. Two incense burners are lighted.

(4) Arrival of the shaman - The shaman enters, kneels, and prays at the table.

(5) Inspection of the Candles - The shaman sits at the table and examines the candles. He says a prayer called k'el kantela (watch the candles).

(6) Preparation of the Plants - The shaman censes and ties together bundles of plants for the patient's bed and the mountain shrines. These plants include various air plants, two types of pine branch tips, laurel, myrtle, pine needles, and three other plants. Using some of these bundles, he constructs an arch over the entrance to the patient's bed. Clusters of red geranium are attached to the top and sides of the arch.

(7) Preparation of the Bath - The shaman puts on to boil a kettle of water containing a bit of each type of plant listed above.

(8) Praying over the Candles - The shaman prays over the candles, and summons--one by one or in pairs--all the people of the house. They kneel at the table, cross themselves, and pray briefly.

(9) Bathing the Patient - Dipping with his hand, the shaman washes the patient's head, arms (stroking down towards the hands and fingertips), trunk, and legs. The patient sits naked in a chair, screened from view. During the washing, three rounds of pox are served. Afterwards the patient puts on clean, freshly censed clothing.

(10) Bathing the Substitute - The shaman bathes one of the black chickens in the same aromatic water. This chicken is the "substitute" that will be taken to the sacred mountain of Kalvario and left as an offering to

the ancestral gods, in the "hope that they will consume the chicken instead of the soul of the patient" (Silver, 1966:171). According to myth (Laughlin, 196 :313), the chicken is now the Zinacanteco sacrificial animal because they believe it informed on Christ. Laughlin asserts (p. 102) that chickens are symbolic vehicles for the strengthening of vital forces, the renewal of life, in many aspects of the culture. He further maintains (1960:17) that flowers, pine needles, clothes, and incense are all offered to the gods as symbolic substitutes for human flesh.

(11) Eating the Ritual Meal

(12) Departure for Zinacantan Center - The group leaves the house in a formal procession and visits the mountains and churches in Zinacantan Center. At each mountain cross, the male assistants prepare the crosses by attaching the fresh pine boughs and red geraniums. The shaman prays and lights candles, and then he and the patient pray together. Rounds of pox are served at fixed intervals. At the shrine of Kalvario, the "substitute" black chicken is left for the gods at the west side of the cross. Its head is pointed east "since this is the direction where the sun rises and comes to receive it" (Vogt, 1969:20-25). A twenty-centavo white candle is lit and left in the hole with the chicken. Finally, a meal of chicken, cooked eggs, or pork is served to the entire company.

(13) Returning to the Patient's House - The party marches home in the same ritual order in which it came, lights candles at the patio cross, burns more incense, and passes three rounds of pox.

(14) Entering the Decorated Bed - Upon entering the house, the shaman washes the patient's hands and feet in the bath water, and helps him through the arch into his bed. He censes the patient three times and prays; then he slaughters the second black chicken and throws it on top of the patient. If it dies with its head pointing east, theoretically the

patient will live; if it falls toward the west, the patient will die. Afterwards, the chicken is placed, head east, beside the patient's bed. The patient will gradually eat it over the next few days.

(15) Calling the Soul - Beginning at the house cross, and then proceeding to other spots around the house where soul-loss may have occurred, the shaman lights candles and prays, then strikes the ground with a branch beater and spits liquor on the ground, while a male assistant makes a whistling sound by blowing on a gourd containing salt water.

(16) Eating the Final Ritual Meal - A final ritual meal is eaten at the table while the patient eats in his bed.

(17) Secluding the Patient - For a period of two weeks or more, the patient must never be left alone, must do no work, must be constantly watched (someone stays awake by his bedside all night to make sure he is not attacked by demons or does not suffer a "blow" from the ancestral gods). If there is only one guardian for his care, she may sleep at night if a light is kept burning. The patient must stay in bed and is forbidden to talk to his guardians; no visitor may enter the house.

(18) Removing the Flowers from the Bed

(19) Bathing the Patient - The patient, accompanied by his wife or mother, takes several sweat baths. Taboos are gradually lifted. The guardians, who were not allowed to weave during the seclusion period, may resume weaving--at first only with black wool, because white objects supposedly attract blows from the ancestral gods (blows which would knock the patient's c'ulel out of his body again).

Perhaps the action of the curing ritual could be described as achieving three major goals: communication is opened with the supernatural, offerings are made to and received by the supernatural beings, and the weak

patient is protected against the dangerous powers of the supernatural.

Communication with the gods is opened through the praying of the shaman, the burning of incense, and the decoration of crosses. According to Silver, crosses are

...symbolic of doorways where communication can be had with the supernatural world.... Crosses are often triple, but even where only one cross is provided (e.g., the patio cross) it is made triple with [the erection of two] pine boughs. Where no cross is available, three pine boughs planted in the ground will suffice [1966:222-23].

Such a "doorway" is similarly erected at the head of the grave at the end of the funeral ceremony, when the c'ulel leaves for K'otebal. Before this doorway are then spread pine needles and flower petals, while on the pine boughs are fastened red geraniums. On the other hand, the patio cross is never decorated before the wake; rather, it may be uprooted and leaned against the fence. Furthermore, the house in which the body lies during the wake is not converted into a sacred place through the use of plant materials, incense, or the table set east-west. These things are not necessary because contact with the supernatural world is established through the liberation of the c'ulel of the dead. The dead person can even be conceived of as taking on the roles of both shaman and patient. For example, during the two days after death, the c'ulel retraces its footsteps gathering up lost body parts just as the shaman goes about the yard gathering up lost soul parts. Furthermore, Zinacantecos believe that the dead person can call the souls of the living out of their bodies in the same way that the shaman can call the souls of his patients back into their bodies. The shaman prays to the gods and "sees" them in the mountains, while the dead goes right before them and

speaks with them face to face. In fact, the dead "sees" out of a window cut in a black coffin, while the shaman "sees" when he is wearing his black robe. In all those ways in which he has power or activity, the dead person is like the shaman. On the other hand, in those ways in which he is weak, he is like the sick patient. In the house, his bed is fenced off and enclosed. He is bathed in aromatic water and dressed in fresh clothes. He is continually fed. As he lies quietly, unspeaking, unmoving, he is watched by sleepless guardians; in fact, as mentioned earlier, the wake is called kalal yolel xcabiel li 7anima ta 7akubaltike, "while they watch the dead at night as if he were a patient in seclusion." He is provided for the afterlife with tortillas that have been burned black just as the patient eats the second black chicken and has guardians who can only weave with black wool.

At the curing ceremony, once communication has been opened with the ancestral gods, then offerings are made to them. In Silver's words:

The parts of the ceremony that are received by the gods are: the h7ilol's words, the pox, the curer's gift (given to him at the end of the ceremony), the meals at table and at Kal-vario [including the black chickens], and the candles [1966:169].

These are the items involved in the "vast transaction in which the participants offer the deities not only the ritual sacrifices but also the ceremonial labor necessary to convert them to divine use." In other words, the ancestral gods receive the c'uleletik of the food, candles, and liquor as the men below consume their substance, according to prescribed ritual form. For example, pox must be served at certain times and must be drunk following the formal drinking procedures of bowing and releasing. If it is handled properly, then it will serve seven crucial symbolic functions (Silver, 1966:225-26):

- (a) pox helps the h7ilol to "see," i.e., intoxication aids his divinatory powers;
- (b) pox consumed by participants in a curing ceremony is actually received by the deities, especially the totilme7iletik [ancestral gods], to whom the offering serves as a sign of respect and propitiation;
- (c) the offering of a bottle of pox, as on a table or at a cross, impels the presence of the totilme7iletik and kahvaltik ta vinahel Father in Heaven;
- (d) the process of drinking pox opens up communication between men and makes it possible for their hearts to be softened towards each other and for reconciliation to take place;
- (e) gifts of pox given to the h7ilol are received as offerings by the deities;
- (f) offering pox to another person is a visible sign of respect.

Pox is thus a humble present from a subordinate being to a more powerful one, but it is by no means an example of non-reciprocal giving. Food and candles and pox alike are used to extract promises. As Laughlin puts it (1962:87), "The direction in which food is circulated is a reliable clue to the meaning of the action." Whether gods or humans, those who consume a gift imply that they will do for the giver some favor or forgive him any wrong he has committed. The respect with which a person bestows a gift signifies the purity of his intentions; the grace of the one who receives it demonstrates the honesty of his promise or his forgiveness. Especially the offer of a sacrificial chicken, we might conjecture, is a token of good faith, because through it the giver seems to be saying, "It is right that the betrayer of Christ should die again and again. Take him instead of me, who would never break his word to a deity."

At the funeral, too, a gift which is accepted implies a request which is granted. The 7anima is continually refreshed with food, candles, and water as the c'ulel retraces its footsteps, and it is provided with food, a candle, and money to take to the afterlife: therefore, the dead person is obligated to make these two journeys, to leave his former

home. Furthermore, those persons who come to perform a function for the deceased--the bather, sacristanes, and musicians--are each presented a bottle of pox. They accept it and thereby imply that the services they render will be performed correctly, in other words, that the body will be purified, the soul will be forgiven in heaven, evil will be kept out of the wake and burial. All the friends and relatives who come to the house or the cemetery are plied with food and pox, and they promise to remain friends with the family in spite of the extinction of one of its members. Finally, of course, the ancestral gods who receive the c'uleletik of all these gifts are disposed to treat kindly both the living and the dead.

The third achievement of the curing ceremony is the protection of the patient from the dangerous powers of the supernatural, which have been unleashed by the curing ceremony. The patient is vulnerable to the attacks of demons and the ancestral gods, in other words, both the evil and the good superhuman beings.

To enter into contact with supernatural forces is potentially dangerous to anyone whose vital forces are not fully developed or are weakened. Thus the patient, who is feeble in body and c'ulel must take extraordinary precautions from the moment he enters into contact with the supernatural. In the case of the curing ceremony, this contact begins with the arrival of the assistants and the commencement of preparation for the ceremony. From that point until the end of the ceremonial taboo period, some two weeks later, the patient must be careful to avoid any activity that attract the attention of the totilme7eiletik or of demons. He does not go outdoors alone; he talks little and in a subdued voice. The patient is never left alone for fear of attack by demons [Silver, 1966:159-60].

These tabbos are strikingly similar to behavior patterns observed after a death. As mentioned earlier, the 7anima is treated, and behaves, until his burial, very much like a patient--except that he is watched by not one or two but rather a large number of guardians. And yet the

situations are fundamentally dissimilar: the patient only simulates a death-like state in order "not to be noticed" by supernatural beings, while the 7anima is really dead, is himself part of the supernatural population.

Domingo de la Torre has written the following description of the death of his father-in-law, which occurred about twelve years ago:

He died because he went to make his fortune in hot country a long time ago. He was given the wealth in a cave in exchange for the souls of his sons. One son named Mateo almost died when the Earth Owner grabbed his soul (the Earth Owner had bestowed the fortune on the condition that he receive the boy Mateo).

My father-in-law greatly enjoyed his riches--his corn and beans and money. But he enjoyed them for only three years, and then he died.

He was speaking as his soul left him. He said his soul-loss was caused by the Earth Owner, who was coming to get him. He was going to have to pay how much he owed, however much the Earth Owner demanded. He said he was being carried away on a horse.

When he died, a demon appeared here. Every afternoon a huge black dog came to the house--the dead man had become a demon because he had done evil things while on top the earth. My brothers-in-law armed themselves with their shotguns one afternoon and waited for the dog to return to the earth. It wanted to take away the souls of the sons, but the sons together defended themselves. They killed the dog, though it was a difficult task because it had been sent to earth to carry away the souls of the dead man and his sons.

After that the sons were safe and did not die. The gods saw they shared no more guilt with their dead ancestor.

It is not clear in the above passage whether the dead person has himself turned into a demon, or whether his evil actions have simply put himself

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and his family under the control of one. Nor is it unambiguous whether the dead man has been punished by demons, the Earth Owner, or the ancestral gods (ti kahvaltik). These ambiguities, it seems to me, are not merely due to illogical thinking on the part of the writer. Rather, they reflect the uncertainty of the living as to what caused their relative's death, their ambivalent feelings toward that death, and their insecurity about their own complicity in his guilt. The curing ceremony provides ways for the patient and his family to atone for and correct any guilt: they drink together and are reconciled to each other, they spend on the gods any large amounts of excess money they have accumulated, they expose one of their members to the full powers of the supernatural, they make up for any wrongs to him by attending to his needs night and day, they offer both the patient and the gods a sacrificial chicken as a plea for forgiveness. The funeral ceremony, on the other hand, cannot correct things, cannot restore the original healthy state. Hence, it simply tries to purify the survivors and the 7anima without inquiring into the nature of their guilt: no shaman is called in to diagnose whether the death was due to soul-loss, or witchcraft, or a mishap of the animal soul companion. The ritual of the funeral points no fingers but instead tries merely to erase all possible pollution and erect barriers against all possible sources of evil.

Basically, both ceremonies attempt to restore clarity about the categories of the living and the dead, but one must deal with a person at the brink of death while the other must deal with him just after he has fallen over the threshold. Perhaps the time of extreme physical weakness, when the soul is most apt to leave the body, is also the

time when it is most able to re-enter it. Hence, the shaman must grind the patient down to the point of near-death before he can cure him, restore him completely to life. Likewise, the time right after death, when the soul still lingers in the vicinity of its body, is the time when it can be most influenced and appeased by things done to the body. Thus during the wake the survivors treat the dead person as if he were still alive--but sick. Virtually every Zinacanteco, after all, dies on his back of some ailment or illness, after at least one curing ceremony has been held, and has failed, to heal him. The funeral tries again to make the person sound so that his c'ulel can be sent off, strong, rested, and grateful, to a new life. However, the shaman's mediatory, supernatural powers, which have been proved insufficient, are discarded. The surviving family members, the ritual bather, and the sacristanes take over to feed, cleanse, and bless the 7anima, while the 7anima himself goes to make things right with the gods.

Chapter IV

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FUNERAL, ALL
SOULS' DAY, AND SUNDAY CANDLE-BURNINGA. Sunday Candle-Burning

The only action a Zinacanteco invariably performs when he visits a grave is the lighting of candles; in fact, going to the cemetery is oftensimply called "going to burn candles." This is the primary obligation Zinacantecos fulfill on Sunday mornings for a dead relative, and theoretically it should be done for as many years as the person was old (although some informants say twelve years is enough). However, the grave of a child rarely receives visits beyond one or two years, while the grave of an adult is usually neglected after five or ten years have passed. Responsibility for tending a grave is shared by a whole family, so that one Sunday one daughter goes to light candles for several of her dead relatives, while another week her sister or mother or cousin may go in her place. All the little children who wish may accompany the women and girls, and sometimes a man even goes to the cemetery to honor the grave of a wife or parent.

For a dead adult, between three and five candles are usually lighted, but for a child, between one and five are more likely. Fifty-centavo or smaller-sized candles are used, and most commonly, a combination of white ("tortillas") and tallow ("meat") candles is set by each grave.

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At an especially tiny grave one sometimes sees a single, or perhaps a pair, of white candles burning; it is probable that there lies buried an unweaned infant.

The candles are set in the hole made directly above the head of the grave (unless the grave has a permanent grave stone indented with a candle-hole). Round or rectangular, six inches to a foot deep, lined with stones or covered with wood to protect it against the rain, this mandatory feature of the grave has no symbolic meaning but is only a device to keep the candles out of the wind. One can easily recognize a forgotten grave by its shallow and disappearing candle-hole, for usually the cavity is kept clean and deep. In fact, the first thing a woman does, in arriving at the cemetery, is to scrape out any leaves, sticks, or other loose matter that has accumulated. She especially clears out the several small depressions dug into the floor of the cavity. Into these she puts the candles she has brought, lights them, and watches them burn all the way down.

Besides candles, the 7anima is occasionally given other foods. Sometimes a bottle of pox is set in the candle-hole, but more regularly the women bring avocados or fruit--bananas, peaches, oranges--and set them in a little pile on the grave mound near the head end. These offerings are by no means left to rot; the women and children eat them as they sit and talk. They believe that the 7anima eats the c'uleletik of the fruit as they eat the rest.

Feeding the soul, however, is not the only ritual performed at the grave, for the cross and mound must usually be renewed. A layer of pine needles (xak toh) and sometimes a few scattered geranium petals cover the mound, and these must be changed at least twice a month to look fresh.

Furthermore, the cross must be redecorated. The woman stands three pine boughs parallel to each other in the ground, with the middle one tied to the cross if the grave has one. To the pine boughs she then ties flowers; red geraniums are almost always used, while any other village flowers are occasionally added. Around the whole, or leaning against the wreath, she sometimes spreads a wreath of leafy boughs, laurel.

The entire operation takes between half-an-hour and an hour! It strikes the observer as extremely casual throughout: children run up and down the grave mound, women stroll around and chat with their friends or sit on the mounds and eat the offerings. No prayers are said.

B. All Souls' Day (as celebrated in Zinacantan Center)

In preparation people obtain beef¹ and all sorts of fruits and vegetables. Two days before the holiday, they clean the cemetery. The next day, the last day of October, they go early in the morning to gather fresh pine needles, which they spread all over the ground in the cemetery, especially on the graves. In the afternoon, they begin to prepare the feast. The women put chayote and fresh corn on to boil, while the men build the table on which the food of the dead will be served.

The cooking goes on all night long. The women must make a large quantity of sweet, cooked corn gruel (zui), and must boil the beef with cabbage. When all is prepared, they set out a plate of food for each ancestor who is being honored. A cup of corn gruel and a cup of coffee are put by each plate, along with a few sugar cane pieces, oranges, chayotes, and handfuls of marigold ("flower of the dead"), dahlia, and red geranium. In the center of the table are put a pile of peanuts and apples, a large plate of tortillas, a dish of salt, and

some pieces of chocolate. In the holes made in the table are put pine tops (tek'el toh), dahlias, and marigold bouquets. Finally, if any of the dead ancestors had been fond of drinking, the women put a limite of pox on the table so that the deceased can entertain his 7animaetik friends when they come to visit. If an ancestor had owned a ceremonial robe, the women lay it on a small table under the dinner table.

Afterwards each family has a meal. The women put any leftover corn gruel in small pots to share with their friends and neighbors: not only the dead but also the living visit each other on All Souls' Day, and the women like to give each other's families fresh corn-on-the-cob and corn gruel.

Then all prepare to meet the 7animaetik in the graveyards. They take the fruits, corn, chayotes, and sugar cane to put at the head of the graves, and candles to burn--two wax and two tallow twenty-centavo candles are needed for each grave.

The following prayer is said only by a grown child or a spouse of a dead person. It is usually recited after the meal is prepared for the dead, before going to the cemetery.

k'elavil c'ulelal
k'elavil lahebal

7oyuk 7avokol 7un
7oyuk 7avik'ti? 7un

zoblikotik 7ec'el 7un
lotlikotik 7ec'el 7un

7ihtatik la muk'ta k'inik 7une
7ihtatik la muk'ta paskuaik 7une

ba kuxavo7on 7un
bavik'asat 7un

ta hnatic 7un
ta hk'ulebtik 7un

Behold, ghost!
Behold, dead one!

Though you have your own work,
Though you have your suffering,

We meet again,
We are reunited.

We have come to your grand holiday,
We have come to your grand fiesta,

That you enjoy here,
That you rest your heart in,

At our home,
At our hearth.

The previous day the mayordomos had honored the saints' coffers and then gone together to the house of one of the mayordomos San Antonio. They had danced there, eaten a beef meal, and gotten drunk. At dawn on All Souls' Day the sacristanes had joined them and been give a meal. All had then left and convened with musicians at the church. The sacristanes had made a mound of candles in the middle of the church for those dead who have no living relatives. They had then left the church and divided up into two groups: six mayordomos and the four sacristanes had gone to the upper cemetery, while the six other mayordomos and the two incoming sacristanes had gone to the lower cemetery.

Meanwhile the people of the community have gathered in the cemeteries to await the officials. When they arrive at their respective destinations, the musicians take seats in the middle of the cemetery, while the cargoholders divide up into two groups to go "draw out the 7animaetik." The sacristanes pause at each grave, say the responses, and sprinkle holy water on the mound--"on the 7anima", in Zinacanteco conception. For this service they are given ten or twenty centavos and perhaps a media (half-liter) or limite of pox. Furthermore, at each grave the mayordomos collect one ten-centavo candle, which they put in a basket. These candles are added to the mound in the church, the place where those dead go who have nowhere else to eat.

At noon the church bell is rung to summon the 7animaetik, who are believed to appear first at the church in order that they may cross themselves to San Lorenzo. Those dead without families stay at the mound, while those who have surviving relatives go and meet them in the cemeteries. The waiting people may return home around two or three o'clock, after the dead have collected in the cemeteries. At home they eat a big meal

during which time the animaetik are theoretically enjoying their meal too.

That evening a group of three musicians (violinist, harpist, and guitarist), and any of their friends who wish to go along and get drunk, visit the different houses in the community to play music and "rest the hearts of the dead." Not all the families, however, let them in, because they must be served corn gruel and liquor. This group of men goes from home to home all night long.

In every house candles are kept burning throughout the night, in order that the dead "may have light to eat." In fact, candles are burned constantly on the feast tables all of November first, all that night, and most of the next day.

When the people had left the cemeteries and returned home, the mayordomos had reconvened at the church and added their new collections of candles to the mound there. Around eight o'clock that evening, the six sacristanes had joined them and recited the responses while all the candles were burned. Afterwards, the men had gone outside and drunk pox in front of the church, and then gone into the Hermita of Senor Esquipulas. There were waiting all the moletik, male assistants, each of whom had brought a bottle of pox. Before the Cross Evangelico, the sacristanes again said the responses, in three parts. At the end of each section they had paused and everyone was served a glass of liquor. Then, around midnight, they all had gone outside and drunk pox and corn gruel (donated by the mayordomos San Antonio) and eaten fresh corn.

At dawn the dead are believed to return to the cemeteries. The cargoholders and people of the community came there as they had the first day. Again the officials stroll through the graveyard and say the Catholic prayers for the dead at each grave; however, this time they are

paid with not candles but rather fruits and vegetables. At each graveside they collect perhaps a banana, stalk of sugar cane, chayote, orange, and piece of corn; and all these things are put by the mayordomos into ~~bags~~ sacks. The people burn candles at the graves, pile fruits and flowers on the mounds, and relax and drink pox together. Toward afternoon they return home and eat the food of the dead which had been taken to the grave or put on the table.

The mayordomos take the fruit they have collected to the church and divide it up equally among themselves. Some of it, however, they send to the presidente and his assistants at the cabildo.

Like other Zinacanteco fiestas, All Souls' Day is not officially over at any particular point, but just gradually dwindles to a close.

	Funeral	Sunday	All Souls' Day
primary people involved	relatives, friends, women of community compadres		entire community
ritual functionaries	musicians, sacristanes	none	musicians, sacristanes, mayordomos, moletik
anima(etik) involved	recently dead person	many animaetik not too long dead	all the community's ancestors
what happens to c'uleletik	c'ulel journeys to afterlife	c'uleletik at afterlife	all c'uleletik come back and visit homes as groups
grave decoration	pine needles and boughs, laurel, geraniums	pine needles and boughs, laurel, geraniums	pine needles and boughs, laurel, dahlia, marigold, geraniums
when graves are decorated	end of ceremony	middle of ceremony	beginning of ceremony
house decoration	none	none	pine tops, dahlia, marigold, geraniums
offerings to dead	chicken head, water, coins, candles, tortillas (burnt and regular)	candles, fruit, avacados, <u>pox</u>	beef, <u>pox</u> , coffee, corn, coin gruel, fruits, peanuts, cabb fresh corn tortillas, salt, chocolate, etc.
what happens to offerings	food and coins put in grave, candles burned	candles burned, living eat other offerings	candles burned, living eat food offerings, sacristanes collect coins
who gives offerings to whom	different families give offerings to one dead person	different families feed their own dead	every family feeds its own dead and gives offerings to community dead
church bell (Zinacantan Cr.)	bell rings as body is taken to cemetery	bell not rung for dead	bell rings to summon dead to Zinacantan
emotional tone	mourning and fear	no particular emotion	fiesta high spirits
presence of musicians	play throughout wake and burial	none	accompany sacristanes, play all night in the houses

C. Analysis

On All Souls' Day the "doors to the supernatural" are opened not to funnel a threatening being into the underworld but rather to welcome back all the community's predecessors into their former homes. Strong religious sanctions, however, discourage any family from evading their responsibilities. For example, one myth (Laughlin, Volume I, ^{1960a,} Tale 15) tells how a man ventured to experiment whether the ghosts "take you away on All Souls' Day if you don't respect them." The ghost which arrived at his house at midnight found, not a feast, but rather bull excrement spread out for him. He was utterly furious: "Am I supposed to eat this cattle dung? I don't come here everyday! This is the only fiesta I ever see!" Within a day, the man who had insulted him was dead. Thus, although, the atmosphere of All Souls' Day is generous and lighthearted, the potential danger which is of central concern in the funeral is at least latent at this fiesta reunion.

In certain respects behavior at the All Souls' Day celebration is the reverse of that in the funeral ceremony, while in other respects it appears an extension, an embellishment of the latter. Specifically, most of those parts of the funeral that might be termed "incorporation rites"--the eating and drinking together of friends and family, the decoration of the cross and gravemound, the playing of music, the sprinkling of holy water, and the recitation of prayers--constitute, in elaborated form, the main body of the All Souls' Day rituals. On the other hand, a few features of the funeral ceremony--the setting apart of a special, normally inconceivable meal for the 7anima (a few drops of water, the head of a chicken, burnt tortillas), the lack of pine or flowers in the house, the

lack of "good" foods (e.g., fruits, corn-on-the-cob, sweet corn gruel), and the taboo on beef--are dramatically reversed at All Souls' Day. Then the house becomes a sacred location, and the dead eat at the table an enormous feast of luxury foods, beef (the customary meat of fiestas, weddings, and cargo rituals), and significantly, pox. Thus on All Souls' Day the dead are reintegrated into the world of the living--especially, let it be emphasized, those dead who left land as inheritance. Whereas those who died with nothing must generally be satisfied with the candles at the communal mound in the church, those who left land or other property can rightfully, by Zinacanteco values, expect to find hospitality extended upon the tables of their direct heirs.

Robert Hertz, in his essay, "Death," asserts that the funeral period is regularly terminated by a communal feast, whose object is "to put an end to the period of mourning, or to make final provision for the well-being of the disembodied soul (1909:75)."

...the final ceremony always has a pronounced collective character and entails a concentration of society.... This action thus takes on a political significance: by dealing with all their dead in common, the various domestic and local groups that form the higher unity become conscious of, and consequently maintain, the ties that unite them. In establishing a society of the dead, the society of the living regularly recreates itself [1960:71-72].

There is, in Zinacantan, no taboo-ridden period of mourning following a funeral, and hence there is no need for a ceremony that will reintegrate the dead's close kin into society. Nor is there a need to make "final provision" for the soul of the deceased, for it is firmly integrated into the society of the afterlife by the funeral rites themselves. Nevertheless, the reception of all the souls by all the people of Zinacantan--including the various cargoholders with their official ritual duties--

is, in contrast to the funeral, a collective and political act of the sort Hertz describes. Thus it serves a social function which the funeral leaves undone: it provides for the dead's rightful re-entry into the world of the living--it transforms a deceased person from a potentially destructive ghost into a welcome and beneficent ancestor. Although there is in Zinacantan no "final ceremony" after the funeral, the All Souls' Day feast does annually reaffirm the unity and continuity of the social company, the unending interdependence of the dead and their descendants. Thereby it consummates the work of the funeral.

In the light of this analysis, the simple Sunday morning observances can be seen as the transition between the individual life-crisis ordeal, the funeral, and the public fiesta, All Souls' Day. The Sunday rites involve more of the dead and the living in the community than does the former ceremony, but less than does the latter. The occasional food offerings consist of a few of those treats which will be laid out in profusion on All Souls' Day. The cross, the "doorway to the supernatural world," is renewed, reopened, not that the dead may either leave earth or return to it, but only that communication with him somewhere in the beyond may be maintained. Finally, the all-important burning of candles assures that the dead will not before his feastday grow hungry, restless, and vengeful toward the living.

NOTES

The meat is usually bought at least a week before the fiesta and is hung from the rafters over the fire to be smoked. Sometimes members of a family will together buy a whole animal to slaughter, in which case one's contribution corresponds to his contribution.

Chapter V

THE FUNERAL IN RELATION TO THE CEREMONIES OF BIRTH AND MARRIAGE

There are several striking parallels between the passage rites of birth and death, as well as between the marriage and the funeral, that help elucidate more of the symbolizations of the wake and burial.

A. Similarities Between Birth Rites and the Funeral

Care for a pregnant mother centers around efforts to maintain her body warmth. "All pregnancy pains and complications are believed to be directly traceable to coldness" (Anschuetz, 1965:2). Therefore, prenatal and labor attention consist primarily of any of a number of efforts intended to increase the woman's "heat":

- (1) massages by the midwife designed to soften the baby's bones-- there is believed to be a direct correlation between hard bones and cool blood, and soft bones and warm blood
- (2) applications of "hot" substances such as linaments, designed to warm the body and the baby externally
- (3) recommended diet of those foods which are considered to be "hot", e.g. beef, chicken, cooked eggs..
- (4) herbal brews made of plants considered "hot," like laurel.
- (5) serving of pox, another "hot" substance
- (6) precautions to keep the house warm and closed against the wind
- (7) burning of incense under the mother's skirt to warm her legs

Furthermore, right after the birth, glasses of liquor are offered by the

new father to all the adults present, to bring heat and strength to the baby. Two extremely "hot" substances, salt and red chile, are placed for a moment in the hands of the infant himself.

Similarly, in the case of the funeral, "hot" foods (chicken and burnt tortillas) are offered to the cold corpse (surely it is the dead who have the hardest bones of all), while those who are guarding him consume large quantities of pox.

The act of birth generally has a large audience of up to twenty-five friends, compadres, and relatives. Although there is no music, otherwise this gathering is similar to that at a wake. A dead infant would probably have the same group of people escorting him into Vinahel as had watched him be born.

If the baby seems lifeless right after birth and does not squirm or cry, then black chicks may be held near its ear in the hope that their peeping will awaken it. Thus the noise of chickens in Zinacantan leads people both into life and out of it, into the afterlife.

The ^{mid}wife then bathes the newborn in warm water which has been boiled with laurel ("hot") and myrtle ("cold") leaves. She dresses it in a clean shirt and skirt and gives it to the mother. Both are wrapped in warm blankets and hidden from sight. The mother is treated like an invalid for about two or three weeks; she stays in bed, does not work, receives no visitors, and eats mostly "hot" foods. She is expected, moreover, to take at least three sweat baths with the midwife. Myrtle and laurel are always used to flavor the water of these baths, which are of sacred significance because only during these times of bathing does the midwife possess the power of communicating with the gods directly.

The corpse, of course, is also ritually washed and dressed by a woman. Significantly, not the "cold" plant myrtle but instead laurel alone is put in the dead's bath water. The recovering woman's thermal equilibrium would be upset by an unmodulated application of heat such as a corpse requires.

The parents may perform a candle-giving ceremony any time after their baby's birth, "to ensure doubly his health and acceptance by the gods" (Anschuetz, 1965:10). In a similar way, the candles burned throughout the funeral are probably offerings not only to sustain the deceased but also to promote his acceptance into heaven.

Last, the mother binds together until baptism her newborn's wrists and ankles (Vogt, 1969:9-5). This is intended to hold his soul until it has been ritually fixed inside his body. The corpse, on the other hand, has already lost his soul by the time his limbs are bound. Perhaps the ropes, then, keep his soul out of his body--keep the body from moving or going anywhere. In a more general sense, we might say that both the baby before baptism and the corpse before burial are "transitional" beings who need to be watched and restrained.

B. Similarities Between the Marriage and the Funeral

Courtship and marriage practices show fewer enlightening parallels to the funeral. Therefore I will mention only a few issues, using data presented by Jane Collier in Courtship and Marriage in Zinacantan.

First, the type of foodstuffs which the boy offers the girl's family alters significantly from the beginning stage of courtship to its later one:

The change of relationship [between the boy and girl] is partially symbolized in the change of gifts that the boy brings. Earlier he had brought only fruit, bread, meat, and other luxury items. At the house-entering ceremony he brings corn and beans, the staples of the Zinacantan diet. He no longer has to wean his wife away from her family with good things [Collier, 1968:192].

This shift is similar to that between the funeral and All Souls' Day. The people at the wake offer the dead only everyday food items (except the chicken, the sacrifice), while on All Souls' Day they attempt to persuade him back into their society, that of the living, by giving him good, luxury foods. Perhaps it is that a feast cannot, like pox, be offered anytime a person would like another to do him a favor or grant him a promise. Rather, possibly it has the symbolic significance of incorporating, or reincorporating, someone into one's group.

Second, the c'uleletik of the young couple are, at the time of the wedding, symbolically entrusted to a wealthy man who has accepted the ceremonial position of "embracer":

When the petitioners request a man to serve as embracer, they ask him to "carry for us the souls of our children." He is asked to plant the souls firmly (as pines and candles) beneath the feet of San Lorenzo and Santo Domingo. His duty is to take the souls of the bride and groom and plant them firmly and uprightly before the main gods of the community. He does this by carrying candles for them during the marriage ceremony in the church [Collier, 1968:192].

Here is related yet another meaning which has been given by the Zinacantecos to their use of candles. Certainly the candle is a complex, multivalent symbol in this culture: at birth they ensure the baby's heat (strength) and his acceptance by the gods, at marriage they represent the couple's souls, at the curing ceremony they are considered

offerings to the gods, at anti-witchcraft ceremonies a row of seven small candles is kept burning to "close the eyes" of the witch, or the row is burned upside-down or cut into three pieces to throw the illness back onto the witch, and at the funeral and on Sundays they are called food for the dead. It seems to me that three properties of the candle underlie all of these symbolic values: its heat; its light; and its faculty of transmuting from a solid into a gas--of "disappearing," of, metaphorically, crossing the threshold between the material and spiritual worlds. Thus the candle flame symbolically combines the two forms of power Zinacantecos most respect--"heat" (health, strength; authority) and "sight" (ability to communicate with the gods); it embodies their interrelation and demonstrates their possibility of linking man with the divine.

Finally, the steps of the courtship and marriage proceedings can be conceptualized as progressive stages in the symbolic and actual establishment of trust and unity between two families.

The Zinacantecos, as individuals, seem very unwilling to trust each other, a lack of trust evident in many aspects of the courtship.... During the long courtship many things are done both to counteract the lack of trust and to promote the building of trust, so that by the time the marriage takes place, it has a good chance of succeeding [Collier, 1968:193-94].

How the funeral can similarly be viewed as a reconciliation, a mutual re-establishment of trust and dependence, shall be discussed in this paper's conclusion.

CONCLUSION

In the funeral proceedings there are many manifestations, both symbolical and actual, of conflict and tension. In the first place, Zinacantecos do in fact quarrel, often violently, about such issues as the distribution of inheritance, the payment of funeral expenses, the location of the grave, and the (unofficial) pointing of blame for the death. Bitter feelings and breaches between individuals may result which take years to heal. In the second place, Zinacantecos convey their feelings of mistrust toward each other through the formal medium of prescribed ritual action. The corpse is bound hand and foot, his eyes are closed, his mouth is covered, and the area surrounding his death bed is fenced off for days. Not only he but also all of the objects closely associated with him are buried outside the village. A number of measures are also taken to prevent his soul, or more generally "evil" (i.e. demons), from re-entering the home: music is played, the guests remain awake all night long, the household cross is uprooted, and salt water is sprayed all over the house, compound, and household animals. This last action is particularly interesting, for salt water is used at the curing ceremony to "call back" the lost soul parts (the shaman may blow salt water on the patient, or a male assistant may whistle through a salt water gourd). Further, myth relates how a man put salt on the neck of his wife after her detached head had gone off roaming in the night to eat charcoal; when it returned, it could not reattach itself, could not stick to the neck, and so died. Salt is

considered an extremely important substance by Zinacantecos because it makes food edible--it transforms something "natural," not a part of Zinacanteco daily life, into something "cultural." Analogously it supposedly prevented the monstrous head from rejoining its body--it set up a cultural barrier the abnormality could not pass. It restores the sick patient, on the borderline of death, to his family by, in a sense, pulling him back within the bounds of the cultural. Finally, it keeps the dead's c'ulel out of the home by making the physical surroundings themselves too closely united with the human, too cultural, for the soul (now associated with the supernatural) to re-enter.

A number of other rites similarly express mistrust and disunity. The poles used merely to carry the coffin are cut in half, and the pick and shovel are laid crosswise over the gaping grave. In place of their own bodies, the living offer the deceased the company of a chicken and the handfuls of dirt thrown into the grave. The neglect of the dead is anticipated and acknowledge by giving him extra food and money for those starving in Vinahel. His perceptions are conceived to be the reverse of those of the living, and therefore he is given black tortillas, a miniature palm cross, a reversed mat, and an upside-down, inside-out blanket. Physical aggression is directed at him: his side is kicked and certain of his objects (shawl, hat, ~~guards~~) are cut or broken. Last, the prayers said to the dead express numerous themes of interpersonal division involving not only the deceased and his family but also their enemies in the community and the gods themselves. For example, the prayer on pp. 8-10 of this paper conveys the themes of:

- (1) desertion--"Why do you abandon me, my husband?
Why do you abandon me, my companion?"

(2) ridicule and scorn--"Our fathers have already seen our spectacle,
Our mothers have already seen our spectacle,
Our fathers have laughed,
Our mothers have laughed,
The small ones have laughed,
The large ones have laughed.

(3) witchcraft injury--"They [who have wronged us] do not die,
They [who have wronged us] do not pass away.
May they plant their corn,
May they plant their roots.
Not yet are they food for the soil,
Not yet are they food for the earth,
Instead of us, my husband,
In place of us, my companion,
So we fertilize the soil,
We fertilize the earth
[i.e., we are the wronged ones who have been
done in].

(4) fear of divine punishment--"Arrive and weep,
Arrive and scream,
Beneath the gaze
Of God the Father."

(5) resentment of the gods--"Who are our fathers,
Who are our mothers,
Who brought the burden,
Who brought the pain,
To your back,
To your side"

Whether the Zinacantecos are an especially untrusting people, as Jane Collier seems to assert, I cannot say. Perhaps such a hypothesis cannot be substantiated by examining their ritual because all ritual is grounded in social disunity. As Victor Turner explains it:

To complete a ritual, as I have shown, is to overcome cleavages. It is collective man's pursuit of himself. For in pursuit of personal and factional ends, men are divided, and in loyalty to their sub-groups, men are set at odds, but before what they conceive to be the eternal or eternally recurrent, these divisions are annihilated.

If unity, then, must be regarded as the product, and not the premise, of ritual action, it must be supposed that a ritual

sequence arises out of some condition of social disunity, actual or potential.... That is why we find, in analysing the successive stages of many kinds of ritual, an increasing disclosure (either explicitly in confessions of mutual ill-feeling, or implicitly in the guise of symbolic actions and articles) of all wishes, ideas, and feelings which threaten to obstruct the progress towards the ideal unity [1968:269-270].

Certainly it is only a beginning to say that the person who has just died arouses anxiety because he has an uncertain status, is a transitional being.

It is the existence of an angry person in an interstitial position which is dangerous, and this has nothing to do with the particular intentions of the person. The inarticulate, unstructured areas emanate unconscious powers which demand that ambiguity be reduced [Douglas, 1966:102].

In the case of the Zinacanteco funeral, the anxiety felt in the face of this ambiguity is handled insofar as the rites (1) purify, restrain, and remove the corpse, (2) protect the souls of the living, and (3) give the deceased a new perceptual orientation, opposite to that of the living. These rites minimize the dangers of being near the corpse and grant clarity as to what sort of being the dead is, what sort of experience death might be.

However, the dead person's interstructural ambiguity is not the only source of disunity and mistrust during the Zinacanteco funeral. An equally important source lies in the people's feeling that death is a terrible misfortune. Thus the funeral does not function solely as a rite of passage, like the wedding. It is simultaneously also what Turner calls a rite of affliction, like the curing ceremony. At the ritual of birth the midwife says,

May it arrive well, my lord,
Do not scorn, my lord....

May [the baby] not be lost,
May he not be scorned
[Anschuetz, 1965:12-13].

Similarly, at the wedding petition the boy begs the girl's father:

Don't give me [cause for] crying, for screaming [so that]
father be diverted, mother be diverted, large be diverted,
small be diverted [i.e., laugh at me]
[Collier, 1968:153].

On the other hand, at the curing ceremony, prayer must ask for a release
from suffering:

Support him, protect him,
Do not let him weep, do not let him howl.
May you take his back, his side;
Give it your holy protection, give it your holy support,
My divine great father, my holy great lord.
Take your suffering,
Support, protect, watch, guard
The back, the side [i.e., the body] of my precious gift [soul]
Let not my back, my sides, remain abandoned
[Silver, 1966:357].

Sickness is the time of suffering and abandonment. Death is all that and more: it is the time of suffering, abandonment, weeping and screaming, and the endurance of ridicule and scorn (see pp. 63-64). Death, it appears, is the ultimate cause for shame, for the loneliness of disgrace.

Certain of the funeral rites, accordingly, seem to express or alleviate these feelings of misfortune as much as they facilitate passage. For example, the chicken head theoretically guides the c'ulel to the afterlife, but clearly it also serves as a sacrifice offered by the close relatives in place of themselves: hopefully the deceased's c'ulel will be satisfied with its companionship and not

attempt to carry off the souls of other living beings as well. Similarly, the dead is given extra bags of food and money so that he will not be left robbed and destitute (i.e., degraded and mortified) in Vinahel. On the other hand, his side is kicked by all the little children, and perhaps in this way the pain of desertion felt by the survivors is ritually expressed (in Zinacantan the epitome of abandonment is the loss of a parent, and therefore when children kick the side of a dead adult possibly they dramatize the anger anyone feels when he is left alone). Finally, as we have seen, the most valued types of power in Zinacanteco life are called "heat" and "sight," and yet what human being is more cold and blind, therefore more weak and vulnerable, than a dead one? The funeral ceremony adds heat to his body and asserts that he can see--only in a way opposite to his previous experience.

The rite of passage, of course, involves three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. Turner has described them with great elegance:

The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions (a "state"); during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the "passanger") is ambiguous; he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; in the third phase the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations of a clearly defined and "structural" type, and is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards [1967:94].

The rite of affliction has a similar^{three-part} structure:

...the typical development of a ritual sequence [of affliction] is from the public expression of a wish to cure a patient and redress breaches in the social structure, through exposure of hidden animosities, to the renewal of social bonds in the course of a protracted ritual full of symbolism [Turner, 1968:272].

The question of whether the Zinacanteco funeral actually does function as both types of ritual at once can be answered by determining whether it deals only with the social pollution of one who has temporarily entered "between the margins of the lines" (Douglas, 1966:122) of social categories (i.e., who has an ambiguous social status), or whether it deals with another sort of social pollution as well.

The curing ceremony handles pollution resulting from violations of the moral code----"danger from transgressing the internal lines of the system" of approved social rules (Douglas, ibid.). A long passage by Silver explicitly pinpoints how sickness is related to moral conflict:

The importance of illness as an expression of social relations in Zinacantan can hardly be overestimated. Men and gods are linked, in Zinacanteco thought, in a triangular relationship. The conflicts of social life predominately tend to manifest themselves in illness. Illness may arise from interpersonal relations in three ways. One party to a dispute may take direct action against his antagonist through the medium of witchcraft. The gods may take direct action against an individual for his socially reproved behavior to others (such as quarreling with his family, excessive drinking, etc.). Finally, an aggrieved Zinacanteco may actively solicit divine punishment to be visited on his enemies, through the medium of 7ok'itabil camel, "illness sought by weeping." This borders on witchcraft, but may be considered a legitimate practice when the complainant's case is just.

Illness can serve, more generally, as an expression of the individual's standing within the community. A Zinacanteco who suffers a disease ta skuenta--i.e., who is afflicted with illness because he has failed to maintain a properly respectful attitude to the totilme7iletik [ancestral gods], as manifested by the occasional performance of curing ceremonies--is in theory in conflict with the gods, but in fact is likely to be in conflict with the community. For failure to commit a reasonable amount of one's resources and energy to propitiating the gods is not only an offense against heaven, but also against the basic values of Zinacanteco life. Religious expenditure is the most highly approved way of dealing with excess income, and a Zinacanteco's neighbors usually have an envious but accurate picture of exactly how much excess income there is [1966:268-269].

These same themes recur in the funeral, which, after all, must

usually deal with the failure of a curing ceremony. The hint of an accusation of foul-play or witchcraft is found in the prayer of the abandoned wife. The concept that one must pay for his sins is upheld by all the grisly beliefs about penalties in the afterlife. Most important, the payment of funeral expenses provides a way for the survivors to avoid incurring the envy (possibly the further envy) of their neighbors. Their outlay on food, liquor, candles, and the coffin is expected to be directly proportional to their inheritance--to the magnitude of the excess income suddenly passing into their hands. Thus they can right any wrong, fulfill any obligations to "the gods," which they failed to face before and thereby avert the misery and misfortune of their relative's death. They must make full and final restitution to the gods and the community before they can dispatch their relative, recovered of strength, to the underworld.

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