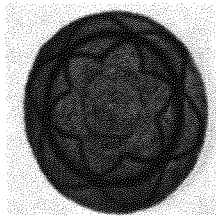




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A Mission Record of the California Indians, by A.L. Kroeber, [1908], at sacred-texts.com

San Fernando.

The Indians of this mission speak three distinct tongues. ³¹

The foods which they use are acorns; pine-nuts; chia (seeds of sage), called pasill in their language; islai, called chamiso by

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them; and numberless others. Of meat they eat deer, coyote, antelope, jackrabbit, rabbit, ground-squirrel, rat, dog, all birds, moles (topos), snakes, and rattlesnakes; and those of the coast are fond of all kinds of fish, especially whale. ³²

The musical instruments which they use are a flute of elder, certain little sticks, and whistles of deer bones. ³³

Nowadays they do not burn the dead as they did at the beginning

of the conquest; but they do still put seeds with them at burial.

When an unconverted Indian dies, they make a deep hole for him. Into this they put a pot, a basket, an otter skin, and some two or three pesos worth of beads, above these the dead body, and this they cover with earth. Then they immediately give notice to all the villages of the district, that all, old, young, and children, are to paint for a general feast. In this feast every kind of seeds and meat is served, and the chief commands all most rigorously never to name the deceased, in order that he may not come to annoy them (arrastrarlos). Note: All should arrive weeping. At the end they burn the house and everything that the deceased possessed.

We have observed the following superstitions. In order that their faces may not be burned, they paint themselves with red ochre (almagre) and other colors. In order not to become tired in climbing hills, they carry a stick or stone. To hunt deer, they drink salt water and a plant which the Spanish call toloache and they manit. With this they intoxicate themselves. They take it in order to make themselves strong, to receive injury from nothing (tomer a nadie), that the rattlesnakes may not bite them, the bears not chew them, and that arrows may not enter their bodies.

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According to information their gods are five and one goddess. They are called Veat, Taimur, Chuquit, Pichurut, and Iuichepet, husband of the goddess Manisar, and she is the one who gives them their seeds. ³⁴

The best known medicines are:

Vespibat. ³⁵ This is composed of wild tobacco, lime, and oxide of iron (orinas) mixed together, which ferment. They take it to relieve themselves of pain in the stomach, as well as for wounds.

Chuchupate (an umbelliferous plant), called cayat in their language. This is a plant which on every stalk has three round leaves, each with a spike in the middle. The flower is white. They chew the root and rub themselves gently where they suffer pain. They also use it for headache.

With the anise plant they purge themselves.

With the herb called del pasmo (convulsion) they drive away toothache of the molars. When cooked they take it to sweat, and when crushed as snuff (como polvo de tabaco).

Chilicote (*Echinocystis macrocarpa*), called yjaihix in the native language, they use mixed with dust of the stone called pafa, or paheasa in native dialect. They employ this for reducing inflammation, for driving away cataracts (nubes de los ojos), for wounds, to bring on menstruation, to cure themselves of urinary sickness, and boiled they take it to sweat (humederse).

Those who suffer from venereal humors, the syphilitic (convenerados), and the crippled, purge with mingled dust of alum stone and copperas (piedra alumbre y alcaparrosa).

When they feel heavy they bleed themselves with a flint. When they are restless they refresh themselves with water from the bark of the ash tree.

When they suffer side pains they take red live ants in water, and apply them alive externally, and strike themselves with nettles. ^{35a}

They do not drink thermal waters, but they do bathe in them.

Among their principal diseases is syphilis (humor galico), of which a considerable number die. They are most often sick in the spring.

Footnotes

12:31 While the Indians of San Fernando have been called Fernandefios or Fernandinos, their dialect was little different from that of San Gabriel, and the general term Gabrielino can be applied to both. There were also Serrano Indians at San Fernando. In fact it seems not unlikely that they may have been as numerous as the Gabrielino-speaking natives there. What the third language was which is mentioned as having been spoken at this mission, can only be conjectured. It is not unlikely that it was Chumash, for it is but a few miles westward from San Fernando to Chumash territory. The missionaries at San Fernando who might have written the present account were Martin de Landaeta, Jose Antonio Urresti, and Pedro Muñoz.

13:32 Chia, pasil, has been mentioned above. With "islai, called chamiso by them," compare R. S. Sparkman's "*Primus ilicifolia*, Luiseño chamish, Spanish islaya." It is interesting that the bear is not given in the list of animals eaten. Many California Indians refrain from eating the bear on account of its human resemblance. Some did not eat the coyote, and those of northwestern California regarded dog meat as virulent poison.

13:33 The "certain little sticks" may have been rattles made of a partly split stick, after the manner of a clap-stick. Such instruments

were used by many California tribes to accompany dance songs.

14:34 Unfortunately the manuscript is not entirely clear. Chuquit may be read Chuguit or Chugerit. Iuichepet may be Inichepet or possibly Quichepet. On page 372 of the second volume of this series of publications is given a prayer, in the Yauelmani dialect of the Yokuts language, obtained from a man who had lived at Tejon, in intercourse with the Shoshonean Indians there. This prayer begins by calling on seven deities, whose names may be rendered, in untechnical orthography, Töushiut, Bamashiut, Yokhakhait, Echepat, Pitsuriut, Tsukit, and Ukat. Two or three of these terms look as if they might be Yokuts, but the etymology of none can be certainly explained in that language. The r in Pitsuriut is not found in Yokuts. At least part of these Yokuts terms therefore appear to have been borrowed from Shoshonean tribes. The names here given by the San Fernando father show the source of this borrowing. Chuquit of the San Fernando list is Yokuts Tsukit. Pichurut is Pitsuriut, and Iuichepet is Echepat. Veat is clear in the manuscript, but is probably intended for Vcat, that is, Ucat, with which the Yokuts Ukat would be identical. Taimur and the goddess Manisar have no Yokuts equivalents, and the three first names in the Yokuts list, Töushiut, Bamashiut, And Yokhakhait, do not occur among the San Fernando names. A distinction seems to exist among the Yokuts between these first three names and the borrowed four; for in a formula spoken in the Yokuts jimson-weed ceremony, given on the page following the prayer, only the first three are mentioned. The usual ceremonial number of the Yokuts is not seven but six, the number of the San Fernando deities. Ukat, the informant stated, was the sister of the others. A Serrano recently seen at San Manuel reservation in Southern California, mentioned six large stones that were once diosas, goddesses. These stones are at Nanamüvyat, in or near Little Bear Valley, but he had forgotten their names. The Yokuts correspondences make it more likely that the six San Fernando deities were Serrano than Fernandefio proper.

14:35 The word vespibat is not otherwise known, but suggests pivat, tobacco, one of the components of the medicine.

15:35a Counter-irritants are not infrequently used by other Indians. The Mohave burn themselves with a glowing stick. Ants and nettles are used by the Luiseño and Juaneño as an ordeal in the initiation ceremonies for boys.

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