Section 1. Introduction

> "It is 1 o'clock in the morning on a moonless night in Montetoni. The village is in utter darkness except for the bright orange streaks made by children gleefully running across the *xanpo*[1] with flaming bamboo brands. Nearly everyone is out in the *xanpo*, in one of the several chant lines, chanting in a rich cacophonous din. I hear laughter erupt from the longest line. One of the shorter chant lines is running around the *xanpo* madly, and the smaller participants at the end of the chant line are being yanked about; it is all they can do to hang on."
>
> "Someone has turned up at my elbow. I can't tell who it is for the darkness – but I know why she is here. She places a small gourd cup in my hand and I drink down the portion of *oburoxi*. After the drink, I decide this must be Ines, because of the sound of her raspy voice as she chants, and because the *oburoxi* is so very delicious. As soon as I have swallowed and begun to chant again, she refills the gourd and hands it to me again. I down the drink. Then the next moment she is gone, moving on to the next person she can find to fill them with *oburoxi*."[2]

Feasts like the one I describe here presently take place in the Nanti community of Montetoni every six to nine days. In this village of about 180 people, every one is welcome to participate in these feasts, and most do. Participation ranges from

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[1] Key terms used in this study will be explicated in detail in subsequent sections. Words in italics are words I have borrowed from Nanti that have no appropriate equivalent in English. Some of these words, such as *oburoxi*, are directly from Nanti, and some, such as *xanpo*, are based on Spanish words that have a uniquely Nanti meaning now.

Oburoxi is an alcoholic beverage made from *sexatsi* (yuca; genus *manihot*), the staple food in the Nantis' diet. *Xanpo* comes from the Spanish word 'campo' meaning field. In Nanti, *xanpo* refers to the large field in the center of Montetoni that is maintained through community labor and is primarily used for chanting during feasting.

[2] This moment took place in 2000. Though I cannot tell you the exact date, the moment is fixed clearly in my memory. I begin this study with a description of that particular moment from a participant's perspective because above all feasting is an overwhelmingly sensory experience. You will find supplementary audio and visual materials on the companion compact disk.

chanting for hours on end in a chant line; to sitting at the periphery of the *xanpo* watching, chanting or conversing; to bringing *oburoxi* to the chanters and spectators (primarily done by women). How one participates is up to that individual; the only choice that receives spoken disapproval from other villagers is actively rejecting the feast through words or deeds – and this rarely happens.[3]

Each feast begins around noon and lasts about 24 uninterrupted hours. These two days of feasting are followed by a day of extreme quiet in the village, as feasters rest and recover from the intense experience. The next three to five days are productive and mundane, as villagers perform a wide variety of activities – working in their chacras,[4] hunting, fishing, preparing food and drink, manufacturing useful objects including arrows, cord, cotton thread and fabric, and so on. Because the community feasts frequently, a number of activities of everyday life in Montetoni are focused on or are part of the preparations for the next feast, particularly for the women who prepare the *oburoxi* over the course of several days.

And yet feasting as described in this study is a relatively new phenomenon. No

[3] I have witnessed only two events, one in 1997 and one in 2001, in which a Nanti man briefly 'rejected' feasting by purposefully chanting alone and separate from the chant lines to express his anger toward his spouse. In both cases, other individuals challenged each man's behavior and brought him back into feasting as part of a group.

[4] I borrow the term chacra from Spanish, since there is no satisfactory equivalent in English. A chacra is a small plot of land, usually 0.5 hectare (5000 m^2), used for cultivation of subsistence produce. Nanti men clear land for the chacra and do much of the initial planting. Women harvest produce and replant the chacra on a near-daily basis. While the chacra primarily is used and maintained by one man and one or two women, sharing the labor and the produce of a chacra with relatives and friends is common. Other anthropologists use the terms 'garden' or 'swidden garden' for this type of cultivated plot. I use the Spanish term rather than Nanti because Nantis usually use verb constructions (*itsamai*, 'he cultivates'; *sexatsi agera*, 'she is getting *sexatsi*') rather than nouns and indicate the salient activity rather than the place itself where the activity occurs.

social activity of this scope, scale, or frequency occurred in the smaller Nanti settlements that preceded Montetoni. Feasting, now a weekly activity, is an innovation in Nanti social life that began to take shape in about 1997 as one of the many innovations that accompanied settlement in the new large village. The ways in which the activities that define feasting have emerged in the last five years are fascinating not only of themselves but also in how they reflect the larger processes of change and innovation Nantis on the Xamisuja have instigated and experienced in the past decade.

This study discusses Nanti feasting practices from a discourse-centered perspective. That is, I look to actual instances of verbal interaction and creative expression as the means to describe important aspects of Nanti social life and cultural values, especially the ways in which Nantis integrate novel experiences into existing patterns of social understanding. Many aspects of Nanti feasts persuade me that they are, at present, both a central organizing activity in Montetoni's community life and the locus for the public expression of values, goals, and aesthetics in Montetoni. Because these feasts and the preparatory activities that lead to them are activities in which every person is welcome to take part, and often does; and because the entire feast revolves around the intense group chanting that often goes on uninterrupted for 20 hours; the feasts stand out, first, as the most important community event in Montetoni, and second, as the most important form of interaction at the community or public level. Nanti feasts offer perceptible evidence of some of the values, concerns, goals, and means of creative expression present in the community.

In this study, I will use the term community, *xomoniraro* in Nanti, to refer to the whole group of people presently living in the village of Montetoni. These people share a common language, share a common 'culture' – that is, enduring local patterns of acting in the world that include ways of communicating with others – and share many historical experiences and memories. As I will discuss at length, the existence of this relatively large settlement, consisting of a single physical place in which a number of formerly distinct family and residence groups now live together, is new. Montetoni was created in 1992, bringing together groups of people who shared certain specific goals: to live in a place geographically accessible enough to non-Nanti people to afford the villagers access to things, primarily manufactured goods, that non-Nanti can provide and yet remote enough to keep interaction with these non-Nanti groups intermittent and limited; and to allow them to live in a place where they consider the land *xameti xipatsi*: 'good, bountiful land' for farming, hunting, and fishing where they perceive neither scarcity nor threat.[5]

Due to the formation of the village of Montetoni, Nanti individuals now have regular social contact with many other Nantis with whom they previously had only limited contact. In the decade since settling together on the Camisea River, Nantis have innovated a number of practices that shape the nature of their interactions with each other. Feasting constitutes a coherent set of overlapping and sequential activities that situate participants as members of a social unit larger than family or residence group. It is my thesis in this study that feasting consists of a constellation

[5] The creation of a second village, Maranxejari, in 1996 privileged the first goal, access, over the latter, *xameti xipatsi*. See section 4.9 for further discussion of the formation of Maranxejari.

of activities that have a communicative force that largely shapes and defines the community as an enduring entity.

While we can never know what a person is thinking, we can closely examine what people in Montetoni do, how they do it, and most importantly from a discourse-centered perspective, what they *say* and how they say it, in order to develop a sense of how individuals are situating themselves as social beings. As I discuss Nanti feasts, I will examine what Nanti individuals say, what they chant, and also what they consistently *do not say* outside of feasting. I will offer my understanding of the implications and impact of feasting practices for the community and for individuals. My goal is to share with you my understanding of how Nanti verbal practices, as they are shaped by feasting, in turn shape their social life and experience. I will work toward this goal by providing a thorough description of feasting practices and by situating this description in a specific theoretical framework. It is my hope to provide both a cogent analysis of feasting as a communicative practice and sufficient evidence to support this analysis.

This study is based on a total of 11 months of fieldwork in the Nanti communities of Montetoni and Maranxejari on the Camisea River, carried out in 1995 (10 days), 1997 (4 months), 1998 (2 months), 1999 (2 months), 2000 (2 months) and 2001 (1 month). My observations of and participation in Nanti social life in these communities have been carried out in the context of humanitarian aid work, and my presence in the communities is welcome in the context of the assistance I have provided them over the years in combating health problems and addressing political problems that have arisen between these two communities and

non-Nanti individuals. Several influential Nantis have told me that I am welcome to learn the Nanti language and participate in Nanti village life only because I have demonstrated through my words and actions my commitment to the well-being of both Nanti individuals and their two communities on the Camisea River.

I wish to emphasize that this contextualization of my place as a participant in Nanti community life has both conditioned my work so far and will continue to shape any future work I do, either humanitarian or anthropological, in these communities. And it is because of the prominent role of feasting practices in shaping relationships within and between Montetoni and Maranxejari that I feel that these practices are so rich an area of study; feasting is important and valuable to Nantis themselves, and therefore it is interesting to me as a researcher. I believe that at present the Nanti communities are still for the most part autonomous and free to live as they choose,[6] and they choose to feast with great regularity. I also believe that Nantis presently see the feasts as a positive element in their community life, beneficial both to them as individuals and as a community, because the feasts so greatly intensify sociability among community members and because community members have so much fun feasting together.

[6] By 'autonomous and free to live as they choose' I mean that these two communities presently have limited contact with outsiders and carry out most of their daily activities unimpeded by the possibly conflicting goals of non-Nantis. This statement does not disregard the larger social and political configurations that involve the Nanti communities; the very fact that Nantis live in Montetoni or Maranxejari reflects compromises different individuals and families have made in meeting a set of goals. Crucially, though, many Nantis express their desire to continue living in these villages because of the benefits they perceive to result from village life. Discussions I have heard on the topic suggest that most Nantis consider themselves free to live elsewhere if they so desired.

I have chosen to write in the first person throughout this study because I wish to index my acute awareness throughout both my research and my writing that I intend nothing I say to be separable from my own perspective and presented as 'objective'. In anthropological research of the sort I have done with Nanti collaborators, my presence is always a part of the unfolding events. I can say this no better than Charles Briggs has: "By failing to treat my own involvement with the critical attention that I accord to that of other participants would obscure the reflexive manner in which performances comment on the situations in which they emerge." (Briggs 1988: xvii). By revealing to you how I participated in many of the events discussed here, I fix my presence in the scene for you, rather than misrepresenting my presence as everywhere and nowhere at once. I chose this strategy to reduce the false sense of omniscience to which anthropological writing is susceptible. You, as an intelligent reader, can evaluate the data knowing where I was as one of the participants in the scene.[7] I present here what I have experienced and observed while among Nanti friends, at discrete moments in the past. I hope to share with you my understanding as a participant of ongoing patterns in Nanti community life balanced with a recognition of ever-present processes of change in these patterns. I wish to convey as well as I can both the impressionistic nature of my experiences and a wealth of details that created that impression. By presenting Nanti words and actions to you in this way, I hope you will be best able to judge the validity of my analysis against the background of events as I perceived them.

[7] This is especially valuable in examining recordings of chanting since if I am present and making a recording, I can be taken into account as a participant. However, if only the recorder is present, it is much less clear if the recorder is being recognized as a 'participant' by chanters or not.

Section 2. Disciplinary Context

2.1 A discourse-centered approach to ethnography

This study is grounded theoretically in several closely related traditions. Drawing from the ethnography of speaking and the ethnography of communication, the discourse-centered approach to culture, and semiotic theories of discourse, I seek to understand the way speech and related social action create meaning and continuity in lived experience. These frameworks take actual instances of discourse and other verbal practices to be not only representative but *constitutive* of the social and cultural life of the community in which they occur.[8] In this study, I use the term 'social' to refer to the actual observable instantiations of interaction between group members, whether these be dyads, triads, or larger groups. I use the term 'cultural' to refer to the enduring patterns of activity that are shared among a group of individuals and guide their daily interactions and activities; this includes knowledge and historical experiences held in common, styles of speaking, and other habituated practices.

At the broadest level, this study is grounded in the discourse-centered approach to culture which "is founded on a single proposition: that culture is localized in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse" (Urban 1991: 1) In this view, 'culture' is not a

[8] Most important to my understanding of the theoretical framework of the traditions discussed here are the works of Jakobson (1960), Hymes (1972, 1974, 1981), Bauman and Sherzer (1974, 1982), Bauman (1977), Sherzer (1974, 1983, 1990), Sherzer and Urban (1986), Sherzer and Woodbury (1987), Urban (1991), and Keating (1998, 2000).

reified abstraction located outside of individuals but rather consists of recognizable patterns of meaning-making shared by a specific group of people. I wish to make explicit my view that culture is 'localized' in all forms of semiosis *and* that naturally-occurring discourse is the semiotic form that patterns semiotic forms and creates semiotic continuity.

From the ethnography of speaking tradition I draw the focus on specific, recognizable 'ways of speaking'; this type of ethnography is "a description in cultural terms of the patterned uses of language and speech in a particular group, institution, community or society." (Sherzer 1983: 11) I take as a theoretical point of departure that one can distinguish specific patterns of speaking, based primarily on form, that are durable and meaningful within a cultural system. From the ethnography of communication tradition, I draw Hymes' crucial observation that

> [o]ne must take as context [for speech] a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole, so that any use of channel and code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the members draw. (Hymes 1974: 4)

Every utterance in a community is situated among previous utterances and draws on them in the meaning-making activity of that moment. In my view, both the presence and the absence of specific forms at any given moment are meaningful within the larger patterns of social action.

Turning away from the reified notions of culture and language found in much analysis in the early and middle decades of the 20th century while bringing together key insights from anthropology and linguistics, ethnographers of communication have developed a framework for understanding human behavior that entails

examining in close detail concrete instances of speaking and discovering the implications of these utterances in their context of origin. By focusing on the observation and analysis of naturally-occurring discourse, researchers in this tradition are able to ground their data in space and time, and make empirically-based statements about human activity as meaningful social action.

Greg Urban (1991) provides a crucial insight into the processes through which discourse as social action is both historically continuous and individually creative, both for speakers and for hearers:

> Within a discursive community, an instance of discourse arises only against the backdrop of a continuing history of such instances, in relationship to which it can be situated. The actual situating is done subjectively, but it is based upon a vast range of historical experience with other instances, which are also part of the public circulation of discourse in the ongoing life of a community…It is not that the meanings are necessarily shared, but that the collection of instances from which meanings are culled is publicly accessible. (Urban 1991: 9)

This perspective on meaning-making is fundamental to my analysis of Nanti feasting and chanting as emergent phenomena that allow Nantis to incorporate novel experiences into existing patterns of understanding. Likewise, this formulation articulates my personal and professional perspective on meaning-making as a participant in and observer of my own experiences. My carefully-documented access to the unfolding events I have experienced over the years together with Nantis is the foundation upon which I build the analysis you find here.

Key works in indigenous South American societies undertaken with a discourse-centered focus have shown the richness of this approach to understanding local patterns of communication and culture, as well as revealing areal-typological

patterns throughout lowland South America. In particular, the research of Sherzer with the Kuna of Panama; Basso with the Kalapalo of Brazil; Briggs with the Warao of Venezuela; Graham with the Xavante of Brazil; Seeger with the Suyá of Brazil; Gnerre with the Shuar of Ecuador; and Urban with the Shokleng of Brazil, have shown how patterns of discourse maintain cultural continuity and provide resources for dealing with social and political[9] change, both through the most formal[10] ways of speaking – including myth-telling, narrative and song performance, and other ritual activities; and through everyday communicative patterns – including dialogue, joking, poetic speech, and other creative means of expression. Of vital importance to the insight of many of these studies is the analyst's presentation of patterns of discourse according to the valuations and evaluations of community members themselves.

Works in the tradition of the ethnography of communication, including especially Feld (1982), Basso (1985), Seeger (1987), Briggs (1988), Graham (1995), Sherzer (1983, 1990) and Urban (1991), evidence the richness of insight gained through viewing discourse practices within the musical, performative, and ritualized context in which they are produced. Recognizing the semiotic aspects of both the content and the form of discourse and examining these different modalities in light of one another gives the analyst a much deeper understanding of the wider system of communication available to a society's members, and reveals the semiosis of each

[9] I use the term 'political' to index a recognized social entity, consisting of a collectivity of individuals who hold common interests, which interacts with similar recognized entities.
[10] By 'formal' I simply mean ways of speaking that emphasize form as well as content for conveying meaning.

modality itself as well as the semiosis of the totality of these modalities that is not reducible to its parts.[11]

A discourse-centered approach to contemporary social life among the Nantis living on the Camisea River (Río Camisea in Spanish; *Xamisuja* in Nanti)[12] is particularly appropriate in light of the considerable rate of change that these individuals have been experiencing over the last decade. More obviously than in many cases, Nanti culture on the Xamisuja resists reification and hypostatization. Sociopolitical relationships both within and between the Nanti communities, and between the Nanti communities and outsiders, have been changing rapidly since these Nanti chose to move from voluntary isolation at the headwaters of the Timpia River (Río Timpia in Spanish; *Tinpija* in Nanti) to their present relatively accessible villages on the Xamisuja.[13] These sociopolitical relationships have had a pervasive effect on Nanti life; they have shaped the decisions made by Nanti regarding where to live and how to live, have shaped kind of interactions Nanti individuals have with other individuals, and have created a concept of community that did not exist prior to settlement on the Xamisuja. Further, in the last decade since entering into on-going relationships with non-Nantis, Nantis of the Xamisuja have encountered and originated a tremendous number of innovations, both material and conceptual. From the applications of metal tools to farming practices – and the resulting plentitude of garden produce that makes feasting possible; to the presence of previously unknown

[11] My understanding of the theories of the semiotics of content and form is derived primarily from Jakobson (1960), Silverstein (1976), Turino (1999), and Urban (1982, 1991).

[12] After the first usage, key place names will be given without italics in the language of the inhabitants of that place.

[13] See section 4 for a discussion of the historical context in which this study is situated.

sicknesses and then access to previously unknown medicines to cure them; to the concepts of writing and counting; to the implications of the presence of outsiders for local structures of power and cooperation – daily existence has changed radically for every Nanti adult on the Xamisuja.

To define contemporary Nanti practices and perceptions based on assumptions of 'tradition' would be a misapprehension of what it is to be Nanti on the Xamisuja right now. This is *not* to say that many enduring values and patterns of knowledge and interaction do not exist; rather, it is to say that Nanti social life on the Xamisuja is presently in a highly dynamic state, and to begin to understand this social life one is best situated by examining what Nanti individuals do and say, examining what they say about what they (and others) do, and taking all of these instances over time as the organic process of the evolution of Nanti culture.

In Nanti discourse, individuals rarely speak in indefinite terms. Their statements are firmly situated in the experiential or discursive present or recent past. Since Nantis do not speak of what it is to 'be' in any static sense, I have drawn the conclusion that they either do *not* or do not *wish* to represent themselves or their experiences in this way. What Nanti individuals do speak about are the actions and the utterances of themselves and others; thus the patterns of speaking used by Nantis have led me to believe that what is most salient to them in their social life is what people do and what they say. Therefore, I believe that Nantis themselves have a discourse-centered approach to their own society. I hope in this discussion to do justice to their way of evaluating their experiences in the process of translating them into my own words.

I have chosen Nanti feasting practices in Montetoni as the focus of this study for several reasons. First, these feasts are the single social event in which all Nanti individuals are welcome to participate, and most do. Second, I too have been made welcome – in fact, I have been expected to – participate in the feasts, and have been permitted to record and observe them. These feasts are a highly public event in the community, a central performance of Nanti creative expression, among a group of people who are otherwise quite laconic in their verbal and interactive behavior. In other words, the feasts seem the most appropriate aspect of Nanti social life to be examined by an outsider from the Nantis' own sense of publicness.[14]

Third, because of the unique status of the feasts as the locus for community-wide interaction, many significant events happen within them. What an individual says and does during a feast can have a lasting effect on his or her relationships with others even if the event is never explicitly mentioned. Each feast becomes a part of the body of knowledge and experience shared by all participants. Therefore, I see the feasts as having a relative prominence in shaping community life among Nantis on the Xamisuja that is worth examining in relation to daily patterns of activity. In an important sense, the feasts are an opportunity for the Nanti individual to create and re-create his or her public persona at a place and time when he or she knows other community members are paying attention to displays of public persona. Of course, this opportunity in a sense exists at any time one is in the presence of other people; but just as Nanti speakers can and do foreground their stance on particular

[14] By 'public' I refer generally to the realm of social activity conducted in shared physical spaces and across family and residence group lines and specifically the interactions Nantis choose to have in this realm.

issues by emphatically quoting themselves in their speech, the feasts provide an opportunity to foreground one's stances as part of the public domain of expression in an expected and appropriate manner.

Finally, I will argue that Nanti feasting practices provide part of the answer to a fundamental anthropological question articulated by Ellen Basso in *A Musical View of the Universe*:

> How are changes in social and ecological roles and relationships given meaning and integrated into the older forms of knowledge that constitute a peoples' received models of the universe, of the self, and of society? (Basso 1985: 1)

Feasting is the primary way that Nantis give meaning to their novel living situation and integrate unprecedented social relationships into preexisting conceptions of society. I will argue that feasting *creates community* out of the new fact of physical co-residence in a village. Community is what community members do or say toward other community members. As such it is ever emerging and ever changing, but every new act of community is informed by those that have gone before it. Each innovation becomes an historical fact and therefore a resource for further innovation.

2.2 Performance and framing in Nanti feasting

In understanding the salience of feasting and chanting in Nanti social life, theories of performance and framing have informed my analysis. In particular, key aspects of Richard Bauman's discussion of performance in *Verbal Art as Performance* are highly relevant (Bauman 1977). First, Bauman characterizes

performance as “situated human communication” (Bauman 1977: 8), “a distinctive frame, available as a communicative resource along with the others to speakers in particular communities.” (*ibid:* 11). Second, he observes that “[p]erformance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content...Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity.” (*ibid:* 11) Just as Bauman employs the concept of performance to reunite the text of spoken art with its context, I wish to employ the concept of performance to emphasize the fundamental unity of the act of chanting with the context of chanting during Nanti feasts. And just as Bauman identifies the “emergent quality of all performance”, I wish to foreground the inherently emergent nature of Nanti chanting. In drawing upon the profound insights of performance theory, however, I find that the Nanti verbal art of chanting offers several important challenges to this theory.

I wish to challenge a distinction that Bauman makes in his discussion of performance between performer and audience. This distinction may be appropriate to individual performances of story-telling, myth-telling, joke-telling, and the like in other speech communities, but in Nanti feasting, participants are simultaneously performers and audience, both carrying out and experiencing intense ‘acts of expression’. A theory of performance such as Bauman’s is invaluable because it captures essential aspects of Nanti chanting: chanters absolutely do foreground “the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential

content" for the "enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself" (*ibid:* 11). However, this theory is also founded on "the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence" based on "the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display" (*ibid:* 11). In elaborating how competence is evaluated in specific ethnographic settings, Bauman draws his evidence from speech communities that articulate their evaluations of a given performance relative to 'traditional' forms.

A perspective that invokes adherence to tradition as the primary measure of competence assumes that an ideal or a set of ideals exists according to which any performance may be evaluated. Further, Bauman also correlates competence of this type directly to the "enhancement of experience" for the audience (*ibid:* 26). My intention here is to separate the locally salient "heightened awareness of the act of expression" (*ibid:* 11) central to verbal art from the possible subsequent evaluation of that act of expression. While the former may be common to all performance, I suggest that the latter is not.

This performance approach to verbal art is fundamentally founded on a Hymesian notion of communicative competence, in which knowledge of the 'system of use' of a language is as important as grammatical knowledge of that language. Systems of use are employed by speakers in carrying out communicative acts. The success of a communicative act is tied to but not *determined* by the skill with which the speaker employs the system. Further, this notion of communicative competence does not implicate metacommunicative acts of evaluation of the skill with which speakers communicate.

Bauman's performance theory relies on an expanded notion of 'competence' that hypostatizes verbal art by rendering it "subject to evaluation" by an audience. In Hymes' and Bauman's views, criteria of authenticity and adherence to traditional forms are definitive of an instance of performance. In an important sense, this formulation circumscribes the possible range of a performer's creativity by positing that faithfulness to certain antecedents or "traditional" forms *define* the competence of a given performance.

While this may be true in many speech communities, it does not hold for Nanti chanting. Privileging an enduring imaginary ideal for a form of verbal art which community members evaluate by aesthetic criteria and through metalanguage may be appropriate for Chamula 'heated' speech or Malagasy *kabary* but no such evaluation is articulated by Nantis about performances of chanting and no metalanguage is used except for descriptive spoken forms such as *omatixi*, 'she is chanting', *isinxitaxa*, 'he is intoxicated' and *xarintaa*, 'improvised chanting'. One chants or one does not chant, but intensity of performance is not tied to an aesthetic evaluation of the performance itself.

And yet to characterize Nanti chanting as not 'performance' because participants to do not engage in a discourse of evaluation would ignore elements of performance theory that provide rich insight into Nanti verbal art. I argue that the immediate, momentary salience of performance may be as important as any subsequent evaluation of that performance according to criteria provided by history or tradition. Continuity with the past is salient, but comparison is not.

The richest of Bauman's contributions toward understanding verbal art as performance is his development of the notion of frame. Bauman bases his discussion of "frame" in the work of both Bateson (1972) and Goffman (1974) and emphasizes that "members of every speech community have available to them a diversity of linguistic means of speaking, none of which can serve a priori as an analytical frame of reference for any other.' (Bauman 1974: 17) Rather than view verbal art as a "deviation" from "strictly referential "standard" language" (*ibid:* 17), he views performance as the "keying" of a particular frame of communication. In performance communicative resources such as paralinguistic features and special formulae are used to key an interpretive context for associated messages.

In the case of Nanti feasting, multiple modes of physical and verbal action, foremost among them chanting, key the frame in which specific types of utterances are made and heard. When communicating within this frame, Nantis explicitly express their opinions on and evaluations of social life that they do not express outside of this frame. At the same time, Nantis hear and interpret these utterances as belonging to a frame in which explicitness is sanctioned. From a practice-centered perspective, the social consequences of explicitness are different inside and outside the feast; explicit statements of opinion or evaluation would be disruptive of relationships outside the feast, but within the feast these statements are not necessarily disruptive.

Throughout the discussion of Nanti feasting below, I wish to accentuate the "heightened awareness of the act of expression" that is conveyed by the repetition of chanted formulae, the improvisation of chanted lines, and the spatiotemporal

configurations that accompany chanting. I will also discuss how this ‘heightened awareness’ contrasts with the much more spare and content-oriented communicative behaviors of Nantis outside of the context of the feast. In seeking a view of the communicative ecology of the Nanti, the performative aspect of chanting is a highly salient unique feature.

2.3 Nanti practices and practice theory

Throughout this study I speak of Nanti ‘practices’, and feasting practices in particular. In addition to drawing on the common senses of the word ‘practice’ as ‘activity, action carried out, things done’, my use of this term is informed by Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu 1977, 1991), which seeks to understand human social activity as a dialectic process in which the structured dispositions of members of a group articulate with the immediate exigencies of daily life. In this view, these individual dispositions are both durable and generative; that is, they are both recognizable as continuous with a larger system of regular behavior patterns and unique to the specific context and moment in which they take place. Bourdieu emphasizes the necessity that the anthropologist admit both time and strategy to her analysis of objective structures of social action.

My goal is to try to understand how Nanti individuals transform their experiential knowledge into strategies for acting in the present, and how ‘the Nanti’, as a collectivity of individuals who hold common interests, articulate that collectivity. Furthermore, I wish to understand how Nantis living in Montetoni act and speak to maintain their community as part of an enduring and ever-changing

ecosystem. Bourdieu's theories of practice and language use provide a valuable framework for understanding the simultaneous facts of situational creativity and durable cultural structures.

2.4 Communicative ecology

This study, which focuses primarily on the spatiotemporal event of feasting and the communicative practices central to this event, is a first step toward understanding the communicative ecology within which the Nantis of the Xamisuja live. The many insights and theoretical advances born of the research carried out in the context of the traditions discussed above have led me to seek an understanding of Nanti communicative behavior from a holistic level best captured by the notion of 'ecology'. I seek to understand both the unique characteristics of distinct Nanti 'ways of speaking' and the entire range of communicative practices as a *system* of interaction with properties of its own. From the first Hymes advocated for a holistic view in outlining his goals for the ethnography of communication. I wish to understand Nanti communicative practices both as a vast set of resources and as a dynamic, emergent system of strategic and innovative uses of these resources by Nantis. Although in this study I will often isolate Nanti chanting as a distinct 'way of speaking' for descriptive purposes, I wish us to always bear in mind that the significance of this way is inextricably linked to the entirety of Nanti communicative practices.

In seeking to understand the mutually signifying aspects of a Nanti communicative ecology I hope to contribute some insight into the larger and more

general question of how observable microcosms of interaction relate to the overlapping and shifting macrocosms in which they occur. It is my hope that an understanding of Nanti communicative ecology can contribute to the development of a theory of communicative ecology that provides insight into other complex systems of interaction in other societies.

Section 3. The Nanti Language

3.1 Orthography and phonology

The Nanti alphabet consists of the following letters:

a ai b e g i j m n ny o p r ry s sy t ty ts tsy u x y

The rules for pronunciation of each letter are provided below. Each description includes an IPA symbol, a Nanti example, a brief description of articulation, and an example of *approximate* pronunciation based on English. See figures 3a and 3b for consonant and vowel charts.

a [a] as in *j**a**nta*; low mid unrounded vowel; pronounced as in *f**a**ther*.

ai [a^{j}] as in *m**ai**xa,* diphthong from low mid unrounded to high front unrounded vowel; pronounced as in *m**i**ke.*

b pronunciation of **b** is conditioned by the following vowel.

[b] before /i/, as in ***bi**ro*; voiced bilabial stop; pronounced as in ***b**e*.

[β] before /e/, as in *o**be**jati*, voiced bilabial fricative. English has no equivalent.

[w] before /a/, as in *i**ba**nxo*; voiced rounded bilabial approximant; pronounced as in ***w**ant*.

[w] before /u/, as in *o**bu**roxi*, voiced rounded bilabial approximant; pronounced as in ***w**eave*.

[b^{j}] when followed by /eCi/, *tsya**b**eri* voiced bilabial stop with palatalized release; as in ***bea**uty*.

e [ε] as in *t**e**ra,* open mid front unrounded vowel; pronounced as in *b**e**t.*

g pronunciation of **g** is conditioned by the following vowel.

[g] before /a, o, u/, as in *o**go**ti*; voiced velar stop; pronounced as in ***g**oat.*

[gz] before /e/, as in *ni**ge**ro*, voiced velar-alveolar affricate; pronounced as in *le**gs***.

[gʒ] before /i/, as in *ko**g**i*, voiced velar stop followed by palato-alveolar fricative; pronounced roughly as in *do**gsh**ow*.

[g^{j}] before /eCi/, as in *tsu**g**eri*; voiced velar stop with palatalized release. English has no equivalent.

i [i] as in *b**i**ro*, high front unrounded vowel; pronounced as in *b**e.***

j pronunciation of **j** is conditioned by its environment.

[h] word-initially, as in ***j**anta*; voiceless glottal fricative; pronounced as in ***h**and*.

[ ] usually when **j** appears between two vowels, as in *ni**j**a*, the **j** is not pronounced, but its presence causes nasalization of the first vowel, some nasalization of the second vowel, and a slight glide between the two vowels; pronunciation is similar to **y** in the phrase "*see **y**a"*.

[h] when **j** occurs between two vowels and closes a stressed syllable, as in *none**j**ero*; voiceless glottal fricative; pronounced as in "*u**h** **h**uh*".

m pronunciation of **m** is conditioned by its environment.

[m] as in ***m**aixa*; bilabial nasal; pronounced as in ***m**ine*.

[m^{j}] as in *ma**m**eri*; bilabial nasal with palatalized release; pronounced as in ***m**ew*.

n pronunciation of **n** is conditioned by its environment.

[n] before vowels, as in ***n****a****n****i*, voiced alveolar nasal; pronounced as in ***n****o****n****e*.

[ŋ] before **x** or **g**, as in *a****n****xiro*, voiced velar nasal; pronounced as in *a****n****xious*.

[m] before **p**, as in *ja****n****pi*, bilabial nasal; pronounced as in *ha****m****per*.

[nʲ] before /eCi/, as in *i****n****ejiri*, alveolar nasal with palatalized release; pronounced as in Spanish *se****ñ****or*.

ny [nʲ] as in *ai****ny****o*, alveolar nasal with palatalized release; pronounced as in Spanish *se****ñ****or*.

o [o] as in *bir****o***, close-mid back rounded vowel, slightly nasalized; pronounced as in ***o****pen* but slightly nasalized.

p [p] as in ***p****iri*, voiceless bilabial stop, pronounced as in ***p****eet*.

[pʲ] before /eCi/ as in *an****p****eji*, voiceless bilabial stop with palatalized release. English has no equivalent.

r pronunciation of **r** is conditioned by its environment.

[ɾ] as in *bi****r****o*, alveolar tap; pronounced as in Spanish *pe****r****o* and similar to English **d** as in *o****d****or*.

[ɾʲ] as in *xa****r****eti*, alveolar tap with palatalized release; English has no equivalent.

[j] in the final syllable of a word, as in *age****r****a*, **r** is realized as a voiced palatal median approximant; pronounced roughly as in *p****a****le*.

ry [ɾʲ] as in *a**ry**o*, alveolar tap with palatalized release; English has no equivalent.

s pronunciation of **s** is conditioned by the following vowel.

[s] before /a,e,o,u/, alveolar fricative; pronounced as in ***s**ip*.

[ʃ] before /i/ as in ***s**intsi*, velar fricative; pronounced as in ***sh**ip*.

sy [ʃ] as in *p**isy**aninxa*, alveolar fricative, pronounced as in ***sh**ip*.

t [t] as in ***t**era*, voiceless alveolar stop; pronounced as in ***t**ip*.

[tʲ] before /eCi/ as in ***t**erira*, voiceless alveolar stop with palatalized release; English has no equivalent.

ts [ts] as in ***ts**ini*, labiodental affricate; pronounced as in *ca**ts***.

tsy [tʃ] as in ***tsy**api*, alveolar affricate; pronounced as in ***ch**op*.

ty [tʲ] as in *ai**ty**o*, voiceless labiodental stop with palatalized release. English has no equivalent.

u [ɯi] as in *ob**u**roxi*, diphthong from high back unrounded to high front unrounded vowel. English has no equivalent.

x the pronunciation of **x** is conditioned by the following vowel.

[k] before /a/ and /o/, as in ***x**anpo* or ***x**oji*, voiceless velar stop; pronounced as in ***c**amp*.

[ks] before /e/, as in ***xe**mari*, voiceless velar affricate; pronounced as in *e**xc**el*.

[kʃ] before /i/, as in ***xi**patsi*, voiceless velar stop followed by voiceless palato-alveolar fricative; pronounced roughly as in *du**cksh**ow*.

[kʲ] before /eCi/, as in ***x**etsi*, voiceless velar stop with palatalized release; English has no equivalent.

y pronunciation is determined by the stress pattern in the word or sentence, and/or by the emphasis placed by the speaker.

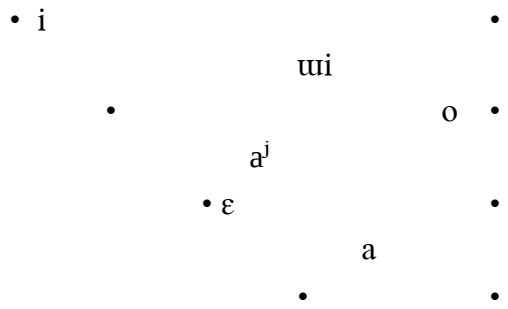
[j] as in ***y**oga*, realized as a voiced palatal median approximant; pronounced as in ***y**oke*;

[dʒ] as in *o**y**ijasijatija*, realized as as a voiced palato-alveolar affricate; pronounced as in *e**dg**e*.

Figure 3a. Nanti consonant chart

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b	t			k g	
Plosive with Palatal Release	pʲ bʲ	tʲ			kʲ gʲ	
Nasal	m	n			ŋ	
Nasal with Palatal Release	mʲ	nʲ				
Tap		ɾ				
Tap with Palatal Release		ɾʲ				
Fricative	β	s	ʃ			h
Affricate		ts dʒ	tʃ		ks gz kʃ gʒ	
Approximant	w			j		

Figure 3b. Nanti Vowel Chart



3.2 The Nanti language from a sociolinguistic perspective

Nanti is a Campan Arawakan language, together with Ashéninka, Asháninka, Caquinte (or Kakinte), Matsigenka (or Machiguenga), Nomatsiguenga (or Nomatsigenka) and Pajonal Campa.[15] All of these languages are spoken in lowland Peru along tributaries of the Amazon River. While each of these languages has been identified and described to some degree, the relationships among them, including levels of mutual intelligibility, remain unclear due to the lack of thorough documentation and of comparative work on the scholarship that exists. Nanti's

[15] This classification is based on that found in *The Amazonian Languages* (Dixon and Aikhenvald 1999). In chapter 3, "The Arawak language family", Aikhenvald groups the other six languages together as Campan, but does not include Nanti, presumably since the identification of this language is recent. Other classification systems also exist; SIL's Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.com) calls this family "Southern Maipuran Campan" and includes in it "Ashéninca Pajonal, Asháninca, Caquinte, Nanti, Ashéninca Ucayali-Yurua, Ajyíninka Aparucayali, Ashéninca Perené, Ashéninca Pichis, Matsigenka, Nomatsiguenga." However, as SIL and Ethnologue are considered by many linguists to maximize difference for political reasons, I have opted to foreground the Aikhenvald classification, even though it does not (yet) include Nanti, because it more accurately reflects non-SIL scholarship.

The term Campa is considered derogatory in Peru, and unfortunately both these systems have retained this term for classification, though it has largely fallen out of use when speaking of individuals and languages. To its great detriment, Aikhenvald's classification even retains the term as a language name, "Pajonal Campa", rather than using the alternate name "Pajonal Ashéninca".

nearest geographical neighbor is Matsigenka and these two languages share a level of mutual comprehension similar to that between Spanish and Portuguese: many aspects of grammar and a portion of their lexicons are shared, but phonology and discourse style differ greatly.

At present, all Nantis are monolingual in Nanti. Although Nantis living on the Camisea River have learned a small set of Spanish words to describe new objects and concepts brought from the Spanish-speaking world downriver, no Nanti person can communicate with a person who is monolingual in Spanish. Similarly, though all Nantis have learned a small set of Matsigenka words, mutual intelligibility between these two languages is limited to simple grammatical constructions and highly referential topics. A small number of Nantis have learned certain important aspects of Matsigenka pronunciation and discourse style, which greatly improves their ability to interact with Matsigenka speakers.

When I first visited the Nanti community of Montetoni in 1995, I only knew a few words of Matsigenka. At that time, I was under the impression that the Nanti in fact were Matsigenka and spoke Matsigenka, since this is what many Matsigenkas had told me. This assessment of the Nanti language by Matsigenka speakers was based on political considerations rather than on linguistic features. All of my interactions with Nanti at that time were mediated by Spanish-speaking Matsigenkas acting as translators. Even at that early date, though, the confusion and awkwardness surrounding the translation process between Nanti and Matsigenka made me deeply curious about the language situation. It was clear to me that I needed to learn to speak in the same way that the residents of Montetoni spoke as

soon as possible, so that my future interactions with them would be free from the distortions that are inevitable when using intermediaries.

Prior to returning to Peru in 1997, I studied Matsigenka grammar and vocabulary from missionary materials, some published early this century by the Dominican priest Padre Pio Aza, and some published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics or provided to me by their offices in Lima, Peru. When I returned to the Camisea River in June of 1997, I used my knowledge of Matsigenka as a foundation, and I was able to begin learning Nanti relatively quickly once I began working with Nanti speakers. Their monolinguality was a boon to my language-learning process, since every interaction necessitated mutual efforts to create understanding using the Nanti language.

As I began to learn to speak Nanti, I also learned that much of the translation of Nanti into Spanish that had been done for me by Matsigenkas was unreliable, due either to simple misunderstanding or deliberate misrepresentation. Much of the information that was conveyed to me during my first visit to Montetoni was in fact untrue. As a result, some aspects of my understanding of Nanti history, as well as some parts of the narratives now told by certain Nanti individuals, have been colored by the emphasis Matsigenka intermediaries have placed on certain ways of viewing the historical past and their relations with the Nanti communities.[16]

All the translations of Nanti in this text are my own work, done in collaboration with my research partner, Lev Michael. The orthography used here is based on the orthography designed for Nanti by David and Judy Payne of the Summer Institute of

[16] See section 4 for discussion of Matsigenka involvement with the Xamisuja Nantis.

Linguistics in collaboration with Angel and Olga Diaz of the Maranatha Bible Institute.[17] This orthography was designed in order to reflect Nanti phonology while at the same time distinguishing written Nanti from written Matsigenka or Spanish, in order to reinforce the value of Nanti as a language in its own right.

3.3 Aspects of Nanti grammar

Below is a brief sketch of key aspects of Nanti grammar. Nanti is an agglutinative polysynthetic head-marking language with relatively free word order. Clauses in Nanti speech regularly consist of a single verb complex; nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs may appear but are not necessary to produce a grammatically complete utterance.

No other formal description of the Nanti language has been done outside of the work carried out by me and Lev Michael. A preliminary pedagogical grammar, *Lecciones para el aprendizaje del idioma Nanti* (Beier and Michael 2001) is available from the authors upon request; also see Michael 2001b.

3.3.1 The verb complex

The basic verb complex consists of a subject prefix, a verb stem, and a set of optional suffixes, and an obligatory mode suffix. Examples for sections 3.3.1.1 through 3.3.1.4 are given in Figure 3c.

[17] When Lev Michael and I began our research in the Camisea Nanti communities in 1997, the Paynes were also beginning to work with them in collaboration with Angel Diaz, a Matsigenka pastor from Nuevo Mundo's Maranatha Bible Institute, and his wife Olga. As a result of our mutual interest in the well-being of the Nanti, we have cooperated amongst ourselves despite differences in field methodology and ideology.

3.3.1.1 Subject prefixes

In most cases, verb forms incorporate a subject prefix.

First person:	**no-**	before consonant-initial verb stems
	n-	before vowel-initial verb stems
Second person:	**pi-**	before consonant-initial verb stems
	p-	before vowel-initial verb stems
Third person		
masculine:	**i-**	before consonant-initial verb stems
	y-	before vowel-initial verb stems in non-future and non-negated forms
	ir-	before vowel-initial verb stems in future and negated forms
non-masculine:	**o-**	before consonant-initial verb stems
	ø-	before vowel-initial verb stems

Optionally, a separate subject pronoun may accompany a prefixed verb complex or the pronoun may be used instead of the prefix for emphasis.

First person:		**naro**
Second person:		**biro**
Third person	masculine:	**iri(r)o**
	non-masculine:	**iro(ro)**

3.3.1.2 Object suffixes

In most cases, a transitive verb complex incorporates an object suffix that marks its object.

First person:		**-na**
Second person:		**-npi**
Third person	masculine:	**-ri**
	non-masculine:	**-ro**

3.3.1.3 Verb mode suffixes

Every Nanti verb complex is obligatorily marked with one of two modes: *realis* or *irrealis*. *Realis* includes the past and present up to the moment of speech. *Irrealis* includes all time beyond the moment of speech. In addition, Nanti verbs are either *reflexive* or *non-reflexive*. Some stems have both reflexive and non-reflexive forms, which have different connotations or meanings.

Realis non-reflexive:	**-i**
Realis reflexive:	**-a**
Irrealis non-reflexive:	**-e**
Irrealis reflexive:	**-enpa**

Verb forms in the irrealis and negated realis incorporate a prefix, **-n-**. This prefix surfaces before the consonants **p, t, ts, x** and is suppressed before the consonants **b, g, j, m, n, r, s, sy, y**.

3.3.1.4 Negation

Negation involves the use of a negation word together with the corresponding mode suffix. The word **tera** refers to the past and the present and indicates ‘did/do not’; **jara** refers to the future and indicates ‘will not’. However, when stating a negative, the presence of these words in effect switches the ‘valence’ of the verb mode morphemes in referring to a particular point in time.

Figure 3c. Examples of basic verb morphology

matix	chant	morphology
		subject - verb stem - mode suffix
nomatixi	I chant	no - matix - i
naro matixi	I chant	naro ø - matix - i
nomatixe	I will chant	no - matix - e
tera nomatixe	I did/do not chant	tera no - matix - e
jara nomatixi	I will not chant	jara no - matix - i

xant	say	morphology
		subject - verb stem - mode suffix
noxanti	I say	no - xant - i
naro xanti	I say	naro ø - xant - i
nonxante	I will say	no - n - xant - e
tera nonxante	I did/do not say	tera no - n - xant - e
jara nonxanti	I will not say	jara no - xant - i

obiix	drink	morphology
		subject - verb stem - mode suffix
nobiixa	I drink	no - biix - a
nobiixenpa	I will drink	no - biix - enpa
tera nobiixenpa	I did/do not drink	tera no - biix - enpa
jara nobiixa	I will not drink	jara no - biix - a

p	give	morphology
		subject - verb stem - mode - object
nopiri	I give him	no - p - i - ri
pinpena	You will give me	pi - n - p - e - na
tera nonpero	I did/do not give her	tera no - n - p - e - ro
jara ipinpi	He will not give you	jara i - p - i - npi

3.3.1.5 Pluralization

Verb complexes are pluralized with the affix **-jig-**, which immediately follows the verb stem and precedes any other suffixes.

nomatixi	I chant	
*nomatixa**jig**i*	we chant	(**-a-** is epenthetic; see section 3.3.2)
imatixi	he chants	
*imatixa**jig**i*	(masculine) they chant	(**-a-** is epenthetic)
ixanti	he says	
*ixanta**jig**i*	(masculine) they say	(**-a-** is epenthetic)

*oja**t**i*	she goes	(**-t-** is epenthetic)
*oja**jig**i*	(non-masculine) they go	

3.3.1.6 Other verb affixes

Nanti employs some four dozen verb affixes and any given verb typically carries three to six affixes. Figure 3d provides a selection of the more commonly used affixes with simplified examples.

Figure 3d. Other verb affixes

Affix	*Gloss*	*Example*
-ax	completive	nop**ax**iro no - p - **ax** - i - ro 'I gave it'
-ogi	intentional causative	n**ogi**norijaxinpi n - **ogi** - norij - ax - i - npi 'I cause you to lie down'
-rira	nominalizer	gotiro**rira** (o)go - t - i - ro - **rira** 'the one who knows it'
-anaj	ablative directional	isig**anaj**i i - sig - **anaj** - i 'he ran away'
-apaj	adlative directional	isig**apaj**i i - sig - **apaj** - i 'he ran back toward where he started'

-aj	regressive directional	ijat**aj**i i - jat - **aj** - i ‘he went back to where he came from’
-u	returnative directional	nojat**u**ti no - ja - t - **u -** t - i ‘I went briefly (then came back)’
-axi	translocative	noxamosot**axi**ti no - xamoso - t - **axi** - t - i ‘I visited over there’
-asi	purposive	noxamosot**asi**taxi no - xamoso - t - **asi** - t - ax - i ‘I visited for that reason’
-ant	instrumental	ixarat**ant**axiro i - xara - t - **ant** - t -ax - i - ro ‘He cut with it’

3.3.2 Epenthesis

Nanti polysynthesis favors a CV pattern. Therefore, when combining morphemes, **-a-** or **-t-** is epenthesized to prevent CC or VV sequences respectively across morpheme boundaries.

*nomatix**a**jigi*	‘we chant’	n - matix - **a** - jig - i subject - verb stem - epenthesis - plural - realis mode
*nobiix**a**jigi*	‘we drink’	n - obiix - **a** - jig - i subject - verb stem - epenthesis - plural - realis mode
*noja**t**i*	‘I go’	no - a - **t** - i subject - verb stem - epenthesis - realis mode

3.3.3 Animacy

Nanti discourse includes a distinction between ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’ entities. This distinction is realized in adjectives and certain verb forms.

*ai**t**yo*	irregular existential verb for inanimate entities
*ai**n**yo*	irregular existential verb for animate entities
*pa**t**iro*	‘one’ inanimate
*pa**n**iro*	‘one’ animate
*pite**t**i*	‘two’ inanimate
*pite**n**i*	‘two’ animate
*tobaje**t**i*	‘many’ inanimate
*tobaje**n**i*	‘many’ animate

3.3.4 Pronouns

naro	first person singular
narojegi	first person plural exclusive
jarojegi	first person plural inclusive
biro	second person
birojegi	second person plural
iriro	third person masculine singular
irirojegi	third person masculine plural
iroro	third person non-masculine singular
irorojegi	third person non-masculine plural

3.3.5 Possessive nouns

Many nouns in Nanti are inalienably possessed; they are composed of a noun stem and a possessive prefix. The possessive prefixes for noun stems are the same as the subject prefixes for verb stems with the exception of the third person masculine form for vowel initial noun stems.

-sinto	daughter
no*sinto*	my daughter
pi*sinto*	your daughter
i*sinto*	his daughter
o*sinto*	her/its daughter

-axo	hand
n*axo*	my hand
p*axo*	your hand
ir*axo*	his hand
a*xo*	her/its hand

-oburoxi	*sexatsi* drink
n*oburoxi*	my *sexatsi* drink
p*oburoxi*	your *sexatsi* drink
oburoxi	her *sexatsi* drink
y*oburoxi*	his *sexatsi* drink

3.3.6 Clitics

In addition to affixes, Nanti has a set of clitics that operate at the clause level:

-xa	evidential: indicates uncertainty or indefiniteness
-ro	evidential: indicates certainty or definiteness
-ta	discourse affirmative: indicates evaluative alignment or topic continuity with another clause
-npa	discourse disaffirmative: indicates evaluative disalignment or topic discontinuity with another clause
-ri	discourse contrastive: indicates coreference to the topic of another clause but a contrastive evaluative posture toward that topic
-me	discourse counterfactual: indicates either a counterfactual clause or a statement contrary to expectation; used to mark hypothetical situations and 'rhetorical' questions.

3.3.7 Noun affixation

Nouns may optionally take the following affixes:

-xu	locative	*Montetoni**xu***	at or in Montetoni
		*biro**xu***	near or by you
		*intsyato**xu***	in, at, on, near, by the tree
-jegi	plural	*tsinane**jegi***	some or many women
		*biro**jegi***	you (plural)

Section 4. Historical context for this study

4.1 Talk about the past

The following historical information is the result of many discussions with Nantis. Most of these discussions took place in Montetoni in 1997 and 1998. I wish to make clear at the outset that Nantis do not often tell stories among themselves of the distant past, and when they do speak of the past, their narratives frequently are not organized in a strictly chronological form. When events are reported in chronological order the narrative may leap across years or decades in a sentence as the narrator relates only the events salient to the topic under discussion. Further, when referring to past events Nanti speakers tend to develop a circular narrative, laying out key events or points and then returning to each of these key points several times with different details or emphasis.[18] They also do not typically speak of the dead or tell stories about them. In an important sense, what happened in the past remains in the past for Nantis, and past events are only spoken about if directly relevant in some way to present happenings or conditions.

As an oral society, Nantis hold in common with other oral societies an exclusive reliance on verbal expression to convey history and experience. Unlike many other oral societies, however, Nantis recount no myths or traditional stories of unknown people and events in the distant past. I have never heard a Nanti talk of any 'mythical' or 'mystical' beings; I have never heard a tale of the creation of humans or of the origin of the earth, sun, moon, or stars; I have never been told an

[18] See appendix 1 for a data transcript and discussion.

explanatory narrative of the origin of any object or phenomenon when talking with a Nanti person; and any questions along these lines have received only terse or puzzled responses.

Given the widespread presence in greater Amazonia (and the rest of the world) of traditional and explanatory tales, songs, and other forms of verbal expression, their absence among the Nantis of the Xamisuja seems anomalous. Throughout the anthropological literature on indigenous societies one finds extensive discussions of myth and story-telling; and linguistic anthropological studies from lowland Latin America with the Kalapalo, Kuna, Shokleng, Shuar, Suyá, and Xavante are full of rich descriptions of diverse oral traditions. Yet unlike all these other groups, Nantis tell no traditional stories. Unlike the Kuna and Suyá, Nantis perform no traditional or specialized curing songs or rites; unlike the Kalapalo they perform no dialogic narratives about their historic or mythic past; unlike the Kuna and Xavante, they perform no verbal art, chanted or spoken, to council and guide the behavior of community members.

If any such verbal forms exist for Nantis, they are not performed publicly with any regularity, I have never heard them spoken about or referred to, and their existence is very well concealed. But I am loathe to assume that Nantis 'must' have such forms simply because they are common elsewhere. Instead I assume that Nantis prefer to speak about their own lived experiences and are not interested in talking about occult, mysterious, or unobservable causes for their experiences.

In addition, Nanti speaking practices do not easily accommodate the relating of events at which the speaker was not present. In their talk, Nantis typically do not

speculate about, loosely infer from, or even paraphrase reports of other people's experiences. The single window on another individual's subjective experiences is that person's actions and words about those events. Nanti speakers rely on direct quotation of what they have been told to describe or discuss another person's experience or activities. This high standard for evidentiality shapes all interactions between and with Nantis, and defines the realm of what may be discussed and how it is discussed.[19] In turn, standards of evidentiality place strong restrictions on what an individual can say about the past outside of his or her own direct experience or what he or she has specifically been told about the past.

As a result of these aspects of Nanti speaking practices, rendering a coherent chronological history of Nantis' experiences requires the reformulation of Nanti presentations of their own pasts. For the outsider, though, a sense of the chronology of events that occurred and shape present Nanti perspectives is essential to understanding contemporary events. Therefore I will present here what I know of past events in the order that I believe that they occurred. Some of the information I present regarding dates and sequences of events comes from my discussions with non-Nanti individuals, especially Matsigenkas and SIL[20] missionaries, who have

[19] See section 5.1 for a brief discussion of evidentiality in Nanti discourse.

[20] The SIL, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, is known as ILV, Instituto Lingüistico de Verano, in Peru and other Spanish-speaking nations. The SIL is presently active in about 52 countries around the world. Founded in 1934, the primary mission of SIL fieldworkers is to translate the New Testament into every language possible and render this document accessible through literacy and education programs (SIL characterizes the priorities of their mission differently than I do; see www.sil.org). This mission has led SIL to be involved in linguistic documentation work in many small societies, the quality of which work varies enormously. SIL has been active in Peru – and formally linked with the Ministry of Education – since 1945 and is a powerful presence both at the

been involved in recent Nanti history. But for the most part, the meaningful connections presented here between past events necessarily reflect the connections made by my Nanti interlocutors themselves. More detailed discussion of recent historical and political events can be found in Beier and Michael (1998).

4.2 Geographic location

The villages of Montetoni and Maranxejari are located near the headwaters of the Xamisuja (Río Camisea, Spanish; Camisea River, English) just to the west of the Manu National Park (Parque Nacional Manu). This part of Amazonia is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet and is home to numerous locally unique species as well as healthy populations of many otherwise endangered species. The Xamisuja, and the Tinpija to the south of it (Río Timpia, Spanish; Timpia River, English), flow north and west from the foothills of the Andes into the Urubamba river basin which in turn forms part of the Amazon river basin. The villages are at approximately 500 meters elevation, and Nantis living on the Xamisuja presently hunt in a very large geographical area to the west and south the villages, often ascending to 1500 meters on hunting trips in the foothills near the villages. The altitude increases quite sharply between the mouths of the Xamisuja and Tinpija and their headwaters, making travel upriver quite difficult and dangerous most of the year. The inhospitable nature of these rivers for travel has provided an obstacle to

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national level and locally in many indigenous lowland communities. The role of SIL in indigenous politics in Peru is enormously complicated and will not be addressed here.

many, though not all, interlopers over the centuries. The headwaters region has a relative scarcity of flat land for farming and the human population is quite small.

4.3 Prior to the 1950s

Stories told by both Nantis and Matsigenkas in the region suggest that during the early decades of the 20th century the impact of the rubber boom sent ripples throughout the Urubamba River Valley. Groups of Matsigenkas (and other Campa groups) living within reach of slave-taking mercenaries on or near the main riverways suffered raids and massacres. Either the devastating experience of, or the fear of, these attacks drove many groups to flee deeper into the jungle seeking safety. These waves of relocations in turn displaced other groups already living deeper in the jungle either through outright conflicts, fear of conflicts, or simple competition for the same resources. At the same time, rumors and stories were carried far into the jungle, so that groups who had never seen a non-indigenous person deeply feared them as murderers and slave-takers. At the same time, because the aggressors were often other indigenous groups who sold the slaves they took, a high level of fear and distrust developed among indigenous groups in this region. Throughout the Urubamba River Valley to this day, Matsigenka communities fear the unknown *xogapaxori*, which roughly means, 'amoral killer'[21], who they believe still live in the headwaters region. Up until very recently, many Matsigenkas believed the Nanti to be *xogapaxori* and assumed they were violent and aggressive.

[21] A more accurate but less concise gloss for *xogapaxori* is 'an uncivilized, potentially violent person' or 'a person who kills for no good reason'.

Nantis in turn fear *xogapaxori* who might approach them from the headwaters of the Xamisuja or the Tinpija.

4.4 The 1950s and 1960s

Since approximately 1950, many of the Nanti families now in living on the Xamisuja were living in several small settlement clusters on the Tinpija. Each settlement cluster was situated near the mouth of a small tributary and consisted of one or a few large communal dwellings in which each adult woman and her immediate family had a separate fire and sleeping area. Each dwelling consisted of a large, steep thatched roof that extended all the way to the ground, with an entrance made in the thatch. Individuals sat and slept on woven cane mats on the ground.

The largest settlement cluster on the Tinpija, at the mouth of the Marijentari, consisted of four large dwellings and had a total population of about 100 people. Two smaller settlement clusters, at Igonani and Tsinxateni, each had about 20 to 30 inhabitants.

As is the case today, hunting and fishing were the primary sources of protein for Nantis on the Tinpija, and family groups made extended trips to hunt, fish, and gather wild produce. Gathering of wild plant and insect foods from the jungle provided a larger portion of the diet, since chacras on the Tinpija were much smaller and less productive than they are now.

Nanti men told us of the difficulties involved in crop production on the Tinpija. Essentially the only tools available to them for horticulture were sticks used for digging and the sharp edges of broken rocks used for chopping down trees and

vines. Chacras were situated near waterways where the foliage was relatively thin and easily removed; this also meant they were susceptible to destruction when the river rose in flood – a common occurrence in the wet season. Bixotoro commented that it used to take several days to chop down a tree with a rock that he now could cut down with a machete or an axe in an hour. As a result of these factors, chacras were small and vulnerable, and their produce limited in quantity.

Several important events in recent decades led to the Nantis' relocation to the Xamisuja, according to Nantis themselves. The first event, chronologically, was an attack sometime in the late 1960s by *xogapaxori* on an upriver Nanti settlement in which many people were killed. This led to the arrival of a number of refugees, all children and adolescents, who fled to the downriver Nanti settlements. Four adults presently living in Montetoni were among these refugees. Perhaps because of the young age of the refugees the motivation for the attack is not known, but the survivors described the attackers as adorned and armed like Nanti. Whatever the motivation for this attack, it led to an enduring fear among today's Xamisuja Nanti of being attacked by people living upriver of them on the Tinpija.

4.5 The 1970s

The second set of motivating events occurred in the mid-1970s, when metal tools were first introduced to the Tinpija Nanti settlements. The details of the acquisition of these tools are vague, but apparently a group of Dominican priests and Matsigenka converts established a mission and school on the middle Timpia in the mid-1970s. Some of these missionaries eventually reached the downrivermost

Nanti settlement of Tsinxateni and captured a number of children who were taken to attend the school. Yonatan, the father of several of these children, followed them to the mission and lived there for some length of time. While there, he acquired a few metal tools, including a machete, a large fishhook, and a knife. Eventually the mission settlement was abandoned and Yonatan returned to Tsinxateni with all but one of his children, who was taken downriver with the missionaries.[22]

Many Nantis say that Yonatan's metal tools revolutionized life in their settlements. Yonatan was willing to share his tools with other Nantis, and he would visit the other settlements and stay for a few days while residents used his tools. His generosity had a double impact. First, the tools changed forever the way farming was done; Nanti men say they abruptly stopped using stone axes in favor of Yonatan's machete. Second, the sharing of these tools brought residents of the Nanti settlements into closer and more regular contact with one another, creating a set of social relationships and collaborative activities that had not previously existed among the independent settlements.

4.6 The 1980s

Not surprisingly, after a number of years Yonatan's few tools began to wear out from such heavy use. Some Nantis began to discuss the need to acquire more tools. Then in the early 1980s, a rumor reached Marijentari from a Nanti man who lived further upriver that people at the headwaters were beginning to migrate downriver.

[22] Matsigenkas in the region have told us that Yonatan's daughter now lives with Matsigenkas at the mouth of the Tinpija.

Fear of conflict with upriver groups compounded with the desire to acquire more metal tools led the Marijentari families to make the decision to migrate over to the Xamisuja basin. The reason they chose to move to the Xamisuja rather than simply moving further down the Tinpija may have been motivated by several factors; first, Yonatan's reports of his experiences with the missionaries led Nantis to fear that the people downriver would again steal their children if given the chance. Second, the rivercourse not far downriver from their settlements is an extremely treacherous canyon for a long stretch, and moving past this section of the river would be dangerous and difficult.

As the Nanti groups moved from their different settlements on the Tinpija to new settlements on the Xamisuja, the distinct family groups began to join, with a smaller number of settlements being home to larger numbers of individuals. In the interest of finding sources for metal tools, these Nanti groups moved several times in the mid-1980s, gradually migrating downriver. Several settlements were established in the headwaters region of the Xamisuja during this period, and successive groups lived at these sites as the downrivermost group moved further.

It was in the dry season of 1987 that the new Nanti residents of the Xamisuja began their first relationship with Matsigenkas from downriver. A group of about ten Nantis had traveled a substantial distance downriver from their settlement at Pirijasanteni to hunt, fish, and gather cane for arrows. While out hunting one day, several of these Nanti men encountered a small group of people from the Matsigenka community of Segakiato who had traveled up the Camisea River in search of thatch. This group included Martin Vargas, a former schoolteacher.

Despite initial fear on both sides, one of the Nanti men, Tito, approached Martin and initiated a conversation with him, and both men quickly discovered the other's peaceful intentions. As a result of their conversation, Tito and Martin struck a deal that the Nanti men would help Martin cut and carry thatch in exchange for two machetes. All the Nanti men in the group worked with Martin for two days, and received the prized machetes. When Martin departed, he told the Nantis that he would return in a year's time for the same purpose and would want their help again.

This event was a turning point for the Nantis. In one stroke, they had made a friendly contact with non-Nantis and had gained access to metal tools. Each dry season over the next several years, Martin Vargas traveled upriver to visit the growing Nanti settlements, bringing a small but highly valued quantity of machetes, pots, clothing, and other desired manufactured items. As an SIL-trained schoolteacher, Martin had been centrally involved in missionary efforts to resettle and 'civilize' Matsigenka groups in the Manu region, and his activities with the Nantis on the Xamisuja reflected a similar motivation. In fact, it was through Martin that the first non-Nanti individual came to live among the Nantis on the Xamisuja.

In 1991, Silverio Araña Gomez accompanied Martin Vargas to Pijegijato, then the downrivermost Nanti settlement. The Matsigenka men succeeded in convincing the Nantis there to allow Silverio to live among them in the capacity of schoolteacher. They explained to the Nanti adults that Silverio would build a school and 'teach' their children and that he would provide a regular supply of metal goods, clothing, and other manufactured items to the community. As Nantis tell the

story, it was the latter part of the proposal that interested them and motivated their decision to accept Silverio's presence.

4.6.1 Nanti characterizations of their move to the Xamisuja

Interestingly, Nantis do not speak of moving over to and down the Xamisuja in search of other *people* who had metal tools; they simply refer to the quest for metal itself. Perhaps this reflects their lack of knowledge, and therefore their unwillingness to speculate, about who or what kind of people they would encounter. Since the motive for moving was always the tools, this is the point Nantis emphasize in their tellings.

The tellings of past events that I have heard from Nantis reflect two explanatory schemes: the desire to gain access to metal tools and the fear of attack from *xogapaxori* upriver. However, because Nanti tellings of these events have been so often repeated and reconstructed by Matsigenkas in the presence of Nanti listeners, it is clear that at times the story-telling by a Nanti individual reflects the emphases he has heard Matsigenkas make in the past if his audience includes Matsigenkas; that is, the element of fear of *xogapaxori* (*kogapakori* in Matsigenka) is emphasized for Matsigenka listeners. However, tellings I have heard without Matsigenka listeners have included no reference to *xogapaxori* at all as the motivation for moving. As a result, it is hard to know how much fear Nantis actually had of *xogapaxori* in the past, or if they speak of the threat of *xogapaxori* from upriver because the Matsigenka so often speak of this threat. 'Upriver' is after all a relative

term, and upriver of Matsigenkas are Nantis, but upriver of them all are the feared *xogapaxori*.

4.7 1992: The founding of Montetoni

Silverio's motive in settling among the Nantis was unambiguous. In his own words, his job was to conquer and civilize (Spanish: *conquistar y civilizar*) the Nantis. This meant teaching them to wear clothes and be ashamed of nakedness, to live in nuclear family dwellings, and to speak proper Matsigenka, among other things. Interestingly, although Silverio's Matsigenka collaborators had religious motives and Silverio himself had been trained at the SIL Bilingual Institute, he did not make substantial efforts to Christianize the Nantis. His personal goals were of a much more political and economic nature. He focused his energies on inculcating a set of 'work ethics' and practices in the Nantis that he felt would create a model community under his sole leadership.

One of the first changes Silverio made upon taking up residence with the Nantis was to relocate their settlement from Pijegijato to Montetoni, a larger site several hours' travel downriver. This site more easily accommodated the large community that was forming as different family groups were invited or persuaded to relocate and, equally importantly, it was much easier to reach by boat from downriver.

4.8 1993 to 1995

Over the several years of Silverio's residence among the Nantis, he used increasingly forceful tactics to dominate village life and to alter the Nantis' lifestyle

according to his vision of a ‘model community.’ Until 1995, Silverio seems to have encountered no significant opposition from either inside or outside the community in carrying out his will.

As part of resettling in Montetoni, Silverio and the Nantis built a schoolhouse and Nanti children and youths started to attend school. While the range of problems with Silverio’s conduct as schoolteacher is far too wide and troubling to explore here (see Beier and Michael 1998 for more on this topic), a fundamental problem – both in the school and in the community in general – was that while the Nantis speak Nanti, Silverio only speaks Matsigenka and Spanish. Silverio’s opinion that Nanti is really just ‘badly spoken Matsigenka’ only worsened the communication problems between him and the residents of Montetoni.

In addition, Silverio used Nantis’ labor in a variety of economically-motivated projects, including farming cash crops and cutting timber illegally. Over the years, the quantity of goods Silverio provided to the village decreased as the demands he placed on the villagers increased. The situation with Silverio was becoming more and more difficult and unpleasant for many Nantis, when nature itself provided the opportunity for a radical change.

4.9 1996 to 1997

From the outset, Silverio had as his goal moving the Nanti community as far down the Xamisuja as possible, to simplify travel to and from the village. After a tremendous windstorm in 1996, which destroyed the schoolhouse, Silverio’s own house and several other houses in Montetoni, Silverio insisted that they rebuild at a

new site, Maranxejari, about 5 kilometers downriver from Montetoni. As many Nantis say, all the Nanti men and older boys worked intensively for many weeks to clear the new village site, to rebuild Silverio's house and the school, and then to plant a large area with *achiote* (*Bixa orellana*; a flower pod used as a dye) – Silverio's own cash crop. A small number of Nanti families also built houses in Maranxejari and relocated when Silverio did. But most Nanti families continued to live in Montetoni, a fact that further infuriated Silverio with every passing month. It was into this tense situation that I arrived in June of 1997.

4.10 Cabeceras Aid Project

I had first visited Montetoni briefly in June of 1995, as part of a humanitarian project to provide medical supplies and healthcare to the village. My colleague Lev Michael and I arrived in the middle of a devastating epidemic of gastrointestinal illness that claimed the lives of four Nantis in the days immediately prior to our arrival. We spent most of our waking hours in the village caring for the ill. Our tireless attention to the ill convinced many Nantis that we were genuinely concerned for their well-being and quickly deepened their trust in us. Upon our departure, Silverio and several adult Nantis told me and my colleague that we were welcome to return to the village if we would again bring medicine, healthcare, and other material aid.

A very similar scenario had occurred in 1993, when Lev first visited Montetoni in the company of some Matsigenkas. At that early date, however, many Nantis were much more afraid of non-Nantis, and after a week, Silverio asked Lev to leave,

saying that many villagers feared him. But Silverio invited Lev to return if he would bring medical and material aid for the community. It was that first invitation that brought the two of us to Montetoni in 1995.

After receiving a second earnest invitation in 1995 to provide much-needed assistance to the villagers of Montetoni, Lev and I considered the nature of this request much more seriously. We recognized the formidable challenges that the Nantis were facing as a group who were just beginning to have sustained contact with non-Nantis and yet who were already suffering from the attendant health problems and political changes that contact brings. After much contemplation, we chose to make a long-term commitment to addressing the situation that the Nantis and other indigenous communities face when developing new relationships with outsiders. In 1996, we founded Cabeceras Aid Project, a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide medical and material aid to groups like the Nantis within the framework of cultural and linguistic research and advocacy that promotes these groups' well-being and autonomy.

I have worked in Montetoni (and Maranxejari to a lesser extent) with Lev Michael on behalf of Cabeceras Aid for part of every year since 1997. As a result of the experiences I have shared with these communities over the years, particularly in confronting epidemics of disease and dealing with Silverio, I have gained the trust of many Nantis. I have been told, in spoken word and in chanting, that both my healthwork and my odd activities with audio and video recording are welcome in Montetoni because, "pamujigaxena Montetonixu", "you two have helped us here in Montetoni".

4.11 1997 to the present

In June of 1997, we made the long journey up the Camisea River expecting to return to Montetoni. Instead, we arrived in the new village of Maranxejari, where Silverio told us ‘almost all’ the Nantis now lived. Although the population seemed strangely small, we took him at his word and settled in to Maranxejari to begin doing healthwork and learning to speak Nanti. Imagine our surprise some two weeks later when about 25 Nanti adults arrived at our hut and asked why we had not yet come to visit them in Montetoni. This was one of many extremely difficult moments when we discovered Silverio’s intentions to force his will on the Nantis in Montetoni and Maranxejari. Although we worked hard to maintain our neutrality in those early weeks, eventually Silverio’s manipulations forced us to choose our allegiance: with him or with the Nantis in Montetoni. The choice was easy. A week later we relocated to Montetoni, a village of more than twice the population of Maranxejari, to continue our work under far more pleasant social circumstances. While Silverio had done all he could to control and impede our relationships with Nantis, all of the residents of Montetoni were friendly, curious, generous, and cooperative with our efforts.

To summarize a very complex situation, it became clear to us in the course of the next four difficult months that Silverio’s conduct among and toward many Nantis, both adults and children, ranged from intimidating to outright abusive. Our arrival on the scene had the negative effect of drawing many latent conflicts out into the open, but had the positive effect of forcing a resolution to some of these

conflicts that might otherwise have simmered, to the Nantis' great disadvantage, for some years to come.

As a result of the attention we drew to Silverio's activities on the Xamisuja, the SIL was able to precipitate an official investigation of Silverio's conduct. According to Nantis in Maranxejari, when he heard of the investigation he fled into the forest in a panic, and shortly thereafter, in November 1998, left Maranxejari permanently, eventually abandoning all his Nanti women and children. In March of 1999, the *fiscal* (district attorney) for the region visited Maranxejari by helicopter and then filed formal charges against Silverio Araña Gomez of 14 counts of rape of Nanti minors. Araña has been living in hiding since he fled Maranxejari, simultaneously protected and trapped in the remote jungle.

4.12 The distance between Xamisuja and Tinpija

The families presently living in Montetoni and Maranxejari all migrated to the Xamisuja in the late 1980s and early 1990s from smaller settlements on the Tinpija and its tributaries. The Timpia river basin lies to the east of the Camisea river basin and the two are separated by a steep ridge of hills. Nantis always speak of the journey between the Xamisuja and Tinpija settlements as long and arduous, and the distance is spoken of as very great. In fact, however, the journey from Montetoni to the nearest present-day Tinpija settlement of Marijentari can be made by an unburdened man in less than two days of walking, as was demonstrated by Esexira in July of 2000. Speaking of the distance as "saamani, saamani", 'very far', reflects

the Xamisuja Nantis' present sense of physical separation from the Tinpija more than the actual distance in kilometers.

The first families now settled on the Xamisuja arrived from the Tinpija in the mid-1980s, and the most recently settled families arrived in the early 1990s.[23] The movements of these various families, which led to the establishment of Montetoni in 1992, were gradual and coincidental to a large degree; that is to say, these groups did not discuss and plan their co-residence on the Xamisuja so much as make similar choices concerning their place of residence, based on similar goals and desires, which resulted in the existence of the village of Montetoni. When discussing their process of migration from Tinpija to Xamisuja during the 1980s, and the formation of new larger settlements on the Xamisuja in the early 1990s, Nantis consistently cite their interest in gaining access to metal goods as their motivation for their decisions to move to new places.

In present day conversations about the potentiality of anyone leaving the Xamisuja and returning to live on the Tinpija, Nantis consistently say that they are unwilling to return to a place where access to metal goods – machetes, axes, and cooking pots in particular – is practically unavailable. For example, when a solitary man came to visit Montetoni from Marijentari in July of 2000, Migero and several other men made eloquent speeches attempting to convince him to move with his entire residence group from Marijentari to Montetoni. Migero repeatedly told their visitor of the benefits he would enjoy in having access to metal goods, including

[23] In June of 2001 a large family arrived in Montetoni and stayed for an extended visit. Members of this group spoke of settling on the Xamisuja, but it remains to be seen if they will reside in Montetoni or at a smaller site upriver.

easier and more productive cultivation and greater ease of food and drink production. He explained that continuing to live on the Tinpija would seriously limit his access to manufactured goods because of the distance and difficulty involved in the trek between Montetoni and the Tinpija, especially carrying a load of heavy metal objects. However, although their visitor was very interested in the small set of goods that was given to him to carry back to Marijentari, he was not willing to say he was ready to move to the Xamisuja, and so remained silent when these arguments were made to him.

4.13 The novelty of village life

Although many Nanti individuals living in Montetoni and Maranxejari are now proud of their new communities and are invested in their cohesion, the existence of these villages as such, as well as many aspects of their structure, are the consequence of other choices made by Nanti families. The idea of a large, semi-permanent settlement deliberately accessible to outsiders was introduced to Nantis by Matsigenkas in the early 1990s. This mode of living stands in striking contrast to many aspects of Nanti settlements prior to their contact with the Matsigenka on the Xamisuja. In particular, living day to day in close proximity to so many people, many of whom are not part of one's active family network, is a great change.

Each village consists of several clusters of huts that I will call 'residence groups'. The members of each residence group are linked by kinship bonds and collaborate and accompany one another regularly in carrying out mundane activities. Within these residence groups are smaller 'family groups', by which I

mean the two or three adults and their offspring who typically share a single sleeping hut. Most family groups also have a shared cooking hut, but in several cases one cooking hut pertains to two family groups. Members of each residence group spend considerable amounts of time in each other's cooking huts.

The sharing of common spaces in the village is at times awkward, as individuals work to intercalate their needs with others' needs. To this day, the large multi-family village seems to be an arrangement to which some Nanti individuals are still adapting. For example, if a man returns to the village with a small amount of game, only sufficient for his immediate family, he will carry it concealed back to his cooking hut. On the few occasions when I have witnessed a man 'caught' in the village with fresh game, he has offered it to the person who has seen it, thereby at the same time acting generously and depriving his family of the intended meal. Similarly, Nantis may walk a circuitous route rather than cross through a space actively being used by members of another residence group. These examples reflect a larger pattern in Nanti interaction – the avoidance of potentially awkward or uncomfortable situations. In general, residents of Montetoni are adept at preventing conflict, and a key strategy is simply not being in a place where conflict could arise.

4.14 Montetoni today

The present community of Montetoni is on the east side of Xamisuja. The village site is about 200 meters from the river's edge, in a large, nearly flat clearing that was previously several contiguous chacras. Two main footpaths provide access to the river from the village. A network of smaller paths runs through the jungle and

chacras surrounding the community; one main path runs parallel to the river in either direction from the village for a great distance.

The huts are built in a rough circle surrounding a large cleared area, with some related families' huts in clusters along the circle. The placement of the huts reflects the strong alliances between each family and their neighbors, and most adults live next to either a sibling, a parent, or their spouse's sibling or parent. One family group has built their four huts off of the main circle, some 30 meters from the other huts on the circle.

When the huts were first built at this site in 1999, the area in the center of the circle was still full of mature *sexatsi* plants and felled trees. By 2000, all of the *sexatsi* had been harvested, all of the smaller trees had been used for firewood, and only a few immense trunks remained. By 2001, every bit of burnable wood was gone from this area. This central area, which villagers call *xanpo* (borrowed from the Spanish 'campo'), is now covered with grass which is kept short through communal labor.

A section of the *xanpo* right next to Migero's, Josi's and Jabijero's huts is solid packed earth that has been cleared of nearly every blade of grass, every weed, and every root, either trampled away by feasters' feet or cut away with a machete or axe in order to protect feasters' feet. Chant lines always first form in this area and are centered in this area, but groups of feasters will wander over the entire *xanpo* during the course of a feast.

The residents of Montetoni consider the *xanpo* communal space and maintain it as such. The physical and conceptual centrality of the *xanpo* is especially striking if

one bears in mind that prior to moving to Xamisuja, the family groups now resident in Montetoni lived separately in much smaller settlements quite distant from other groups. Since the arrival of the school teacher in 1992, the Camisea Nanti have taken on a very different style of life in many ways, and have adopted many practices introduced by the school teacher, practices they have kept since his departure. (Some practices, of course, they have discarded.) Given that the new village site was built after the teacher's departure – in fact, the timing of their relocation seems to have been directly linked to his departure – it seems probable that the residents of Montetoni have designed the village to suit their own desires. And clearly the concept of community is central to these desires.

When the schoolteacher Silverio lived in Montetoni he spoke regularly of the features that were essential to a community. Principal among these was group labor to clear and clean the village, and the school's soccer field was principal among the places to be kept cleared. Although there is not now a school in the village and the teacher is gone, Montetoni's residents have adopted both the *xanpo* itself and the communal labor to keep it clear as part of their practice of community. Community, or *xomoniraro,* is both a place and an activity in Montetoni. Migero made the symbolic aspect of the *xanpo* clear when he specifically stated, "Aityo xanpo, aityo xomoniraro", "There is *xanpo,* there is *xomoniraro"*. The existence of the *xanpo*, and the spatial arrangement of the huts around it; and the regular activity of men working together to clear and maintain this area do not represent community in Montetoni, they *are* community.

A relatively flat, even section of the *xanpo* including and adjacent to the chanting area is designated as a soccer field. Rough goalposts made of cane stand at either end of the area. Most feasts begin with a game in this area.

Now let us return to the character of the village. All families now have separate cooking and sleeping huts, although both styles of huts are used for a variety of purposes, including eating, sleeping, working, and socializing. Cooking huts are either rectangular or oval in shape, and are made of narrow slats of *xamona* (a species of palm) stuck directly into the ground and woven together with vine. Most cooking huts have no raised floor or platform, and occupants sit on cane mats directly on the ground. The cooking fire is typically made directly in the middle of the space, although some larger cooking huts shared by many people will have the fire placed to one side or have two separate fires at opposite ends of the space. The roof is thatched in the same manner as the sleeping huts' roofs, and with time it becomes blackened and shiny with soot.[24] Arrows, spindles, knives, machetes, bone and metal needles, and various other tools and bundles are stuck in the thatch for safe-keeping, out of reach of children and chickens. Dried gourds filled with cotton or dried grains are often suspended from the rafters, as are larger bundles of clothing, cloth, and other possessions. Many huts will have a woven rack suspended above the fire for preserving prepared food, especially smoked meat or fish. Recently harvested *sexatsi* or other roots are piled on the floor along the walls.

[24] Because this thatch is both more water-resistant and more fire-resistant than 'clean' thatch, rebuilding a cooking hut often does not involve the replacement of these leaves, just a retying of them.

Cooking pots and water gourds also sit along the walls, though sometimes these larger items are stored on the outside edges of the floor of the sleeping hut.

Sleeping huts are an innovation among the Xamisuja Nanti, introduced by Matsigenkas. Prior to this change, each residence group lived in one large hut, and adult women had their own separate cooking fires within this hut. Mothers, fathers, and children slept on cane mats on the ground near their cooking fire. Due to forces about which I could only speculate, after contact with Matsigenkas Nanti families stopped living together in one large hut and began to build smaller cooking huts and sleeping huts. The primary distinguishing features of the sleeping hut are two: it has a raised floor and has no fire in it. I foreground form rather than function of the 'sleeping' hut in defining it because Nantis often nap and sleep the night in their cooking huts, especially in cold weather when being near the fire is essential. However, sleeping is the primary activity done in the raised hut.

The floor of the sleeping hut is usually three to four feet above the ground. The raised structure is supported by tree trunks sunk in the ground, and consists of a frame of slender trunks for the floor, walls, and roof. The roof is thatched, using palm leaves lashed with vine, and the floor is made of *xamona,* the smooth outer bark of a palm. Most sleeping huts have walls, also made of slats of *xamona* lashed with vine (built in the same manner as the cooking hut walls). The pitch of the roof is much steeper than that of the cooking hut, and keeping the 'seam' closed – to keep rain and sun out – at the very top where the rows of thatch come together is a continuous problem, due to the heavy rains and tremendous winds that blow along the Camisea river course. For this and other reasons, Nantis spend much less time in

their sleeping huts than in their cooking huts. One important exception is that a new mother will spend an uninterrupted week or more in her sleeping hut with her newborn, and the new baby will remain in the sleeping hut with the mother's nearly constant attention for the first three or four weeks of life.

The cooking hut is the center of most activity, especially when the weather is inclement. Food and *oburoxi* are prepared, arrows are made, cotton is spun to thread, and innumerable other projects to craft or repair objects are carried out by people sitting on cane mats in the cooking hut. People almost always eat sitting near the fire, and do much of their socializing sitting either by their or another person's fire. Most of the time, visitors step into their neighbors' cooking huts without hesitation if the person they are seeking is inside, or they sit or lean in the entrance of the hut to converse.

Sleeping huts, in contrast, are treated as a more private domain. Most sleeping huts have an open porch-like space and an enclosed area. While visitors are generally welcome to enter the porch area to talk with the residents, only the individuals who sleep in the enclosed area have free access to it. Visitors always approach the cooking hut first if seeking someone, and will generally not address a person inside a sleeping hut without a strong motivation or an invitation to do so.

In general, Nanti spend most of their time in the village in places where they are accessible to everyone else. People only go inside of their sleeping huts during the day to rest or sleep or if they are sick. Nanti individuals are very rarely alone in the village; they are either visiting other households or working on tasks in the company of one or two other adults and children. Nanti individuals are very comfortable with

silence and will spend long stretches of time together without speaking much; but being in the presence of others, even silent, is far preferable to being alone. Men usually make short hunting trips in pairs or trios, and longer trips in groups; women go to their chacras in pairs or trios and with several children trailing along; children play in groups of as many as six or seven, usually all boys or all girls. In other words, Nanti daily life is highly social and interactive, both physically and verbally.

4.15 Quality of life on the Xamisuja

Access to metal tools has drastically changed the way that Nantis on the Xamisuja farm. Chacras are quite large compared to those on the Tinpija, and several men have more than one producing chacra or are clearing a new one while an existing one is producing. The introduction of new technology, in the form of axes and machetes, has had a profound effect on the Nantis' quality of life, in two ways in particular: the amount of labor relative to the amount of food produced has greatly decreased, and the amount of food consistently available has greatly increased. Daily life has been made easier, because less time must be spent procuring food since chacras are now much larger and more productive.

In addition to metal tools, contact with outsiders has brought new cultigens which Nantis now grow in their chacras, including *tsitixane*, peppers, both hot and sweet; *sinxi*, popcorn; *inxi*, peanuts; *tsyirijanti*, pineapples, and certain varieties of *sexatsi*, or yuca[25]; and has brought the reintroduction of cultigens lost in the early

[25] Yuca, genus *Manihot*, is also known as manioc or cassava in other parts of Amazonia.

years of migration to the Tinpija, including *seri*, tobacco, and *anpeji*, cotton (for certain families).

In addition to a basic improvement in day-to-day quality of life for the Xamisuja Nanti, having plentiful quantities of *sexatsi* in their chacras has made the production of vast quantities of *oburoxi* possible, which in turn has made the scale of today's feasts possible. Indeed, the present state of plentitude seems to motivate as well as permit contemporary feasts. Living together as a large community in Montetoni provides all individuals access to the tools that make this plentitude possible, and both community and plentitude are essential to feasting. Many Nantis in both Montetoni and Maranxejari have commented that they have no interest in returning to the Tinpija or 'running away' back into the forest, because they then would be cut off from access to new metal tools and would have to return to a much more limited and difficult way of life. The weekly feasts are a tangible and pleasurable instance of the positive results of community life.

4.16 The future of the village

It seems very likely that upon my arrival in Montetoni in 2002, I will arrive in a different village. During 2001, the community was preparing to move the village site about 500 meters downriver.

During the wet season of 2001, the present village site experienced heavy flooding. The village is located on low, flat land the inside of a curve in the river, a perfect site in many ways. But the Xamisuja rises dramatically during the rains at the height of the wet season, and Migero explained that the rivercourse appears to

be shifting – through the present village site. In order to avoid serious flooding, most of the families in Montetoni have expressed an intention to relocate. During our stay in 2001, most of the adult men spent many days together clearing a higher flat area that is presently occupied by Migero's and Anteres' chacras. Because the land has been cleared and planted as chacras, all of the big trees and most jungle growth have already been removed. Thus the clearing parties in June and July resulted in the harvesting of immense quantities of *sexatsi*.

After one several-day stretch of clearing, several residence groups carried cooking pots down to the future village site and prepared *oburoxi* mash right there on the river's edge. After two days of fermentation, Montetoni had a feast of tremendous proportions. I estimate that these groups alone produced at least 100 gallons of mash, and several other residence groups produced perhaps 50 gallons more. During the feast, this mash was diluted to yield about 250 gallons of *oburoxi.* In this particular case, the connection between community labor, community *oburoxi*-production, and feasting was overt. Migero expressed this perspective to me, explaining that the men from the village would work together to clear land for the new village, and then *matix* and drink *oburoxi* together as a result.

It remains to be seen is if all of the residence groups will move together to the new site. If any people do not intend to move, they have not said so – which could be reminiscent of the happenings in 1996 and 1997 when Silverio attempted to move the whole community to Maranxejari. It appears to me that the village will move as a whole, since in true Nanti discourse style, nothing was said to the contrary while I was in Montetoni in 2001. But if any families intend not to move,

this will likely only become apparent when they *don't* move. I expect, however, that everyone will move together, since everyone I spoke to voiced concerns about future flooding, and evaluated the new site as superior to the present one.

Section 5. Aspects of cultural context

Drawing from ethnographic data I have gathered on the Xamisuja, I wish to foreground certain aspects of Nanti practices that are especially relevant to feasting. I do not wish to imply that Nantis can be reduced to predictable stereotypes. I do wish to imply, however, that certain patterns and expectations are very useful to Nantis in guiding their actional choices over the course of time.

Two more observations are crucial before we proceed. First, the Nantis who presently live on the Xamisuja are not a homogenous group in a significant historical sense. My discussions with various Nantis from different family groups over the years have made it clear that both their histories of movement and certain aspects of their daily activities prior to settling on the Xamisuja differed in important ways. For example, in the former case, some Nanti groups on the Xamisuja have kin ties to groups in the Manu region but others do not; and some Nantis now living on the Xamisuja have encountered non-Nantis in the past, while many have not. In the latter case, some Nanti groups now on the Xamisuja made *oburoxi* in the past while others did not. Some Nanti men did chant and others did not. Some Nanti women knew how to weave and others did not. My point is that many commonalities and differences simultaneously contextualize contemporary social life in Montetoni and it is important always to bear this in mind.

Second, despite certain differences among themselves, many of the Xamisuja Nantis' social practices evidence striking differences from most other Amazonian societies that have been documented thus far. A number of the most interesting

aspects of Nanti society are presented below. If certain of my claims strain your credulity, I ask you instead to consider the diversity and creativity of human beings and marvel at how much of this diversity yet remains undocumented.

5.1 Evidentiality in Nanti discourse

As you will notice throughout the data segments included in this study, Nanti speakers rely heavily on direct quotation to present the words and actions of others. This pervasive way of speaking reflects the high standards of evidentiality that Nantis apply when making statements about the world, and particularly about the actions of social agents.[26]

In Nanti discourse, statements about the world are generally founded on one of two sources: direct observation of an event or state by the speaker; and quotation of the direct observation of an event or state by another speaker. In their talk, Nantis do not speculate about states in the world nor about the motivations or causations of states in the world.[27]

The evidential status of a particular statement is indicated in one of two ways in Nanti discourse. Either speakers express what they themselves have observed or they quote what another person has observed, using the verb stem *xant*, 'say', to frame the quoted segment; or speakers employ a discourse clitic, *-xa*, to indicate their lack of direct experience of the event in question:

C: ixanti nojataji
he said, I'm going back

[26] Lev Michael has written extensively on evidentiality and speech quotation practices in Nanti discourse (Michael 2001). For more general discussion, see Hill and Irvine 1992.
[27] See section 5.2 below for further discussion of the issue of causation.

A: inpo maixa gonxetaxa maixa[28]
then now he has arrived perhaps now

One social effect of this speaking practice of strict 'sourcing' is the importance of access to the speech of others in order to talk about the states of affairs among individuals. A common strategy to introduce a topic in conversation is, "tya ixanti", "what did he say?" In addition, speakers will emphasize their evaluation of a particular event by quoting themselves, saying "noxanti", "I say" to frame segments of their own speech.

In considering feasting practices, the importance of direct access to another person's speech becomes especially salient. As I discuss in this study, the frame of feasting shifts the boundaries of acceptable speech form and content, allowing feasters to express opinions, evaluations, and criticisms of states in the world much more explicitly than is acceptable outside of feasting.

Consider the example given in section 10.3.4. While chanting, Tebora states explicitly, "aryoxa pabisaxi", "perhaps you passed by". I had never said that I was 'passing by' Maranxejari and had never spoken of any disinterest in visiting with villagers there. But the sequence of events could be evaluated as "pabisaxe", that is, that I had passed by Maranxejari because I had no interest in the people there. During feasting, Tebora gave me the opportunity to respond to this potential evaluation of my actions and she offered me the social opportunity to respond to her with a quotable statement, "noxamosoti", "I will visit" which indicated my interest in the villagers in Maranxejari.

[28] Transcript 010616-A-c1-002.

5.2 Sickness and curing practices

To the best of my knowledge, Nantis do not have any ritualized curing or healing practices.[29] nor do they do not have an elaborate traditional ethnopharmacology. Since the arrival of new diseases among them, such as pneumonia and malaria, Nantis have quickly adopted the use of introduced medicines to combat these diseases and are impressed by their efficacy.[30] When discussing illness prior their move to the Xamisuja, Nantis describe often simply waiting for a sick person either to become well or to die. During epidemics of respiratory illness in the 1970s and 1980s, many Nantis described retreating into the forest to wait the epidemic out; in this way the well and the sick kept away from one another until the epidemic passed.

When Nantis speak of sickness on the Tinpija, they speak of people suffering from diarrhea, respiratory illness, and worms. Only the former two are ever spoken of as life-threatening. Nantis rarely associate illness with evil spirits, demons, or witchcraft, even though each of these is a common explanation for disease in Amazonian societies and including among the Nantis' nearest neighbors, the Matsigenkas (Shepard 1999).

Both elaborate beliefs about the causes of illness and specific practices for curing them are found throughout lowland indigenous Latin America, often

[29] Nantis on the Xamisuja presently do not perform any 'traditional' rituals at all, such puberty rituals, marriage ceremonies, or funerals, religious ceremonies, war magic, exorcisms, etc.

[30] The ritual ministrations of a visiting Matsigenka *seripigari*, or curing specialist, who accompanied me to Montetoni in 1995 were also welcomed by several Nanti adults suffering from respiratory illness. The *seripigari* conducted a lengthy curing ritual but no Nanti assisted him or evidenced any knowledge of what to do or expect during the event.

involving curing specialists such as the Kuna *ikar* knower (Sherzer 1983), the Cashinahua *huni dauya* and *huni mukaya* (Kensinger 1974) or the Matsigenka *seripigari* (Baer 1993; Rosengren 1987; Shepard 1999). In addition to the work of specialists, curing practices available to non-specialists are common in Amazonia, including chanting, as among the Yaminahua and Yora of southeastern Peru; song, such as the Suyá *sangere* (Seeger 1986, 1987); and the consumption of hallucinogenics thought to have curative properties, such as the use of *banisteriopsis caapi* among the Yaminahua, Yora, Matsigenka and others.

In striking contrast, especially in consideration of the numerous curing practices of the neighboring Machiguengas, Nantis have no traditional curing specialists among them on the Xamisuja. Some Nanti men have spoken of consuming *xamaranpi (banisteriopsis caapi)* or *saro (datura sp.)* in the past as a curative measure, but all say that they no longer consume these hallucinogens except under the most dire circumstances because they are frightening and dangerous. Some have also spoken of using *seri* (tobacco) to combat respiratory illnesses in the past, but in 2001 there were no healthy tobacco plants to use for snuff in Montetoni. In 1999, on behalf of the community Migero named a young man to be trained as *gotirorira,* 'knower' of medicine, and he has been learning to use and administering a basic set of medicines to treat introduced illnesses since then.

Although I will continue searching for evidence, it seems clear to me that seeking either cause or remedy for sickness was not of substantial interest to the Nantis I know prior to their recent experiences with introduced diseases and their specific medicines.

5.3 Gender roles

Among the Nantis I know, all adults fall into one of two gender categories: *tsinane,* 'female' or *surari,* 'male'. Children may be called either *otyomijani,* 'small female' or *ityomijani,* 'small male', but are most often referred to by kinship terms, as in *notomi,* 'my son' or *nosinto,* 'my daughter'[31]. All infants are all called *jananexi,* and all Nantis in the process of becoming adults, both physically and socially, may be called *xoraxona.* All humans are identified as *matsigenxa,* and all the people with or near whom one lives and shares common goals are called *nosyaninxa,* best glossed as 'the (group of) people I live with'.

Except under special circumstances, most daily activities are done exclusively by men or exclusively by women. The division of labor in Montetoni and Maranxejari largely falls along gender lines. There are no activities that I know of that are explicitly forbidden to one gender or the other, but there are many activities in which one gender specializes that the other gender does not know how to perform – such as spinning cotton and weaving for women, and making bows and arrows and hunting with them for men. Both men and women participate in childcare activities, though men do so less than women, and both men and women participate in farming activities, but each gender specializes in certain aspects of farming.

Under normal circumstances, men hunt and fish several times a week, gut and clean game, and share game with their family and with their residence group as quantity allows. Men also clear land for chacras; plant new chacras; chop and carry large pieces of *tsitsi* (firewood); and manufacture many objects and tools they and

[31] See section 3.3 for a discussion of relevant aspects of Nanti grammar.

women use, such as *xabejatsa* (thick hand-spun bark-fiber cord); *tseroxi*, large woven bark-fiber cord bags used to carry *sexatsi;* and *xetsi*, (cooking paddles).

Under normal circumstances, women harvest produce from the chacra cleared and planted by her spouse, father, or brother, depending with whom she lives; prepare cooked food and *oburoxi*; cut and carry small pieces of *tsitsi* (firewood); harvest, spin and weave *anpeji* (cotton), if they have *anpeji* plants; and collect small *jetari* (a species of fish) from the river near the village.

In preparing for feasts, men hunt and fish in the days prior to a feast to provide large amounts of game for the village; carry *tsitsi* used in preparing *oburoxi,* cooking *ibatsa* (meat) and smoking *sima* (fish); and clear the *xanpo* where chant lines chant. On a larger time scale, it is the labor of men in clearing and planting large chacras that leads to the vast quantity of *sexatsi* that is available to be made into *oburoxi*. Women prepare *oburoxi*; cook *sexatsi* and *ibatsa* or *sima*; and share their batch of *oburoxi* with all feasters throughout the course of the feast. Children participate in these activities according to their gender and their capabilities, assisting the adults in their family or residence group if they so wish.

5.4 *Sexatsi* and *oburoxi*

Nantis rarely speak of ownership *per se*. However, in practice, *sexatsi* 'belongs' to women: it is the woman of a household who decides when to harvest *sexatsi,* carries it back to the village, and prepares it. If another woman requests to harvest *sexatsi,* she requests it from another woman. And further, the term *oburoxi* is literally translated as 'her *sexatsi*-drink'. Although the term *oburoxi* can be and is

often used as a ‘mass’ noun, as it were, to refer to all of the *sexatsi*-drink that exists, any batch of *oburoxi* can be identified with the woman or women who made it. One will at times hear Nanti speakers refer to *noburoxi*, ‘my *sexatsi*-drink’, or *poburoxi*, ‘your *sexatsi*-drink’, but never to *yoburoxi*, ‘his *sexatsi*-drink’ – even at the moment that a particular man is drinking down an entire bowl.

5.5 The semiotics of food

For Nantis, the sharing of food is highly semiotic. By this I mean that all acts of giving and receiving food carry with them social meaning, indexing or creating relationships between giver and receiver. Certain kinds of food carry more social meaning than others. Most food, cooked or uncooked, is stored in the cooking hut and available for the taking by family members who share that cooking hut. Sometimes food is stored in the sleeping hut to keep it out of reach of children, monkeys, dogs, birds, and chickens. In principle, any person who sleeps in that hut may take food stored there if they know where it is; but if a person wishes to save a morsel of food for their own consumption later they may store this morsel out of sight in the sleeping hut.

Garden produce is harvested by women, who also cook and distribute it to others who do not have *de facto* access to it as described above. In other words, women share garden produce with residence group members or visitors as they see fit. *Sexatsi* is ubiquitous and is the staple food that is consumed by everyone every day. As a result, it is both shared most freely and least often because every family group always already has *sexatsi* available to eat. Other garden produce, such as *syonaxi*

and *tsanaro* (two varieties of tubers) and varieties of *parianti* (plantains) are harvested and cooked regularly; these are mostly shared with residence group members.

Depending on the quantity of *ibatsa* (meat) or *sima* (fish) a man brings back to the village, he will either give it all to his spouse to prepare or give some of it other members of his residence group. If a group of men have succeeded in killing and bringing back a large animal like a *xemari* (tapir) or *sintori* (peccary) or a large number of any animal or fish, each man shares part of the game with his spouse and close kin. Once a woman has cooked *ibatsa* or *sima* she may share cooked portions with other residence group members. *Ibatsa* and *sima* are infrequently shared outside of the residence group outside of feasting. Only when a very large quantity of game is brought back to the village is it shared across residence group lines, and in these cases men from other residence groups have usually participated in carrying or gutting the game, which itself entitles them to a share of it. In sum, residence groups are for the most part self-sufficient in procuring food.[32] Present patterns of food distribution within residence groups in Montetoni for the most part seem to follow the patterns of distribution that were used within the smaller settlements on the Tinpija.

Typically, Nantis eat in the privacy of their cooking huts and they do not necessarily eat with others unless there is freshly cooked meat or fish. Visitors who

[32] Practices of self-sufficiency in obtaining food are formed very young. Children begin fishing, collecting, and preparing food for themselves when very small and much of their play centers on acquiring, preparing, and consuming food, especially tiny *jetari* (a ubiquitous species of fish) and any ripe fruits that they can manage to acquire.

arrive while people are eating anything besides the ubiquitous *sexatsi* generally do not stay, especially if the visitor is not a person who regularly shares food with that family. Nanti interactions regarding food are often awkward; at the same time, Nanti individuals' discretion about food, and their ability to avoid awkward interactions, is very adept. Because acquiring sufficient food is a daily activity and concern, interactions pertaining to food are perhaps the most frequent type of inter-familial interaction. My characterization of Nanti interaction in general as highly cooperative and shaped by conflict-avoidance, therefore, is grounded in the patterns of interaction so commonly played out due to the presence or potential presence of food in all of its forms – freshly hunted or harvested, being prepared, or being eaten.

Nanti behavior concerning food does not reflect a general unwillingness to share; individuals unhesitatingly lend and borrow useful items on a daily basis. A person who is hungry or cannot be discretely refused food will receive it. Rather, food-related behavior reflects the unpredictability and labor-intensivity of acquiring valued food resources. As such, individuals and families demonstrate a highly self-sufficient attitude toward these resources.

The act of sharing food outside of usual distribution patterns is therefore a marked act. For example, a man will demonstrate his interest in or relationship with a woman who is not a member of his residence group by giving her *ibatsa* or *sima* and conversely will express his rejection of a woman by not giving her *ibatsa* or *sima*. Similarly, under special circumstances a woman may request to harvest produce from the chacra of a close relative, such as her mother, brother, or sister, who is not a part of her own residence group.

The functional separation between residence groups in terms of food distribution outside of a feast makes the collaborative hunting and fishing activities, the subsequent distribution of *ibatsa* and *sima*, and the sharing of *oburoxi* across residence group lines especially salient. Outside of the context of a feast, food is shared among those who have close blood bonds and alliances of collaboration. Inside the context of the feast, sharing of food and drink with community members across residence group lines indexes and creates close bonds and alliances among those sharing.

5.6 *atsi nonxamoso,* 'well, I'm off to visit'

Many residents of Montetoni spend a significant amount of time visiting other households. Most often, and particularly during the day, Nantis who are in the village will visit their kin, but many Nantis have taken to visiting with anyone who is around to visit. As I have mentioned elsewhere, Nantis are relatively spare with their words and do not engage in phatic talk. These visits, then, do not necessarily involve much conversation, so much as they involve friendly acknowledgement between people through physical proximity and provide the opportunity to learn what is going on for others in the village either through talk or through observation.

Every day around five in the evening, a number of individuals will each make a trip around the village, stopping in at every cooking hut to greet or converse with its inhabitants. People who spend a long stretch of the day in the village will usually make a round of the village at least once to see who else is around and discover what they are doing. One of the most common leave-takings Nantis use is "atsi

nonxamoso", which means, 'well, I'm off to visit'. The verb stem *xamoso* means both to visit and to check on, and nicely represents a central practice of Nanti social life. One learns about what is going on for others, what they are doing, what news they have, and so on, by making frequent casual visits with others. While Nanti will sometimes ask directly for information, much more often they will simply be present at the right place or with the right person to find out something they want to know. Nantis engage in very little gossip, and if a person asks another person about a third person, the second person will give a minimal amount of descriptive information: "sexatsi agera", "she is getting *sexatsi*" or "ijati inxenisixu", "he has gone into the jungle" or "oxaati", "She is bathing". The motives of another person for making a trip or doing something are not commented upon, unless the speaker can quote the person in question about his or her spoken intentions.

This spareness of information concerning motivation or purpose is likewise a part of individual statements about one's own activities. For example, Maroja will leave the village to go her chacra, simply saying, "sexatsi naga", "I'm getting *sexatsi*". She might return with a small quantity of *sexatsi* sufficient for feeding her family, or she might return with an enormous quantity to make *oburoxi*. In the latter case, other women will observe that Maroja has begun to prepare *oburoxi* and that day or the next they too will bring back *sexatsi* for *oburoxi* production. In terms of the feasts, then, *xamoso* is the primary way for people to know who is preparing *oburoxi* and how much; and how far along in the fermentation process each batch of *oburoxi* is.

Because Montetoni is a very small village, both in number of residents and physical size, most people do or can know what has happened to or been done by another person almost immediately. A few words about an unusual occurrence will travel around the village quickly, and a curious person will go directly to the source of the news to obtain any further information. But since many people are away from the village most of the day and may miss any news at the time it occurs, *xamoso* is a pleasant and acceptable way to learn about events in other villagers' lives.

As it is done now, *xamoso* is a recent innovation, since the village of Montetoni itself is an innovation for Nantis in terms of social group constitution. Prior to living on the Xamisuja, a small group defined by close kinship lived in a single large dwelling and all a person's interactions were with these kin except when the group or individual members went on journeys to visit other settlements. In Montetoni, however, non-kin or distant kin live a few minutes' walk from one another, and often cross paths with one another in the course of their daily activities in and around the village. When they *xamoso,* Nantis intentionally make social contact with all the family and residence groups in the village and create points of contact between their otherwise largely unconnected lives. The practice of *xamoso,* like feasting, is both a result of and results in a sense of community in Montetoni.

5.7 Topics of daily conversation

Perhaps the most common topics for conversation between and among Nantis are where people have been, what they saw there, and what they have brought back to the village with them. One hears these topics discussed among a few residents of

a cooking hut or when a relatively large group of people have come to *xamoso*. Although the presence of game is socially awkward at times, the story of an exciting chase or successful kill are often discussed, particularly if several men from a family or residence group shared the experience. Telling the story of how the hunter or hunters brought down a monkey or peccary, or even just relating the engaging details of a hunting expedition that yielded little food, fascinate audiences of all ages. Audience members ask leading questions; hunters and witnesses will repeat the best details and sometimes even act out the best moments of the story.

5.8 Personal names

Prior to the creation of Montetoni in 1992, Nantis did not have or use personal names. One of the first tasks the school teacher Silverio undertook in Montetoni was to assign each Nanti person a unique Spanish name. Personal names are essential for the record-keeping schemes of local healthcare personnel, so the names Silverio assigned became immediately useful to him and other outsiders.

It took many years for Nanti adults to learn their own names and the names of others in the village. To this day, most Nantis refer to others by kinship terms or pronouns.[33] However, over the years most Nanti adults have discovered the utility of personal names, especially as a means to refer to people with whom they have no salient kinship relationship. Young people who attended Silverio's school learned

[33] Many people are incredulous at this claim and suggest that Nantis actually have secret names. If they do, I have never found any evidence of it. Rosengren (1987: 108-109) states this to the case among the Matsigenkas in the upper Urubamba river valley. In any case, the most interesting point here, in my opinion, is that Nantis did not refer to each other by names in the *common* sense, that is, by a unique identifier used by everyone for a single person.

their own names and the names of the other schoolchildren quickly, and now young children who never attended Silverio's school use personal names regularly. Since Silverio's departure, names have been assigned to newborns and newcomers either by healthcare personnel visiting the village or by Angel Diaz, the Matsigenka missionary pastor who visits Maranxejari a few times a year.

Nearly every name that has been introduced into the Nanti vocabulary has been transformed to fit Nanti phonology. In particular, the Nanti language avoids consonant clusters, so most consonant clusters in Spanish names have undergone vowel insertion in Nanti pronunciation. In addition, pronunciations of some names have shifted over time, so that, for example, a man named "Ezequiel" by Silverio, was first called "Esexera" [eseksera] and is now called "Esexira" [esekʲira] by Nanti speakers. All the names I use in this study are written according to current pronunciation using Nanti phonology and the orthography that has been developed for Nanti.[34]

5.9 *nosyaninxa*

Up to the present, the salient way to refer to groups and to indicate individual membership in a group is according to place of residence. The word *nosyaninxa* is best translated as 'a person that I live with' and is the term Nantis use to refer to unspecified persons in their village. This conceptualization is continuous with group identification that Nantis used on the Tinpija. Individuals will say *isyaninxa*, 'a person he lived with' to indicate the members of a person's residence group on the

[34] See section 3.1 for discussion of Nanti phonology.

Tinpija when referring to a person who presently lives in Montetoni; although at the moment of discourse, that person is *nosyaninxa* to the speaker, at the time being indicated, the person's residence group was different and that is what is salient.

When referring to non-Nantis, the concept of *i-*, *o-*, or *pi-syaninxa,* 'a person he/she/you live with', is often used. For example, Nantis refer to people that I speak about from 'where I live' as *pisyaninxa*. But just bare reference to the community a person is from is sufficient to identify someone in discourse:

L: tsini xantiro	Who said that?
M: iriro Segaxijari	Him, *Segaxijari*
	(that is, a person from Segakiato)

Given the salience of a person's place of residence to Nantis and their tendency to categorize individuals in their speech according to place, it stands to reason that Nantis would place importance on creating and maintaining positive relationships with the other residents of Montetoni. Though the size and configuration of Montetoni are novel, the political significance of the settlement is not.

5.10 *Peresetentes* and the concept of people who speak on behalf of other people

In Peru, indigenous communities may obtain legal *comunidad nativa* status (CC.NN., 'native community' status) through a complex bureaucratic process. Two of the requirements of this process are that the community have a specific political structure, including an elected *presidente*, *vice presidente* and *secretaria,* and hold monthly *asambleas*, or community-wide meetings. The schoolteacher Silverio was eager to establish first Montetoni and then Maranxejari as an official CC.NN. and he

attempted to set up some of the necessary political structure in these villages as soon as he took up residence on the Xamisuja.

One step he took early on was to designate Joja as the first *peresetente* (president in Nanti) of Montetoni. He also held *asambleas* with some frequency, attempting to bring together all the adult residents of the village for a community meeting in the schoolhouse. Silverio's *asambleas* were directly associated with his definition of a 'model community' and the practice of meeting together across residence group lines has endured in Montetoni as a sign of village-wide sociability.

When Silverio and Joja relocated to Maranxejari in late 1996, Joja continued on as *peresetente* there. Silverio never introduced the concept of 'election' to either village, so Joja has continued in his role as *peresetente* since at least 1993. Once Silverio and Joja had left Montetoni, Migero emerged as the new *peresetente* of Montetoni. I do not know by what mechanism the role became his;[35] Silverio did not appoint him because Silverio did not recognize Montetoni as a separate community from Maranxejari and did not support the idea that there be two *peresetentes* on the Xamisuja. In conflicts between Silverio and the residents of Montetoni in 1997, however, Silverio did recognize Migero as *peresetente* in his efforts to apply pressure to the residents of Montetoni through Migero in his role as their *peresetente*. Like Joja, Migero has kept the role of *peresetente* continuously since 1997. In both Maranxejari and Montetoni the role of *peresetente* seems to be conceived of as a quality of Joja and Migero that is not transferable to another person, and it is a role that carries both unique privileges and unique

responsibilities. For example, the *peresetente* interacts with all outsiders, speaking to them sometimes on his own behalf and sometimes on behalf of the entire village; he receives gifts to the village from us and other outsiders and distributes them among villagers; he sometimes makes requests across residence group lines to facilitate cooperative activities; on occasion he mediates between individuals in conflict.

Both Joja and Migero are more gregarious and assertive than most other Nantis, and the role of *peresetente* suits each fairly well. Over the years that I have known Migero, his confidence and skills in addressing an audience with a monologue and in speaking to outsiders on behalf of other Nantis have greatly increased. He has grown more comfortable with the concept of being a 'representative' of the village-at-large, a concept unknown to him and other Nantis prior to their move to the Xamisuja. Because a 'public' persona such as that of the *peresetente* is a novelty in Nanti society, this persona is in large measure understood locally by how Migero in Montetoni and Joja in Maranxejari perform it. No one in either village seems dissatisfied with either of these men as *peresetente*, but this likely stems from a lack of imagining any other kind of *peresetente*. Up to this point, no one else in Montetoni seems interested in taking on the role of *peresetente* and at times Migero still seems burdened by it.

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[35] That Migero is the younger brother of Joja and an energetic, charismatic person may have been important factors in his emergence as *peresetente.*

Section 6. Feasting

People in Montetoni presently feast every six to nine days. This roughly 24-hour event has a regular pattern of overlapping and sequential activities that define it. Nantis do not refer to the set of activities that I am calling a feast with a name in noun form[36]. Rather, each activity is spoken of as action, either of the individual or the group. Participants will say, “atsi nomatixi”, “so, I will chant now”; “nobiixajigaxa tobajeti oburoxi”, “we all drank lots of *oburoxi*”; “ojojoji, nosinxitaxa!”, “oh ho ho, did I become intoxicated!”.

Two activities are unique to feasting: consuming large quantities of *oburoxi* over a long stretch of time and chanting. More specifically, almost all chanting takes place while people are in groups, holding hands and moving together around the village as groups; and almost all *oburoxi* that is consumed is shared in public spaces by its makers with everyone present, without concern for usual patterns of food distribution[37]. People’s activities during a feast foreground their membership in the community and background their membership in a specific residence group.

I refer to the set of activities that center around chanting by one name because these activities together constitute an event that has a characteristic pattern and is an event that is repeated regularly in accord with this pattern. In other words, there is a unity to the activities of this roughly 24-hour period that make it a discrete event distinguishable from the rest of the activities and interactions outside of this period.

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[36] The Nanti language in general relies on verbs rather than on nouns; see section 3.3 for further discussion.

[37] See sections 5.3 through 5.5 for discussion of usual patterns of food distribution.

I believe that Nanti individuals also conceive of this series of activities as a repeatable event with a coherent pattern, although they have not given it a single name.

For example, on a few occasions, early in the day Migero told us, “aityo oburoxi”, “there is *oburoxi*”, as a comment on the anticipated activities in the village during the rest of the day. When there is *oburoxi*, there is drinking, and when there is drinking, there is chanting in chant lines through the night and into the next day. Because all of these activities always happen together, by referring to one element he was indexing them all. But in general there is simply no need to make such overt statements of what is known to everyone who is in the village; anyone in the village can know the state of every household’s batch of *oburoxi*, and can observe when the drink is fermented and prepared for consumption, and so everyone can know when consumption of it will take place. The lack of overt discourse about situations that are evident to everyone is characteristic of Nanti interaction.

Further, activities that go on together and constitute what I call a feast do not go on at any other time during the week. These activities form a whole both through their co-occurrence and through their absence at any other time. During the rest of the week, *oburoxi* is made in small quantities and if people gather to share *oburoxi*, they drink in small groups inside a cooking hut. During the rest of the week, no adult chants, either while drinking or at any other time. The only time one might hear chanting outside of the feast is in the voice of a small child repeating a chanting formula in play.

I have chosen the term feast because it connotes celebration, sharing, and plentitude[38]. The atmosphere in Montetoni is full of good humor and joviality as people begin to drink, and the mood soon blossoms into enthusiasm and hilarity. Each batch of *oburoxi* is shared by its makers with all participants; everyone present is welcome to drink, most people drink to their capacity – and many people drink beyond their physical capacity[39]. Hunting and fishing trips are made in the days while the *oburoxi* is fermenting, and large quantities of *ibatsa* (meat), *sima* (fish), *sexatsi* (yuca), and other garden produce are usually consumed in the village in the early part of the day before drinking begins. Often a village-wide fishing party will take place in the last few days before the *oburoxi* is ready to drink so that every family in the village can obtain a large number of *sima* at the same time if they wish. The cooperation and sharing among community members in these activities is best evoked by the term 'feast'.

Feasting takes place in the shared spaces of the village and encourages interaction between people from different residence groups whose mundane activities do not necessitate social contact and may even rely upon non-overlapping activity areas. For example, families and residence groups plant their chacras and fish and hunt in non-overlapping areas. Produce and game are typically distributed within family and residence groups and people usually do not ask for or expect

[38] It has been suggested to me that I call these events 'parties' rather than 'feasts'. However, I feel the connotation of the word 'party' does not include the highly regular and ordered pattern of activities the Nanti carry out. While 'party' does connote a social gathering held for the enjoyment of all present, it does not foreground the elements of sharing and plentitude that are central to the events in Montetoni.

[39] See sections 10 and 12 for further discussion of the physical experience of feasting.

collaboration from people outside of their own residence group on activities that benefit only members of that residence group. And yet members of these distinct residence groups are continually in close proximity to one another, and do share certain goals that have brought them to live in close proximity to one another. In order that these groups live harmoniously so near to one another, village residents have innovated strategies to generate that harmony. As I will argue, feasting is the primary strategy villagers use to establish sociability and bonds across the boundaries of their residence groups and within the boundary of the village as a shared space.

As I will discuss further in section 10, feasting is accompanied by a profound transformation of Nanti ways of being and interacting. Not only do the boundaries of with whom one interacts change, but also the acceptable ways of interacting with them change. Feasting keys a frame in which directness and overtness is acceptable in interactions and in which impulsive behavior and speech is a source of amusement and pleasure. Challenging the norms of expression is expected rather than avoided and the consequences are few for behavior that is otherwise avoided. Feasting is its own elaborate form of sociability that foregrounds intense interaction and contact among people whose mundane behavior is far more reserved.

The use of the term ‘feast’ in an anthropological study such as this necessarily indexes Chagnon and Asch’s film *The Feast*. While the practices and goals of the Yanomamö presented in that study are different from those described here for the Nanti, the Yanomamö feast includes the sharing of food and drink as a means to establish and re-establish bonds of sociability between people with shared goals: in

the Yanomamö case, to both prevent and carry out warfare among different villages; in the Nanti case, to reinforce cohesion within a village made up of smaller residence groups which previously had minimal contact among them.

Other lowland indigenous societies express sociability in similar ways. For example, Kuna *inna* rites bear many resemblances to Nanti feasting, as I discuss section 10.2.3. Likewise, the Suyá of Brazil express community and group identity though group singing; the Kalapalo of Brazil create and reinforce relationships between individuals and groups through dialogic verbal performances; the Matsigenka of Peru share food and *oburoxi* to celebrate national and religious holidays; and the Xavante of Brazil reinforce community identity through dream performances in the public space at the center of their villages.

Section 7. The structure and form of Nanti chanting

7.1 *nomatixi,* 'I chant'

When a Nanti speaker refers to the verbal activity around which feasting revolves, he or she will say, "nomatixi".[40] I have chosen to translate the verb stem *matix* as 'chant' to reflect several key characteristics of this verbal art form. First, every chorus phrase is short and formulaic, and the performance of the formula is highly repetitive. Second, each formula makes use of a restricted pattern of tones, and the pitch of the tones in the sequence is less regular than their pattern and rhythm. Since the vocal quality is melodic rather than intoned, this art form might be called 'song', but 'chant' seems the most faithful representation because of the regular and repetitive style of performance. Nanti speakers have no noun form to refer to this practice; *nomatixi* is a verb complex that means, "I chant".[41]

Nantis say *nomatixi* only to refer to the verbal art performed during feasts. Unlike many other lowland Amazonian groups, Nantis presently practice no other genres of singing or chanting; they tell no myths or traditional stories, sing no lullabies or work songs, have no elaborate forms of greeting, leave-taking, mourning, or fighting.[42] The feasts are the only place and the only time when Nanti adults employ melody, rhythm, and repetition together in a structured manner.

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[40] See section 3.3 for further discussion of *matix* and other verb complexes.

[41] Another verb stem, *pirant,* is occasionally used to refer to chanting by women. I do not know if there are any other qualitative differences between *matix* and *pirant* besides the gender of the chanter.

[42] See section 5 for further discussion.

Further, it is important to note that in practice, the activity of chanting is of a whole with the setting of the feast and the physical activity of the chant lines. Sometimes participants will chant while sitting or resting at the sidelines of the feast, and women will chant as they walk around the village bringing *oburoxi* to *xita*[43] other feasters. For the most part, however, chanting involves being hand-in-hand with at least one other person and moving among other chanters. I have never overheard Nanti adults chanting to themselves or chanting while carrying out another unrelated activity. Likewise, I have never observed anyone drinking *oburoxi* to the point of physical impairment nor witnessed displays of intense physical contact between adults in public outside of the context of the feast. Nanti chanting is extremely context-bound and is a verbal art enmeshed in a set of social and physical activities. Once in a rare while a Nanti individual will chant a line or two as a faithful quotation of someone else outside of the setting of a feast, but this quotation will necessarily reference the feast at which the quotable utterance occurred.

7.2 *xarintaa*, improvised chanting

The performance of Nanti chants is highly structured, but also allows for a substantial amount of variation. Each chant in the large repertoire consists of a formulaic line or pair of lines, which all the members of a chant line will chant simultaneously, but not synchronously. The most regular and unchanging elements of the chant performance are the tempo and the tone pattern of the formula, although

[43] *xita* refers to the specific way in which *oburoxi* is shared during feasting. See section 11.3.4 for further discussion.

many formulae have a small set of equivalent, minimally varying patterns that are interchangeable.

The most variable elements of the chant performance are the actual enunciations of the vocal sounds that compose the formulae and the interpolation of *xarintaa* lines. I will address the latter phenomenon first. Nanti chanters often alternate improvised lines of words with the formula, using the same melody and rhythm of the formula. I call these improvised lines *xarintaa* because a chanter will often begin a stretch of improvisation with the word *xarintaa* or use this word as part of the improvised stretch of chanting.[44] The lexical content of *xarintaa* lines is unlimited and may be referential or not. The word *xarintaa* itself keys a frame of improvisation that pervades chanting which may or may not in addition be referential. Word pronunciation, stress patterns, and morphology may be altered in order to match the shape of one's *xarintaa* to the formula. Adding affixes and reduplicating syllables, especially with the vowel nucleus [a], are the most common techniques for shaping *xarintaa* lines.

Nanti chanters often use affixes, particularly emphatic forms and discourse markers, in structuring their *xarintaa*, and the selection of the affix seems to be primarily guided by its sound value. This is a striking similarity and possibly an interesting areal feature shared among native North and South American verbal

[44] Interestingly, in the first months during which I was learning how to participate in the feasts, I inquired about *xarintaa* during a conversation with a friend, having heard it for the first time and yet many times during a feast. He could not, or would not, provide any information about the concept of *xarintaa*. He did not seem unwilling, so much as baffled by my questions. I got essentially the same reaction from several Nanti friends. Based on these and many subsequent observations, it appears that both the concept and the practice of *xarintaa* have relevance only within the context of a feast; it is a word never spoken, only chanted.

artists. Hinton notes the frequent use of affixes as vocables in many native North American verbal art forms. As she puts it, “certain grammatical affixes of fairly general meaning... may be used so generally in songs that they are obviously semantically empty and there primarily for their sound value.” (Hinton 1986: 15) I would not say, though, that the wide use of affixes in Nanti chanting implies that they are “semantically empty”.

In describing verbal art among the Xavante of Brazil, Laura Graham describes the entire “texts” of Xavante *da-ñoʔre* performances as vocables, “either syllables or words from the Xavante language; they do not communicate any propositional or referential meaning” (Graham 1995: 124). Although *da-ñoʔre* are like Nanti chanting in having “a distinctive melodic contour characterized by movement between proximate pitches” (*ibid:* 122), Graham points out a key structural difference: “Xavante do not improvise in *da-ñoʔre* performance”; rather each *da-ñoʔre* is carefully taught to performers who perform it “with as much consistency as possible” (*ibid:* 123).

Xarintaa may be performed in several ways. A chanter may *xarintaa* to the group at large with no obvious recipient. Or a chanter may *xarintaa* directly to another participant, directing his or her words, gaze, and physical orientation to that recipient. The recipient, in turn, may either simply continue to chant the formula and listen to the *xarintaa*, or may respond to it, creating a form of dialogue within the chant performance.

Returning to the element of enunciation in chant performance, Nanti chanters are very creative in the ways they vary the sounds they verbalize, both in the

xarintaa and in the formulae themselves. Lowering and raising of vowels, voicing and devoicing of consonants, diminishing consonants and expanding the vowel nucleus of syllables, nasalization, and replacing vowels and consonants with other sets of vowels and consonants are all common patterns that Nanti chanters employ. We may refer to these as patterns of vocables[45] as long as we do not neglect the important fact that these vocables are always based on and shaped by the patterns of the particular formula in which they are imbedded.

7.3 The structure of chant formulae

Most chant formulae have an eight beat phrase, consisting of two four beat lines. Each beat may consist of one, two, three, or four metrical fractions. In most chants, either the first and third beats or the second and fourth beats of each line receive the predominant stress; alternate beats receive secondary stress. Most formulae are quite short, and are repeated ten to twelve times per minute; any one formula is performed for an arbitrary amount of time, anywhere from a few minutes to an hour or more.

Many chants employ only two contrasting tones of a set of about five. (I have identified five tones thus far, but further analysis may lead me to posit others.) Faithfulness to the exact tones seems unimportant and there is considerable variation in pitch among individual chanters. It is the pattern and tempo of the tones that maintains the continuity of each individual chant during its performance, especially when enunciation is substantially varied by performers. A number of

[45] "The presence of vocables ("nonsense syllables") are [sic] relatively prominant throughout North America, and can well be seen as an areal feature of the continent as a whole." [Hinton 1986: 15]. It

chants employ a pattern of three or four tones and a very few employ a single tone. Most chants employ two tones; a few formulae employ only one syllable of a second tone in sequence of four monotonic beats.

Most Nanti chants are performed with a clear onset of each tone. Sequences of syllables of the same tone usually are uttered with continuous voice, and changes in tone usually correspond to word and breathing breaks. A number of chants, however, include gliding tones, in which the voice glides either smoothly or incrementally between two clear tones that carry a beat. When improvisation reaches the level of vowel enunciation alone, (usually the vowel [a]), the chanter's voice glides between the prescribed tones of the formula and repetitions of the same tone are indicated by greater stress (pulmonic force) together with slight glottal constriction and alteration of the shape of the mouth.

The following chant employs two tones and an eight-beat line. One complete phrase consists of two paired lines.The second and sixth beats of each line are most heavily stressed; the fourth beat is slightly less stressed than the second and sixth; the first, third, fifth and seventh beats are unstressed; and the eighth beat is silent. The tone of each uttered syllable is stable, and there is no glide between the high tone and the low tone. The beats are numbered, and half-beats are indicated with a •. ´´ indicates primary stress; ´ indicates secondary stress; and -- indicates rests.[46]

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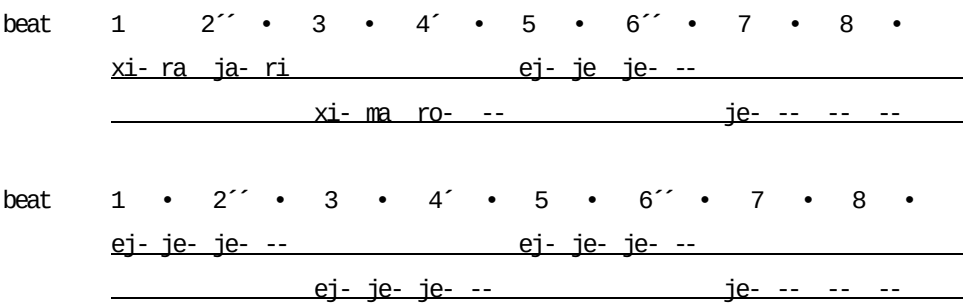
seems that the use of vocables is an areal feature in Latin America as well, although "non-referential" is a more palatable description of these articulations than "nonsense".

[46] See section 3.1 for a guide to Nanti phonology.

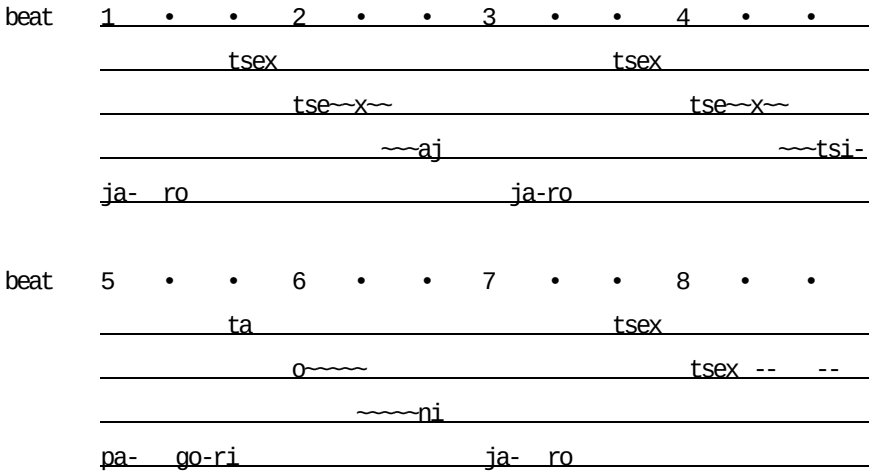
Figure 7a. ***xirajari ximaro***



In speech, the word *xirajari*, 'red', receives antepenultimate stress: xirájari, while the chanted form receives penultimate stress: xirajári; and the spoken word *ximaro*, 'macaw', receives penultimate stress: ximáro, while the chanted form receives final stress: ximaró. Shifts in stress such as this are characteristic of chanted forms of lexical items, both in the formulae and in the *xarintaa* lines. Stress in chanting is manifested both through pulmonic force, as in speech; and through physical movement, including swaying the upper body, nodding the head forward, and emphatic foot-stepping.

The following chant differs in several ways from the previous one. Each beat is a triplet, a common meter in many Nanti chants; one beat even has a sixth: *pa-gori*. The segments indicated by ~ also have the somewhat unusual feature of sliding tone; the voice begins on a fixed tone at *tsex* and *o,* then glides down through the utterance of this segment to finish at a fixed tone at the end of the following segment. Sometimes this chant is performed with a wobbling, sliding tone beginning with the vowel of the second beat until the onset of the third beat, a very unusual phenomenon among the chant formulae I have recorded.

Figure 7b. ***jaro tsex tsex***



7.4 Repetition and variation in chanting

The performance of chants changes dramatically over the course of a feast. During the first hours of chanting, the formulae are uttered clearly with little variation and participants rarely improvise *xarintaa*. The male participants stay in a single long line, faced by a short line of women, and all perform the same chant. When someone, usually one of the more prominent men at the center of the line, changes the formula; the change is quickly taken up by the rest of the chanters. During this time, *oburoxi* is being distributed to chanters by many women and in large quantities, so many participants are focusing more of their attention on the physical activities than on verbal activities at hand. It is during this phase of the feast that the most members of the community are participating in and attending to the same activity, and it is during this phase that the largest number of women are

xita-ing the greatest number of feasters. The atmosphere is one of conviviality, cooperation, and good humor.

As the feast progresses, and as the single, long line fragments into smaller, less unwieldy groups, participants begin to improvise *xarintaa* lines. At this point, the lines are no longer separated by sex, and the lines move more freely around the cleared areas of the village. During the early hours of night, participants often joke and tease each other, and one hears shrieks of hilarity regularly. The participants are now focusing their attention more closely on the people most immediately surrounding them, and the interactions within the line become more deliberate and interactive. At times, two lines will interact with each other, with individuals directing either a chant formula or *xarintaa* at members of another line.

As feast participants become more entranced by their experience, their chanting becomes less coherent and structured. While they maintain the tone pattern and rhythm of a formula, their enunciation, articulation, and tone shape change dramatically. At the extreme, the tone pattern and rhythm will be maintained only by the sound [a] modulated by glides or partially articulated consonants.

The most common regular variation in the phonology of the chant formulae is the alteration of vowels through nasalization, lowering of high vowels /i, e, o, u/, and unrounding of the round vowel /o/. The most common alteration of a consonant is of the tap [ɾ] becoming a lateral approximant [l] or a voiced palatal median approximant [j]. The pronunciation of /y/ varies between a voiced palatal median approximant [j] and a voiced alveolar affricate [dʒ] These variations also occur in Nanti fast speech.

The most notable characteristic of Nanti chanting is its repetition. Feast participants will sometimes chant the same formula for an hour; though individuals may interweave *xarintaa*, the matrix tone pattern and rhythm may stay the same for hundreds of repetitions. At the same time, while individual chanters may synchronize their voices to the voices of others immediately around them, the entire group of chanters is never synchronized, so the individual participant is both hearing and joining a specific rhythm and enveloped by the disordered sound of all the participants. The intensity and complexity of this aural experience, especially during the night when visual stimulae are few, is no doubt key to the transformative[47] effect that participating in the chant line has on the individual.

In closing this section, I wish to point out a striking common effect that Laura Graham notes between Hinton's discussion of Havasupai vocables and her own discussion of *da-ño?re*, because it so closely parallels my own analysis of the effects of chanting among Nanti feasters:

> *Da-ño?re* vocables are only one among many modalities that function pragmatically to promote and signify a spirit of collective solidarity. All participants move identically and simultaneously utter the same vocables and short phrases over and over. This complex repetition of multiple identical units and multiple performance modalities effectively effaces individual differences and promotes group solidarity... (Graham 1985: 124).

Despite substantial differences among the performances being described and vast distances between the communities from which these performances originate, solidarity and community are created through group verbal performances.

[47] See sections 10 and 12 for further discussion of the sensory and transformative aspects of feasting.

Section 8. Sonya's *xarintaa*

8.1 Introduction

In this section I will present and discuss a segment of chanting and *xarintaa* recording during feasting in the morning of June 16, 2001. This segment is especially interesting because a single person, Sonya, chanted at length to a single other person, Lev, while sitting in our hut. As a result the recording is unusually clear and easy to transcribe. Under typical feasting conditions, the sea of sound and continuous motion of the chant lines makes recording long segments of *xarintaa* nearly impossible.

But on this particular day, Sonya sat with Lev in our hut in Montetoni watching the several chant lines that were moving around the *xanpo*. While they sat together, Sonya began to chant the same formula as one of the chant lines, *yojina yojina*, and then improvised a long *xarintaa*, which Lev recorded.[48]

I have transcribed Sonya's chanting here and translated the referential meaning of as much of her *xarintaa* as I can identify. Following the transcription, I have provided first a free translation of what Sonya communicated to Lev in her chanting and then a contextualized interpretation of her *xarintaa*.

Sonya's chant is included on the disk that accompanies this document.

[48] Recording 010616-A-005.

8.2 Segmental representation of Sonya's chanting and *xarintaa*

The formula that Sonya chants and improvises upon, *yojina yojina,* has two tones (see section 9.8 for another representation of the basic formula). In order to preserve the tonic structure of Sonya's chanting, I have indicated segments at the lower tone in plain text and segments at the higher tone in underlined text. In the top line of Nanti text, segments with referential meaning are in talic text and their translation is provided below. Two brief spoken segments between Lev and Sonya occur in lines 49-51 and 109; these are indented to indicate that they are spoken and not chanted. In the final two lines presented here, Sonya transitions her chanting to another formula, *janinxa beya janinxa be.*

1 yo**jina** yoji**na** yo**ji**na yojina

2 **yo**jina yoji**na** yo**ji**na yojina

3 *a:a**ji**ra**ni*** yo**ji**na yojina
long ago

4 *a**ryo** noxa**rin*** yojina yojina
indeed I-xari(ntaa)

5 *paji**ra**ni**tyo*** *pixanti*tyo xarintaa
long-ago you-said

6 *aryo**ri**tyo* *paj**irani*** *maixa*tyo
indeed long-ago now-then

7 n-**n**-*pixan**ti*** *pixanti*:tyo
you-said you-said

8 *tera* **???**-n-n ***pi****xanti*tyo
no you-said

9 *ar****yo*** xa**ri**ntaa-*a****ryo***ni
indeed -indeed

(3.0)

10 yo**jina** yoji**na** yo**ji**na yojina

11 **yo**jina yo**jina** yo**ji**na yojina

12 *a****ry****o*tyo xarintaa
indeed

13 *ir****yoriro*** pa**ji** *pa****ji****rani*
he long-ago

14 *aryo****rixa*** xa**rin**ti ?
maybe

(8.0)

15 yo**jina** yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina

16 *a****ryo*** xa**rintaa** ar **jo**ninori
indeed

17 yoji**na** yo**jina** yo**ji**na yojina

18 *aryo****rityo*** *pa****ji****:ra* yo**ji**na
indeed long-ago

19 yo***ji*** ***o****xari* ji**nita**rityo *oxa*
this-one-(feminine) she-said

20 *pa**jiro**sa**mo** po**go**taganta*
very-much-so you-taught-about(-medicine)

21 *pogo**ta**gan**ta** pixanti*tyo xarintaa
you-taught-about you-said

22 *pipaji**gax**eri**ra** pisyaninxa*tenityo
"you-give-them-thus your-people-here"

23 yoji**na** yoji**na** yo**ji**na yojina

24 *yanta*ta *maro**ja*** jinxatityo xarintaa
over-there Maroja

25 *jara pa**ja**mu**jigi**me pisyaninxa*tenityori
will-not you-aid-them your-people-here

26 yoji**na** yo**jina** yo**ji**na yojina

27 *biro*ja**tyo** xarin**taa** *gotaganateri*tyo
you began-to-teach-him

28 *pixanti**tyo*** xarin**taa** *pamu**jig**axerira*
you-said "you-will-aid-them-thus"

29 *pisyanin**xa***teni**tyo** yo**jina** yojina
"your-people-here"

30 yoji**na** yo**jina** yoji**na** yojina

31 yoji**na** yo**jina** yoji**na** yojina

32 *jaro**xa** biro**tyo** pa**jira**ni*nityo
had-not you long-ago

33 *gotaga**na**teri**tyo*** *pixanti**tyo*** xarintaa
began-to-teach-him you-said

34 *pamu**jiga**xeri**ra*** *pisyaninxa*tentityori
“you-aid-them-thus your-people-here”

35 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

36 yoji**na** yoji**na** yo**ji**na yojina

37 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

(2.0)

38 *ja**me***tyo xa**ri** *pa**jira**ni*tyo
had-not long-ago

39 *pogo**ta**gana**xeri*** *jame*tyo xari
you-began-to-teach-him had-not

40 *jame**tyo*** *xan**tityo*** *pisyaninxa*tenityo
had-not said your-people-here

41 yoji**na** yo**jina** yo**ji**na yojina

42 *pinej a**ryo**ri**tyo*** *noxenxijanaxeri*
look indeed I-begin-to-remember-about-him

43 *noxanti**tyo*** xarin**taa** *yagatagani*
I-said he-was-the-one-who-finished

44 *pinej a**ryo**ri**tyo*** *noxenxijanaxeri*
look indeed I-begin-to-remember-about-him

45 *noxanityo* xarin**taa** *yagatagani*
I-said he-was-the-one-who-finished

46 yoji**na** yo**jina** yoji**na** yojina

47 yoji**na** yo**jina** yo**jina** yojina

48 m- **m**- m- m- [breath]

49 L: *ary imatixi*
indeed he-chants

50 S: *jeje ary ima-*
yes indeed he-chants

51 *ary ixanti imatix*
indeed he-says he-chants

52 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

53 *pinej pa:jirani arisano* xarintaa
look long-ago indeed

54 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

55 aj- **ja**- ja [breath] aj- ja- ja

56 *aryo***ri**tyo xa**ri** *jame paira*
indeed had-not long-ago

57 *biro go**tag**anaxe**ri** pixanti*tyo xarintaa
you began-to-teach-him you-said

58 *birori**ri** xaxero**me*** yojina yojina
you throw-it-away?-NO!

59 yojina yoji**na** yojina yojina

60 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

61 *mame pa**jira** ogo**ta**ganaxeri*
none long-ago began-to-teach-him

62 noxi**to** t- *oga**sa** tera**sa**no irityo*
know-indeed no-indeed he

63 *birori**tyo** bi**ro** biro* tox tobari
you you you

64 *gota**ganax**eri**tyo*** yojina yojina
began-to-teach-him

65 yojina yoji**na** yojina yojina

66 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

67 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

68 *pinej a**ryo**ri**tyo** pajirani*tyo
look indeed long-ago

69 *i:**ji**roben**ta** pinxanti*tyo xarintaa
for-his-benefit you-said

70 *pinxanti**tyo*** xarin**taa** non**ta**ta *nogosa*
you-said I-will-teach-indeed

71 *non- ira**tyo** na**ganax**iri*
I-will him I-will-take-him-away(-with-me)

72 jaroro xarin**taa** *pixenxiri yugasa*
you-remember that-one-masculine-indeed

73 *noni*tyo xarin**taa** anxityo *taina*
I-say "come"

74 *noxen**xijij**ajana**xeri*** yojina yojina
I-begin-to-remember-about-him

75 yojina yoji**na** yojina yojina

76 yojina yoji**na** yojina yojina

77 ana**nityo** xa**ri** *biro*ntyo xarintaa
you

78 n-**n**-n-**n** n-**n**-n-n

79 n-**n**-n-**n** yo**ji**na yojina

80 n-**n**-n-**n** n-**n**-n-n [breath]

81 *oga**ri** onti**ra*** in**xi**ro xarintaa
this it-is

82 *xenxi**janax**eri**me*** yojina yojina
begin-to-remember-him-NO!

83 n-**n** yo xarin**taa** *ijox**anax**ero*tyo
he-threw-it-away

84 yojin**a** yoji**na** yojina yojina

85 a:**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

86 *pa:**i**rani aryo*rityo xarintaa
long-ago indeed

87 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

88 n-**n**-n-**n** n-n-n-n

89 *pa**ji**ira**ni** tya nonira*
long-ago what my-words

90 jani**tyo** *pa**jira** biro gotaganaxe*
long-ago you began-to-teach

91 *pixanti***tyo** xarin**taa** *pisyaninxa*tentityo
you-said your-people-here

92 *pinpa**jigax**eri**ra** pogotaga* jintari
“you-will-give-them-thus you-know-“

93 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

94 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

95 yoji**na** yo**jina** yo**ji**na yojina

96 aj- **a**- a**-** **a** a- a- a [breath]

97 aj- **a**- a- on**ti** **pa**ji**ra**nityo
it-was long-ago-indeed

98 *ja**ra** naro-***o**-o xarintaa
will-not I

99 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

100 yaji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

101 jaya**yo** xarin**taa** ijiyojina

102 aj-ji-ma-ji ji-ni-ji [breath]

103 [breath]

104 ***eje*** na**no** *no**nityo*** xarintaa
yes I-I-speak

105 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

106 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

107 yoji**na** yo**jina** yojina yojina

108 ja-**ja**-aj-**ja** n-**n**-n-n [breath]

(5.0)

109 L: pixanti

110 janinxa **be**ya ja**ninxabe**

111 janinxa **be**ya **janinxabe**

8.3 Line-by-line free translation

In this free translation, segments without clear referential meaning are in italic text, and glosses are in plain text.

1 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

2 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

3 Long ago *yojina yojina*

4 indeed I *xarintaa, yojina yojina*

5 Long ago you said, *xarintaa*

6 Indeed, long ago, now,

7 You said, you said,

8 ?? You said.

9 Indeed, *xarintaa,* indeed.

10 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

11 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

12 indeed, *xarintaa,*

13 he, long long ago

14 indeed maybe, *xarinti*

(8.0)

15 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

16 indeed *xarintaa ar joninori*

17 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

18 indeed long ago *yojina*

19 *yoji* this one *jinitarityo* she said

20 “You taught very much about (medicine)”

21 You taught about (medicine), you said, *xarintaa*

22 “You two will give them medicine, your people here.”

23 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

24 Over there, Maroja (said) *jinxatityo xarintaa*

25 “You do not aid them, your people here?”

26 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

27 You *xarintaa* began to teach him

28 You said, *xarintaa,* “You two will aid them.”

29 “Your people here.” *yojina yojina*

30 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

31 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

32 Had you not long ago

33 begun to teach them, you (would not have then) said *xarintaa*

34 “You will aid them now, your people here”

35 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

36 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

37 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

(2.0)

38 Had you not *xari* long ago

39 you began to teach him, had (you) not *xari*

40 You would not have said, “Your people here.”

41 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

42 Look, indeed, I begin to remember about him.

43 I say, *xarintaa* “He was finished (with your training and your medicine).”

44 Look, indeed, I begin to remember about him.

45 I say, *xarintaa,* “He was finished (with your training and your medicine).”

46 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

47 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

48 *m- m- m- m-* [breath]

49 L: Indeed, (that is what) he[49] chants?

50 S: Yes, indeed he chants

51 indeed he says, he chants…

52 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

53 Look, long ago, indeed *xarintaa*

54 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

55 *aj- ja- ja [breath] aj- ja- ja*

56 Indeed, *xari* had not long ago

57 You began to teach him, you said *xarintaa*

58 "You throw it away? No!" *yojina yojina*

59 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

60 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

61 Long ago, no one began to teach him

62 *noxito* – know (medicine?) indeed, no indeed, him

63 It was you, you, you *tox tobari*

64 began to teach him *yojina yojina*

65 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

66 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

67 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

[49] In using the masculine form here, Lev refers to the chorus that everyone present (including Sonya) is chanting, *yojina yojina,* rather than referring to Sonya's own *xarintaa*. Sonya answers him in the affirmative and immediately chants another line of the chorus before continuing her *xarintaa.*

68 Look, indeed, long ago,

69 For his benefit you said *xarintaa*

70 You said, *xarintaa*, "I will teach, indeed."

71 "I will, him, I will take him away with me"

72 *jaroro xarintaa* You remember him, that one indeed

73 "I say" *xarintaa anxityo* "Come"

74 I begin to remember about him, *yojina yojina*

75 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

76 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

77 *ananityo xari* you indeed *xarintaa*

78 *n- n- n- n- n- n- n- n-*

79 *n- n- n- n- yojina yojina*

80 *n- n- n- n- n- n- n- n-* [breath]

81 this here, this is *inxiro xarintaa*

82 does he begin to remember? No!

83 *n- n- yo xarintaa* he threw it away indeed

84 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

85 *a: na yojina yojina yojina*

86 long ago indeed *xarintaa*

87 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

88 *n- n- n- n- n- n- n- n-*

89 long ago, what words of mine

90 *janityo* long ago you began to teach him

91 you said *xarintaa* “Your people here”

92 “You two will give them, you now know” *jintari*

93 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

94 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

95 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

96 *aj- a- a- a- a- a- a-* [breath]

97 aj- a- a- it is long ago

98 I will not *xarintaa*

99 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

100 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

101 *jayayo xarintaa ijiyojina*

102 *aj- ji- ma-ji ji-ni-ji* [breath]

103 [breath]

104 yes I say I speak indeed *xarintaa*

105 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

106 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

107 *yojina yojina yojina yojina*

108 *ja- ja- aj- ja n- n- n- n* [breath]

(5.0)

109 L: so you say

110 S: *janinxa beya janinxabe*

111 *janinxa beya janinxabe*[50]

[50] Sonya does not answer Lev with words but immediately begins to chant another formula.

8.4 Contextualized interpretation

Beginning in 2000, Lev and I began to train two young men, Bisarota and Tyejerina, to use basic medicines for serious diseases that had been introduced to the Xamisuja communities by outsiders – malaria, bacterial diarrhea, and respiratory infections in particular. On behalf of the residents of Montetoni, in 1999 Migero had requested that we begin to train these two men and provide them with the medicines to combat these illnesses. At that time, both men expressed interest in and willingness to receive this training. We worked intensively with both of them during our stay in 2000 and trained them in the use of anti-malarial treatment.

Upon our return to Montetoni in 2001, however, only one of the men, Sonya's spouse Bisarota, expressed interest in continuing his training. Tyejerina never said he was no longer interested, but early on in our stay each time that we began to get out our training materials he quickly disappeared from the village, making himself unavailable for our training sessions. We continued training Bisarota throughout the summer, but there was no discussion of Tyejerina's absenting himself from the training. Rather, Bisarota was simply spoken of by everyone in the village in the singular, as *gotirorira,* 'the knower of medicine'.

In 2000, we had also spoken with Tyejerina, Bisarota, and Migero about the possibility of the Tyejerina and Bisarota accompanying us downriver to the government healthpost at the mouth of the Xamisuja to introduce them to the healthcare staff there, and to arrange further training for them by the Matsigenka healthcare workers at the post. We proposed to take them with us when we left the village after our stay in 2001. In the meantime, we could set up the arrangements

with the healthpost and obtain the funds needed to support this project. All three men, and others who heard of the proposed plan, were in favor of it.

Early on during our stay in 2001, we reintroduced this topic and told Migero and Bisarota that we had secured the funds and gasoline necessary to provide for Bisarota's training and subsequent trip upriver to Montetoni. Both Migero and Bisarota expressed enthusiasm at having Bisarota make the trip to the healthpost. Tyejerina's status regarding the trip – whether he still wanted or expected to go – remained ambiguous.

These key events informed Sonya's *xarintaa* to Lev. In this *xarintaa,* Sonya expressed her dissatisfaction (and that of others, including Maroja in line 24) that Tyejerina had "thrown away" his training as a 'knower of medicine' after our having said, 'We will begin to teach you medicine, and then you will be able to aid your people here.'

In her *xarintaa,* Sonya referred to the planned trip to the healthpost. She pointed out that the other person we had offered to take with us had thrown away his knowledge of medicine before and no longer remembered his training. She also quoted our saying the previous year, "come" (downriver with us). In her *xarintaa* Sonya does not say explicitly that she does not think Tyejerina should go with us; rather, she makes several pointed statements in a sequence that implies that only one person, Bisarota, has maintained the knowledge of medicine necessary to receive further training at the healthpost.

Many Nantis, including Sonya, have expressed to us at key junctures over the last few years that they value our work to provide Montetoni with needed medicines

and to train Nantis to use them. The nearest healthpost is very far away and the communities have no access to medicine when epidemics strike. The public discourse about our collaboration with Bisarota (and Tyejerina in the past) is that it is very important to the entire community that they have their own ‘knowers of medicine’and that it is difficult work to learn *janpi* (medicine). In her *xarintaa*, Sonya articulates an evaluation that other villagers may hold but that no one else has ever articulated: that Tyejerina’s “throwing away” of his training is a disappointment and a loss to the whole village.

Section 9. Chant formulae

This section provides a selection of chant formulae presented on the page in a way that reflects their basic rythmic and tonic patterns. Samples of chants marked with an asterisk * are included on the disk that accompanies this document. As you listen, you will notice many variations on these basic patterns.

None of these chant formulae have referential meaning that I am aware of. A number of formulae incorporate names or parts of names of birds and animals, and I have included a gloss for every lexeme that I can identify. But this does not mean that the chants are *about* those birds or animals. Similarly, chanters often incorporate the names of birds and animals into their *xarintaa* lines, and these improvised are no more and no less about the birds and animals then, either.

9.1 inxiro inxi inxirobe *

inxiro: species of frog

beat	1	•	•	2	•	•	3	•	•	4	•	•
				in-	--					be	--	--
	in-	xi-	ro			xi	in-	xi-	ro-			

beat	5	•	•	6	•	•	7	•	•	8	•	•
				in-	--	xi			xi-	ro-be	--	--
	in-	xi-	ro				in-					

9.2 asintsyaja jinxate:(ni) *

beat 1 • • • 2 • • • 3 • • • 4 • • •

tsya-- ja -- te:-(ni)-- --

a:- -- sin- -- jin- -- xa-

beat 1 • • • 2 • • • 3 • • • 4 • • •

a:- -- sin- --tsya-- ja -- te:-(ni)-- --

jin- -- xa-

9.2 pisitinirorisa pisitiniro *

pisiti: species of toucan

beat 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 •

pisi- sa--pisi-

tinirori- tiniro

5 • 6 •

pi:- ti

siti pisi

7 • 8 • 9 • 10 •

pisi- sa---pisi-

tinirori- tiniro- --

9.3 syoje syoje xanari *

syojebani: wattled guan, species of bird that Nantis hunt and eat

xanari: generic term for guans

beat 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 •

je je xa- na- ri --

syo- syo

beat 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 •

je je

syo- syo- xa- na- ri --

9.5 pantisitirorira otisi *

pantisi: hilltop

otisi: hill

pantisitirorira: 'hilltopper'

beat 1 • • • 2 • • • 3 • • • 4 • • •

o---

pan-ti- si- ti- ro- ri- ra -- ti- -- si -- -- -

beat 5 • • • 6 • • • 7′ • • • 8 • • •

o-

o- -- ti- -- si -- a- -- -- ti- -- si -- --

9.6 osigasiga putora *

osigasiga: verb complex meaning 'it ran away'

putoro: species of bird

beat 1 • • • 2 • • • 3 • • • 4 • • •

a---

o- siga-siga-- pu- to- ra -- bo- tsa -- xi- ri- ri

beat 5 • • • 6 • • • 7 • • • 8 • • •

a---

o- siga-siga-- pu- to- ra -- sin-tsa -- xi- ri- ri --

9.7 xajayaxe je *

beat 1 • • • 2 • • • 3 • • • 4 • • •

xa- ja- ya- xe -- -- je -- in- xa- ya- xe -- -- je --

9.8 yojina yojina *

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
                  yo-     na                --  yo-
      yo- --  ji- na      ji-       --  yo- ji- na-          ji- na  --
```

9.9 sarixojani sarixojani *

sarixoja: species of bird

```
beat      1′  •  2  •  3′  •  4  •
              ri     ni
          sa:-    xoja:   sarixoja:ni  --

beat      5′  •  6  •  7′  •  8  •
              ri-
          sa:-    xoja:ni sarixoja:ni  --
```

9.10 jorinxabeya jorinxabe *

jorini: species of bird

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
            xa- be- --          jor---  in- xa- be  --  --  --
      jor--- in-            ya  --

beat  5  •  •  •  6  •  •  •  7  •  •  •  8  •  •  •
            xa- be- --              --  in- xa- be  --  --  --
      jor---  in-            ya  --  jor-
```

9.11 baya bayari *

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
      ba -- ya- --                    ba-    ri -- -- --
                  ba- ya- ri -- ba- ya-    ya-
```

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
      ba- ya- ba- ya-                 ba- ya- ri -- -- --
                   ba- ya- ri -- ba- ya-
```

9.12 yaa yigari ya yigari *

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
         yi-          yiga ri    yigari --     yigari
      yaa --   gari  ya- --          yaa          ya
```

9.13 inx yojiyojina *

```
beat  1  •  •  •  2  •  •  •  3  •  •  •  4  •  •  •
      inx    yojina inx    yojina inx       na  inx
         yoji-          yoji-          yojiyoji     yojiyojina
```

```
beat  5  •  •  •  6  •  •  •  7  •  •  •  8  •  •  •
      inx    yojina inx    yojina inx       na  inx
         yoji-          yoji-          yojiyoji     yojiyojina
```

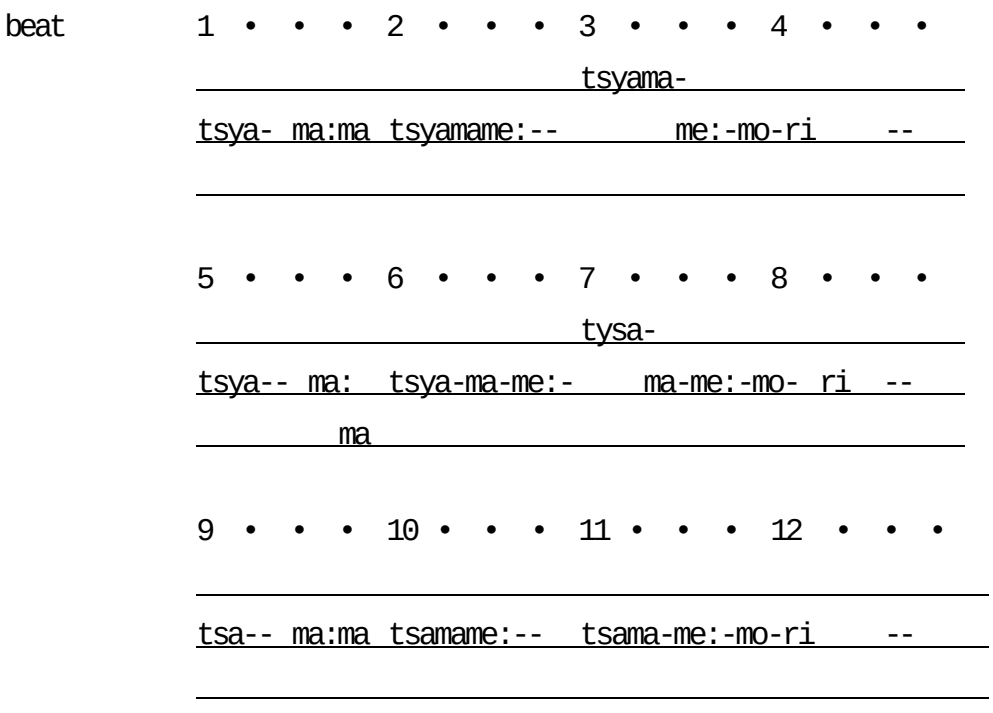
9.14 xayonabaxa je:yo *

```
beat     •  1  •  2  •  3  •  4  •  5  •
           xa-        ba- xa  --  --
           yo- na-                 je:---  yo  xa-

beat          1  •  2  •  3  •  4  •  5  •
              yo-    ba-xa   --  --
                 na-                 je:---   yo --
```

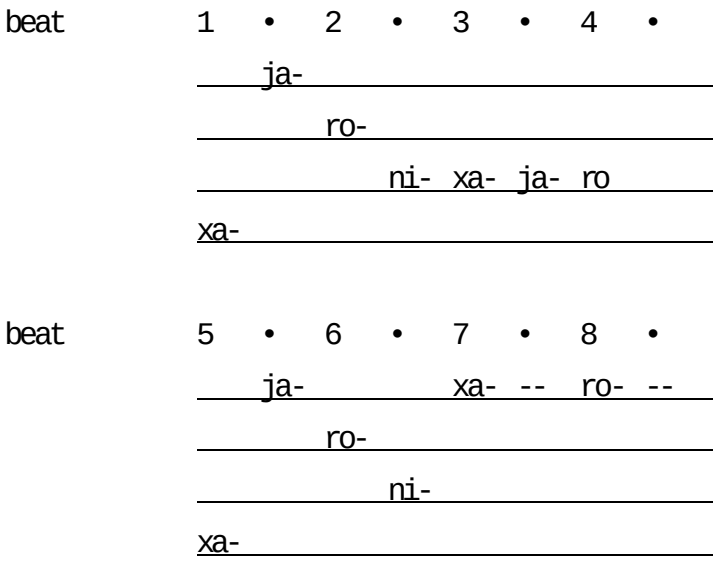
9.15 ajeneyo jeneyo *

```
beat          1  •  2  •  3  •  4  •
                 je- ne- yo
                          je-
              a-                  ne- yo- --

              5  •  6  •  7  •  8  •
                 je- ne-
                       yo  je-
                           ne- yo  --
              a-
```

9.16 tsyamama tsyamame tsyamamemori *



9.17 xajaroni xajaro xajaroni xaro



9.18 parigapaxe inxani

parigapaxe: verb complex meaning 'it fell towards'

inxani: 'rain'

beat	1′	•	•	•	2	•	•	•	3′	•	•	•	4	•	•	•
									i:n---							
	pa:	ri-	ga-	--	pa:	--	xe	--			xa-	--	ni	--	--	--
beat	5′	•	•	•	6	•	•	•	7′	•	•	•	8	•	•	•
									i:n-							
	in-	xa:-	ni	--	in-	xa-	ni	--			xa-	--	ni	--	--	--

9.19 janixanexa janixane

beat	1	•	2	•	3	•	4	•
			xane-					
	ja-	ni-		xa	janixa-		ne	--

beat	5	•	6	•	7	•	8	•
			ne-					
	janixa			xa	ja-	ni-	xa-	ne

beat	9	•	10	•	11	•	12	•
	ja:-ni-		jani					
			xa	xa:	jani:xa-		ne	-

Section 10. Transformations

As I have described in this study, feasting activities differ substantially from activities during the rest of the week. Certainly what villagers do during a feast is strikingly different from what they do on an ordinary day. But I am also making a stronger claim. During feasting, Nanti individuals often behave and express themselves ways that are dramatically different from their usual selves. With the evidence I present below, I will argue that feasting has a transformative effect on participants. It is the co-occurrence of the special set of events and expectations that define feasting and create a social context in which individuals may act and interact in novel and sometimes entirely unexpected ways.

10.1 Transformations of group

While most mundane activities are focused on maintaining the well-being of family and residence group members, feasts are focused on sociability across residence groups and on the intense enjoyment of that sociability. Feasters gather in shared spaces in large numbers and for long stretches of time. People focus their attention on other people who they may regularly have little contact with or access to. During feasting, the meaningful group, and the set of people with whom one will potentially interact directly, shifts and becomes the entire village.

10.2 Transformations of affect

Along with the transformation of the group during feasting, there are transformations of the feasters themselves. The behavior of Nantis when feasting differs substantially from their behavior during the rest of the week. Indeed, perhaps the most striking aspect of Nanti feasting is the transformation most feasters undergo. The demeanor and behavior of feasting individuals contrast dramatically with their day-to-day mien. Feasters become loud, gregarious, assertive, and physically animated. Individuals interact more directly with one another, making eye contact, speaking or chanting loudly to or at one another, and placing their bodies much closer to one another than is acceptable outside of the feast.

10.2.1 Affect outside the feast

Outside of the context of the feast, Nanti individuals very consistently conform to certain behavioral norms. Nantis are quiet much of the time, even when in the company of others. Verbal interaction usually focuses on the exchange of information and includes essentially no idle chat or phatic talk. Most of the time, Nantis speak in quiet voices and rarely raise their voice volume, even when agitated. Nanti adults working together work for the most part in silence, occasionally exchanging brief comments. A woman will raise the pitch or tone of her voice to scold or warn a child, but typically will not raise the volume of her voice unless the

child is at a distance or in danger. The daily atmosphere of the village is very quiet and tranquil, both day and night.[51]

Children too mostly speak quietly, though young children will cry or holler loudly from strong emotion. By roughly the age of 10, though, young Nantis have stopped vocalizing their emotions; tears from pain or frustration are accompanied by silence. Nanti adults bear pain with little reaction, either physical or verbal. For the most part, all Nanti individuals are especially reserved in public spaces, by which I mean any place outside of that individual's sleeping and cooking huts. Louder, more animated conversation will occur inside of a cooking hut among family or resident group members and perhaps a few guests, but most of the time individuals remain reserved inside other peoples' huts, even those of their parents and siblings.

In day-to-day interactions, Nanti adults have little physical contact with one another. Adults, including siblings and spouses, make no displays of affection, such as hugging, kissing, hand-shaking, or hand-holding, and generally maintain a few feet of space between themselves when interacting or accompanying one another. Sitting together in a hut or standing in a crowded place, adults will lean against one another un-self-consciously, and occasionally siblings or spouses will tease one another physically, but the general configuration of adult bodies reflects respectful distance. A woman sitting and interacting with a group of people will often pull a

[51] Daily interactional patterns among Nantis contrast in some very specific ways to Sherzer's characterization of Kuna patterns: "There are neither taboos against talking nor penchants for silence during such activities as hunting or fishing." (Sherzer 1983: 155); "...there are many other pretexts for visiting, including the desire to chat for its own sake…If more than one woman is at home, they talk constantly as they work together" (156).

child or another woman toward her and groom the person, cleaning debris or bugs from the hair, or squeezing the itchy blood blisters left on the skin by the countless biting gnats. Far less often a woman will groom an adult man in public in the same manner. Adults often carry children or hold their hands while accompanying them, but they will also often rebuff the physical contact of a child if it is bothersome.

The behavior of young people contrasts with that of Nanti adults. Up until about the age of puberty, children have frequent physical contact with one another, carrying one another, holding hands, and clinging to one another affectionately. A combination of shyness and curiosity will draw a cluster of children near an adult gathering, each child clinging to the others, trying to hide behind the rest but still maintain a good view. However, once youngsters draw near adulthood and begin to spend more time with older individuals and participate fully in adult activities, they begin to display a more reserved demeanor and to draw away from the physical affection of younger children.

Similarly, Nanti adults do not stare at other people, and generally do not hold sustained eye contact with each other. People will catch one another's gaze intermittently in conversation, but then quickly shift their gaze`. If men sit down together for an extended conversation, they often sit side by side and look off in the same direction, speaking without looking at each other for long stretches of time. Women often converse while engaged in another activity, on which their visual attention is focused as they talk. When a person sees another person looking at them intently, both will quickly turn their heads away and break their met gaze.

Young women are the most restrained in making eye contact. They often speak with their heads and eyes lowered, and will even sometimes physically turn their faces away from someone who is addressing them directly. A young woman may conceal part of her face when interacting with adults, raising the back of her hand or wrist to cover her mouth as she speaks or is spoken to, while gazing toward the ground.

10.2.2 Affect inside the feast

The physical behavior of Nanti feasters is a striking transformation from their usual day-to-day physical behavior. Feasters hold hands, lean on each other, walk arm in arm, and drape themselves over each other's shoulders throughout the feast. Participants are perpetually in contact with others in the chant line, and separate lines will join, or bump one another, or follow one another, or parallel each other closely throughout the feast, bringing members of each line in frequent physical contact with one another. Chanters will put their faces close to those of others, and often make steady and unflinching eye contact with others while chanting to them.[52]

10.2.2.1 Arisuja

A striking example of transformation of affect takes place during every feast in the person of Arisuja.[53] Arisuja is very quiet and unobtrusive, even more so than most women in Montetoni. She rarely visits (*xamoso)* other residence groups and

[52] Many people with whom I have discussed Nanti feasts liken them to *carnivales* or other rites of reversal, and have asked if feasts provide Nantis an opportunity for trysts or other unusual sexual behavior. I do not yet know the answer to this question.

spends most of her time in the village in her own cooking hut. She has never initiated a conversation with me in all of the years I have known her, and smiles shyly while answering very quietly if I address her.

And yet Arisuja is one of the most energetic and tireless of Nanti feasters. She almost never rests throughout a feast and is often one of the first *and* one of the last women chanting. She contributes very large batches of *oburoxi* to every feast and spends the first several hours of each feast *xita*-ing the chant lines while chanting energetically with and at all of the other participants. Her voice when chanting is loud and strong and she gazes directly in the eyes of other feasters. At times I find it hard to believe she is the same person. But this is precisely my point: Arisuja transforms herself during feasting to the point that almost none of her behavior or affect is the same as it is outside the feast.

10.2.2.2 Birari and Santijago

Like Arisuja, both Birari and Santijago are among the quieter Nanti adults. They *xamoso* around the village relatively infrequently and each spends nearly all of his social time within his own residence group. Both say less to me when they *xamoso* than many other people do; each always smiles warmly upon making eye contact with me and says only as much as is necessary. During the early evening of a feast in 2001, they were hand in hand in the long men's chant line and I was in a short women's chant line. The two lines were weaving around the *xanpo* and interacting with one another. For a stretch of several minutes, each time Birari and Santijago

[53] Arisuja is the elder of Migero's two present spouses; her younger sister Maira is his second spouse.

came near me, they lunged forward and chanted loudly and directly in my face. Each time they moved away from me they laughed hilariously and continued chanting. This happened five or six times before the movements of the two lines did not bring us close together again. Everyone, including me, found their exaggerated behavior very, very funny.

10.2.3 An areal-typological perspective on transformation of affect

From an areal-typological perspective, Nanti feasting bears some striking similarities with Kuna puberty rituals, or *inna* rites, at opposite end of greater Amazonia. Joel Sherzer describes these *inna* rites in *Kuna Ways of Speaking* (Sherzer 1983). Like Nanti feasting, Kuna puberty rituals involve a transformation of norms of social interaction. During these rites, Kuna enact "a general sense of looseness and letting go which is in direct contrast with ordinary etiquette. While many types of behavior and activity are permitted and encouraged, there is a special focus on speech play and verbal art." (*ibid:* 151) Like Nantis, Kuna behavior is altered across most modalities; "Loud talking and joking, yelling and screaming, touching, and a lack of attention to how or where one walks, sits, or lies are all the rule." (*ibid:* 148) Both the Kuna and the Nanti invest substantial amounts of energy and resources in a community event that involves excessive drinking and unusual behavior, and in both settings people behave in ways only sanctioned in the context of an event centered on the consumption of an intoxicating beverage. Indeed, the *inna* rites are named after *inna*, the fermented sugarcane beverage central to these celebrations.

However, a few aspects of Kuna *inna* rites are more structurally transgressive of mundane behavior than Nanti feasting is. First, among the Kuna, drinking of alcoholic beverages is "otherwise taboo" (*ibid:* 147), whereas Nanti consumption of *oburoxi* is different in scale but not prohibited outside of feasting. Second, "(o)f the three Kuna ritual traditions, the puberty tradition is publicly practiced and performed least frequently. In Sasartii-Mulatuppu, two or three full-scale puberty rites are typically held during a single year" (*ibid:* 152); Nanti feasting, in contrast, presently takes place roughly every week. And finally, *inna* rites are centered around and motivated by a special occurrence in the life cycle, a girl's reaching puberty. The ritual requires the participation of a *kantule*, or ritual specialist and the performance of a long *ikar* in ritual language addressed to the spirit of the *kammu*, a long flute. Many aspects of the *inna* rites are focused on effective communication between the human and spirit worlds and have a magical element or function to them. In contrast, Nanti feasts have no focal participant, no ritual specialists, nor any spiritual or magical aspect whatsoever. Local conceptions of the *purpose* of these two events differ fundamentally, then, although many elements of the *performance* of these events are strikingly similar.

10.3 Transformations of speech

As the physical behavior of Nanti feasters changes, so does their verbal behavior. That is, both the form and the content of verbal interactions is transformed. At a fundamental level the form and the content of chants, both the formulae and the *xarintaa* lines, are functionally inseparable. People simply do not

speak the formulae, and do not express themselves in speech as they do in *xarintaa*. Above and beyond all else, during feasting Nantis' conceptions of appropriate social action are transformed – and this crucially includes speech.

While participating in a feast, and especially while chanting, Nantis may speak and chant about topics not addressed in public spaces during the rest of the week. Individuals' opinions, desires, criticisms, and other commentary are expressed explicitly with words during feasting in a way that is never done outside the feast. These words may be directed toward members of the chanter's family, members of his or her residence group, or members of the larger community.

10.3.1 *piximaro*[54]

During the evening of June 28, 2000, Anteres wore a minidisk recorder around his waist for 150 minutes while he feasted. Anteres is a very energetic man of about 40 years of age and one of the most gregarious individuals in Montetoni. His spouse, Ines, is Migero's sister. Anteres is a tireless and enthusiastic participant in every feast; like Arisuja he is often both one of the first *and* one of the last chanters. Always good-natured, his humor and ability to thoroughly enjoy every feast is contagious, even among the shyest participants.

At the time of this recording, Anteres (A) was part of a chant line and was interacting with many other feasters in the *xanpo*. As is often the case as darkness is falling over Montetoni, feasting was in full swing. Most adults in the village were participating in one of the chant lines or sitting nearby and the energy level was very

[54] Recording 000628-A-1.

high. People had been chanting and drinking *oburoxi* for several hours and were deeply engrossed in feasting, but they were not yet very intoxicated or tired.

The following interaction is typical of this phase of the feast. People were joking with one another, laughing at the slightest provocation, and a number of participants, including Anteres, were saying or chanting one funny comment after another. As you read the free translation below, you will note a distinctly sexual theme to the banter. This is both quite common during feasting and practically unheard of outside of the feast. The chant formula that all the participants are using is in italic print in the transcript; it has no referential meaning that I know of. In this particular data segment, most of the *xarintaa* lines are spoken rather than chanted. T and J refer to two other men in the chant line. Although I can guess from their voices who they are, since I was not present for this recording I can not be certain, so I have chosen not to include their names here. This example is included on the audio disk that accompanies this study.

All:	*xayonabaxa jeyo*	
T:	noxemisant	I will listen
	tsyitsyanira	carefully
All:	*xayonabaxa jeyo*	
T:	onxemisantaxe	She will listen
J:	natyara abotsixu	when I'm in the path
All:	*xayonabaxa jeyo*	
	xayonabaxa jeyo	
J:	aryo noginorija	indeed I will "make lie down"
	pisinto	your daughter
All:	*xayonabaxa jeyo*	
T:	paita osama	later on
J:	xamosotana	visit me

All:	*xayonabaxa jeyo*	
J:	aryota pisinto	indeed your daughter
	noginorijaxe	I "make lie down"
T:	[noxamoso ityani	I will visit then
J:	one:::je	she seeeeees
A:	onti naxetyo naro	it is me first, I
	inti sima gagetaxe	it is fish you'll get
T:	jara oneje	she will not see
	pisinto	your daughter
	yoga jara otyarira	this one, it isn't new
	syarotsantsa	(it's) long
A:	tsiripejaxiti tyara	(it's) small
J:	syarotsantsa	long
T:	ximaro tsiripejoxiti	little macaw eye
A:	noxentirira	I will shoot it with an arrow
	noxentiro piximaro	I shoot it, your macaw
T:	onxentiro piximaro	She will shoot it, your macaw[55]

10.3.2 *noginorijaxenpi*

Sexual themes are far more common in chanting than in daily discourse. In fact, I have never heard Nantis converse openly about sexual activity; the little that is said in shared spaces is said discretely and implicitly, and jokes are infrequent and subtle.

During feasting, explicitness is the norm, even if the explicitness is often conveyed in elliptical speech and metaphors like *ximaro tsiripejoxiti*, 'little macaw eye'; and explicitness is almost sure to provoke laughter. During the same evening

[55] In this line, T shifts the gender of the shooter from masculine to feminine, presumably for comic effect. Shepard notes that that among the Matsigenka "men often refer to sex in slang by using metaphors from hunting" (1999: 99)

as I described in section 10.2.2.2, two men in another chant line, Aran (A) and Birari (B), and I (C) had the following *xarintaa* interaction:

B (to A):	atsi pinxantero	so, say something to her
A (to C):	(in a loud voice and	
	leaning into C's face)	
	noginorijaxenpi	I will "make you lie down"
C (to A):	aryo pixanti	oh is that what you say
B (to A):	oxemisanti	she understood you

[hilarious laughter erupts from everyone present]

Neither of the men involved in this banter had ever said or chanted anything remotely like this to me before, and I got the feeling at the time that I was being given a bit of a 'test', to see if I was paying attention and understanding what was going on around me. I was indeed paying attention, I did understand what Aran had said, and everyone was gratified and highly amused.

10.3.3 Barentin and Sonya

Barentin is a highly respected elder man in Montetoni with a cheerful and positive disposition. A model of Nanti interactional values, in daily conversation he reports on other peoples' activities accurately (or not at all) without evaluating them and especially without criticizing them. During a feast in July of 2000, Barentin was in a small chant line that also included his spouse Xatarina, his son Bisarota's spouse Sonya, me, and several other Nantis. It was well after nightfall, and the feast had been underway for many hours. Suddenly Barentin began to *xarintaa,* improvising as he chanted and stating that Sonya did not cook regularly for his

household but did regularly eat with them, did not regularly harvest yuca for the household but did regularly consume yuca from the household's gardens, and did not prepare *oburoxi* but regularly drank with them. Xatarina chanted words of agreement along with and after Barentin's verses. Sonya's posture and movements indicated that she was attending to Barentin's chanting; it would have been impossible for her not to hear him. As Barentin improvised, Sonya continued to chant the chorus with the rest of the group but she did not respond with improvised chanting of her own. After a few minutes and several lines directed at Sonya, Barentin stopped improvising and joined chanting the formula with the group.

Some months before this incident, Sonya had lost both of her small daughters in a malaria epidemic and she had been especially quiet, inactive, and reclusive since then. Neither prior nor subsequent to this moment at the feast did I ever hear Barentin or Xatarina criticize Sonya, either to her face or to others. I do not know what, if any, lasting effect this incident had on the relationship between Sonya, Barentin, and Xatarina; I observed no obvious changes in their interactions afterwards. The crucial point here is the radical difference between Barentin's verbal style during and outside of the feast; during the feast, Barentin expressed exactly what he was observing in Sonya's behavior and made clear how he evaluated it.

10.3.4 *aryoxa pabisaxi*

In the early evening of a feast in July of 2001, a small group of visitors arrived from the downriver community of Maranxejari. Among these visitors were Ajorora

and Tebora. Ajorora is the mother of Tebora and of Migero and Joja, the *peresetentes* of Montetoni and Maranxejari respectively. Shortly after Ajorora and Tebora arrived, they both paid a visit to me in my hut where I was sitting watching the first chant line form. We spoke for a while, discussing the fishing outing that had brought them upriver and other matters relating to their family and their community.

Later on in the evening, I joined a large chant line and held Ajorora's and Tebora's hands. After some time had passed, Tebora chanted the following lines directly to me. The repeated segments are the chant formula; underlined segments are improvised and have salient referential content. A free translation is given of these segments in the right column. Brackets [indicate synchronous or overlapping chanting of the formula by both participants. Your will find this segment on the audio disk that accompanies this document.

T:	pantisitirorira otisi	
B:	pantisitirorira <u>pabisaxi</u>	you passed by
T:	pantisitirorira otisi	
	pantisitirorira <u>aryoxa pabisaxi</u>	it could be said you passed by
	[pantisitirorira otisi	
C:	[pantisitirorira otisi	
T:	[pantisitirorira otisi	
	<u>nonebi pogonxe pogonxera</u> xojani	I ask that you arrive, you arrive
	[pantisitirorira otisi	
C:	[pantisitirorira otisi	
	<u>arisano noxamasoti</u>	indeed I will visit
	pantisitirorira otisi	
T:	<u>arisano pamu pamugi</u>	indeed you will aid, you will aid us
C:	<u>arisano arisano namugi</u>	indeed indeed I will aid you

[pantisitirorira otisi
T: [pantisitirorira otisi
C: xamani aixiro noxamosoti[56] In the near future I will visit again

When I had returned to the Xamisuja a few days prior to this feast, I and my traveling companions had stopped only briefly in Maranxejari. We had arrived in the late afternoon and visited with a few villagers, but many people, including Tebora, were out of the village on overnight fishing trips. We stayed in Maranxejari that night and in the morning gave gifts to the community that they had requested of us the year prior. Later that morning we continued on upriver to Montetoni. As a result, we had not visited with Tebora or many other residents of Maranxejari prior to continuing on to Montetoni. Tebora's chanting *aryoxa pabisaxi* to me suggests that she had considered interpreting our actions negatively, as though we had passed through Maranxejari without concern for or interest in the people there. She then directly asked me to return to visit Maranxejari and attend to the needs of people in that village, which she summed up by the word *pamugi,* 'you will aid us'. In making this request, she even used the first person form of the verb to ask, *nonebi*, which is very unusual in Nanti speech. Most Nantis rarely make direct requests and thereby avoid imposing their wishes on the will of others. For Tebora to say explicitly, "I ask you to arrive" is highly uncharacteristic of her speaking style, and I doubt she would have uttered this request outside of an improvised chant. She had never done so prior.

[56] Recording 010615-B track 002, made June 15, 2001.

The events of the following day reinforce my analysis of Tebora's request as having been made possible by our co-presence in the chant line. When I spoke with Tebora and Ajorora at length again the next day before they returned downriver to Maranxejari, neither made any mention of our having passed too quickly through Maranxejari nor of Tebora's request, "nonebi pogonxe pogonxera". When they expressed their intention to leave, I replied by stating my intention to come on foot to visit them in Maranxejari very soon, to which they replied, "nani xameti pinxamoso", "OK, very good, you will visit". In regular conversation, neither Ajorora nor Tebora has ever directly asked me to visit them, and I don't expect they ever will, because a direct appeal to another's volition is highly disfavored in Nanti discourse. But through her chanting at that feast, Tebora told me very clearly how she had evaluated our passing by without visiting them on our way upriver and stated what she wanted me to do.

Section 11. The making of a feast

Making a feast involves activities both during the feast itself and during the days between feasts. I will begin by discussing the key preparatory activities for a feast and then continue on to discuss the activities that characterize feasting itself.

11.1 *Oburoxi* production in the village

As a general rule, the women of each household or residence group will make a large batch of *oburoxi* for every feast. This rule, however, needs qualification. Certain households make large batches more consistently than others, and these households usually provide the bulk of the *oburoxi*. Other households will make small batches sometimes and huge batches at other times. Other households only make *oburoxi* intermittently. For all households, certain significant events interfere with *oburoxi* production, particularly a birth, illness, or injury in the family.

Many social factors also affect who makes *oburoxi*, and how much of it. The households of the most socially prominent[57] men most consistently make the largest batches. The number of enthusiastic drinkers present in the household also determines the quantity that household will produce for a particular feast. The availability of large pots to prepare and ferment the *oburoxi* determines the quantity made by each household. And the availability of an abundance of mature *sexatsi* is essential, so households whose chacras are smaller, farther away, less mature, or

[57] Social 'prominence' in Montetoni has much to do with a person's participation in and contributions to feasting, along with other types of participation in and contributions to community life; these connections are discussed below and in sections 4 and 5.

less tended for any reason make less *oburoxi*. Under special circumstances a woman may make *oburoxi* with *sexatsi* she has requested and received from someone else's chacra, but this is unusual.

All of the social factors that affect *oburoxi* production are correlated in complex ways to social relationships within the community on both the short-term and long-term scale. The less prominent or less assertive families generally receive fewer or smaller pots when gifts are distributed, either because someone from that family is not present to receive a large pot, or does not articulate a desire to receive one. Likewise, the more prominent men receive more help from other men in clearing larger chacras, which allows for their households to plant and harvest more *sexatsi*, which in turn means the possibility of making larger batches of *oburoxi*. The family groups who are most centrally involved in inter-familial activities in general are the family groups most centrally involved in *oburoxi* production and feasting activities. Within this larger pattern, though, remains substantial flexibility for individuals to vary their level of participation depending on their circumstances from one feast to the next. For example, a family that usually provides a large batch of *oburoxi* but is away from the village for a hunting and fishing trip during the *oburoxi*-making days may provide only a small batch but still participate to their full capacity.

During 2000, I estimated that approximately 500 kilos of *sexatsi* were processed for a typical feast, yielding on the order of 200 gallons of *oburoxi*, although this latter figure can vary substantially depending on the dilution rate each woman uses for her mash. Over the years that I have been attending feasts in Montetoni, the quantity of *oburoxi* prepared has gradually and steadily increased in two ways:

socially prominent families that have always produced large amounts produce larger amounts; and less socially prominent families that previously didn't produce and share *oburoxi* now do so. The increase in *oburoxi* production reflects three solid facts: the increase in the number and size of productive chacras around Montetoni, the increase in interest throughout the community in contributing *oburoxi* to each feast, and the decrease in the labor people were expending during previous years to clear a new village site and build a new village of huts. In the summer of 2000, the residents of Montetoni had little else demanding their time besides maintaining their chacras; hunting, fishing, and gathering activities; and feasting. In the summer of 2001, villagers were just beginning to act on their recent decision to relocate their huts 500 meters downriver to avoid inundation in the wet season, and the first stage of this relocation involved harvesting tremendous amounts of *sexatsi* from the area where the new huts would sit. At the biggest feast this summer, perhaps 250 gallons of *oburoxi* were prepared and consumed.

11.2 Making *oburoxi*

In order to best illustrate the process of making a batch of *oburoxi*, I will present the steps carried out by Maroja, a highly respected elder woman and a key figure in every feast in Montetoni, with the help of family members.

At dawn, Maroja leaves her cooking hut with a huge mesh bag and a machete in hand, her two youngest daughters and two nieces trailing behind her. An hour or two later they return to the village, the girls again trailing in a line behind Maroja. Maroja's mesh bag, its strap across her head and its weight carried on her back, is

bursting with freshly harvested *sexatsi*. The girls carry other produce inside their skirts or in slings. They all duck into Maroja's cooking hut and stash the fresh produce on the cool ground near the hut's walls.

Maroja steps back outside the cooking hut and picks up one of the huge pieces of wood that Josi, her spouse, cut and brought back the day before. Preparing all of the *sexatsi* to yield a large batch of *oburoxi* requires a big and hot fire that will burn for a long time.

Once Maroja has the fire blazing, she and her daughters each pick up a knife or a broken machete blade and begin to remove the thick, mud-covered, stiff skin of the *sexatsi*, slitting the skin length-wise, and then peeling it away. They cut off the woody ends of the larger roots and throw them to the chickens. As they work, a pile of discarded skins and earth piles up on the floor on one side of them, and a pile of muddied milky-white *sexatsi* roots piles up on the other side. They work mostly in silence, occasionally commenting to one another as their work requires it.

Once all of the roots have been peeled, Maroja pours water from a gourd into a small cooking pot and begins to wash the roots. Some of the roots are up to 2 feet long, and Maroja cuts them in half or into thirds before washing them. The water quickly becomes muddy, but Maroja is expert at squeezing nearly all the dirt and water off the root with her hand. Each cleaned root is added to a growing pile, this time placed on a cane mat on the floor next to her. As she draws near completing this task, she looks at her older daughter, and says, "atsi, nija", "hey, water". Her daughter picks up a large pot and goes immediately to the river to fill it. She returns

shortly, dripping wet and carrying the very full pot on her head; any trip to the river is an opportunity for a quick refreshing bathe.

Once all the roots have been washed, Maroja brings her largest metal cooking pot and sits again near the roots. She cuts each one into pieces that will fit tightly into the pot. She then adds water to the pot, just enough to cover the *sexatsi* pieces; puts the pot on the fire; and covers the *sexatsi* with several folded *tsupana* leaves. The leaves form a close-fitting cover that keeps most of the steam trapped in the pot. She then blows vigorously on the enormous logs in the fire until they flame and leaves the *sexatsi* to cook for about an hour.

When the *sexatsi* has cooked and most pieces are very soft, Maroja takes the pot from the fire and sets it aside to cool. She removes the largest, firmest pieces from the top of the pot and offers them to her daughters to eat. After the *sexatsi* has cooled a bit, she takes her *xetsi*, a small, flat wooden paddle, and mashes the *sexatsi* pieces completely, adding small quantities of water as she proceeds. As she works she removes most of the thick tough center fibers of the roots and other tough, unmashable chunks from the pot.

While mashing the *sexatsi*, Maroja takes a small handful of mash, puts it in her mouth and chews it a bit. She holds the chewed mash in her cheeks without swallowing it for several minutes. She then puts this mash back into the pot. A few minutes later, she does the same thing again. This mastication process provides the bacteria that ferment the mash.

Once she has mashed and diluted the *sexatsi* to a thick, lumpy paste, Maroja grates half of a *xoriti*, a purple sweet potato, into the mash. The *xoriti* tinges the

batch pink and adds sweetness to the drink. The sugars in the potato also aid the fermentation process. Maroja then covers the pot again and sets it aside to ferment. This entire process has taken Maroja a number of hours, working at a steady but unhurried pace and often diverting her attention to other tasks and activities.

Several pots of mash are usually made in quick succession and fermented as a batch. The fermentation process takes place quickly, especially on hot and sunny days. Maroja and others in her family may dip out portions of the mash during the time that it is fermenting, either eating the mash as it is, or diluting it into a partially-fermented sweet drink.

After roughly 48 hours, it is time to strain the mash. Maroja goes to the large tree stump 20 paces from her cooking hut and lifts the giant wooden vessel that she will use for the straining process. This vessel is shaped like a little canoe, and could certainly float a small child. It is about 4 feet in length, pointed at each end and about 1.5 feet wide at the center. It is roughly hewn and very thick, so it is also very heavy.

Maroja brings this vessel inside her cooking hut, maneuvering it through the low, narrow door with her older daughter's help. She then fetches a *tsiperixita*, a rectangular woven strainer which is about 1.5 feet wide on each side, and lays it across the mouth of the vessel. She brings the first pot of fermented mash, and one of her sisters and one of her daughters join her as she sits down next to the vessel. The mash has fermented so vigorously that thick pink froth is spilling over the lip of the pot. Below the thick layer of froth is a thick layer of heavy fermented mash. At the bottom is a layer of bubbly liquid, highly alcoholic and very strongly flavored.

Using a dried gourd bowl, Maroja scoops a portion of the thick fermented *sexatsi* mash onto the strainer and the three women begin to rub the mash through the strainer with their hands. Because the strainer is fairly tightly woven, this is a slow process, but effective in removing the remaining solid matter and fibers from the mash. As they work the mash through the strainer, Maroja adds another scoop. When the mash on the strainer becomes very coarse and lumpy, Maroja pours hot water on the strainer, which is massaged into the mash. The women proceed patiently, sometimes talking and mostly silent.

A woman stops at the door of Maroja's cooking hut to visit and have a look at the activities going on inside. After making eye contact with her, Maroja uncovers the pot of mash at her side and dips her gourd bowl down to the thin liquid at the bottom of the pot. She offers the bowl of strong drink to her visitor, who downs it quickly with a small grimace. When the visitor returns the bowl, Maroja does the same thing again and offers drink to the women working with her. Then she herself drinks down a bowlful and returns her attention to the work at hand. Maroja proffers the drink to each woman silently, her actions communicating her offer clearly to each of her companions. After exchanging a few words with Maroja, the visitor moves on and Maroja returns her attention to straining her *oburoxi.*

After the women have strained the whole first pot of mash, Maroja brings the next pot and they continue with that one in the same manner, and then the remaining ones. After more than two hours of work, all of the mash has been strained, and Maroja dilutes the thick mash with hot water to the brim of the canoe-like vessel. If the *oburoxi* will be drunk very soon, the mash may be left in the wooden vessel to

continue to ferment. Otherwise it is returned to the original pots, carefully covered, and set aside. Usually within hours the mash is again frothing over the sides of the pot.

The last step of preparation is to dilute the mash to a drinkable consistency. The dilution is done just before the *oburoxi* is drunk, and Maroja does this in stages, producing a gallon or so of drink at a time. The mash is still quite thick, so a relatively small amount of mash is diluted with quite a bit of water. Over the course of the feast, the consistency of the drink may vary quite a bit, depending primarily on whether Maroja wants to make her mash go further or to use it up by the end of the feast. The number of other women and girls taking *oburoxi* from the same batch of mash, and their rate of serving it, will greatly affect how much mash is available as the feast progresses, and this in turn will determine the thickness or thinness of the drink in the waning hours of the feast.

11.3 Feast chronology

The set of events that make a Nanti feast are to a significant degree very regular, or at least have been between 1997 and 2001, during which time I have been observing them. The following activities, in fact, are those that define the feast for our purposes here.

11.3.1 Clearing the *xanpo*

On most feast days, Migero picks up his machete in the early morning, heads to the *xanpo* (cleared area) at the center of the village, and begins to clear some of the

of overgrown grass. Within minutes other men have joined him. Over the course of the next quarter of an hour, all the adult men present in the village, and any teen-age boys with access to a machete, will be clearing overgrown grass. The men work steadily for an hour or so with minimal conversation, except for an occasional comment or joke.

After they have worked for a while, one of Migero's spouses or sisters will bring a large bowl of *oburoxi* to the *xanpo* and offer him a drink. After he drinks, she will offer *oburoxi* to the men working nearest to him. When the bowl is emptied, she will return to her hut. She may return with another bowl and repeat this process again. Soon, another woman will bring a big bowl of *oburoxi* for her spouse and the men working near him to drink. In this way, *oburoxi* will given to all, or nearly all, of the men working in the *xanpo*. Eventually Migero returns to his hut, and most other men disperse subsequently. At times, though, if a man has come back to the village from a daybreak trip to his chacra and joins the working group late, he will continue to clear the area near his house for some time by himself. Outside of these communal periods of labor, no one clears the *xanpo*; individual labor in the village goes instead toward clearing away growth from the area immediately surrounding one's own huts.

After clearing the *xanpo*, men return to their huts and usually drink another bowl of *oburoxi*; even by 8 am the sun can be very hot and the clearing is hard work. After a drink many men go individually to the river for a quick bath. Few adults leave the village after the *xanpo* has been cleared since feast preparations are in their final stages. During the rest of the morning, some men will gather in small groups in

each other's cooking huts to talk and laugh, others will repair arrows or weave *tsiroxi* (mesh bags). Women also gather to drink *oburoxi* and talk, or to cook, or to finish preparing their large batches of *oburoxi*. The atmosphere is convivial and one hears more voices talking and laughing than on other days. Most of this talk centers on recent happenings in peoples' lives and especially on where various people have been. Men often relate their most recent exciting or humorous hunting experiences to an appreciative audience of other men, women, and children. If several men had been out hunting together, they all tell the story together and even act out their own and the animal's movements at the most dramatic moments of the story.

11.3.2 The soccer game

If there is no rain, in the late morning one of the men will bring the soccer ball to the soccer area; this is often Tyejerina, who has stored a soccer ball in his house over the years. A few other young men or teens will join him, and they will repair the goals if they have fallen or been knocked down, which is usually the case. These activities draw the attention of other men and boys, and they gather in the playing area. Usually about 15 to 20 people participate in the game. Sometimes a young woman or teen girl will be recruited as goal-keeper if none of the boys presents himself for the job; but women and girls seem to prefer the company of other women and girls to the soccer game and so they play infrequently[58]. Those present for the game decide on the spot who will play on which side. This process can lead

[58] But then again, on few occasions I have seen an adult woman appear and join one of the teams while a game is underway, and I have also seen a few all-women games over the years. There seems to be nothing stopping women from playing except their own disinterest.

to great asymmetries in the make-up of the two teams, both in the number and skill level of the players. Sometimes players will change sides mid-game. Generally, half-way through the game the two teams and their goal-keepers change sides and switch the direction of play.

The game is played with two primary objectives: to keep the ball continuously in motion, and to kick it inside the goal. The skill with which the players play varies quite a bit; the younger men and boys who spent time in the school are able to keep better control of the ball. The players and the ball travel great distances in all directions during the game. Given the wide range of play, the goal-keepers spend long stretches of the game sitting inside the goal waiting for the ball to come near them.

All players conform to certain standards of play: kicking the ball with the feet or legs, or rebounding it with the head or torso; avoiding contact and collisions with other players; and throwing the ball back into the playing area if it goes too far out of bounds. The boundary of the playing area is unmarked, which allows players to keep the ball to stay in play as much as possible. No explicit rules are invoked, and violations of standard practice – such as blocking the ball with one's arm once in a while – may provoke laughter, but never interfere with play or draw direct criticism.

When a player kicks the ball past the goal-keeper and into the goal, the nearest players shout "gor!" and word spreads around among the players and spectators about who scored the goal: *yogorataxe* is the Nanti verb used to mean, 'he scored the goal'. The verb stem comes from the Spanish word *gol*. Likewise, the verb stem *jojig*, 'play (soccer)' comes from the Spanish verb *jugar*, 'to play'. Both of these

verbs involve the insertion of a Spanish word into a Nanti construction. These forms are found in the Matsigenka language as well; the Matsigenka schoolteacher who taught Nantis to play soccer no doubt introduced these words along with the game. During the games in the summers of 2000 and 2001, the two young men who were working on their counting skills began shouting out a number each time a goal was scored, but keeping score as such has little to do with the progress of play.

Nanti players and spectators cheer each other on quite a bit during the game, usually calling out “sintsi” to whoever has contact with the ball. *Sintsi* means ‘fast’ or ‘strong’, and in this context means, “play fast and strong!” No player’s performance is verbally evaluated negatively; a missed or wild kick, a missed goal, or a poorly defended goal, may bring good-natured laughter but no one voices criticism. Players do not acknowledge the differences in playing style as differences in ability. The most energetic players are the ones who have the most contact with the ball, and this fluctuates over the course of the game as players’ energy levels vary.

Once or twice during the game, a woman will come into the playing area and bring bowls of *oburoxi* to some of the players. This is especially welcome on sweltering hot days, as the players are running around in the full sun. The combination of exertion, play, and drink seems to catapult the participants into an exuberant state that prepares them for the rest of the feast activities.

After the game ends, most men will again visit the river for a quick bathe after the exertion of playing in the heat. For the next few hours of the afternoon, people visit each other around the village, often receiving bowls of *oburoxi* from the

women who have it to offer. At some point in the afternoon, everyone eats a substantial meal, usually of meat or fish and boiled *sexatsi*, followed by several bowls of *oburoxi*. As the afternoon wanes, more people begin to drink, and begin to consume larger quantities more rapidly. The demeanor of people in the village is becoming more animated and gregarious, and a large group of people grows in and near the huts closest to the chanting area.

11.3.3 Communal meals

An important aspect of the celebratory nature of Nanti feasting is the eating that precedes *oburoxi* drinking. While women are preparing the *oburoxi* in the days before a feast, men go on group hunting and/or fishing trips, sometimes traveling great distances in search of particular birds, animals or fish; or they arrange a group fishing party near the village to provide an especially large amount of fish for the day of the feast. The collaborative nature of these activities contrasts with the hunting and fishing activities of men that are not associated with an upcoming feast in two ways: first, men coordinate their efforts and plans, and second, the game is distributed more widely through the village and outside of family and residence group distribution patterns that guide game distribution otherwise. In addition to acquiring large quantities of game, novel patterns of food consumption accompany the feasts.

In 1997 and 1998, each feast I attended began with a communal meal in the largest open hut in the village, which faced on to the chanting area. At about noon, most men and many families converged on this hut, women bringing steaming

plates of freshly cooked *sexatsi*, and portions of boiled or smoked meat or fish. The men all sat crowded together on the raised floor of the hut, and the women and some children sat on cane mats on the ground next to the hut. Dishes of food were placed by the women in the center of the circle of men, and everyone helped himself from the dishes. Women and children shared other plates of food in smaller groups, and when the men had finished eating, what remained from their dishes was eaten by still-hungry youngsters or taken back by the woman who had provided it.

During my stays in Montetoni in 1999 and 2000, I witnessed no community meals. Rather, successful group hunting and fishing trips led to the sharing of raw meat and fish around the village, which each household or residence group cooked and ate in private before gathering to drink *oburoxi*.[59]

In 2001, however, two of the three feasts I attended began with a communal meal in front of Migero's hut. Like the meals in 1997 and 1998, nearly all of the adult men present in the village gathered and sat together in something like a circle, but sat on cane mats on the ground since Migero's hut is walled and small. Some women and children sat on mats on one side of the circle, but many women did not join the group; instead, after bringing a dish of *sexatsi* and fish to her spouse, most women returned to their own huts and ate in smaller groups there. When Migero went around the village and called villagers together for these two meals, he was dressed in his newest clothes, and in addition to saying, "asexatenpa", 'we will eat', he also said "apatojita", 'we will meet together'. Perhaps his announcement, which indexed his intention to make a speech before the meal, marked the occasion as

[59] See sections 5.3 through 5.5 for a discussion of food consumption and semiotics.

oriented toward the men of the community; certainly 'speech-making' is an activity carried out by very few individuals, and only men. In any case, a small number of women were present for the speech or after it for the meal. At the end of the meal, many women walked back and forth between their huts and the group with portions of *oburoxi* to share with the group.

The emerging genre of the 'presidential speech' in Montetoni is fascinating in its own right, and I can only briefly outline it here. Communal meals that I have attended in Montetoni have almost always included a presidential speech by Migero. I do not know if Migero makes speeches like these when Lev and I are not present; but I believe that the interactional configuration of one person speaking monologically to a silent assembled group is unique to this setting. Over the years, Migero's oratorical skills have developed dramatically. When performing these speeches in 1997 and 1998 he was visibly nervous, often stumbling in his words. In contrast, in 2001 he performed these speeches confidently, eloquently, and even with touches of humor at times. Migero's presidential speech style seems to be based on the speeches Silverio often made to the community when he called *asambleas* (community meetings) and adheres to similar themes, including the benefits and obligations of community life.

It is primarily in these speeches that Migero enacts his role of *peresetente* and speaks on behalf of the whole village. When speaking he addresses the entire assembled group, but he directs many of his statements and requests toward Lev, who is expected to make a speech in reply after Migero finishes. The primary topics Migero directs toward Lev are what villagers want and need, both politically and

materially. His approach to these topics is characterized by two types of request. First, he requests and expects that we do specific things for the community, including providing goods and healthcare each time we return to Montetoni. Second, he requests and expects that when we leave, we will carry his message on behalf of Montetoni to the people downriver that have an interest in or relationship with the village.

Though presidential speeches seem to be a somewhat awkward genre for Nantis in Montetoni because they are unlike mundane Nanti interaction in so many ways, Migero at least clearly recognizes their political utility. When he addresses an assembled group concerning issues that affect everyone present, his speech provides everyone with equal access to his words on their behalf. These words can be quoted, or they can be contested, but in either case his words become part of the shared history of the village as a community.

11.3.4 The chanting begins

In the late afternoon, usually around 4 o'clock, two or three men will enter the chanting area, join hands, and begin to chant. They begin moving slowly and chanting relatively quietly. Gradually, other men join this short line and as the line lengthens, the pace of both chanting and movement increases. Before dark, nearly all the men present in the village are in this line, each end of the line tapering off with younger and smaller boys.

Usually 20 to 30 minutes after the men’s line has formed, a short women’s line will form. Two or three women join hands and approach the men’s line, facing the

men at the center of the men's line. As the men's line winds around the chanting area, the women's line winds in parallel. If the men's line is very long and energetic and the women's line is much shorter, the women's line often must navigate reactively to avoid colliding with the men. While the men's line can reach 40 participants, the women's line usually has around 10 women and girls.

During this early stage of the chanting, the other primary activity is drinking *oburoxi*. Although all participants have been drinking prior to beginning to chant, much larger quantities are consumed once people have joined the line. As soon as the line forms, women who have made batches of *oburoxi* fill small pots or bowls with the drink, pick up a cup or small drinking gourd and approach the chant lines. Beginning with the first person at one end of the line, each woman proceeds from one to the next, skipping none, filling the drinking vessel from the pot and giving *oburoxi* to the chanters. The chanters, of course, have each hand tightly clasped to their neighbors' hands, so the woman raises the drinking vessel to each person's mouth and with a deft duck, the chanter stops chanting and downs the *oburoxi*.

A Nanti would describe the scene by saying, "oxitatiri inpo oxitatiro", "she filled him up with *oburoxi,* then she filled her up with *oburoxi*". The verb complex uses the verb stem *xita,* 'to fill up', in its transitive form, with a pronominal suffix, *ri,* him, or *ro,* her, to indicate who is being filled up. The transitive form of the verb stem *xita* is primarily used during feasting to describe this specific act of sharing portions of *oburoxi* among chanters.

As the feast progresses during the first few hours, and as the feasters become more engaged in the chant line, their movements become more energetic and

unrestrained. Often during these first hours of the feast, participants will draw others into the line from among the spectators or those sitting and conversing near the chant lines. People almost never refuse these invitations; perhaps this reflects the knowledge individuals have about a person's intention or desire to participate or not in any given feast. For example, when Aran, usually a central participant in all feast activities, was sick for a few weeks, both he and his spouse largely withdrew from feast preparations and activities and were left in peace by the feasters when they dropped by to watch for a while. Only when they each engaged themselves again as active feast participants were they acknowledged as such.

The men's line will usually reach its largest size after two hours or so, and eventually the men in the center of the line will begin to run around the feasting area. The participants at the ends of the line – usually young boys – will be yanked around mercilessly by the undulations of the line and the level of hilarity among all the participants grows. The women's line begins to run around the feasting area as well. This energy level is sustained for a little while, but inevitably a long chant line cannot hold together, and two people will be pulled apart by the movements of the line. These two will rejoin hands, but then shortly another pair will be pulled apart. Eventually a pair of participants do not rejoin hands and the long line fragments into two or three shorter lines. Once the long line has fragmented, division according to the sexes dissolves and participants join which ever line they choose or are drawn into by other participants.

Throughout the course of a feast, participants may join then leave then join the chant lines. People leave the line to rest, to *xamoso* friends or family members, and

to attend to other personal concerns. Sometimes 'regular' spoken conversations go on during the feast, among spectators or resting participants. Feasting does not necessarily prevent interactional activities that could occur outside the feast. This is the primary communicative asymmetry between feasts and non-feasts; one does not chant during mundane conversation, but one may have a mundane conversation while a feast is going on. In an important sense, though, interactions that go on during a feast are framed by the feasting activities.

11.3.5 Chanting and drinking through the night and into the morning

During the rest of the course of the feast, there will be two, three, or four chant lines moving around the *xanpo*. Although there are a few prominent individuals who will usually start the nucleus of the first men's and women's lines, the composition of the chant lines is otherwise largely unpredictable. Some participants seem to have preferences for holding certain other individuals' hands; in particular, in the early evening the most prominent men usually hold each other's hands and are at the center of the line[60]. But no overt constraints operate to determine who can or cannot hold any other individual's hand, and one can often observe quite surprising combinations of individuals in the chant lines: people who otherwise have very little interaction with one another, due to age or residence group, will end up hand in hand while chanting. Because feasters frequently break from the line to drink, urinate, or go the river, the configuration of each line is continuously in flux. Also,

[60] This formation is the result of the most enthusiastic chanters beginning to form a chant line together rather than the result of the insistence of 'prominent' men that they hold the hands of other

the short chant lines often close into a circle; therefore there is no 'end' to the line, and joining participants must break in to the circle at some point. The cumulative effect of all of these factors is to put a large number of people in close contact with each other during the course of a feast.

As the feast develops, to *xita* chanters can become very difficult. If the line is moving fast; if the line has become a closed circle; if the participants are chanting very vigorously and are unwilling to stop for a drink, or are already very intoxicated; or if a chanter chooses to chant at length at the woman herself, a woman may spend several minutes to *xita* one person. A woman *xita*-ing a line of chanters never skips anyone, no matter how long this takes; she continues to maneuver or simply wait until her goal of getting the portion of *oburoxi* swallowed has been attained. A woman may, though, give participants larger or smaller portions depending on their age and will give some men two drinks in a row. After one entire line, the woman will move on to *xita* another entire line, then *xita* the rest of the chanters, then any spectators, and even people who are sitting in their own huts if she happens to pass by them. Once her pot of *oburoxi* is empty, she returns to refill it from the batch she has helped make.

All the women who have participated in making a batch of *oburoxi* are free to *xita* among the feasters, and sometimes other women will *xita* from a batch they didn't participate in making if there is need or opportunity. After a long period of fermentation, *oburoxi* becomes sour and pungent, and unpleasant to drink. Perhaps

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'prominent' men. Again, we see here that a person's 'prominence' is partly a result of his or her enthusiasm and sociability during feasts.

as a result of the drink's perishability, efforts are made to consume all of the *oburoxi* made for a feast, and these efforts are usually successful.

The consumption of *oburoxi* is greatest in the evening and night. During the first five or six hours of the feast, there are usually several women *xita*-ing other feasters at any one time. As the feast progresses, though, the number of women participating in the chant lines increases and the number *xita*-ing *oburoxi* decreases. As the night continues, drinking tapers off, and in the wee hours of the night, long stretches of time pass when no one is bringing *oburoxi* to the chanters. During these stretches sometimes a chant line will actually go to a hut looking for *oburoxi*, or a man or child will bring a container of drink to *xita* the line. In the morning hours, when many women rejoin the feasting after having slept or cared for children or other family members, a number of women will again walk around the village to *xita* other feasters. But again, these women soon end up joining the chant lines. A woman who usually participates in chant lines but is in a very advanced stage of pregnancy will often participate in the feast by *xita*-ing *oburoxi* consistently throughout the feast, chanting with and to the lines enthusiastically but consuming very little herself. In this way she may participate without engaging in the physically challenging activities of the chant lines and without becoming intoxicated.

Once the feast is well underway, children will often form their own chant lines set apart from the adults, and young girls will get a drinking vessel and a small pot of *oburoxi* from their household's batch and *xita* this line. During nearly every feast one will see parallel feasts in miniature, with eight or ten children under the age of

ten exactly replicating the activities of the adults. The children are free to drink as much or as little *oburoxi* as they want during the feasts.

Feasting can be a messy affair, especially if it is or has been raining. Feasters always end up with *oburoxi* spilled, spat, or vomited on them, and if it has been raining they will end up covered with mud as well. Thus trips to the river to bathe are a common event during the course of a feast. Usually groups of three or four people go to the river together for a quick dip. They do not undress, but rather just tumble into the water to rinse themselves and dunk their heads. Often times, they don't stop chanting except when underwater.

The large amount of *oburoxi* that feasters drink leads to frequent urination. Men simply step a few feet away from the feasting area and turn their back to others to urinate. Sometimes a whole section of a line will stop simultaneously to urinate and the rest of the line will stand by and wait for them, continuing to chant. Women are a bit more discreet unless they are very intoxicated, and will duck behind a hut or into the grassy margin to urinate. Since all women wear skirts, they are able to urinate very discreetly even in full view.

These ways of attending to personal physical needs – bathing in a group, even hand-in-hand; and relieving oneself in the company of a group – contrast dramatically with Nanti ways of attending to personal needs outside of the feast. While Nanti couples or parents and children will often accompany each other to the river to bathe, bathing itself is an individual activity done quite discreetly by adults. A Nanti person often does not even announce his or her intention to relieve him or herself much less invite company along.

Once feasting has begun in earnest, and participants are beginning to show signs of intoxication, older women begin to pay close attention to the movements of other feasters. No matter how intoxicated these women are themselves, certain women always take upon themselves the role of guardian during feasts. They allow no one to wander out of their sight alone during the feast, so any person who leaves the *xanpo* has at least one person to accompany her or him. Especially very late at night and on moonless nights, the more sober women are very vigilant of the movements of other feasters. As the feast progresses, of course, the number of participants who remain involved and awake *and* sober becomes very small, so efforts at caretaking one another become much more a kindness and less an actually safety measure. But three staggering individuals locked arm-in-arm are less likely to fall down and be injured than one lone staggering person. In truth, the feasters' abilities to remain upright and mobile despite serious intoxication are really impressive. This practice of caretaking does ensure that individuals are rarely alone while intoxicated, even if the whole group is in an altered state.

A frequent occurrence for most feasters is vomiting. Participants consume enormous quantities of *oburoxi* very quickly, and eventually the stomach fills up and rejects the next drink[61]. Most of the time, the feaster will step out of the line to vomit at the margin of the *xanpo*, but as the feast intensifies and the participants become more intoxicated their efforts to vomit away from the line diminish. The vomit is just undigested *oburoxi*; most people do not drink heavily immediately

[61] Rather than experiencing nausea, as one drinks one experiences a more and more pressing sensation of fullness until one simply overflows. Far from being unpleasant, this sort of vomiting has a elevating, cathartic effect. See section 12 for more discussion of the sensory experience of feasting.

after eating, so the only liquid in the stomach is *oburoxi*. The village chickens are always present on the scene during daylight hours, and very eagerly clean up the ground. As a result, the feasters make a huge mess that is already gone by the end of the feast.

Feasters have no negative reaction at all to vomiting, either their own or others'. Over the course of the feast, feasters' faces, feet, and clothing become covered with *oburoxi*, some of which has spent a little time in a stomach. As already mentioned, feasters will make trips to the river in small groups, to clean themselves and their clothing.

After numerous hours of vigorous drinking, chanting, and dancing, many feasters will eventually reach something like an unconscious state. Although they are still upright in a chant line, clasped to two other feasters, their movements have become slow and uncoordinated, their chanting has become incoherent and their eyes are often shut. In this state, though, most feasters do not wish to stop participating, and will resist efforts of the chant line to separate from them. Either the person will eventually completely pass out and crumple to the ground, or someone will procure some *oburoxi* which is force-fed to the semi-unconscious person until he or she completely passes out. Once the person is motionless, a few other members of the chant line will carry him home, or at least to a cane mat on the ground nearby. Depending on the stamina of the person, he or she will recover and return to the line within minutes or sleep for a while before returning to the feast.

Although the number of chanters may decrease to twenty or thirty in the wee hours of the night, chanting never stops throughout the night unless there is a very

severe storm, and a great many individuals will come and go from the chant lines as their physical state permits during the course of the night. As the sun rises, many feasters will arise from a few hours' sleep and return to the chant lines, and often most of the village will be involved in the feast during the first several hours of the day. By late morning, though, exhaustion begins to overtake many feasters, and the number of participants will drop off substantially as afternoon approaches. The last chanters have usually fallen silent by noon. The latest I have seen a feast end is 3 in the afternoon.

11.3.6 After the chanting and drinking stops

After the chanting has stopped and all of the feasters have gone off to sleep, the village is very quiet. Few people are awake and even fewer are moving around. A few adults may have discreetly gone to their chacras earlier in the morning and will not return until late afternoon, and the children who are awake will have left the village center to play in the river or in the nearby forest. The rest of the day is still and quiet as people sleep.

At around 4 or 5 in the afternoon, the feasters begin to stir. Pairs or trios of hoarse and bleary-eyed Nantis will drift to the river to bathe and wash their feast-covered clothes. If still intoxicated, people will wash themselves and their clothes without removing the clothes. Sober people[62] will undress and wash themselves and their clothes separately in the usual way. A small number of people will *xamoso*

[62] If Nanti feasters experience anything like a 'hangover' they do not comment on it. I have never heard a person say they felt unwell, had a headache, or considered their physical state after a feast to

around the village, checking on the state of friends and family and listening to any commentary that might emerge from the recent activities. Little is said about the feasts afterwards, though; and most villagers have already seen or heard first-hand any unusual goings-on. After a few evening hours of socializing, the village again falls quiet as people return to sleep.

11.4 The days between feasts

The next day is even more quiet than usual in the village. Most families stay around the village socializing and eating, physically recuperating from the intensity of their activities. Many people's voices are still quite hoarse, their feet are a bit swollen and sore, and any cuts or strains are at their worst.

By the following day, however, all day-to-day activities are back in full swing. Many women and men leave the village at daybreak to work in their chacras, harvesting and planting produce. Small hunting and fishing parties will go out for the day, men will go out in a group to clear a new chacra, women will begin a new weaving or spinning project. Many people will come back to the village with firewood, since two full days have passed since getting wood.

The next three or four days are very much like this one, as villagers attend to their material needs. Usually at least one family group will go on an overnight fishing trip during the week, either upriver on the Xamisuja, across to the Serato (the Río Manu Chico) to the east, or the Sagontojari to the west. During the dry season, a large group of men may work together over a few days to dam a small

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be unpleasant. The day after a feast ends are definitely days of minimal activity, however, during

spur of the river and all their families will spend the next day catching the trapped fish. In these several days, most Nanti spend much of their time away from the village, in their chacras, in the forest, or at the river.

During these three or four days, women will again begin *oburoxi* production for the next feast, and about six to nine days after the last feast, the next feast will begin.

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which people rest and recover from the feast.

Section 12. The multi-sensory experience of feasting

As I have suggested elsewhere, the participant's experience of feasting is a multi-sensory one. While certain elements of the feasts can be separated out to be discussed as discrete forms and activities, this is *not* to imply that these elements *are* separable. Rather, feasting is a complex physical experience in which simultaneous activities combine to create a unique state of being in the participants. At the same time, specific elements of feasting are especially instrumental in creating the transformed state that many feasters attain. It is the combination of chanting, being part of a chant line, intoxication from *oburoxi*, sleep deprivation, and the darkness of the night that makes the experience of the feast unique unto itself and leads the feaster to an altered state of being.

Upon joining a chant line, the individual becomes part of a moving entity much larger than herself. Feasters clasp hands tightly, often entwining their forearms to make a solid bond between them. In the early hours of the feast, the movements of the line are fairly predictable, and individuals have little trouble maintaining their balance as the line moves. But as the feast progresses and feasters become more intoxicated and entranced, the movements of the line as a whole become more erratic. This is especially so when the two ends of the line join to form a circle, which happens often. The feaster must hold on to her neighbors tightly to stay upright and remain a part of the group. The movement of the group as a whole combines the movements of the individual feasters, and thus supercedes them much

of the time; no one person is guiding the movement of the group, but rather the group is moving as a continuation of its previous motion.

Once the chanting has begun, it is usually continuous until the end of the feast some 18 to 20 hours later. During the first few hours of the feast male participants form a single large chant line and female participants form a smaller parallel line. At this stage, all feasters chant together; that is, everyone is chanting the same formula, and when someone begins to chant a different formula, the rest of the participants change to this formula as well. Once the two first chant lines break apart into smaller, mixed-sex lines, each line takes its own course of chant formulae, and participants in any one line chant together, but people do not coordinate their chanting with other lines. At this point, *xarintaa* is also performed by many feasters simultaneously. Because there are usually several shorter lines chanting at the same time, the chanting in the village is unceasing for the duration of the feast.[63]

The continuous sound of chanting in the village together with the intensity of the chanting within the chant lines has a powerful effect on participants. The formulae are relatively short, and are often repeated hundreds of times in a row. The steady, rhythmic repetition of the formula, and of *xarintaa* in the same metrical and tonal pattern as the formula, is as intoxicating to feasters as the *oburoxi* is. And yet because feasters do not chant in unison most of the time, they are surrounded by the continuous sound of blended voices. Simultaneously, the individual is producing a highly repetitive sound sequence and listening to many other sequences of sounds, similar to but different from her own voice.

At the same time, each feaster is consuming *oburoxi*, a mildly alcoholic beverage, throughout the course of the feast, and usually consuming it in vast quantities. The quantity of *oburoxi* one consumes results in the consumption of quite a bit of alcohol, which leads to intoxication (Nantis say, “nosinxitaxa”, “I was intoxicated”). It also results in quite a bit of vomiting (“noxamaranxaxe”, “I vomited”), which has a purifying, cathartic effect on the body.[64]

Many feast participants chant and drink as part of a chant line for hours at a time. During the early hours of the feast the enthusiasm of the participants is continually building, and they become louder and more animated with each passing hour. It is in the early hours of darkness, between about 7 and 11 pm, that the feast is usually at its peak, with the largest number of participants, the most voluble chanting, the most creative, communicative and referentially meaning-full *xarintaa*, and the most dynamic and energetic chant lines.

Once night falls, the feasters are enveloped in darkness. Even on nights with a bright full moon, when one can visually recognize other people in the moonlight, feasters’ ability to see is greatly reduced. And on nights of a new moon or heavy clouds, the feasts go on in complete darkness. The light from cooking fires in the huts at the margins of the feast or from the occasional burning brand someone carries makes the visual scene more disorienting, not less so. During many hours of

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[63] Though individual feasters may start and stop and start again numerous times throughout the feast, the activity in general is uninterrupted.

[64] Many Matsigenkas (the indigenous group geographically and linguistically closest to the Nanti) use a medicinal plants to induce vomiting for its purifying effect (Shepard 1999: 101). Although Nantis use no such medicinal plants, they seem to have a similar conception of vomiting as a cleansing of the body.

the feast, then, participants must rely on their senses of hearing, smell, and touch, and their knowledge of their surroundings to guide their physical actions.

As a result of all of these simultaneous activities and stimuli, participating fully in a feast is very physically demanding. And yet most feasters participate throughout the night and on into the following day with very little rest and almost no sleep. On a non-feast night in the village, everyone retires to their huts by the time night falls, and the village is nearly silent by 7 o'clock. Although individuals don't usually sleep the entire night through and one might hear the soft murmurs of conversation at any hour, people rarely leave their huts during the night. A night in the village that is not a feast night is characterized by calm, stillness, and silence.

During a feast night, lack of sleep combines with the great increase in activity level during the night hours and contributes substantially to the altered state of being feasters attain during the feasts. And yet the stamina Nantis have to continue feasting is remarkable; brief periods of rest during the feast are sufficient for most adults to renew their energy for another few hours of feasting. Chant lines almost never stop moving and the lines often run around and across the *xanpo.* Many Nantis are on their feet and moving for six or eight or more hours without rest. And yet exhaustion does not overtake many of the feasters until later in the following day. Clearly, Nantis are incredibly motivated to continue feasting to the limits of their physical capabilities. What is it that is so worthwhile?

One simple answer to this question is that feasting *feels good*. Feasting is both an intensely social and an intensely individual sensory experience. Participants both feel and feel together, sharing and expressing powerful emotions with one another.

Thomas Turino has discussed the fascinating question of why music is full of "emotional power" (Turino 1999: 221) in so many human societies. The answer he gives is that music and other forms of expressive culture have a "specific semiotic character…which make them particularly affective and direct ways of knowing" (*ibid:* 221). Developing a theory of semiosis based on the work of Charles Peirce, Turino observes that "[m]usic involves signs *of* feeling and experience rather than the types of mediational signs that are *about* something else." (*ibid:* 224) He follows Edward Hall in identifying "rhythmic synchrony – moving and/or sounding together – [as] key to the way dicent-indices create actual experience of social identity, unity, and participation". (*ibid:* 241; citing Hall 1977)[65] Turino's analysis of music provides insight into *how* Nanti chanting and feasting transform the fundamental nature of interaction among feasters. Feasting is not *about* community – it *is* community, creating an 'actual experience of social identity, unity, and participation'. Feasting is an intensely pleasurable, powerful semiotic activity that individuals collaborate in creating, each feast endures in their shared historical memory, and it a shared experience that Nantis repeat over and over again.

[65] A dicent "is a sign which is understood to represent its object in respect to actual existence…Dicent-indices are among the most direct and convincing sign types because they are interpreted as being real, true, or natural." (Turino 1999: 229, following C.S. Peirce)

Section 13. Inside and outside the feast: a concise comparison

At this point I will summarize key elements of feasting in relation to the activities of the rest of the week. I have two motivations in doing so: to demonstrate how these spheres of activity contrast with one another, and more significantly, how they complement one another from the point of view of a *system* of communicative practices.

Table 13a. Inside and outside the feast

Inside the feast	***Outside the feast***
Verbal behavior	
loud, boisterous talk	quiet talk
most interaction in public spaces	little or no interaction in public spaces
explicit opinions, criticisms expressed	no explicit opinions, criticisms expressed
chanting	no chanting
joking, teasing in public spaces	no joking, no teasing in public spaces
loud effusive laughter and hilarity in shared spaces	little laughter and no hilarity in shared spaces
Use of physical space	
people inhabit and fill up public spaces	people only pass through public spaces
men labor together in the *xanpo*	no labor in the *xanpo*
men fish and/or hunt in large groups to provide *sima* and/or *ibatsa* for all villagers	men fish and/or hunt alone or in groups of two or three to provide for family or residence group members
village-wide fishing parties in the river near to the village on the day(s) prior to feasting	no village-wide fishing parties
Physical behavior	
adults hold hands and move around as a group	adults do not hold hands
adults have substantial physical contact with each other, especially in chant lines	almost no physical contact between adults
demonstrations of affection among adults in public spaces	no demonstrations of affection among adults in public spaces

intoxication in public spaces	no intoxication in public spaces
village-wide soccer games	soccer is rarely played, and if it is played by small groups or boys
individuals sit, lie, and sleep where ever their feasting activities take them	individuals visit others for relatively brief periods and only sleep inside their own huts
urination in the company of others	urination is done discreetly by lone individuals
vomiting in the company of others	no vomiting in public spaces
Social interactions	
villagers coordinate their activities and place themselves in the company of others in public spaces across residence group lines	villagers coordinate their activities among their family or residence group and do not seek out others' company in public spaces
oburoxi is shared all around the village by the women and girls who made it	*oburoxi* is drunk inside cooking huts by individuals or small groups - no expectation
any person may expect to drink any *oburoxi* available in public spaces	individuals are given portions of *oburoxi* by the woman who made it entirely at her discretion or at the invitation of her spouse
open sharing of uncooked food, primarily *sima* and *ibatsa*, across residence group lines	discreet sharing of uncooked food among family and residence groups
open sharing of prepared food, primarily *sima* and *ibatsa*, across residence group lines	discreet sharing of prepared food among family and residence group members

This summary foregrounds the salient distinction between the social groups in which Nantis presently interact inside and outside the feast. While most activities during the rest of the week are bounded by the family and/or residence group, virtually all activities during feasting take the entire community as the meaningful group. A pattern emerges here: communicative practices that are appropriate among family and residence group members differ from those that are appropriate among community members in Montetoni.

I wish to call this pattern a *communicative ecology*. At different meaningful and distinct levels of social organization, different systems of semiotic action and communication are employed. These systems of communication are integrated into a larger system of social activities carried out within the village, but these systems

can not be collapsed into one another. Rather, different actions motivated by different goals belong to these different systems, and these systems together form the whole of lived experience within this communicative ecosystem.

Section 14. Emergent aspects of feasting

This study discusses Nanti feasting practices and offers descriptions of events that I have witnessed in Montetoni since 1997. I have addressed the common activities and patterns that run through all the feasts that I have attended. But it is crucial always to bear in mind that these practices *began* at roughly that time and have developed and changed in important ways since then. In fact, perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Nanti feasts is their emergent nature.

14.1 Antecedents of contemporary feasting practices

The origins of contemporary Nanti feasting in past practices are not clear. Many Nantis claim that they never 'chanted' before living in Montetoni and some claim that they did not drink (or make) *oburoxi* either. Other Nantis have said that they drank a little *oburoxi*, or chanted on occasion, but these reports were inconsistent even among family members. What has been consistent, though, are Nanti characterizations of *oburoxi*-drinking and chanting on the Xamisuja as unlike anything they knew on the Tinpija. Any previous practices of *oburoxi*-drinking or chanting, then, were of a very different type from contemporary practices.

Since Nantis do not refer to the set of events I call feasting by with a single term, it has been difficult to formulate specific questions and receive specific answers about similar sets of activities in the past; therefore, I can not presently speak directly to the historical precedents for feasts as a unified phenomenon. Based on the information I have gathered thus far, however, it seems that the present-day

residents of Montetoni whose families lived in and migrated from the Manu region to the east of the Xamisuja had or had seen practices most similar to contemporary feasts, while the families who previously lived furthest up the Tinpija did not have nor witness practices like these.

It is clear that *oburoxi* was never prepared and consumed in vast quantities prior to the formation of Montetoni, for two important reasons. First, no one had the large vessels necessary for its preparation. The infusion of large metal pots into the community has paralleled the increase in *oburoxi* production, both in quantity and frequency. Many of the newest large pots in the village are presently only used for *oburoxi* production and are kept glisteningly clean by their owners. At present, there are also three huge wooden vessels in Montetoni, which are used for straining and diluting *oburoxi* mash; these vessels are shared around among the households making large batches of drink.[66]

Second, prior to living on the Xamisuja, Nanti chacras were much smaller and the quantity of *sexatsi* cultivated was much smaller as well. Nanti men still talk of the hard labor involved when they cleared their chacras using broken stones before leaving the Tinpija. As Bixotoro explained to us, chacras had to be situated relatively near to the river's edge where the plant growth was relatively sparse and the land could be cleared most easily. Because of the hardship of cultivation with crude tools, and the vulnerability of these chacras to flooding from the river, *sexatsi*

[66] In 1995, I saw none of these large wooden vessels in Montetoni. Their manufacture requires the use of an axe, so it is unlikely that Nantis used such vessels prior to acquiring axes in Montetoni.

was much more scarce, and as such was not available in plentiful enough quantities to make the large batches of *oburoxi* made now in Montetoni.

In striking contrast to the days on the Tinpija, most Nanti families now have very large chacras, and some even have two chacras. At present, many hectares of land are producing *sexatsi,* far in excess of what is villagers require for subsistence. Because men also regularly clear land for new chacras, and women consistently plant new *sexatsi* plants each time they harvest *sexatsi*, it seems likely that large quantities of *sexatsi* will continue to be cultivated and consumed in Montetoni – much of it as *oburoxi* during feasts.

14.2 A theory of emergence

Contemporary Nanti feasting practices manifest Raymond Williams' concept of "emergent culture", in which "new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences are continually being created" (Williams 1980: 41). It is largely through feasting practices that novel perspectives on experience are brought by individuals into public discourse and made available to be integrated into the group's shared understandings.

The crucial point that Williams makes and that I wish to take up is the fundamentally processual nature of the relations between existing 'dominant' forms of culture and 'new feelings, new meanings, and new values' that confront them. Williams suggests that cultural forms serve to 'make sense' of lived experience and that 'dominant cultures' select certain meanings and practices for emphasis, neglecting and excluding others. I disagree with his presentation of culture itself as

agentive (*ibid:* 40-41); rather I propose that practitioners of cultural forms select certain meanings and evaluative stances for emphasis in the process of making sense of lived experience. Williams point out that new meanings and practices are often introduced to and then incorporated into existing meanings and practices in a social group (a 'culture') through art forms, including poetry, song, and dance. He stresses that one must consider the social conditions surrounding the production of art forms as their most salient aspect, not the resulting object or entity (the 'text' of performance theory).

Williams' argument is intended to construct a less static and more accurate Marxist analysis of social relations in capitalist societies – a position that I do not wish to attempt to translate into Nanti social relations. In particular, Williams' use of the concept of 'hegemony', in which the structural relations of production favored by some members of social group are imposed on other members, does not make sense in the small and minimally-stratified subsistence-oriented Nanti communities. But Williams' more general inquiry into the *processes* by which existing social structures come to incorporate novel activities, relationships, and expectations is as highly relevant on the Xamisuja as it is anywhere else. Nanti individuals strive to realize their material needs and desires within the ever-changing limits of their understanding of possibilities for action. It is in this sense that a theory of emergent culture can provide insight into Nanti social practices.

Nanti feasts have emergent qualities in two senses. First, the performance of each feast as a whole emerges from the activities and goals of community members interacting with and reacting to each other, and as a result each feast is both like and

unlike any other feast that preceded it. Second, the performance of each individual during any particular feast emerges from a generalized set of principles for participation but reflects the current state of being and communicative goals of that individual. While these observations of change in individual and group practice over time are not novel, they are crucial to understanding each Nanti feast as a dynamic expression of Nanti conceptions of the present and future rather than simply as a repetition of a static cultural form.

Each time they feast together, participants create, alter, and involve themselves in social relations anew. Feasting is overtly collaborative and cooperative. I assert that in feasting, Nanti individuals are foregrounding their conceptions of themselves and others as social, sociable agents, making available to others through their chanting and other feasting behaviors their stance(s) toward unfolding events and discourses. In turn, other individuals are acknowledging and taking up (or not) the new stances introduced by other feasters. While Nanti feasters have no predictive ability to know what will result from their feasting activities, they can and do act with intention toward one another. Grounding their actions in their understandings of shared experiences, including previous feasts, they enact their membership in their community.

Within the general structure of the event, actual happenings vary substantially from one feast to another, and over time certain significant aspects of the general structure of feasting have changed. However, certain basic, unchanging elements of every feast have continued up to this point: the preparation and sharing of *oburoxi* between households; the chant lines; and the chanting itself. Specific details, such as

who makes *oburoxi*; who distributes it; who initiates the chant lines and at what time; who participates in the chant lines and for how long; and which chants are chosen, when, and by whom; all vary from feast to feast. But the entire process of creating each feast anew is a collaborative and organic one. No one declares what will happen or when it will happen; individuals simply begin to act and other individuals join them. From these actions and reactions, new patterns can emerge; in these patterns, feasters may find new meaning.

14.2 Recent emergences

Describing two of the more obvious novel feasting practices that I observed during my research in 2001 will illuminate the ever-emerging nature of feasting. While the first set of events was unpleasant for everyone involved, the second set proved quite interesting and enjoyable. Both were quite unexpected.

14.2.1 Acting on anger

In the late morning of the second day of the feast held on June 30 and July 1, a shocking event occurred. A man and both of his spouses were participating in the feast. One of his spouses was at that time *xita*-ing one of the chant lines. Lev and I were sitting in our hut watching the activities. As we watched, the man's temper exploded toward his spouse and he began to strike her violently, knocking her down and then attempting to drag her across the *xanpo.* After several minutes, she ran from him. He followed her and they both disappeared from view.

After some minutes, the man came to us. The man expressed his anger that his spouse had refused to *xita* him in the same manner that she was *xita*-ing the other chanters. He explained that before we had arrived, she had 'run away' from him and had been staying with her brother. He quoted her chanting that she didn't want him anymore, but protested that he did not want her to leave him for another man. He explained earnestly that he had not gotten angry and hit her *xogapage*, 'for no reason', but because she had openly refused to *xita* him and had chanted that she would not give him *oburoxi*.

After some more minutes, the woman came to our hut. The man tried unsuccessfully to make her leave and not speak to us, but she held her ground. For the next little while, they argued with one another, mostly by speaking their points of view to us. She did not deny that she had not been *xita*-ing him, but she did deny that she had chanted or said that she wanted another man.

The complex set of events that led to their fight are too numerous to explore here, and many of the events that caused their anger preceded my arrival in the village, so I do not understand entirely what had happened. The point I wish to make is that for the first time[67], a man expressed his anger physically during a feast and struck his spouse violently in the public space of the *xanpo*.

During his explanations to us, he reassured us that he would never do such a thing again, and he told us, "jara pinxantero xaseta", 'you will not play this *xaseta*

[67] I believe that this was the first time anything like this had happened in Montetoni, certainly in such a public manner. This was the first time I had ever witnessed physical violence in the *xanpo* and everyone I saw who had also witnessed this event was visibly upset by it. In fact, during the subsequent discussion in our hut, the man's sister sat near me weeping silently – only the second time I have ever seen a Nanti adult cry.

(recording)'. He also justified his reaction based on his spouses actions and said to Lev, 'had *Xurisita* (Chris) refused to *xita* you, perhaps you would have done the same thing.'[68]

This display of violence, which took place in the center of the *xanpo,* was very upsetting to many villagers. While the couple were with us in our hut, a large number of other feasters joined us to hear what was said. The man also attempted unsuccessfully to exhort them to leave and not listen. Several people asked us before and after the incident if we had seen what happened, and said that the man had been angry with the woman because she refused to *xita* her spouse. One man observed, "tera paniro onxite onti maganiro oxitaxe", 'she only did not *xita* one person, she should *xita* everyone.'[69]

Separate from the outcome of this incident between the man and woman, the outcome for the community remains to be seen. This event took place during the last feast we attended, only a week before our departure from Montetoni. During that intervening week, the woman stayed in her cooking hut almost continuously and the man spent almost all of every day out of the village. So for at least that week, their behavior both toward each other and toward the rest of the villagers was markedly different.

It is my hope that the man will keep his pledge, 'I will not do this again', and that neither he nor any other man will act so violently toward another person during a feast. But the possibility is there; a new historical fact emerged in those moments

[68] Out of respect for his request that I not 'play the *xaseta'*, I will not include his or his spouses name here, nor will I include a transcript from that recording.

[69] This is not a literal gloss but a free translation based on the context of the utterance.

that may be repeated in the future. The limits of possibility in Montetoni changed on that day.

14.2.2 *atsi noxemisanti,* 'so, I will listen'

Another significant change took place on June 25, 2001, at the feast prior to the one described above. A young man, Oras, mistakenly believed that Bisarota had pushed a woman, Serina, down in their chant line. (Later, both Bisarota and Serina explained that she had simply tripped and fallen.) Oras responded to this happening with a *xarintaa* to Bisarota that he would not take Bisarota's medicine.

Early in the morning Bisarota came to us, visibly upset, and reported what had occurred and what Oras had chanted in his *xarintaa.* We spoke with him at length about Oras' words and he expressed his concern about Oras challenging him as *gotirorira,* 'knower of medicine'. He reassured us that he had not knocked Serina down and wanted to continue to take care of all sick villagers including Oras. After we conversed a while, Bisarota calmed down and eventually left our hut.

Not too long after this, he returned and Oras came along behind him. Apparently, Bisarota had told Migero and Oras that he had spoken with us and, as always, we had made a *xaseta* (recording) of our conversation. This had greatly alarmed Migero. Migero expressed his concern that Oras' words would get back to *our* people in our land and they might decide as a result not to provide the village with medicine in the future. He instructed Oras to come to us and make another recording explaining that his words were only his own words, that he would not say them again, and that he would gladly take Bisarota's medicine in the future.

When Bisarota and Oras arrived in our hut, we made the new recording according to their wishes. Later Migero came to *xamoso* and asked to hear both recordings. During the rest of that day and the several days following, many of the adults in the village came to *xamoso* us and also said, “atsi noxemisanti”, “so, I will listen”, asking to hear our recordings. During the rest of our stay in Montetoni, a number of people asked to hear other recordings we had made as well and began to quote some of the chanting and *xarintaa* they heard on the recordings.

Several aspects of this event are fascinating. First, Migero recognized the potential negative impact of Oras’ *xarintaa* on the entire village if ‘our people’ were to withhold medicine as a result of it. Second, he recognized that another recording could be made to ‘fix’ the first one. And third, a very large number of Nantis discovered the utility of the recordings to gain access to other peoples’ speech that they had not witnessed originally. Nantis took advantage of our recording technology in a way we never expected.

What remains to be seen as a result of these events is how our (or anyone’s) recordings will be used and evaluated in Montetoni in the future. Since Nantis have very high standards for evidentiality in discourse, gaining access to recorded speech is potentially a tremendous resource in gaining ‘first-hand’, and therefore quotable, information about interactions in the village. Like the incident described in the previous section, these events set a new limit of possibility for a form of social action in the community that may or may not be incorporated into future social action. Above all, it exemplifies the ever-emerging ways in which new experiences

are incorporated into existing patterns and demonstrates the creativity people employ in making use of the resources they find in their world.

14.3 Long term possibilities

The assertion I have made in this study that every instance of speech or action is informed by other historically-prior instances of speech and action entails a process of change: the resources from which individuals draw are continuously shifting with time and experience. Newcomers to a social space, particularly children becoming adults, will necessarily be drawing from a substantially different reservoir of historically-situated social experiences than their elders. The lack of experiential continuity between unique individuals and especially across generations necessarily yields different sets of meanings for shared experiences as time unfolds. Therefore, a Nanti child who is born on the Xamisuja in a large community like Montetoni, and who begins to participate in feasting activities from the very start of his or her life, will understand and perpetuate feasting practices in a way very different than his parents do, who first innovated most feasting practices as adults who founded Montetoni.

In other words, if feasting continues over the long-term future, I expect to see radical differences in feasting practices ten and twenty years from now because the historical context shared by future feasters is *already* so different from the historical context today's Nantis share.

Section 15. Conclusions and future directions

15.1 Concluding remarks

In this study I have developed my thesis that contemporary Nanti feasting practices are the locus for creating social relationships and bonds between individuals who otherwise have relatively little direct contact with one another. Living in a large multi-family village such as Montetoni places individuals in proximity to a great many people from other family and residence groups. And yet, many aspects of daily life are carried out entirely in the domain of the family group or the residence group. In a sense, outside of feasting the village of Montetoni is but a collection of contiguous residence groups united by certain common interests.

It is through feasting together every six to nine days that the village is transformed by its residents into a community. That is, villagers create community by acting as group and collaborating in a common set of activities in which everyone present is welcome to participate. Participation in the group is what defines the group and community emerges from collaboration and cooperation.

At the same time, feasting provides an opportunity for individual expression in the context of a highly social event. In their individual improvised chants, or *xarintaa*, feasters give voice to observations, opinions, and evaluations that they otherwise do not speak. In their discourse outside feasting, Nantis are adept at avoiding conflict and rarely give voice to criticisms of others. In feasts, the limits of what is acceptable to express are redrawn and feasters interact with one another in dramatically different ways.

Through the intense physiological and emotional experiences individuals have while feasting together, feasters create shared history which all participants hold in common and which individuals can and do draw upon when acting and speaking with one another. Nantis rarely directly refer to the occurrences or interactions within a feast, yet week after week they make these occurrences and interactions possible when they begin to feast.

Over the years that I have been participating in and observing feasting, many aspects of feasting have changed. And of course, at the same time many aspects of daily life have changed as well. And yet there is continuity at every moment between what has gone before and what is emerging. I see feasting as a powerful expression of creativity and agency as Nanti individuals embrace their ever-changing world of experiences. As such, I have no doubt that feasting in Montetoni will continue but I beleive it will also be transformed radically in coming years as Nantis innovate new ways of responding to new situations.

The level of significance of feasting practices and the place of feasting in Nanti social life both are likely to change. As this happens, I anticipate that these changes will reflect and illuminate other changes Nantis are experiencing in their way of life together on the Xamisuja. I am deeply grateful to my friends in Montetoni and Maranxejari that they have given me opportunity to participate in their community life in recent years. I hope that my research in some small measure can reflect my gratitude to them by contributing to their own efforts to define their way of life according to their own values and goals.

15.2 Future directions

This study of Nanti feasting is a part of my long-term collaborative relationship with many Nantis on the Xamisuja. In the spirit of viewing my research with them as a work in progress, I would like to pose some key questions to which I hope to find answers in my future work:

Where will Montetoni be when I return to the Xamisuja in 2002?

Will present levels of plentitude continue? Any changes in the amount of *sexatsi* available in Montetoni can affect the amount and/or type of feasting that goes on.

Will villagers continue to participate in group-oriented activities, including the community hunting and fishing projects that presently precede feasting?

How will feasting practices develop over time? In particular, will more drinking and less chanting occur in the future?

Will bursts of violence such as the one I observed and described in 2001 be repeated? If so, how will this affect Nanti attitudes toward feasting?

How will relations between Montetoni and Maranxejari and relations between these two Nanti communities and non-Nantis develop?

How will feasting practices in Maranxejari develop over time? Will they diverge from the practices in Montetoni?

How will the role of Migero as *peresetente* develop? Will other representative roles emerge? If so, who will fill them?

Appendix 1. Ajorora *oxamoso*[70]

During the morning of the feast that took place June 15 and 16, 2001, Ajorora and Tebora came to *xamoso* Lev and me in our hut, where we were sitting and watching feasting in the *xanpo.* In this segment, Ajorora discusses the events that led to her decision to *xamoso* Montetoni and participate in the feast.

This segment illustrates several aspects of Nanti discourse style that I have discussed in this study. In particular, I wish to draw your attention to Ajorora's extensive use of quotation, of others and of herself, in creating a narrative of how she came to be in Montetoni; and the circular unfolding of discourse typical of Nantis' tellings of past events.

Ajorora is Migero's, Joja's, and Tebora's mother. She presently lives in Maranxejari and shares a cooking hut and sleeping hut with Tebora and her family. In this narrative, Ajorora mentions another of her daughters, Amarija, who also lives in Maranxejari but in a different residence group.

Ajorora tells us that while she was upriver of Maranxejari and downriver of Montetoni at the fish dam that men from Maranxejari had made, she encountered Erobaxin, a young man who lives in Maranxejari, as he was returning from *xamoso*-ing his mother Maroja, Ajorora's eldest daughter, who lives in Montetoni.

Erobaxin told Ajorora that there was *oburoxi* and feasting in Montetoni. Ajorora points out that Erobaxin did not stay in Montetoni to participate in the feasting and tells us that shortly after speaking with her at the fish dam he headed downriver to

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Maranxejari. Subsequently, Ajorora came up to Montetoni in the company of her daughter Tebora. Ajorora tells us that her other daughter (Amarija) said she did not want to accompany them and had returned to Maranxejari also. Ajorora quotes her own declarations that she made at the fish dam that she would visit Montetoni. She points out the potential social consequences for Erobaxin because did not stay for feasting, saying that men in Montetoni will say, 'he left, he did not stay.'

As Ajorora speaks with us, she introduces and later returns to several key topics. First, Ajorora introduces the topic of Erobaxin and how she came to know about the *oburoxi* in Montetoni. She then introduces the topic of the fish-dam, and who was successful in getting fish there. She then returns to the topics of Erobaxin, *oburoxi,* and her own visit to Montetoni, She next introduces the topic of her other daughter saying she did not want to visit, which then leads her back to the topic of Erobaxin's words and his departure for Maranxejari. She and Lev then return to the topic of the fish-dam, then to Erobaxin, then to her own visit again. Each time Ajorora reintroduces a topic she adds more detail, and at several points juxtaposes these details in such a way as to create a contrast between them.

The top line of text is a transcription of Nanti; the second line of text is a free morpheme-level translation, and the third line is a free translation.

Participants:

A Ajorora
L Lev
C Chris
T Tebora

L: aryo
indeed

A: jeje noxamosotax
yes I-visited

je ixanti na- nani xara
yes he-said I- OK there

xara nopoxaxe yoga ogoga ixamotira
there I-came(-from) that that where-they(-masculine)-fish-dammed

Yes, he said, "I visited". I said, "OK" there.
I came from there, where they made the fish dam.

C: eje ixamotira
yes where-they(-masculine)-fish-dammed
Yes, where they made the fish dam.

A: ixamo iri aryo nopoxaxe
he-fish-dams he indeed I-came(-from-there)
He made a fish dam, indeed that is where I came from.

L: [burps----------]

C: [aryo pimaguti
[indeed you-slept-a-bit?
So you slept a bit?

A: je xaroga aryo nomaguti je nomagaxe
yes over-there indeed I-slept-a-bit, yes I-slept
Yes, over there, I did sleep a bit, yes, I slept

C: [a::ryo
[indeed
indeed

T: [pisinxita
[you-are-intoxicated (to L)
Are you intoxicated?

L: [je nosinxita
[yes I-am-intoxicated
Yes, I am intoxicated

A: pisinxi
You-are-intoxicated (to L)
You are intoxicated?

L: [je nobixaxa
[yes I-drank(-*oburoxi)*
Yes, I drank oburoxi

A: pisinxitaxa
you-are-intoxicated (to C)
Are you intoxicated?

C: maixa tesa:xona
now only-a-little-bit
Now only a little bit

A: [aryo
[indeed
Indeed

C: iriro
him
He is the one who is intoxicated!

A: iri aryo
Him indeed

C: jeje aryo nobixaxa
yes indeed I-drank(-*oburoxi)*
Yes, I did drink oburoxi before though.

A: aryo
indeed
indeed

L: axa pixenapaji
here you-headed-toward-here? (gesturing toward the path along river's edge)
You came here (along the path along the river's edge)?

A: a:xa noxenapaji axa
here I-headed-toward-here here
Yes, I headed toward here (as you indicated).

L: aryo aryo
indeed indeed
Indeed, indeed

A: inpo xara nonxamosotax iriro
then there "I-will-visit" (I-told) him
So then, there, "I will visit", I told him.

C: jeee xame--
yes good—
Yes, good!

A: ary maixa aryo poxaji
indeed now indeed (I)-came-back
indeed now, indeed I came back (here to visit).

C: je
Yes
Yes, good!

A: maixa (nej) aryota inxajara ya-
so (see) indeed-as-I-said before (he-)

ipoxaxe ixanti nonxam'
he-came(-back) he-said "I-will-visit"

So you see, indeed, before, he came back and he said, "I will visit".

C: eje iri:ro
yes he(-that-very-one)
Ah, yes, him

A: [pinejaxe
[you-saw(-him)
So you saw him?

C: jeeje
Yes
Yes

L: [noneja
[I-saw
I saw (him also).

C: inpo jataji
then (he-)went-back
then he went back (downriver).

A: jatajira oxa
went-back(-as-we-spoke-of) she-said

jatajira yoga
went-back(-as-we-spoke-of) this(-masculine)

He went back, she said, "He went back, that one."

C: ixamosotuti isexataxa inpo i-
he-visited-a-bit, he-ate, then he-
He visited a bit, he ate, and then he-

A: [je [a:
[yes [ahh
Yes…I see

C: ixanti nojataji jatana
he-said "I-am-going-back. Off-I-go."
he said, "I am going back (downriver). Off I go."

A: [pixantira nani=pixantira nani
[thus-you-said "OK"=thus-you-said "OK"?
So you said, "OK", you said "OK" (to him)?

C: je
Yes
Yes

L: [je
[yes

A: je inpo maixa gonxetaxa maixa
yes then (by-)now (he)-arrived-perhaps now
Yes, then by now he perhaps has arrived now.

C: maixa
now
now

A: go:nxetaxa gonxetaxa
(he)-arrived-perhaps arrived-perhaps
Perhaps he has arrived, perhaps he has arrived.

C: [gonxetaxa
[arrived-perhaps
Perhaps he has arrived.

L: oga janta ixamotira
this there where-they(-masculine)-fish-dammed
There, where they fish-dammed?

A: je oga ixamotira oga xatonxo
yes this where-they(-masculine)-fish-dammed this upriver
Yes, that fish dam, this one, upriver

L: [aja
[yes
Yes

C: [aja
[yes
Yes

A: ma:nerira yonta jetari yonta
no:thing there(-masculine) *jetari* (fish sp.) there(-masculine)
Nothing – there (there were no) jetari there.

L [tera irage?
[not he-get?
He didn't get (any jetari)?

A: ma: tera ira- iryo ma:meri
none he-(the-man-in-particular)-did-not-get nothing
None, he didn't get (any jetari), nothing!

C: tera irage
he-did-not-get(-some-*jetari*)
(Wow) he didn't get (any jetari)

A: in-inti jetari irio nagax
they-are *jetari*, (of-)those I-got-(some)
Those jetari, I got some (though).

C: irio jetari
those *jetari*
(Some of) those jetari?

A: [irio nagax
[those I-got
I got (some of) those jetari

C: aryo
Indeed
Indeed (great!)

A: aryota nagaxe
Indeed-*ta*, I-got-(some-*jetari*)
Indeed, unlike him, I got (some jetari).

L jeje [laughing]
yes [laughing]
Yeah?

A: asi maixa (1.0) maixa noxa ixanti
so now (1.0) now I-say he-said

i-i- ijataji ixanti aityo potsyatira
he-- he-went-back(-there) he-said "there-is-sweet-*oburoxi*"

So now (1.0) now I say, he said (when) he went back, he said, "there is sweet oburoxi."

C: aryo ixanti [laughs]
indeed he-said [laughs]
Indeed, he said that?

L: [laughs]

A: [naro nonxamosotaji ixanti na:ni
[I I-will-go-visit-again he-said OK
I said, "I will go visit again." He said, "OK".

C: [laughs] [ixa na:ni
[he-said "OK"
So he said, "OK"

A: aryota maixa nonej no-
indeed-*ta* now I-see I-

noxanti nonpanpogi noxanti
I-said "I-will-watch" I-said

Indeed, unlike him now, "I will see" I, I said, "I will watch" I said.

L: [je xametitax
[yes good
Yes, that's very good.

C: jeje
yes
yes!

A: aryota oxanti jatajira
indeed-*ta* she-said go-back

iro ojatajira
she go-back

oxanti nani tera nonxoge
she-said OK not I-want

nonxa iro maixa jatajira tsyapi
I-will-say she now went-back yesterday

Indeed, unlike me, she said, "I will go back." She went back (to Maranxejari). She said, "OK. I don't want (to go to Montetoni)." I will say, "She now, she went back (to Maranxejari) yesterday."

C: [jatajira
[went-back
(She) went back.

A: jatajira
went-back
(She) went back.

C: aryo apitera jataji obanxoxu
indeed the-other-one went-back to-her-house
So the other one (your other daughter) went back to her house?

A: jatajira ojatajira
went-back she-went-back
(Yes, she) went back, she went back.

A: janta obanxo maixaxa (?------)
there her-house now-perhaps (?--------)
There, her house perhaps (she's there now).

T: [jeje aryo nomaguti [addressing someone else]
[yes indeed I-slept-a-bit
Yes, indeed, I slept a bit.

L: [aryo janta otsegojaxu
[indeed there on-the-*otsegoja*(-branch-of-the-river)?
Indeed, there, on the otsegoja?

T [je otsegojaxu
[yes on-the-*otsegoja*
Yes, on the otsegoja

A: oxa i- axa-- inxan tera ineja axa ijataxe
She-said he- here-- he-will-say- he-did-not-watch here he-went
She said, "he, here, he will say, "He did not see here, he left." "

L: aryo pimagax
indeed you-slept?
Indeed you slept?

T: aryo nomagax
indeed I-slept
Indeed you slept?

A: oxa ira-iragajigaxe (tataxa) yoga
this they(-masculine)-did-not-get (something-perhaps) that
This, they didn't get (something perhaps), that one.

L: oparigaxe inxani
it-fell rain
Did rain fall?

T: ma:me onpar-
none it-did-not-fall
None! It didn't fall.

L: ma: tera onparige
none not it-did-not-fall
None. It didn't fall.

T: tera onparige
not it-did-not-fall
None. It didn't fall.

A: aryo (apana) aryo ijataxe tera inejabaxe
indeed (?) indeed he-went he-did-not-watch(-my-depature)
Indeed (?) indeed he went, he did not watch (my departure).

C: [eje [mjm
[yes [yes
Yes, yes

A: inpo maixa inpo maixaxa poxajixa otsyapini
then now then now-perhaps he-got-back-perhaps in-the-evening
Then now, then perhaps he got back (to Maranxejari) in the evening.

C: aryo
Indeed
Indeed

A: [aryo ijataxe
[indeed he-went
Indeed, he went back.

L: aryo
indeed
Indeed

A: naro nopoxaxe xaroga (?) ixamotajig
I I-came(-here) over-there (?) they(-masculine)-fish-dammed

ixantiro maixa
he-said-it now

I came (here). Over there, they are fish-damming. He said it (at that time).

C: [je
[yes

L: tsini xamotaxe
who fish-dammed?
Who fish-dammed?

A: iri:ro yonta xamoti iriro xantatsi maixa
he: there(masculine) fish-dammed he
He there, he fish-dammed, he did it, now.

L: [iri:ro
[he:

C: jeje
yes

A: axa ary=maixa isatyo Erobaxin
here indeed=now the-same-one(masculine) Erobaxin

ixantira nonxena [aryo
he-said-thus I-will-head(-there) [indeed

here, indeed now, that same one Erojbaxi, he said, "I will head (there)".

C: [a: isatyo
[ah the-same-one(-masculine)
Ah, that same one (Erobaxin).

A: isatyo maixa ima (?) naga
the-same-one(masculine) now he-- (?) (when)I-got(-*jetari*)

inxara ixanti nonxam-- nonxamoso
before he-said I-will- I-will-visit

That same one, now, he (?) (when) I was getting (jetari) before, he said, "I will visit, I will visit."

L: [aryo
[indeed

A: jeje
yes

(1.0)

C: eje
C: yes

(0.5)

A: obasi maixa ijataji ixanti
so now-then he-went-back he-said

[ijataji ixa noja na:
he-went-back he-said I-am-going OK

So then, now, he went back, he said, he went back and said, "I am going." "OK" (I said).

C: [ijataji [aryo
[he-went-back [indeed
He went back, I see.

A: maixa noxobagera jetari iro naga
now-then thus-I-collected *jetari* those I-got
Now then, I collected jetari, I got some of them.

C: aryo
indeed

A: nagaxe itya yorobaxe iro (?xatinxati)
I-got when(masculine) he-dried(-the-*otsegoja*) it (?at-noon)
I got (some jetari) when he dried (the otsegoga) (?at noon)

C: [pagax
[you-got
You got (jetari)

A: maixa nojataxera nonxamo ixan nani
now-then I-went-then I-will-visit he said OK
Now then, when I went, "I will visit" (I said). He said, "OK".

C: mhm
mhm

A: nani xamoso
OK visit
"OK, visit!" (he said)

C: xamoso- ary ixanti
visit- indeed he-said
"visit" – indeed he said (that to you?)

A: [jeje ary ixanti nani xamoso
yes indeed he-said OK visit
yes, indeed he said, "OK, visit!"

C: jeje
yes

(2.0)

L: aryo maixa ixena janta oga Maranxejarixu?
indeed now -then he-headed there that to-Maranxejari?
Indeed, now then, he headed there, to that, to Maranxejari?

A: je aryo ixena maixa o-
yes indeed he-headed
yes, indeed he headed (there) now

L: [ary irimage
[indeed he-did-not-sleep(-there)
so he didn't sleep (there at the fish-dam?)

A: [jara ima- maixa jatajixa
[will-not he-sleep- now-then went-back-perhaps
he will not sleep (there) now, perhaps he went back

L: [jataji
[went-back
(He) went back

A: jatajixa (0.5) jatajixa
went-back-perhaps (0.5) went-back-perhaps

ixenapaji pitotsi irota maixa yamax
[he-headed-away(-with) a-boat that-(is-what) now-then he-took

Perhaps he went back (0.5) went back perhaps, he headed away with a boat, that now is what he took.

L: [aryo ixenanta pitotsi
[indeed he-headed-with a-boat
Indeed, we went with a boat?

C: [aryo
indeed

A: [iro ixenanta
[it he-headed-with
yes, with that he headed (away)

C: aryo
Indeed
Indeed

A: jatajixa maixa ijatajira nonejaba iro
went-back-perhaps now-then he-went-back-thus I-watched it
(He) went back perhaps. Went he left, I watched it.