



ETHNOHISTORIES

Midi Chali

English

AUTHOR:

Roger Séptimo Jiménez – Agricultural engineer

EDITORIA / EDITOR:

Luz Graciela Joly Adames – Anthropologist, Ph.D.

FOREWORD

To facilitate reading in Ngäbere, we have adapted, with some modifications, the system in the short Ngäbere-Spanish dictionary Kukwe Ngäbere by Melquiades Arosemena and Luciano Javilla, published in 1979 by the Directorate of Historical Heritage of the National Institute of Culture (INAC), now the Ministry of Culture, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

VOWELS	CONSONANTS
a - Like in Spanish	/b/ch/d/g/j/l/m/n/ñ/r/s/t/v/y/ Like in Spanish
ä - Deeper than in Spanish	c - Like the soft sound of the /c/ in Spanish
e - Like in Spanish	td - Intermediate sound between /d/ and /t/, like /th/ in English
i - Like in Spanish	k - Like the strong sound of the /c/ in Spanish as in "casa"
í - Guttural sound between vowel and consonant, like the "klick" of some African languages	ng - In Ngäbere it exists in initial position, but in Spanish it does not exist in initial position as in "congo"
ii - An /i/ longer than in Spanish	IMPORTANT: It should be noted that in Ngäbere there is no /f/
o - Like in Spanish	
ö - Deeper than in Spanish	
ó - More accented than /ö/	
u - Like in Spanish	
ü - Deeper than in Spanish	
ú - Like the /w/ in English	

It should also be clarified that this story comes from narrators residing in the village of Potrero de Caña, formerly the Tole district of the Chiriquí province, now the Müna district of the Ngäbe Buglé region, from which the Agronomist Roger Séptimo, the compiler and writer is a native. Consequently, the phonology corresponds to the dialectal or regional variation "Guaymí del Interior" (Pacific slope) which differs from the "Guaymí de la Costa" (Caribbean slope of the province of Bocas del Toro and the now district of Kusapin in the Comarca Ngäbe Buglé) in the *Guaymí Grammar* of Ephraim S. Alphonse Reid, published in 1980 by Fe y Alegría. This variant corresponds to what Arosemena and Javilla call "Chiriquí" and which contrasts with the Caribbean variants of Bocas del Toro and the coast of Bocas.

This ethnohistory was published in 1986 in Kugü Kira Nie Ngäbere / Sucesos Antiguos Dichos en *Guaymí* (Ethnohistory *Guaymí*), by the Panamanian Association of Anthropology, with the PN-079 Agreement of the Inter-American Foundation (FIA) managed by Dr. Mac Chapin, Anthropologist, who encouraged us to follow the example he had set by compiling *Pab-Igala: Histories of the Kuna Tradition*, published in 1970 by the Center for Anthropological Research of the University of Panama, under the direction of Dr. Reina Torres de Araúz.

This book represented the work of the Agricultural Engineer Roger Séptimo, when he was a student in his second year at the Center for Agricultural Teaching and Research in Chiriquí (CEIACHI), Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of Panama (FCAUP), not only writing in Ngäbere the stories that he had heard from his family members in his community, but also his effort to translate them into Spanish as a bilingual person that he is, like other indigenous people in Panama, who are striving to receive a formal education.

The ethnohistories were compiled, recorded on cassettes and written by the Agronomist Roger Séptimo in 1983 and 1984.

As Professor-Researcher of Anthropology and Rural Sociology at the CEIACHI of the FCAUP, Luz Graciela Joly Adames, Anthropologist, Ph.D., encouraged Roger, as one of her students, to write the stories, convince him and show him that she would not exploit or abuse his work, but that he would get credit. Consequently, the anthropologist limited herself only to making some corrections of form and style in the Spanish translations without altering their content.

We encourage students from the seven indigenous peoples in the Republic of Panama, and teachers in public and private schools, colleges and universities in Panama, to write in their own languages and translate the ethnohistories and songs they hear in their families and communities into Spanish, as part of their informal education.

We also encourage readers of these ethnohistories in Ngäbere, Spanish and English, to draw the scenes that they liked the most, as they did in 2002, students in an Education and Society course, directed by Dr. Joly, at the Faculty of Education, Autonomous University of Chiriquí.

Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, approved by the General Assembly, in its 107th plenary session on September 13, 2007:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, promote and pass on to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to name and maintain their communities, places and people.
2. The States shall adopt effective measures to ensure the protection of this right and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and make themselves understood in political, legal and administrative actions, providing for this, when necessary, interpretation services or other appropriate means.



Brothers Midi Chali and Juite Chali, kidnapped by the Mosiguís ethnic groups from mundo.com in es.wikipedia.org consulted 11/29/2020.

MIDI CHALI

That is the name of the Indian who was kidnapped by the Mosiguís, during their constant guerrilla excursions on the Isthmus of Panamá, specifically, in the regions now known as Bocas del Toro and Chiriquí. The Mosiguís were enemies of combat, for several decades, of the Guaymí (Ngäbe). Apparently, they did not want to expand their geographical position, but it was rather their desire to commit any type of abuse against indigenous groups that they encountered on their way, plundering and killing them. To do these feats, they visited places faraway from where they came.



Miskito Nation consulted 1/12/2020 en.wikipedia.org.

Before the colonization and during the colonization, these groups of warring Indians committed arduous battles of frontal opposition, without truce, against the Guaymí (Ngäbe). The Mosiguís were sailors who used to enter inland through the mouths of the rivers in the sea and thus surprisingly attack the camps and garrisons of their rivals.

In one of these warring expeditions, the Mosiguís managed to kidnap the two brothers Midi Chali and Juite Chali, when they were very small. The Mosiguís took care of them so that later they could serve as spies in territories of combats, camps, and garrisons of their enemies; in other words, the brothers would be the guides of the Mosiguís to attack the Guaymí (Ngäbe).



Miskitos leveraging cayuco. Accessed 12/1/2020 Miskito Nation es.wikipedia.org.

It seems that nobody gave importance to the presence of these two individuals. Perhaps they missed their participation among the Guaymi (Ngäbe), who did not even think that the two brothers lived with the Mosigui warriors and knew their combat strategies and their types of arms.

Although they lived with groups of Guaymi (Ngäbe), they were faithful to the Mosiguis, as they never said of the possibility of an excursion of the Mosiguis nor of why they were constantly present in the indigenous communities of the region. But, one day, a *suguiá* became aware of them. He allowed some time to go by so that Midi Chali would not become aware of his presence nor of his intentions.



Cayuco miskito with mangrove sticks. Accessed 12/1/2020 Misquita Nation es.wikipedia.org.

The *suguiá*, wanting to verify the attitude of Midi Chali, gave him the responsibility to look after the presence of the boats of the Mosiguis which could penetrate through the mouth of a river close to where a group of Guaymi (Ngäbe) people were living. The instruction that he gave to Midi Chali was to be permanently on the lookout to see if boats were near the coast. If he observed something small that looked like leaves of trees floating in the sea, to immediately notify the *suguiá* because that was the presence of the Mosiguis. After giving this task to Midi Chali, the *suguiá* was continuously looking after Midi Chali, but without making Midi Chali aware of it.

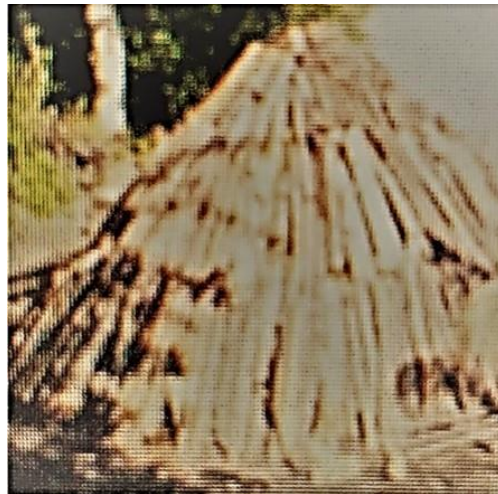
The *suguiá* became aware of several boats that arrived at the mouth of the river, but Midi Chali said nothing. The *suguiá* knew this before it occurred and before assigning the task to Midi Chali to report the presence of any boat. So, the *suguiá* only limited himself to visit the troupe of Mosiguis that was already on land and on their way to combat.

But to make this inspection, the *suguiá* had to look like a Mosigui mulatto, in order to get into the camp of the Mosiguis without anything happening to him. Thus he did his maneuver and then returned to his camp. In going through the camp of the Mosiguis, he became aware of the number of Mosiguis that had arrived, and that was very numerous. When he got to his camp, he told what was happening, and he gave the order that all the Guaymi (Ngäbe) in the camp should prepare for combat against the

Mosiguis. He looked for an hour when de Mosiguis were all resting, so as to be able to get them all and kill them without leaving anyone alive.

The Guaymi (Ngäbe) prepared themselves and went to see the Mosiguis and took Midi Chali along without his becoming aware of the action that they were going to do. Not even the *suguiá* called Midi's attention, but only left this until the end. It seems that Midi Chali would get together with the Mosiguis at night and would tell them how their rivals were prepared and the time in which they could become victims of the Mosiguis without any resistance. According to this, the Mosiguis were going to attack the camp of the Guaymi (Ngäbe); but, before the Mosiguis could do it, the Guaymi (Ngäbe) did it.

When the Guaymi (Ngäbe) arrived at the camp of the Mosiguis, they found all the Mosiguis asleep. It is thought that this was achieved by the *suguiá*, to finish with the Mosiguis. The boats of the Mosiguis were full of mangrove sticks which had been cut specially to kill their enemies, beating them on the heads and finishing them forever.



Pile of mangrove sticks. Mangles de Panamá (Mangroves of Panama), consulted 4/12/2020 Google.

The retinue of the *suguiá* arrived. Without losing time, they took the mangrove sticks that had been cut by the Mosiguis and, with the same sticks, they began hitting each one without giving time for the rest to wake up. When there were only a few left, then the rest managed to escape from the beatings that were going to fall on them.



Monument to the Miskito Warrior Bilwi. The bow and arrow were the principle arms of the Miskito warriors. From childhood, they practiced with toy bows and arrows that their fathers made. es.wikipedia.org consulted 4/12/2020.

It is remembered that this was the biggest massacre and defeat of the same dimension that the Mosiguís had. After this killing, the dead Mosiguís were picked up, their bellies were opened, and, with the same guts of the Mosiguís, Midi Chali was bathed. Then they gave him a sovereign lashing for his noxious militancy with the Mosiguís, against the Guaymí (Ngäbe). It seems that he did not intend to inform the Mosiguís anymore and decided to live with his group. Afterwards, he made or organized a battle that assaulted Tolé, since he knew the method of attack and combat of the Mosiguís, which he imitated to do the heroic feat in Tolé, that is attributed to the Mosiguís, because it was a commando in a Mosigui style, but were Guaymíes (Ngäbe). (1)

(1) The Miskitos penetrated the Isthmus, by the Atlantic side, coming from Nicaragua, in the year 1727. In 1732, they invaded the Villa of David, and in 1788 destroyed Bugaba, Tolé, and Cañazas. In the dawn of the 8th of September of 1788, they fell upon the missionaries in the reduction of Saint Joseph of Tolé, burned the convent, stole the sacred vessels, and badly injured Father Ramón Rabago, as is affirmed by the witness Fraile Diego Montes (General Archives of the Indies, Panama, Foil 265, Report of the Governor of Veraguas about the aggressions of the Miskitos in Tolé, Bugaba, and Cañazas, year 1788).



On the left, in red, the Mosquetia. On the right, Coat of Arms of the Miskito Kingdom (es.wikipedia.org consulted 1/12/2020).

JOLLY

Luz Graciela

PUBLIC DOMAIN CONTENT

