



Figure 3: The site used to celebrate *la chichería* of September 10–11, that was organized by several families in the community where the two boys had been struck by lightning. The shelter serves as the cooking facility when school is in session. The boy who survived the accident (now grown) did not attend. Once the sun had set, the women with their small ritual leaves from the woven bag and the men with their ritual weapons left the hut to place their respective objects under a bush (type apparently unimportant) outside the shelter. Except for the singers, most people moved about rather freely when not dancing. During the night, children remained with their mothers or older sisters on the leaves arranged by the women around the perimeter. Fermented sugar cane fruit drink (*ibia dūi*) was served at this ritual, and was complemented by two boxes of *aguardiente* donated by the provincial government.

household, *tukwo böin* alludes to the ritual act of using the (manta ray) spike to pierce the men's ears. In the waning hours of the darkness, the small gourd (*bukata*) is taken to the east entrance of the shelter. The lightning survivor (*mōnkōn*) and whoever else wishes can volunteer to leave the shelter, and, in an area away from the shelter, each one has his right ear pierced. The same arrow used to provoke the two lines is used to pierce the ears. (This ear piercing is described by Mérida 1963: 59, who apparently used informant reports for his description.) The ear piercing action is described very literally as *olo tōko bike bukatate* ("striking the ear, send [its blood] into the gourd"). The blood of each man having his ear pierced is mixed with water in the small gourd; some three medicinal herbs¹⁸ are mixed with the water and the blood. Then all of the men return to the shelter, and the small gourd is replaced in the center near the singers' bench.

Following the ear piercing, the singers sing songs that reflect the "piercing" action which causes bleeding, such as the predatory actions of "the big shark" (*trū kri*) or "the tiny shark" (*trū kiare*). Meanwhile, the lightning survivor, the men whose ears were pierced, and the singers all drink the *chicha* being kept at the side of the singers' bench; Ngawbere describe this action quite literally as *kutu nain noin* ("proceeding to drink the ritual *chicha*"). Then, the lightning survivor

returns to his seat, and the men rejoin the participants.

Shortly thereafter, when the sun rises, the small gourd holding the medicinal water mixed with blood is dumped at the base of a tree, outside the shelter area. The larger ritual evidently substituted another act that was performed shortly after the participants entered the shelter (see Fig. 3).

According to some informants, it was once the custom¹⁹ to have a special fruit drink set apart from what was consumed by the line dancers. This *chicha* allegedly contained the head of a monkey and the head of a bear, and was referred to as *hurinmu kutūbiti* (literally "monkey's life-force atop the *chicha*") and *men kutūbiti* (literally "bear's [life-force] atop the *chicha*"), respectively. The *chicha* with the animal heads has never been

18 The three ingredients include *druraw*, known in Spanish as *viruli*, which is the slender shaft holding the fluffy seeds of "wild cane" (*Gynerium sagittatum*); *hura* (an unidentified medicinal plant); and *nubetuli* (unidentified, possibly a species of wasp).

19 Returning to the capital city for a brief period, the author came across the Von Uffelde reference and, upon returning to the field, asked one of the local diviners some focused questions. Although some clarifications were made, no one in the latter months of fieldwork was willing to verify that centuries ago the male member was pierced.