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**RESEARCH  
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## BELIEFS SURROUNDING THE LODESTONE

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### I

## INTRODUCTION

To carry out the present work, which concerns beliefs surrounding the lodestone, we gathered information about this stone from a resident of the village of Tapacún, in Villa Canales.

We will attempt to transcribe the information provided to us as faithfully as possible, including the different types of stones that exist, how they are obtained, what their "powers" are, and the prayers associated with them.

Footnotes are used to indicate any discrepancies or to provide comments or clarifications.

We have divided the work into sections to make it easier to understand. Wherever possible, certain expressions have been transcribed verbatim. Some of the prayers to the stone were copied word-for-word from a manuscript the informant had with him, including all of its grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

## II THE LODESTONE

There are two types of lodestones: the "real" one and the "purchased" one.

### *The Real Lodestone*

The real lodestone possesses "great powers." It brings wealth; it helps with business success and love problems; it "makes a person invisible to their enemy"; it heals diseases.

In short, the bearer of the stone "walks free from any mishap." The informant does not know anyone who owns this stone. He says one must have great courage to obtain it.

This lodestone—the "real one"—is given by the *Cadejo*. It cannot be bought and must not be baptized, as doing so would cause it to disappear.

### *Who is the Cadejo?*

According to what his grandfather told him, "the *Cadejo* is a dog, the first dog Our Lord sent to the world. It is like a calf, but it can take different forms. There are two types: white and black, and they can be large or small."

The white *Cadejo* is the one that announces a marriage and does not stop lurking until the union takes place.

"The black *Cadejo* is a sort of demon, and sparks shoot from its eyes" when someone is trying to *enhierbarlo*.<sup>1</sup>

When a person is *enhierbando* the *Cadejo*, "the shower of sparks goes ahead of it. You're not as afraid of the animal as you are of the sparks."

The *Cadejo* "shows up starting at nine o'clock onward."<sup>2</sup> It appears and disappears at will, except when it has been summoned through prayer in order to take the stone from it; in that case, it charges.

<sup>1</sup> *Enhierbar* is the process used to remove the lodestone from within the *Cadejo*. The *enhierbada* is performed on Fridays "exactly at midnight."

<sup>2</sup> It appears starting at nine o'clock at night.

Sometimes it whistles, and when it passes nearby, one hears a clack sound, as if it were boneless.<sup>3</sup>

"If you do not mess with it, it will not harm you." It can only be recognized by being extremely black and having eyes like burning embers. It "manifests" itself in any uninhabited place.

### *Experiences with the Cadejo*

Our informant told us he first encountered the *Cadejo* when he was about 8 years old. He said: "I saw it in a big yucca palm; the animal was sitting. I thought it was my dog Sutil. After calling him by name, I threw a clump of dirt at him. Then it turned to look at me with huge eyes, like glowing embers." "I ran inside to tell my dad, and he told me it was the *Cadejo*, but that it would not harm me as long as I did not mess with it."

On another occasion, our interviewee said he was drunk and lying on a path when the *Cadejo* approached to lick him, "to take away the drunkenness."

### *How to Obtain the Lodestone*

"It is the black *Cadejo* that one must pray to seven times in order for it to appear. When it manifests, it crackles with sparks and throws itself at the person who prayed to it seven times," and you have to fend it off each time. By the seventh time, it is already tired and stops attacking. That is when you know it is going to vomit. Then you take out a new handkerchief, and it vomits the stone onto it. You wrap it in the same handkerchief and take it with you.

### *What to Do with the Stone*

Once you get home, it must be kept in a small red wool bag made specifically for that purpose. In order for it to "remain in existence, you must pray to it daily."

### *"Powers" to Attract the Opposite Sex*

If someone wants to use it to "gain love," they carry the stone with them, and when courting a girl, at a moment when she is not paying attention, they rub the stone in her hair—"and she will be his, whether she wants to or not."

<sup>3</sup> We believe the term boneless is incorrectly used here. If it were truly boneless, it would not make any noise. What the narrator likely meant is that it seems as if its bones were broken or loose.

### *To Become Invisible*

"When someone is being pursued by the authorities, they pray the prayer, tap the stone seven times, and they disappear from the eyes of those chasing them. One becomes nothing."

### *To Unlock a House Door:*

If someone has the stone given by the *Cadejo*, they can unlock a door simply by praying the prayer and blowing seven times on the padlock or latch—it will open.

### *To Cure an Illness:*

The stone must be left in water overnight. The next day, the water is strained, the stone is prayed to, and then the water is drunk.

### *To Help in Business:*

The stone should be kept under the cash register. With that, "it pulls in more money." Also, if a thief enters the business, the stone will not allow anything to be stolen. It must be prayed to daily.

### *The Purchased Lodestone*

The "purchased" stones are not as powerful as the "real" ones, but they do help in business and love.

They can be bought without major difficulty and are sold in various places such as markets, by street vendors, etc. The "purchased" lodestone consists of two small stones: male and female. They must be "baptized" to activate their powers. Below is the prayer for baptizing the "purchased" lodestone, copied word for word from a manuscript provided by our informant:

#### *"Prayer to the Virtuous Lodestone"*

#### *Baptism of the Purchased Stone in a Church:*

*The purchased lodestone is taken to a church. Two candles are lit, and the stone is brought near the baptismal font. Ground salt is placed on the stone, and it is immersed in holy water. Then the following words are spoken: "God the Father, God the Son, I baptize you. Magnet you are, and a magnet you shall be,*

*fortune and luck you shall call me."*

*Immediately afterward, one kneels in the center of the church and recites the Lord's Prayer.*

#### *At home:*

*Next, the stone is taken home and placed in a specially prepared wool bag while reciting the following prayer:*

#### *Prayer:*

*"Beautiful lodestone, charming mineral who walked with the Samaritan woman, and to whom you gave beauty, luck, and a wife, I offer you gold for my treasure, silver to take away envy and evil. According to what I desire, let it be asked." The offerings mentioned should be prepared to accompany the lodestone.*

#### *On Fridays:*

*On Fridays, the stone is bathed in consecrated wine, and the following prayer is said:*

#### *Prayer:*

*"Beautiful lodestone, mineral who walked with the Samaritan woman, to whom you gave beauty, luck, and women, you shall give me luck and fortune." Then it is placed back in the pouch with the sand<sup>4</sup> and other items. After that, the wine in which the lodestone was bathed is drunk.*

#### *Another prayer:*

*"Lodestone, enchanting by the virtue that God gave you, enchant me as you enchant every woman, so that at my feet she may moan and sigh.*

*To you I pray, lodestone, that my sales be splendid, quick, and forceful, and that the weapons of my enemies who attempt anything against my life fall defeated—all at my feet—so that I may lose neither in dice nor in cards." Whoever prays this will pass joyful days and nights, with good comfort. Amen, Jesus.*

#### *Recommendation:*

*All these prayers must be recited with faith.*

### *To Test if it is Genuine*

The "purchased" lodestone consists of two small stones: male and female. To test if it is genuine, the female stone must be placed on top of a porcelain plate

<sup>4</sup>The purchased lodestone must be "fed" with river sand or machete sawdust (i.e., the fine metal filings left after sharpening a machete).

(not any other kind). If the female stone on top does not "seek out" the male stone underneath the plate, then it is not good.

*Powers for Business:*

As suggested in the prayers, the purchased lodestone serves to "bring in more money." For this purpose, it is kept in its red pouch and placed under the cash register or wherever the money is stored.

*To Attract the Opposite Sex and Bring Good Luck:*

The "purchased" lodestone is also used for love and good fortune. The procedure is the same as the one used with the stone from the *Cadejo*.