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TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA



EL CAFE LITERARIO

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TOPE DE MAYO DANCE

The last day of May in Santa Catarina Mita township, department of Jutiapa, takes place the so-called "*El tope de mayo*", to ask for soon rainy season. This was created fifty years ago by Mr. Santiago García, as known as "*tío Tago*", and since then become part of the local folklore, and the *barrio de Santa Elena* is in charge of organizing it every year.

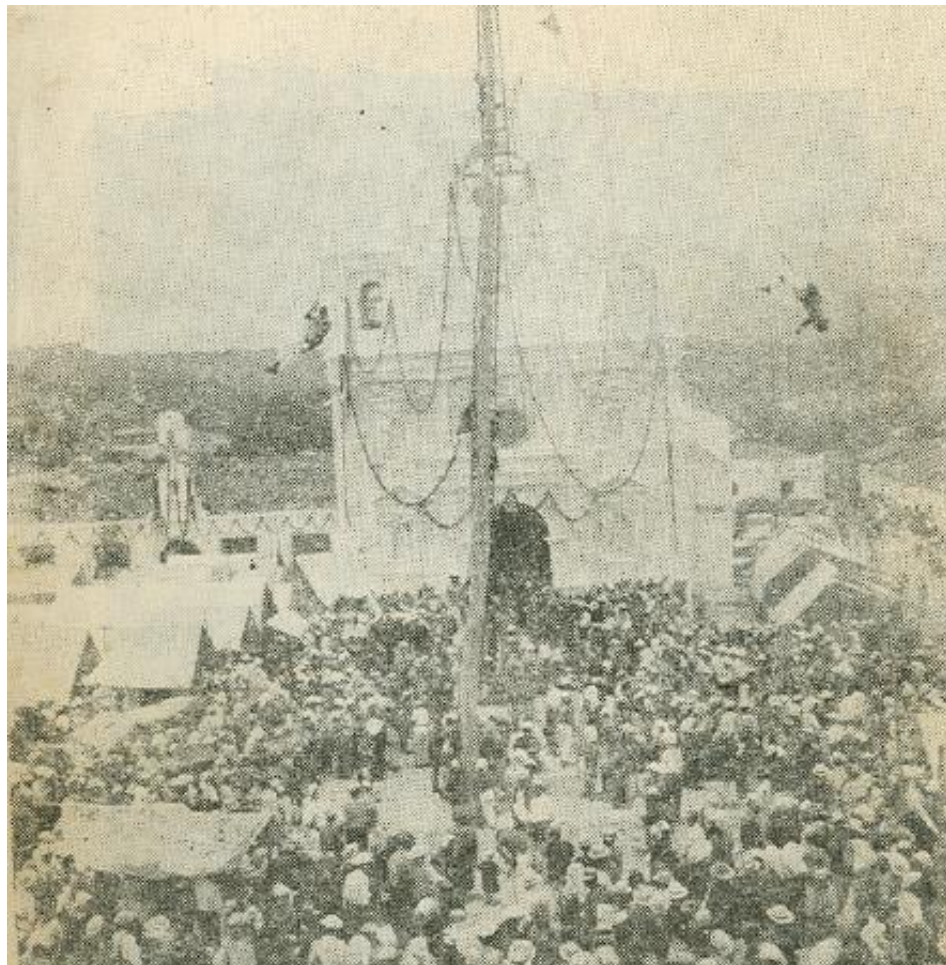
Originally, the dance was starring by two characters: winter and summer, the first one was dressed in tree branches of paradise, from the neck to the feet, and the second one was dressed in dried banana leaves, both of them wore ancient wood masks, now belonging to the neighborhood. Then, two more characters were added: spring and fall. Men represented them all, and spring and fall wore modern masks and common clothes. A wind band plays the music.

The schedule of the entourage is the following: to sunset, spring and fall leave the house of Mr. Manuel Barrientos to meet with winter and summer, who leave "*tío Tago*" house, the four characters all together go towards to the central park accompanied by the crowd and a group of young men carrying torches that illuminate the stage and from there the performers of the dance say their relationship.

**WINTER**



SUMMER



PALO VOLADOR DANCE

The main celebration of Joyabaj, Quiché, is on August 15. Among the many dances that are celebrated on this day, the main one is *Palo Volador*.

A 20-meter post is brought to the plaza for this dance; it is brought from far away and enters the town at night, and without being seen by any woman. Several stairs will be placed next to the most tied one, and the three main characters will climb them. The characters are dressed in clothes generally rented in the “*morería*” of the place, with colors red, yellow, and black. The youngest stays on top of the post, and the others, at the moment that the parade passes under them, already back to the church, approximately at midday, they are released from the ring by placing the tip and slowly begins to spin, unrolling the long rope from the tip of the post. This descent is carried out by hanging on one leg. In the successive turns, it will no longer be them who climb, but others, and they will have simpler costumes.

