

LEGENDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: LEGENDS, STORIES, MYTHS, AND INDIGENOUS FABLES

Jaime Ismael Búcaro Moraga

Presentation

Many years have passed since the first edition of the "Legends, Stories, Myths, and Indigenous Fables" was published. In 1959, the Director of the Instituto Indigenista tasked the author with a study on the legends of indigenous peoples. After the research, a significant amount of legends from indigenous populations, representing different linguistic groups, were collected. Given the variety of popular narratives and after analyzing their content, they were classified, leading to the title assigned to the study. A mimeographed publication was prepared and printed in a very limited edition, coinciding with the celebration of the First Inter-American Indigenous Congress in Guatemala, attended by indigenous scholars from various countries in North, Central, and South America, who exhausted the available copies. For more than three decades, copies of this work have been requested, but unfortunately, it has not been possible to satisfy these requests.

When we began researching indigenous legends, we did not imagine the contribution these oral traditions would make to the knowledge of aboriginal culture, nor the interest it would arouse among scholars of popular Guatemalan literature. Our study allowed us to delve into the influence that Western culture exerted on indigenous peoples, which, although it did not transform their culture, gradually allowed for some transformation in their thinking, giving rise to new popular narratives.

Undoubtedly, the indigenous peoples of Guatemala have their most faithful representation in the wonderful conception of popular thought, transmitted orally from generation to generation, carrying the traditions of our ancestors. Time is relentless, but benevolent when popular traditions are transmitted, which, after many years, still retain their cultural value as part of the dynamic culture. However, many legends remain unknown and should be rescued for the enrichment of national folklore.

In Guatemala, only the Centro de Estudios Folklóricos of the Universidad de San Carlos is dedicated to the study and dissemination of national folklore. We acknowledge their concern for rescuing popular traditions that remained hidden in oblivion. The author wishes to express his profound gratitude to CEFOL, especially to Lic. Celso A. Lara Figueroa, a distinguished researcher dedicated to national folklore, for his unwavering support in including in the Tradiciones de Guatemala magazine a new edition of the "Legends, Stories, Myths, and Indigenous Fables," which are representative of the cultural value of our race, whose folk culture reflects the purity of thought and sincerity of indigenous sentiments.

Its content has been revised and corrected without altering its traditional integrity and purity, preserving the originality of the first edition, except for some stylistic, presentation, and readability corrections to engage the reader in understanding its content and how the indigenous person conveys their thoughts in relation to their popular traditionalism.

The author wishes to take this opportunity to present the new edition as "Legends of Indigenous Peoples: Legends, Stories, Myths, and Indigenous Fables" and, with it, pay homage to two pillars of national indigenism, especially Lic. Juan de Dios Rosales N. (RIP), former Director of the Instituto Indigenista Nacional, who sparked my interest in dedicating myself to the study and research of indigenous culture, and Lic. David Vela S. (RIP), former Director of the now-defunct newspaper "El Imparcial," who always recognized the value of indigenous culture and sponsored my writings in the field of indigenism, publishing them on the editorial page of said disseminative organ. Both expressed their interest in having the work on indigenous folklore legends published on the occasion of that international congress. I also express my gratitude to my former fellow researchers at the Instituto Indigenista, with whom I often joined efforts and interest in our fieldwork, to objectively investigate the reality of indigenous culture.

The author hopes that this new edition of "Legends of Indigenous Peoples" fulfills its purpose of informing Guatemalans and those interested in national folklore about some of the oral traditions of indigenous culture, with the assurance that its description carries the purest originality of traditional thought of Guatemalan culture.

Introduction

The Instituto Indigenista Nacional, on this occasion, is pleased to present to all those interested in the indigenous culture of the country this publication related to a part of the national folklore. This publication does not aim to present to the esteemed readers all the folkloric material that exists in our aboriginal communities but rather to introduce popular thought through a small collection of narratives that showcase the spiritual aspect of their culture, which, despite the influence of Western culture, still retains the originality and distinctiveness inherited from their ancestors.

The Institute has not conducted any specific folkloric research in the indigenous communities of the country. While it does hold a considerable amount of this material in its archives, it has been collected through various studies conducted by members of its Technical Field Department and has emerged from the nature of their work. Therefore, the presentation of the material is not exactly original but a version of the data collected during their research, without distorting the underlying idea or moral essence, ensuring that the indigenous popular thought, which governs its folkloric character, is not lost for even a moment.

For the reasons already stated, the Instituto Indigenista excused itself from conducting a complete scientific analysis and leaves it to the discretion of folklorists, ethnologists, and others interested in deeply understanding our folklore to analyze these narratives or "recreations of the people," as A. Van Gennep calls them in his work "The Formation of Legends".

In preparing this version of the "Legends of Indigenous Peoples," it was necessary to classify the material into several themes, namely: Legends, Myths, Fables, and a Story, each further subdivided according to the themes present in these narratives.

In the LEGENDS, motifs such as corn, certain saints, bells, adventures of people and animals, and some history are highlighted; in the MYTHS, beliefs and characters from the supernatural world of the indigenous people stand out; the FABLES showcase the wonderful and fertile imagination of the indigenous people; and finally, the collection is enriched by a Story whose original account took place in a community of color located on the Atlantic coast.

Legends about the Origin of Corn (1-18). Corn is a cereal that is intimately connected to the life of our aboriginal people. They cultivate it continuously as it forms the basis of their diet. Regarding corn, the indigenous people hold various beliefs that have given rise to the most original legends circulated within their territorial space.

In the first twelve legends we present, the origin of corn is related to animals such as crows, ants, and wildcats. In the remaining legends, the origin of corn is attributed to religious figures and chance. These narratives possess a genuine indigenous flavor.

Legends about Some Saints (19-35). Although these legends are not numerous, they are of great folkloric importance for a better understanding of the religious spirit of the indigenous people, particularly the mysticism of their deep faith and the unwavering practice of their religious customs.

However, to facilitate the reader's interpretation of these legends, it is necessary to make some preliminary considerations.

In pre-Hispanic times, the Guatemalan indigenous people practiced polytheism. When the Spanish conquerors invaded their lands, the Western culture they brought began to influence the indigenous culture, especially in the religious aspect. The missionaries' vigorous and tenacious evangelizing efforts eventually dominated the indigenous mind, transforming their paganism into a blend of religious mysticism and pagan primitivism, which gave rise to the most implausible beliefs, resulting from the interplay of the two cultures.

Catholicism so thoroughly took hold of indigenous thought that, combined with the polytheistic beliefs of their ancestors, it generated multiple beliefs and varied religious customs. This wealth of beliefs and religious practices gave rise to what is currently known as "indigenous religion."

Our aborigines, like all humans of Western culture, believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and venerate many saints that the Christian religion has set as examples of faith and purity. However, among them all, there is one for whom they feel adoration and deep respect: the "patron saint." This saint is called so because, according to their beliefs, he is responsible for ensuring the prosperity and security of the people under his protection, and his devotees turn to him for spiritual health.

The image of the "patron saint" is sacred to the indigenous people, and their feelings towards it are of profound devotion and ardent zeal. Thus, in all indigenous communities, there is a religious organization responsible for caring for the image, performing its rituals and special customs, and celebrating its festival, which is almost always the patron of the village.

There are other similar organizations in the communities, but the most important one is the Cofradía del Santo Patrono.

On the other hand, it frequently happens that the name of this saint is the same as the name of the town.

Regarding the saints, indigenous tradition preserves wonderful legends, of which we present those numbered 19-35. Among these, the legends numbered 19-30 refer to the origin of the "patron saint," which the indigenous people attribute to a supernatural event.

Legends 31 and 32 also refer to the patron saint, although not to his origin. Number 33 narrates the origin of the name of the town of San Pedro Necta. Number 34 comes from Santiago Atitlán, recounting the origin of Maximón (Simon Judas), and the indigenous people give this legend a moralizing character. Finally, the last legend, number 35, focuses on the Virgin of Guadalupe, whom the indigenous people of San Pedro Soloma (Huehuetenango) venerate.

We also include other legends, numbered between 36 and 43, that feature motifs and characters with the vividness of indigenous imagination. In these, the reader will observe the moral depth, a characteristic that highlights the indigenous people's high sense of perfection and their spirit of goodness towards their fellows.

Myths (numbers 44-52). The indigenous people believe in the existence of a "creator" for each of the things on earth; such beliefs are products of the polytheistic heritage of their ancestors. They also hold the belief in a character known as the "owner of the world," also called the "Lord of the Mountain" (legends 44 and 45). This character is of small stature, with a thick gray beard, and wears red clothing, as his appearance is also red. He lives in the hills and volcanoes, where he has a luxurious palace; the aborigines worship him and believe that he is the one who can authorize them to plant their lands, cut down trees, and hunt animals.

Anyone who excessively hunts animals or cuts down trees and does not follow the rites imposed by the "Lord of the Mountain" is punished by being taken to his palace, from which they do not leave until they fulfill the imposed sanctions to atone for their fault.

The existence of the Supreme Being inspires in the indigenous people a certain fear and deep respect, which is reflected in their religious practices and can be appreciated by the reader throughout these narratives.

Fables. This publication includes two fables. Number 53 comes from San Juan Alotenango (Sacatepéquez) and has been divided into chapters to better interpret it, as its character experiences various situations, and the description, while somewhat long, is very engaging.

Number 54 originates from San José Chacayá (Sololá) and shows the importance of animals in indigenous fantasy. This narrative is very beautiful as, although the protagonists are only animals, it carries a significant moral content.

Stories. Although we include only one story, number 55, its content offers a wonderful view of the culture of a community of color located on the shores of Bahía de Amatique, Livingston (Izabal).

Such is the succinct description of the content of this publication, which we leave in the hands of the esteemed reader with the best wishes that it will be an informative material of national folklore.

Legends about Maize

The Origin of Maize

Santa María Visitación

On the slopes of the San Pedro volcano, located in San Pedro la Laguna, there was a very large rock a long time ago. The Archangel Gabriel decided to give a gift to the inhabitants of that region by sending a lightning bolt with all his might that shattered the rock, revealing a large cave full of corn cobs. Some crows wandering around those places, upon hearing the thunderous impact on the stone, rushed to that place, where they found a large number of corn cobs burning as a result of the electric discharge. Quickly, they managed to pull out a sufficient quantity of unburnt cobs and took them to the tops of the highest rocks, leaving only the corn turned into charcoal in the cave, which was of no use to them.

Wild cats also heard the thunderclap and hurried to locate the place from where it came. It did not take them long to discover the cave and, since the crows had arrived first, they only found burnt corn, which they consumed a large part of.

In Santa María Visitación, men were also experiencing a shortage of food, as the Palapam (ceiba) they consumed was running out and they were greatly concerned about finding a new food source to satisfy them. But they did not have to wait long: on one occasion, a neighbor who was cutting firewood on a nearby hill saw a wild cat defecating beside him. He wanted to catch it to kill it and take it home to eat with his family, but it escaped and disappeared into the bushes. Very curious, the neighbor saw that the cat's excrement contained some grains unknown to him. He quickly went to the village to tell the neighbors what he had seen, bringing the grains he had found in the feces as proof. The neighbors decided to catch every wild cat in the mountains and set out in search of them. They managed to catch only six animals and punished them severely to make them reveal where they got the grains, but since they refused to speak, they prepared a bonfire and hung them upside down

over it, suspended by a rope from a tree branch. The poor animals could not endure the torture and were forced to reveal where the maize was.

The men prepared the journey and went to the cave, where they indeed found many burnt grains. Despite this, everyone took as much as they could and brought it to their homes to plant in their fields, which they did without delay. The maize harvest was abundant but black; nevertheless, they consumed it to sustain themselves, abandoning the **Palapam**.

Later, the crows learned that those men were eating maize and became angry because they did not want anyone but them to eat those grains. They decided to destroy the cornfields, but they were discovered by the men, who attacked them. Many crows died in the fight, and the rest fled.

However, these men were not content with just driving away the destructive birds; they wanted to find out why the crows wanted to destroy their crops and sought to catch one alive. When they had one in their hands, they imposed such a painful punishment that it could not bear it and was forced to say that it and the rest of its kind had better maize and of a yellow color. The men continued to question the crow to find out where it kept its maize, and since it refused to answer, they made a bonfire and burned it. It was not enough to kill it; they then dismembered its body and found ten grains of yellow maize inside its crop.

Believing that all crows kept maize inside their bodies, they went through the trouble of killing every one that crossed their path and thus gathered many grains, which they used as seeds. After a year, they had a good harvest, and it was this maize they passed down to their generations, which to this day is considered the most valuable food in Santa María Visitación.

The Origin of Maize

San Andrés Xecul

Once, a very hungry crow decided to go in search of food to distant lands, as he could not find anything to satisfy his appetite. Exhausted from so much flying, he

returned to his nest to rest and regain the lost energy. He had strategically built his home at the top of the highest rocks to avoid being disturbed while he rested.

He was sleeping peacefully in the silence that reigned in those places when his sleep was suddenly interrupted. He heard loud noises coming from inside the rock, and since this was unusual, it scared him. However, he managed to control himself and quickly recovered. As there was no one around to tell about what had happened, he decided to find out the cause of the noises himself. Despite the fatigue and hunger he was suffering, he tried to break the rock with his beak, but he could not due to its solidity. Since it was impossible for him to break part of the stone because his beak was too weak, he preferred to rest, as he needed to recover from his fatigue.

The crow remembered his friend the woodpecker (tuc tuc) and thought that he might help him drill the rock. When he was again able to fly, he took to the air, heading to the forests in search of his friend. When he found him and after telling him what was happening, he asked for his help to drill the stone, as he was intrigued by the strange occurrence.

The woodpecker provided the help his friend required, and together they went to the rock, where without wasting any time, he began to drill it with his strong beak. After much effort, he managed to make a small opening, and to their surprise, a large quantity of corn cobs came out, completely covering the crow's nest.

As the cobs fell, many grains were detached from them, and the two little birds decided to eat them. Since they liked the taste, they kept eating until they were full. The crow had to build a new nest, but this was compensated by that valuable discovery, as he would no longer have to search for food everywhere, and this satisfied him.

The two birds constantly visited that place, carrying many corn grains in their beaks and wings, which, through their flight, were scattered everywhere. In this way, many fields became saturated with maize plants, which the birds fed on.

Among the neighbors living around those areas, no one realized how, when, or why those plants appeared in their fields. Although they never found an answer to these questions, they also had maize at their disposal and decided to try it. Like the birds, they liked its taste. They continued planting it, giving it great attention, and quickly, maize spread everywhere until it was planted in large quantities, becoming the most valued food in San Andrés Xecul for nourishment.

The Origin of Maize

Nebaj

When the town of Nebaj was newly founded, the inhabitants only ate fruits and papa "potato" with maize being completely unknown to them. But one day, a bird with shiny black feathers, a crow, flew over the fields surrounding the town, carrying a corn cob in its claws and scattering the grains in those places.

None of the people living in that region noticed what the crow was dropping and paid no attention to the event until they saw many similar plants growing in the communal fields without them having planted them. When they saw the grains that these plants produced in the form of corn cobs, they called them "fruits," as they only knew fruits. They wanted to eat the grains, but there were very few, so they decided to plant as many as they gathered without worrying at all about preparing the soil beforehand. Someone found out that the name of those grains was maize.

After some time, the new harvest was abundant. They only needed to find a way to eat those grains. First, they ate them raw, then roasted, until they finally cooked them in water to turn them into dough and from it made tortillas.

Many people suffered from stomachaches when trying the different preparations they made from maize, and some even believed they might die if they ate it. Little by little, they got used to eating maize and continued cultivating it until it became widespread throughout the region.²

The Origin of Maize

Tectitán and Sipacapa

Long before the Spanish conquerors set foot on Guatemalan soil, everyone sustained themselves with the root of a plant called Ixpengua. This plant, whose root is large and round, can still be found in the forests of the Tectitán community. During those days, an unexpected event occurred that changed the dietary habits of the people in that area—this was the discovery of a grain that would later be called Maize.

This discovery happened when, one day, a crow was flying around the village carrying a strange object in its beak. The villagers observed it and, despite not knowing what it was, they thought it might be some kind of food, saying to each other, "Perhaps it is food that God is sending us." Before they finished their comments, the crow dropped the object. Some people hurried to pick it up and, seeing that it was a corn cob, they examined it closely, as they had never seen a fruit of such nature; then they cleared a portion of the communal land and scattered the grains there.

However, being inexperienced with this kind of planting, they placed the grains too close together, resulting in dense growth and very small corn cobs.

Undeterred, they planted the grains again, this time spacing them further apart. After some time, they were greatly satisfied with the results of their new harvest, as the corn cobs had grown considerably. They then began preparations to eat this new food. They cooked the grains in water, but later discovered that adding lime to the water made them taste better.

The prepared grains had such a good flavor that they adopted them as their exclusive food and named it Maize, a name that it still bears today.

The Origin of Maize

Santa Bárbara H.

In ancient times, the inhabitants of Santa Bárbara sustained themselves with the fruit of a grass called txuxin. This fruit was similar to maize but larger in size.

On one occasion, some villagers noticed a crow (joj) flying around the area, and suddenly it dropped a corn cob. Although they didn't know what fruit it was, they quickly picked it up, and seeing that the grains were similar to txuxin, they thought that by planting it, they might obtain the food they needed. They proceeded to plant the grains, and soon after, they harvested their maize crop. They prepared the grains in a special way and ate them. From that moment on, they chose to use maize as their means of subsistence, abandoning txuxin, which was not as good as the new grain.

The Origin of Maize

San Martín Sacatepéquez

Several centuries ago, the people of San Martín Sacatepéquez were sustained by the fruits of a plant that resembled maize. One day, a crow (joj) was flying over the village and dropped a corn cob that it was carrying in its beak. Some villagers who witnessed the event quickly picked up the corn cob. Noticing that it had grains, they decided to plant them, and with the best care, the plants soon began to bear fruit.

They harvested the first crop, cooked the grains, and ate them. As they liked the taste, they shared the news with the rest of the community, and in this way, the consumption of maize spread. Shortly afterward, the entire community began cultivating the new product, and the harvests were abundant, leading them to stop eating those fruits that did not provide as much nourishment as maize.

The Origin of Maize

San Andrés Itzapa

Many years ago, a crow flew over San Andrés Itzapa, scattering a few maize grains across the lands of the community. The inhabitants of that place found the grains and planted them, thinking they might serve as food. The crow did not only drop the grains of that precious cereal in San Andrés Itzapa but also in other places. All the towns blessed with maize became accustomed to planting it, as they found in it a valuable means of sustenance.

The Origin of Maize

Jacaltenango

It is said that in the place where the Azul River originates, in the municipality of Concepción, Huehuetenango, there once lived a group of elders who gave rise to several towns that now form the department of Huehuetenango.

In that place, there was a cave, the entrance to which was narrow enough to only allow small animals like ants (tx'ekém) to enter, and these ants constantly extracted grains of maize from it. The elder who later founded the town of Jacaltenango discovered that those insects ate the grains, which he also tasted and found to be delicious. He then showed the grains to all his companions, and since they needed food, they sought a way to enter the cave. It took them much effort, but they finally succeeded; they found the maize and spread its grains across all the lands.

Over time, the new towns propagated the grain and adopted it as a means of subsistence.

However, not all newly settled places produced good maize, as only in Jacaltenango is maize of high quality still grown today. This happened because the founder of this town, upon collecting his share of the grains, wrapped them in tree leaves, while the other elders used handkerchiefs.

The Origin of Maize

San Sebastián Coatán

The early inhabitants of San Sebastián Coatán were unfamiliar with maize. It was in San Miguel Acatán where ants (tx'ekém) discovered it inside a cave located in the outskirts of the town. The small creatures would enter the grotto and extract as many maize grains as they could carry.

One day, several villagers from San Miguel, who were walking near that hill, saw some tx'ekém ants coming out of the cave carrying unknown grains on their backs. Curious about the ants' load, they took the grains and ate them. They liked the taste and decided to enter the cave to extract as many grains as they could.

After much effort, the people of San Miguel managed to break through the rock and took all the maize they found, which they planted in their fields, hoping for a good harvest. Indeed, when they harvested, they found an abundance of grains, of which they consumed some and replanted the rest. They continued this cycle with each maize crop they harvested.

In gratitude for the gift of maize from the hill, the villagers decided to name it Or'lajón veén.⁴

The news of this grain reached the ears of the people of San Sebastián, who went to the town of San Miguel Acatán to obtain the maize they needed for food. They then dedicated themselves to cultivating this grain, as they liked it very much and adopted it as their primary food source in the entire community.

The Origin of Maize

Colotenango

On one occasion, a young boy was walking absentmindedly along the slopes of a hill within the municipality of Colotenango when he suddenly saw an ant (macax) carrying something on its head that caught his attention. He approached to see what

it was and noticed that they were grains, which he thought might be good for planting; so, he took them from the ant and brought them home. The next day, he planted them and carefully tended them, patiently waiting for the grains to sprout.

After some time, those grains turned into robust green plants, from which large cobs filled with grains emerged. The boy, pleased with his work, prepared the grains for eating and was delighted with their taste. Believing that he had made a great discovery, he shared it with his neighbors, who, following his example, also ate the grains.

Since then, the indigenous people of Colotenango have used maize as a staple food, and to thank the hill for the gift, they named it Twi paxel (Mother Maize).

The Origin of Maize

San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán

The early inhabitants of San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán sustained themselves by eating the root of a plant called txetxina.⁵ They did not eat maize and often struggled to find enough food until one day, some villagers discovered grains in the droppings of a wildcat that piqued their curiosity. When they asked the wildcat⁶ what it was, he replied that they were maize grains, which he had brought from a cave located on the outskirts of the village. The villagers asked the wildcat to show them the cave, and he gladly agreed.

However, the villagers could not keep up with the wildcat because it ran too fast, so they assigned⁷ a louse to accompany it. As they set off on the journey, the louse climbed onto the wildcat's back, but it couldn't withstand the shaking of its body and fell to the ground. Unable to see which direction the wildcat went, the louse returned to the village, disheartened. The villagers then decided to send a flea on a new journey with the wildcat. Although the flea also fell due to the wildcat's speed, it was cleverer than the louse and quickly jumped back onto the wildcat, holding on tightly until they reached a rock with a small opening where the feline satisfied its hunger with the maize it had mentioned.

With this information, the villagers went to that place and confirmed that it was all true, but they were unable to enter the cave. Needing the grain, they turned to the woodpeckers,⁸ asking them to use their strong beaks to widen the opening in the rock, but the hardness of the stone prevented them from succeeding. However, with their long beaks, the woodpeckers managed to extract a few grains of maize, which they consumed themselves.

Seeing that the woodpeckers had failed in their attempt to open the entrance to the cave, all the villagers called upon "White Lightning"⁹ to use his power to achieve this. Despite striking the rock with all his might, White Lightning was unable to destroy the stone that blocked the entrance to the cave. The villagers then decided to call on his younger brother, "Red Lightning."

The smaller lightning bolt, aware of his brother's failure, laughed at him and, to prove his superiority, unleashed a strike with all his fury, shattering the rock and exposing the grains. The villagers took as much maize as they could carry back to their homes, where they used it as seed for their crops. The maize quickly multiplied thanks to the care they gave it, and when they harvested the crop, they abandoned the txetxina plant to nourish themselves solely with maize.

The Origin of Maize

Santa Cruz Verapaz

Many years ago, there lived an elder known as Xajal mama', who had a daughter of striking beauty. She would often spend her time weaving in the courtyard of their home. A young man named Quiché Winak frequently passed by, deeply in love with the girl and courting her. However, she was very elusive and paid him no attention.

Tired of the girl's indifference and possessing the power to transform himself, the young man, Quiché Winak, decided to take the shape of a beautiful sparrow with vibrant plumage, hoping to capture her attention. He flew to an orange tree in the courtyard of the girl's house, savoring the sweet nectar of the blossoms. The girl, who had never seen such a stunning bird, immediately fell in love with it and asked her father to kill it so she could use it as a model for her weaving. The elder, who

never denied his daughter's requests, took his blowgun and shot a small projectile at the sparrow, wounding it and causing it to fall, where it was then captured.

The girl's father took the sparrow to his room, but the bird's pitiful cries due to its wounds kept him awake all night. Unable to bear the noise, he decided to move it to his daughter's room, where it would stay for the night. Once alone with the girl, Quiché Winak transformed back into his human form and, taking advantage of the darkness, abducted her.

Early the next morning, Xajal mama' noticed the disappearance of both his daughter and the sparrow. He asked his wife to bring him his special glasses, which allowed him to see great distances. With them, he located his daughter with Quiché Winak at the bottom of the Thirteenth Sea. Grabbing his blowgun, he set out to kill the man who had taken his daughter, and seeing the water turn red, he believed he had succeeded. Satisfied, he left, thinking the red was blood, but it was actually delicate flowers the couple had released to deceive the elder.

Meanwhile, Quiché Winak and the young woman used this time to their advantage. They emerged from the sea at a spot where they could not be seen and began to ascend the hills known as Don Juan, Don Paxil, and Don Pablo. On each hill, they built stone walls to slow down their pursuer. When the elder realized he had been tricked, he continued his chase but eventually gave up. He then called upon the hawks to catch the couple, but they, too, failed.

After leaving the hills behind, Quiché Winak arrived at the house of a man from Rabinal,¹² entrusting the girl to his care for seven years. He instructed the Rabinal man to place her in a cave located in those hills after the seven years had passed and to leave her three candles, each worth twenty-five pesos, for light. Quiché Winak then ascended to the sky, transforming into the Sun.

The Rabinal man fulfilled the task exactly as he was told. He found a cave with a small entrance and left the girl there. Once inside, she transformed into maize, and for a long time, no one knew that this precious grain existed in that place.¹³

A wildcat eventually discovered the maize inside the cave and began to feed on it. One day, while wandering with his friend the fox, the fox noticed the peculiar smell of the wildcat's gas and asked:

- "What have you eaten that makes your fart smell so strong?"
- "Nothing but patz'pam,¹⁴ replied the wildcat.
- "But your fart really stinks!" insisted the fox.
- "That's all I've eaten," the wildcat concluded, and then he wandered off in another direction.

The wildcat continued visiting the cave, but the fox, curious to find out what his friend was eating, eventually followed him and discovered the maize in the cave. The fox was so pleased with the grain that he ate until he was fully satisfied.¹⁵

It didn't take long for the fox to spread the news. Once everyone knew about the existence of maize, they tried to break the rock, but when they couldn't, they turned to the Thunder Brothers.¹⁶ None of them could destroy the stone, and when it was the turn of the youngest, he asked his brothers to leave him alone for a moment so he could try. Since he considered the rock too hard, he decided to use a trick. He sought out a friend who played the harp and asked him to play his instrument around the stone and tell him which part was the most fragile and could be broken easily.

The musician quickly discovered the weak spot and informed his friend, who immediately released a thunderbolt that shattered the rock into pieces. However, not only did the rock suffer the consequences of the thunderbolt, but so did the maize. Much of it was burned, some of it was merely toasted, and the rest retained its white color.¹⁷ Once the cave was opened, everyone entered and took maize, which they later planted. Some people took black kernels, others red, and the rest white. These varieties soon spread throughout the region and became a staple food.

The Origin of Maize

Concepción Tutuapa

Many centuries ago, in the territory now known as the municipality of Concepción Tutuapa, there was a great indigenous empire whose king had several sons. The eldest of these, still very young, was destined to lead his people in the future, but he suffered from an illness that prevented him from satisfying his hunger with any kind of food, so he chose to stop eating altogether. This situation brought him to the brink of death and caused great distress to his father.

One day, the monarch was walking outside the town when he encountered a young man who, by his appearance, did not seem to belong to the empire. The foreigner piqued the king's curiosity, so he called the young man over to ask who he was and where he came from. The young man hurried to greet the king with all the customary reverence and introduced himself as Juan, explaining that he came from Colotenango, where he owned vast lands on a hill called Ax'el, located about a hundred kilometers from where he was now visiting. He went on to say that in his lands, he grew maize, beans, potatoes, and other crops that were the staple foods of his people.

As Juan was an intelligent young man, quick-witted, and articulate, the king had a pleasant and lengthy conversation with him, during which he shared what was happening to his son. The young man replied that what the king's son needed was to be nourished with the maize that was cultivated on his lands, as it was easy to prepare, eat, and constituted excellent nourishment. The king was thrilled by this news and asked Juan to gift him the maize he spoke of. Juan courteously responded that he would only give him seeds to plant and cultivate, but with the condition that when his children died, they would be buried in the earth.

Juan believed that everything the earth provides through crops must be returned to it, and as he had heard during his visit to this empire that when a person died, their body was cremated, he felt compelled to impose this condition. The king gladly accepted, as he did not want his son to die at such a young age. Juan invited the king to visit his home so he could give him the maize seeds, which he couldn't provide at that moment since he didn't have them with him.

The monarch quickly prepared for his journey, and many people accompanied him, bringing along a marimba, drums, flutes, and fireworks. The journey took several days, and after overcoming great natural obstacles such as high mountains, deep ravines, and wide rivers, they finally arrived at the town of Colotenango.

When they arrived at Juan's home, they held a celebration, but Juan did not like the music produced by those instruments and, in his anger, refused to gift the maize seeds. Disappointed, the party returned to their land.

After some time, the king decided to make a new trip and to insist that Juan provide him with the maize seeds. This time, he was accompanied by only a few subjects, who brought only a violin and guitars. The music of these instruments did please the young man, and approaching the king, he invited him into his house, where he gave him a large quantity of maize seeds wrapped in a small cloth. At the same time, Juan instructed the king on how to plant the maize and how to prepare the grains for consumption. The king returned to his people very content and ordered that everything Juan had advised be done.

When the first maize harvest was gathered in Concepción Tutuapa, the maize was prepared for eating, and the king's son was the first to try it. What great joy there was in that town! The king's son began to eat, and from that moment on, the young man grew strong and healthy, never suffering from any illness again.

That first maize harvest was abundant, and when all the neighbors saw the results obtained with the king's son, they also ate those grains, and since they liked it, they continued planting it and used it as their main source of nourishment.

The Origin of Corn

San Rafael Pétzal, H.

The inhabitants who once populated the community of San Rafael Pétzal used to eat a plant called txetxib' (mule's hoof), which was only found in the forests. Long after, the descendants of these people discovered that from the hill txe c'ojá (behind

the house), located approximately two kilometers north of the town, water flowed and formed a river. They were observing it and discussing the phenomenon when suddenly they noticed a small unknown cereal grain floating like a toy on the water, which they could not obtain because it appeared so suddenly and the water was flowing swiftly.

This event made the villagers think that the hill was performing miracles and, therefore, needed to be pleased. They lit a candle for it and soon saw other grains, similar to the first one they had seen, in the river waters and prepared to collect them. Having the grains in their hands, they did not wait long to plant them.

After some time, to their great satisfaction, they saw that in the place where they had planted the grains, green plants were growing with large ears filled with grains. They harvested the ears, and with the grains they collected, they replanted, which later allowed them to have a good harvest. With a good quantity of those grains gathered, they decided to eat them and never tasted *txetxib'* again.

The entire community believed that the hill *txe c'ojá* had provided them with that cereal on which they now relied for sustenance, so they decided to dedicate another candle to it, which they lit near the water source. But something unexpected happened at that moment; together with the water, as if it were part of it, the figure of a human being appeared. It was a robust man who, speaking to those indigenous people, declared:

- "I am the Man of Corn, and my name is Paxl. (Pascual).

- I come from far away; I lived on the coast, but since they offended me by throwing me to the ground for animals to eat, I now seek a new home where I will be appreciated. I believe that with you, it will be different, and that is what brought me to this land.

- I hope you treat me well," continued the man, "and appreciate those corn grains I sent you before my arrival, but I ask that through a diviner, ¹⁸ on April 20th ¹⁹ each year, you celebrate a 'custom' in my name. I will also be in the neighboring town of Santa Bárbara," added the apparition, "as I have secured lodging on the hill *twi'*

xtuc',²⁰ whose residents have committed to practicing the same custom I request of you."

Having said this, the strange figure disappeared as if the river water had enveloped his body.

Since then, those grains have been called "corn" by all the villagers. Each year, the "custom" requested by the "Lord of Corn" was celebrated, but it was suspended after the death of the diviner in charge of carrying it out, and there was no one else to continue the tradition.

The Origin of Corn

San Cristóbal Cucho

Corn was not brought here from anywhere, nor did it originate from any kind of plant; it was God who created it and left it in San Cristóbal Cucho so that those who lived here could use it for sustenance. The Lord did not leave only corn but also wheat and many other types of grains, which complete the dietary needs of all the residents of this place.

The Origin of Corn

Joyabaj

Note: This legend also provides the origin of the patron saint of Joyabaj, and since the indigenous people's supernatural religious beliefs are more important in their cultural life, we have deemed it convenient to move it to the section of Legends about Some Saints, where the reader can read and enjoy its content.

The Origin of Corn

San Rafael La Independencia

The first people who settled in the area that later became the town of San Rafael La Independencia already knew about corn, although it was different from what is known today. Due to the poor quality of corn they had, it did not grow well in the new lands, resulting in very poor harvests. This prompted the community to search for a new crop to replace the corn for sustenance.

But one day, some villagers returning from a trip to San Sebastián Coatán, Huehuetenango, came across an ear of corn while passing through a hill in the jurisdiction of that municipality. Since the ear had different grains than those they cultivated, they took it with them and set out to plant the new grains, thus obtaining a quality of corn that turned out to be superior to what they knew. From that time on, they adopted it as food because it provided a better yield to their daily diet, and thus it became widespread, leaving it as a legacy to subsequent generations.

The hill where the first ear of corn appeared was named Isnal (a Kanjobal word meaning "Its Ear"). According to the legend, when the sound of thunder is heard on this hill, it is certain to rain because this is where corn was created.

The Origin of Corn

Zacualpa

The inhabitants who founded Zacualpa were unfamiliar with corn and subsisted solely on tobacco, an agricultural product that was the only one known, as there was no need to plant it. Since the plant was wild, it grew on its own and was abundant around the settlement. They consumed this tobacco by either eating or smoking it, but it did not satisfy their hunger and provided no nourishment.

However, the news reached Zacualpa that in the town of Canillá, they ate grains cultivated in the ground, called corn. They decided to exchange some of their abundant tobacco for the much-needed grains. The villagers gladly accepted the exchange because they had enough corn for their consumption and even some surplus, plus they found it entertaining to smoke tobacco. Corn spread to all corners of Zacualpa and was adopted by the locals as a staple food in their daily diet.

LEGENDS ABOUT SOME SAINTS

The Origin of the Patron Saint

San Pedro Jocopilas

Many years ago, a large number of people arrived at the place now known as San Pedro Jocopilas, intending to settle there. Given their growing numbers, which continued to increase over time, they managed to form a village where, in addition to their homes, they built a temple to venerate a Christian image they wished to acquire, though they had yet to decide which one. Despite being well-organized, the village had not been christened with its current name or any other.

However, it happened that on one occasion, a woodcutter from the new village was in a nearby mountain, specifically in the place called Sak'rip'al (which has no translation into Spanish), looking for a lush tree to cut for firewood, which he needed to make a fire at home and cook his meals.

After covering much of the mountain, he found the tree he was eagerly searching for, from which he hoped to make good use.

He began to cut down the green giant, and when it finally gave way and leaned to one side, he saw a cabinet fall at his feet, which had detached from one of the high branches. The tree fell, and the frightened woodcutter saw that inside the cabinet was an image he recognized as San Pedro, a biblical figure he knew from practicing the Christian religion.

The woodcutter was astonished by this marvelous apparition, and once he regained his composure, he attempted to lift the cabinet to carry it to his village, but he couldn't because his strength was insufficient. This prompted him to hurry back to his village, where he recounted what had happened. Everyone listened attentively and believed his words, as he was a respectable man. Then several neighbors went to where the cabinet was, carrying candles, incense, and setting off fireworks. They were also accompanied by a marimba that played throughout the journey.

Several men lifted the cabinet and transported it with great solemnity to the village. Like the woodcutter, the entire community recognized the image as San Pedro and decided to adopt him as their patron saint. That same day, they placed the image in the temple they had already built, and no further ceremonies were held at the moment.

The next day, when the first rays of the sun began to dawn, all the villagers went to the church to visit the sacred image of their patron saint. However, when they arrived, they were surprised not to find it in its place. They searched the entire village, assuming someone had stolen it. When it didn't appear, someone suggested they go to the place where it had appeared to the woodcutter, and indeed, they found it there. They transported it again to the village temple and had a mass said, which pleased San Pedro, and he remained in the village.

The religious fervor of the indigenous people who inhabited the place led them to recognize San Pedro not only as their religious protector but also to name the town they managed to establish after him.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

Patzité

The municipality of Patzité is situated on a mountain and bears that name because before it was populated, the pito (Tz'ité) trees abounded in its forests, producing a fruit shaped like pods with red-colored seeds.²¹

In Santa María Chiquimula, in the department of Totonicapán, a group of poor families lacked enough land for their subsistence, which prompted them to travel north and reach the departmental capital of El Quiché, where they asked the authorities to provide them with the necessary land to build their homes and practice agriculture. Their request was not denied, but since El Quiché did not have available and suitable lands for the needs of the applicants, they offered to give them only the Tz'ité hill.

The travelers gladly accepted the offer as they would finally have enough land; however, they faced the daunting task of cutting down all the pito trees. They began the work on the slopes of the hill to clear the area and build their homes. No one rested, and trees fell with every step. Then came the turn of a large tree, the tallest and most robust of them all. Given this giant's size, the task was difficult, but they finally felled the tree. At that moment, they saw an image of a virgin fall from one of its branches.

This happened on February 2, and because they were all Catholics, they baptized the appeared image with the name María Candelaria. At the very place where the virgin appeared, they built a temple with a thatched roof to house and venerate her. Also, when there were no trees left, they built their homes around the church, beginning the formation of the town they named María Patzité.²²

The name these neighbors gave their town was modified much later, leaving it with only the name Patzité.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

Malacatancito

The municipality of Malacatancito had its seat in the village currently known as San Ramón. At that time, it was just a small settlement where one day, an image of the Virgin Santa Ana appeared. Those who found it became her devotees, and as the settlement's population increased, many others joined this religious fervor and built a temple where they would go to venerate her and seek protection.

But the town had to be moved to another location, where it remains to this day. The reasons that forced most of the residents to relocate are unknown. They took all their belongings with them, including the image of Santa Ana; however, she was unsatisfied with the move and disappeared several times from where she was placed, reappearing in the village of San Ramón. Then the chimanes pleaded with the Virgin to accompany them because they needed her to watch over the entire neighborhood. The Virgin accepted the move, and they built her a new church.

Practically, the village of San Ramón was abandoned because the few families that continued to reside there, without any religious image to worship, did not use the temple and left it in disuse. The ravages of time destroyed the entire building, of which only some walls remain today, remnants of what was once the community's Catholic church, slowly eroding over the years.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

San Antonio Huista

The town named San Antonio Huista was once barely populated enough to be considered a small settlement. At that time, some elders found an image of San Antonio in a place known as the "old cemetery," located half a kilometer south of the village. They spread the news, and all the neighbors headed to that place to see the image for themselves.

Since they were already aware of the existence of "saints," they did not want to leave the image of San Antonio behind, so they took it to the center of the settlement, where they built a church and paid homage to it. From that time on, San Antonio was formally recognized as the community's patron saint.

Gradually, people from various distant places began to settle in the settlement, and together with the descendants of the original inhabitants, they formed a town, which they named San Antonio Huista in honor of the patron saint.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

El Tejar

In a place in the municipality of El Tejar, many years ago, the image of "San Sebastián" appeared. The neighbors who discovered it moved it to the Catholic church in the departmental capital, but later they were informed that the image had disappeared. They returned to the place where they had found the image and were greatly surprised to see it there. Again, they took it to the Catholic temple in Chimaltenango, but the image returned to its original location.

This happened many times, so the community, believing that the image's appearance on their land had some miraculous significance, decided to choose "San Sebastián" as the patron saint of the town, so he would watch over the community's interests.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

San José Chacayá

In San José Chacayá, a long time ago, a neighbor found an abandoned image of the Patriarch San José in the field. Not knowing who this biblical figure was, he picked up the image and took it with him, using it to make a fire, which produced flames of different colors. He then placed a jug of water near the fire. Soon it boiled, and he calmly drank it. Instantly, he was struck by a strange illness, which eventually led to his death, but not before telling his neighbors what had happened.

The entire community used to graze their animals on a distant plain, and one day, several shepherds were engaged in this task when suddenly an old man appeared to them. He was poorly dressed, with a small bag hanging from his shoulder, giving the impression of being a beggar. He asked them for some food to satisfy his hunger, and the shepherds replied that they had nothing on hand and could not get any for fear of losing their animals.

The old man insisted and, to persuade the men to fulfill his request, offered to watch their livestock. The shepherds agreed and headed home. They told their families what had happened and soon returned to the grazing area, bringing enough food for the beggar who was surely waiting for them. But upon arrival, they were astonished to see that he had disappeared, and in his place was the image of San José with a small bag on his shoulder, the same as the stranger had carried. Moreover, the animals were all accounted for.

The shepherds noticed that the image of San José was the same as the one that had appeared to the neighbor who had succumbed to a strange illness, as he had described it to many people before he died, and they spread this description throughout the town. The shepherds wanted to immediately take the image to the

town, but they could not because it was too heavy, and only with the help of other neighbors were they able to transport it. The image of San José was kept in the home of a resident of the town.

Inside the small bag on the image's shoulder, the discoverers found an account of the events and seeds of corn, wheat, and fruits, which were of no use because from that moment, the lands became barren. After a long time, during which the community made numerous prayers, some birds appeared carrying in their beaks seeds similar to those found in the bag, which they scattered throughout the town. Although the neighbors knew it was difficult to achieve a harvest due to the conditions of the land, they decided to plant them, as they did not want to miss the opportunity. They later showed great joy when they found that the lands had become productive again, as they obtained rich and abundant harvests.

Seeing that their lands had become fertile again, they rejoiced and believed it was a miracle of the Patriarch San José. They then decided to venerate the image and built a church for it, designating him as the Patron of the town. They were so grateful that they named their homeland San José and, because the image of San José had been brought from a distant place, they added the word "Chacayá," which means "on the other side."

Several centuries ago, some families from the town of Santa Eulalia arrived at the place now known as San Miguel Acatán with the intention of settling and acquiring land for their crops.

On one occasion, two members of these families, mature men, were searching for a suitable place to expand their crops. While exploring the area, they discovered a very tall and robust pine tree that caught their attention. They were immediately astonished when they saw the silhouette of an unknown man dressed in pure gold, leaning against the pine. In his left hand, he held a shield, and in his right hand, he brandished a long, sharp sword that glistened intensely, as if ready to repel an attack.

These men were only familiar with the Virgin Santa Eulalia, who resided in the place named after her to the east, surrounded by enormous mountains. They quickly went to inform her. After listening to their account, she agreed to accompany them to the

site of the mysterious appearance. Indeed, the indigenous people had not lied, as Santa Eulalia also saw and recognized the richly dressed man as San Miguel Arcángel.

The Virgin told the two indigenous laborers that San Miguel Arcángel had been designated to be the patron of that place, which would soon be populated by many neighbors, and he, as patron, would be responsible for overseeing the prosperity of the community and the town that would be established. With that, the Virgin returned to Santa Eulalia.

The two men looked again at the pine tree but could no longer see San Miguel Arcángel, as he had disappeared. Three days later, they returned to the same spot and instead of finding San Miguel in person, they discovered an image exactly like him.

This image of San Miguel Arcángel spoke to the two men in their native language, saying:

- My name is Miguel (ayinchiwik" mequel). I am San Miguel and I am also a Captain. I come to live with you, and from now on, I will be your patron. Therefore, I want you to build me a church right here, where the pine tree stands, which will be located in the center of the town that will soon be formed.

-I have traveled to many nations," continued San Miguel, "among them Chiapas, México, Honduras, and the United States, where I have reformed many towns. I have done the same with San Juan Atitán, San Pedro Soloma, San Mateo Ixtatán, and Santa Eulalia, neighboring towns to the one you inhabit, where the patron saints are those whose names they bear. I have always tried to leave all the towns I visit in good standing; in San Mateo, for example, I left a mine from which the neighbors could obtain their money."

After listening to the impressive words of San Miguel Arcángel, the two men sought a way to build the church, which they constructed, though small, at the foot of the pine tree, where they placed the image they devoutly worshiped. Later, numerous families from different places arrived and formed the town as San Miguel had

announced to them, naming it after him to distinguish it from others. They then felled the pine tree and built a large building intended for the church, with a special place where they placed the image of the patron saint.

The Origin of the Santa Patrona

Joyabaj²⁴

The town of Joyabaj is situated in a valley (x'oy) and was once a small settlement called Pux'telón. An indigenous man who lived there was fortunate to be the first person to meet the one who would later be named the local patron saint, as she appeared to him in person. When this happened, she granted him another honor, that of being the first local to learn of the existence of corn, sugarcane, and bananas, gifts from which she gave him some plants.

One day, this indigenous man was cutting firewood on the hill surrounding his town when suddenly a lady approached him, wandering alone in those places, carrying three tall-stemmed plants in her hands. Since he had no news of anyone living there, her presence greatly frightened him, and as a result, he left the place as quickly as he could. Seeing him leave, the lady spoke to him in his own language. The poor man stopped when he heard her words, and she then told him not to be afraid, that she was the owner of those lands, and to prove she would do him no harm, she gave him the plants she carried, which she called abix', ajij, and suk'ul.²⁵ At the same time, she instructed him to plant these plants and that when he harvested, he would have a good quantity of food they would produce.

The indigenous man, very pleased with the gift from the unknown woman, took the plants and quickly went home. He told his family what had happened and then extended the news to his neighbors, who were so happy with the event that they helped him plant the plants.

But they were left with the mystery of finding out who that lady was who had made them such an interesting gift. They decided to search for her to thank her for the distinction she had given them and set off towards the mountain to the place where she had appeared: but she was no longer there. In her place was only an image with her same face and attire; they then believed what had happened was a miracle and

took the image to the town to worship her. As their various occupations allowed, they built her a temple. They obtained the money to cover the expenses by selling half of the harvest of the products the unknown woman had given them; the other half they used for their sustenance.

Shortly after, they learned that the revered image was of the Virgin Mary, and to watch over the well-being of the town, they proclaimed her the Santa Patrona.

The Origin of the Santa Patrona

Tajumulco

In ancient times, in Huistla, State of Chiapas, México, lived the Virgin Santa Isabel. Her life was peaceful, and among her occupations, she dedicated herself to raising poultry. But it happened that on one occasion, there was a water shortage, a situation that distressed her because her animals had nothing to quench their thirst with. For this reason, she was forced to leave her land, as she did not want to let her birds die. She went in search of a place where there was abundant water and headed east, taking with her all her belongings, including the birds.

She visited many populated places, among which are worth mentioning first and foremost, the villages Toquián Chico and Chana, in the jurisdiction of Tajumulco, because she tried to settle in them, but she had to leave them because, like in Huistla, water was scarce. As she passed through these villages, as a sign of her attempt to settle in them, she left vestiges that would endure for a long time, like stones shaped like basins and, on other stones, imprinted the marks of her hands and feet.²⁶

Santa Isabel continued walking and reached "Piedra Partida,"²⁷ a place so called because it was formed by two stone columns separated by a distance of one vara, one of which measured six meters in height and the other four. These columns gave access to a field where the Virgin also attempted to reside. She traced on the ground the shape in which she wanted to build a temple and a courthouse; however, since what she needed was water and in view of its absence, she abandoned the place and moved to Tuischiquel.²⁸

There, she also made plans on the ground for the buildings she wanted to construct.²⁹ Neither did she find the precious liquid she sought, so she began her journey back to her hometown, Huistla, as she could not locate a suitable place to satisfy her desires.

She headed west and arrived at Caserío Tolá (municipality of Tajumulco), a place that did please the Virgin; but, unfortunately, she found that people worshiped many idols, which prompted her to continue searching for a new site further west. She finally found what she was looking for: a village next to which ran a small river of crystal-clear waters. This, combined with the landscape and the healthy climate, invited the Virgin Santa Isabel to stay permanently in that place.

Once she was established, she proceeded to build the religious temple, which, when finished, served all those seeking refuge there for spiritual comfort. From then on, no more misfortunes occurred in the community; there was an abundance of water, and the landslides that used to occur during the rainy season no longer affected the residents, who were overwhelmed with happiness. To thank the Virgin for her favors, they decided to hold a solemn feast on the day of her birth.

Preparations for the celebration began days before the Virgin's birthday. A large number of neighbors gathered to collect the necessary funds to acquire everything needed, such as candles, bread, storax,³⁰ sapuyul,³¹ fireworks, gunpowder for chambers,³² etc. Since these purchases had to be made in the city of Quezaltenango, a committee of four neighbors was appointed to make these purchases, and they were voluntarily accompanied by a young man of sickly appearance (xiap').³³

It took those travelers two days to reach Quezaltenango; on the third day, they made the purchases and began their journey back, spending that night in the village of San Antonio Sacatepéquez.³⁴ The following day they walked without rest, and nightfall found them in the hamlet of Tulpic (stone cave), where they decided to sleep.

Since the young man accompanying the group was so weak and always lagging behind, he was constantly reprimanded for it. That night of the fourth day, the boy approached the fire to reheat his food, which consisted only of a large tamale (pix'que), and sat down to dine (tsik'on).

His companions lay down on the ground to sleep, and he remained awake for a long time, feeding the fire with some logs. Unable to fall asleep, he chose to stay by the hearth all night, warming himself. The darkness and silence were deep when, at midnight, the boy heard the sound of a beast whose rider was approaching that place, guided by the dim light of the fire flickering in the darkness. Soon after, a "black" man appeared, riding a saddled donkey, and asked the boy what he was doing. He replied that he was warming himself by the fire because the cold was intense and he couldn't sleep.

The "black" man was a bandit who, realizing the boy's weakness, decided to take action to carry out his sinister plans. He saw that several men were sleeping soundly and suggested to the young man that he sell him his friends. The boy, though frightened, replied to the bandit that he would not agree to such a proposal. Upon receiving this refusal, the bandit became pensive, plotting a new stratagem, as he did not want to be thwarted, and told the boy that since he would not give up his friends, he should at least allow him to press the tip of his cigar into each of their heels. The young man, intimidated, accepted the proposal. The four travelers were so deeply asleep that not even the cigar's tip managed to wake them.

Because he had given in the first time, the boy was forced to accept a new challenge from the "black" man. This time, it was a test of physical strength. The "black" man said:

- "I'll lift you first to the height of my head and throw you with all my strength onto the fire. If you fall into it, I'll give you all the money I have with me; but if you manage to fall to the side, then you try to do the same to me. If I manage to fall into the fire, you give me your companions, and if I don't, I'll leave quickly."

Since the young man had volunteered to be part of the committee buying what was necessary to celebrate the Virgin Santa Isabel, she granted him the miracle of giving him courage and strength, and he accepted the challenge, with no interest other than safeguarding his honor, which the stranger had called into question.

The bandit then proceeded to lift the young man first, placing one hand between his legs and the other on his neck, and he threw him. The boy, summoning strength from weakness, as he had no interest in winning money, did everything possible not to fall into the fire and succeeded. He quickly got up and said to the bandit, "Now I will test my strength." And, immediately putting his words into action, he took the bandit by the legs and threw him into the air. The young man exerted such speed and strength that the "black" man didn't have time to avoid the ground and fell on it, with the misfortune of landing on his head. He quickly got up, shaking off the dust and ashes that had clung to his clothes, but the blow he received on the head affected his brain, preventing him from realizing that he had lost the fight.

The boy hurried to take advantage of the bandit's dazed state and proposed to repeat the deal. The bandit agreed and threw the young man, who once again landed to the side of the fire. Then it was the young man's turn to throw the "black" man, who, as before, landed on his head, only this time never to get up again, as he broke his neck. The brave boy wanted to finish off the bandit once and for all, and taking a log from the fire, he struck his opponent's head several times with all his might, until he was dead.

He then went to fetch the donkey, which had run away braying from that place, and took the saddlebags it carried on its back, where the "black" man kept all his money. He took it and stuffed it into his pockets. Afterward, he woke his companions to tell them everything that had happened while they slept and led them to where the bandit's lifeless body lay.

When the four travelers saw what their young companion had done for them, they regretted the poor treatment they had given him and apologized. The boy told them to search the "black" man and take all the money he carried in his pockets since he would donate what he had found in the saddlebags to the Virgin.

To avoid leaving the bandit's body abandoned in that place, they placed it on the donkey and made it run back to its starting point. For such a feat, those men considered the boy a hero, divided his load among themselves, and showered him with many attentions.

Finally, the travelers entered the town, and many people received them with cheers and joy. When the travelers recounted the boy's deeds to the neighbors, they were amazed, even more so when they saw that the young man donated all his money to the Virgin Santa Isabel's temple, with which she acquired a large number of jewels, which are the ones currently adorning her image in the local Catholic church.

With the arrival of the committee, the celebration of the Virgin Santa Isabel's birthday began. The festival lasted from June 30th until the 4th of the following month, and every year they continued celebrating this festival until it became the town's main celebration.

The town grew, and it is believed that it was the Virgin Santa Isabel who gave this town the name of Tajumulco, which it now proudly bears.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

Cubulco

Santiago and San Pablo, apostles, were two brothers who were in continuous and intense conflict for thirty years in a distant place. After that time, they grew weary and decided to end their enmity, retreating to live in separate, remote locations. The first of them, also known as "Santiago of the Horse," settled in Rabinal, while San Pablo, after visiting many places, chose Cubulco, both in the territory of Baja Verapaz.

Time passed, and each dedicated himself to building his own town. By then, they already had a fair number of neighbors who worked the land, cultivating corn and raising livestock.

But in Cubulco, strange events began to occur that the residents couldn't explain: every night, some neighbors disappeared, and there were cases where entire families vanished. San Pablo, as the town's patron, decided to investigate the reasons behind these occurrences and discovered that the Yewachi, or Quiché king of Rabinal, was kidnapping the "Cubulqueños" to bring them to his domains and subjugate them to his authority.

San Pablo was so enraged that he decided to fight the Quiché king. However, realizing that the king's forces were superior, he opted to inform his brother Santiago Apostle, who assured him that he would destroy the man but advised him to change towns. San Pablo accepted because he no longer wanted to continue fighting.

Santiago settled in Cubulco and gathered forces to attack the Quiché king. He was prepared to launch the attack but decided to wait for Yewachi to come and steal the neighbors. The opportunity soon arose, and the thief appeared, only to find "Santiago of the Horse" waiting for him. They engaged in a fierce battle, and after much effort, Santiago managed to prevail.

When the Quiché king realized he was defeated, he offered Santiago all his treasures for his freedom. Santiago refused, responding that he didn't need them because he already had them on the tip of his dagger. The Quiché king then requested one last favor: to be allowed to "cry out to the world" as a farewell. The favor was granted, but instead of farewell cries, he launched a curse on Santiago's family. Santiago did not wait for him to finish his words before thrusting his dagger into the Quiché king's chest, killing him.

Since then, the residents of Cubulco have been very poor because Santiago Apostle did not accept the treasures offered by the Quiché king. Nevertheless, he was designated as the town's patron saint, and in Rabinal, the same was done with San Pablo.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

Lanquin

Santo Domingo, San Pedro, Santa María, and San Agustín were four great friends. The first three had settled, one in Cobán, another in Carchá, and the last in Cahabón (towns of Alta Verapaz), where they were considered religious protectors. The three places were neighbors, as they are to this day.

San Agustín was poor and contented himself with living in a remote place called Chiracti, beside a large stone, which he called Pec Cuxtin. His three companions and friends discussed his solitude and, since they loved and valued him greatly, wished for him to join them and form a new town neighboring theirs. To achieve this, they visited him personally and made their proposal. After a long conversation, they convinced him, and he accompanied them back, settling in the land they assigned him.

However, San Agustín did not like that land because it was too small, and without informing his friends, he returned to his previous residence.

When the three friends learned of his actions, they visited him again at his home to ask for explanations. San Agustín explained his reasons, and his friends, determined to have him as a neighbor, decided to give him, in addition to the land they had already offered, the places called Chi Pap and Q'uix Che, with which he was satisfied. He quickly moved to those places and established himself there permanently.

All the people living on his land, seeing that the land they inhabited was now considerably extensive, decided to name it Lanquín and adopted San Agustín as their patron saint.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán

In ancient times, a group of elders from the town of Ixtahuacán (now Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán) embarked on a pilgrimage on foot to the city of Rome. Their purpose was to request from the Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Catholic Church an image of a Virgin to venerate and to take as the patroness of their town. Upon arriving in Rome, they presented themselves to the Pope and explained the purpose of their journey. He listened to their pleas and provided them with the image of the Virgin of Santa Catarina and two large bells to serve their church as a reward for the sacrifice they were making for the good of their people.

Pleased with having achieved their purpose in Rome, the elders set out on their return journey. The image of the Virgin and the bells were carried on their shoulders. Throughout the journey, the pilgrims conversed with the Virgin, and upon reaching the summit of the Sija hills,³⁵ she told them that she liked that place very much and wished to settle there. Her bearers agreed to her wishes. However, she did not count on the fact that at the foot of those hills resided San Miguel, who, upon learning of the usurpation of his lands, became very upset, as he did not think it appropriate for a woman to live at the top of the hill while he was below. He then decided to make the earth shake and the sky thunder to force the intruders to leave. Seeing what was happening, the Virgin's entourage continued their journey and reached a place called Chuapilá, west of the Nahualá summit. There, too, the Virgin wished to stay, but upon feeling the intense cold, she opted to continue the journey. When they arrived at Chuapiacul', the group decided to take a brief rest.

The elders, weary from exhaustion, sat down to rest in the shade of some trees. They felt drowsy and soon fell asleep. Upon waking, they noticed that the bells had disappeared. They searched everywhere and finally spotted them suspended from a rock, held up by snakes instead of ropes, even with the clapper transformed into a snake.

Convinced that it was impossible to retrieve them, they informed the Virgin, who advised them to leave the bells there, as she could kill the snakes by sending lightning down from the sky, but the storms would ruin the bells.

The Origin of the Patron Saint

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Pleased with having achieved their purpose in Rome, the elders began their journey back. The image of the Virgin and the bells were carried on their shoulders. Throughout the journey, the pilgrims conversed with the Virgin, and upon reaching the summit of the Sija hills, she told them she liked that place very much and wished to settle there, to which her bearers agreed. However, she did not anticipate that at the foot of those hills resided San Miguel, who, upon learning of the usurpation of his lands, was greatly displeased, as he did not think it proper for a woman to live at the top of the hill while he was below. He then decided to make the earth tremble and the sky thunder to force the intruders to leave. Seeing what was happening, the Virgin's entourage continued their journey and arrived at a place called Chuapilá, to the west of the Nahualá summit. There, the Virgin also wished to stay, but feeling the intense cold, she opted to continue the journey. Upon reaching Chuapiacul, the group decided to take a short rest.

The elders were overwhelmed by fatigue and sat down to rest in the shade of some trees. They felt sleepy and soon fell asleep. Upon waking, they noticed that the bells had disappeared. They searched everywhere and finally spotted them in a place suspended from a rock, with snakes instead of ropes, even the clapper having been transformed into a snake.

Convinced that it was impossible to recover them, they informed the Virgin, who advised them to leave them there, as she could kill the snakes by bringing down lightning from the sky, but that due to the storms, the bells would be ruined.

They finally arrived in Ixtahuacán, where the Virgin Santa Catarina was designated as the patroness of the town, and they also named the town after her, adding it to the existing name, thus the town became known as Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán.

What the Town Suffered for Changing the Parish Priest to the Patron Saint

On one occasion, a parish priest in charge of the Catholic Church of San Pedro Pinula wanted to change the town's patron saint. He removed the image of San Pedro from the main altar of the temple and placed in its stead the image of Jesus Nazareno. Many people protested against this measure, but he paid no heed to any of them. However, the townspeople believed that the priest's decision would bring

great misfortune to the town. Indeed, the following day, strange events unfolded in the town.

It was the month of April, and summer was at its height; nevertheless, in the distance, over the place known as "La Cumbre," a large black cloud could be seen advancing rapidly towards the town, growing larger by the moment. Such a storm broke out that the hurricane destroyed a large number of houses, and many others, whose walls withstood, were left without roofs. The same happened to the crops, almost all were lost.

The storm threatened to completely destroy the town, but the residents went to the church, took the image of San Pedro, restored it to its place, and proceeded to put away that of Jesus Nazareno. It was then that the fury of those winds calmed, for they had been sent by San Pedro. Afterward, all the residents had to make great efforts to rebuild their homes and plant new crops, and they did not allow anyone else to tamper with the image of the patron saint.

Other Images of Patron Saints Exist³⁶

A few meters from the Cathedral church building in the municipal seat of Jalapa, there flows a river that forms a pool, where in ancient times, no one would bathe for fear of drowning, as many people who attempted to do so died in that manner. But a sailor of unknown origin arrived in Jalapa, whose presence did not go unnoticed by the local residents.

One day, this sailor decided to bathe in that pool, and as he was about to undress, the people watching him approached and implored him to desist from his intent, warning that he would drown. He paid no heed to those superstitions and plunged into the water, disappearing from the sight of those who tried to stop him.

After a long while, the sailor resurfaced and recounted to all the people who had gathered to witness his audacity that while swimming underwater, he discovered a subterranean passage, which, according to his calculations, ran under the parish church, where precisely beneath the main altar, he had seen another altar with the true images of "El Señor de Jalapa" and the "Virgen María de la Expectación de la

O," patron saints of the municipal seat of Jalapa and the villages of the Gran Comunidad de las Montañas de Santa María, respectively.³⁷ The news quickly spread among the residents, and since then, those saints have been worshipped with greater religious fervor.

The Origin of the Name of the Municipality

In San Pedro Necta, it is said that Santo Domingo was a neighbor of the town of Comitán, Chiapas, in the Mexican Republic, but he was unhappy and decided to move elsewhere. He visited many places until he arrived at one where San Pedro lived, to whom he explained that he had come from far away and had nowhere to live. San Pedro responded that he would give him part of his lands to settle in. Santo Domingo became a great friend of his protector, and they both came to consider each other as brothers. Finding a pleasant environment, Santo Domingo decided to settle there permanently.

The lands of the two saints gave rise to the municipality, which the inhabitants named San Pedro Necta, thinking that all the territory had belonged to San Pedro; however, they divided the municipal seat into two cantons, which they named San Pedro and Santo Domingo, respectively, because in the past these two saints had resided in those places.

The origin of Maximón³⁸

In Santiago Atitlán, there was a time when twelve very close gentlemen resided, whose names are unknown; it is known that six of them were married and lived with their respective wives, while the others were single. All of them possessed the strange ability to make the sky thunder.

On one occasion, these single gentlemen decided to test the degree of supernatural power their married friends had. To achieve this, they decided to provoke discord among them, and found no better way than to seduce the wives of the married men to incite jealousy.

When the married men discovered the betrayal of their friends, they decided to punish them for their audacity. They immediately proceeded to cut down a thick pito tree, located about four hundred meters from the center of the town, towards the eastern part. They prayed as they approached the tree and took the necessary measurements to carve an image resembling Judas in its trunk, claiming to be in contact with him through certain prayers that only they knew. Without ceasing to pray, they began to carve the figure, and when it was almost complete, they noticed that the image seemed to want to speak but was still incomplete, lacking a face. To remedy this, they added a mask and then dressed it. Once the image was finished as described, they decided to name it "Maximón."

The creators of Maximón made a firm commitment to protect their creation. They then transformed the image into a woman, whom they disguised to resemble each of their wives, with the intent of avenging themselves on the traitors. They would place the figure along the path of any of their single friends. Whoever happened to encounter the lady along the road would begin to make advances towards her persistently, until Maximón would burst into loud laughter, forcing him to retreat.

In this way, the six married gentlemen repeatedly mocked their single friends, who were ultimately convinced of the former's superiority and forever abandoned their malicious intentions.³⁹

The Appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe

A long time ago, the first prayer leader (Alcalde rezador) of San Pedro Soloma climbed a nearby mountain to perform his religious rites. As he approached the place he usually visited, something suddenly caught his attention. There, he saw the Virgin of Guadalupe, standing approximately one meter tall. He observed her closely but felt too afraid to bring her with him, so he decided to return to the village and inform his fellow prayer leaders and the elders of the community about the event.

Upon hearing the news, these individuals made their way to the mountain where the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe had appeared. When they arrived, they were amazed by the splendor of the image, and with the utmost care, they transported it and placed it in the parish church. They selected four honorable people to watch over the image, positioning two on each side. These watchers decided to take turns,

with one person keeping a constant watch over the Virgin every two hours. However, late at night, the person on duty fell asleep.

When he awoke, he was shocked to discover that the image of the Virgin had disappeared. Embarrassed, he woke up his companions, who searched every corner of the church, but they couldn't find her.

The next day, the elders received the news and, frightened, they once again went to the mountain, to the place where the Virgin had appeared. Upon finding her, they promptly brought her back to the local temple. However, the image disappeared again. The Virgin vanished five more times, which was interpreted as a sign that she did not wish to remain in that place. Realizing this, the villagers decided to leave her at the spot where she had first appeared. When the prayer leader who had seen her initially returned to the mountain, he found that she was no longer there.

Shortly after, the news spread that the Virgin had moved to Mexico, and to preserve her memory, the residents of San Pedro Soloma named the mountain where she had appeared Cochuch Najat.⁴⁰

LEGENDS OF ADVENTURES AND CHARACTERS

An Unfortunate Man Sacrificed So the Bells Would Ring Well

The first settlers of San Pedro la Laguna, despite some sacrifices, managed to build their Catholic church, but it was missing bells, so they decided to purchase them. They were informed that in San Pedro Sacatepéquez (San Marcos), two large bells and two small ones were for sale, so they appointed several distinguished townspeople, known as "principales," to undertake the journey to acquire them.

These individuals arrived in San Pedro Sacatepéquez and, after some inquiries, located the house where the bells were being sold, and immediately purchased them. Not wanting to waste any more time and having satisfactorily fulfilled their mission, they began their return journey. As they passed by the slopes of "Las Cristalinas" hill, fatigue overtook them, so they decided to leave the bells there while

they returned to the town—just a short distance away—to summon their companions for help and to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

Once in town, the travelers, after meeting their needs, informed the other Principales that the bells were near the town. Many of them volunteered to help retrieve the bells, and accompanying the buyers, they arrived at the spot where the bells had been left. However, they were surprised to find that one of the large bells was missing, and they could not explain its disappearance, as the area was desolate. They searched diligently but were unable to locate it.

One of the searchers looked up towards the top of the hill and, by intuition, guessed that the bell was on the other side. To verify, he began to climb the hill with great difficulty. Just a few meters from the summit, he saw that the bell was indeed there, but he couldn't reach it because it was being guarded by enormous snakes coiled around the bell and menacingly preventing anyone from approaching. He called his companions, who arrived quickly, but they too were reluctant to rescue the bell due to the treacherous terrain and the threat posed by the snakes.

The Principales were deeply disheartened and, not knowing what to do, returned to the town with the three remaining bells. They delivered them to the church and recounted the incident to the priest, who advised them to prepare a drum, a *chirimía*, pom, incense, and candles to see if playing these instruments and burning the resins would help them retrieve the bell. When they returned to Las Cristalinas hill, they realized that all their preparations had been in vain as the bell was gone, leaving only its silhouette imprinted on a rock.⁴²

A few days after bringing the three bells to the town, the Principales rang them, only to find that they emitted a dull sound. Someone among them came up with an idea to make the bells produce a strong sound that could be heard far and wide; however, to achieve this, it was necessary to sacrifice a human being. The idea was proposed to the group, and upon agreement, instructions were given on what needed to be done. But no one volunteered for the sacrifice, as they were unwilling to die, so they opted to find an outsider to carry out their sinister plan.

Several days passed without any travelers arriving in the town. The Principales grew desperate until finally, an opportunity presented itself. A humble-looking man was

seen in the streets, carrying a load of chilies from his harvest, which he intended to sell at the local market. The vendor walked peacefully, unaware of the danger looming over him, as he drew closer to the town center with each step.

The Principales, along with various members of the *cofradías*, observed the vendor intently, their faces reflecting boundless joy, knowing the moment had come to test if the bells would take on their characteristic sound. They approached the vendor and invited him to the home of one of them, offering to buy his entire stock. With a specific goal in mind, they treated the unfortunate man with great hospitality, serving him chocolate and bread, and even inviting him to spend the night at the house, providing him with a room where he would be alone. They suggested he rest, and if he wished to take a walk, he should feel free to do so, assuring him that they would pay for his goods the following day. This gesture was meant to ensure that the vendor wouldn't leave town without informing them first.

The day passed without further incident. Around midnight, the Principales decided the time had come to execute their diabolical plan, as the vendor was sound asleep. They carefully lifted him from his bed, making sure not to wake him, and led him to where the bells were stored. At that very moment, they had just removed the large bell from a fire, where it had been heated to a glowing red. They placed the unfortunate chili vendor into the scorching bell. As the heat and burns roused him, he awoke in agony, screaming desperately for help, but no one showed him any mercy, and he perished in those circumstances.

The Principales then proceeded to cut off the man's testicles and placed one in each of the small bells. After this gruesome act, the three bells finally produced the desired resonant sound, achieved at the cost of an innocent chili vendor who wasn't even a resident of San Pedro la Laguna.

Another Sacrifice to Make a Bell Ring

The first bell in Santa María Visitación, Sololá, was crafted by a "black man" who had arrived from an unknown place, specifically summoned by the local residents. When the bell maker finished his work, he attempted to ring the bell, but it produced no sound. Frustrated, he decided to conduct an experiment involving a human being

to make the bell functional. He set off down a road, waiting for someone who could help him achieve his goal.

He positioned himself strategically and waited for a long time until an unfortunate indigenous man from San Marcos la Laguna (Sololá) appeared, coming to Santa María to sell small fish. The bell maker approached him, and through deceit, managed to bring him to the place where the bell was. Using his strength, he overpowered the man, grabbing him by the waist, and then, with a sharp machete, he mutilated his body. The poor indigenous man cried out in pain with each brutal machete strike, while the bell maker threw the severed pieces of the man's body into the bell, which he had placed facing upward. When the bell was filled with the remains of the man, the bell maker positioned it back on the ground and left it there for some time.

Days later, he decided to check the results of his experiment and inspected the bell. To his surprise, there was nothing inside, as the bell had completely consumed the remains of the fish seller's body. The bell acquired a sound, but it was unlike that of a typical bell, as it constantly emitted the same sorrowful cries of the indigenous man from San Marcos.

The Highwayman

Before Colotenango, Huehuetenango, was populated, it was a place that offered safety to travelers and significantly shortened their journey. It was heavily frequented by many travelers, who were typically peaceful citizens. However, one day an individual appeared and built his house in the very spot where the Catholic church is currently located. No one knew who this person was, where he came from, or what he did, but they soon regretted his presence. He turned out to be a villain who took advantage of the solitude of the area to ambush and kill travelers in order to rob them, quickly spreading terror throughout the region. During this time, no one dared to travel through the area for fear of losing their lives, and anyone who tried, with no known cases of anyone reaching their destination, paid with their lives for their bravery.

The news of these crimes spread throughout the region and reached the ears of a resident of San Marcos. He was a very brave man who feared nothing, so upon

realizing the danger posed by this highwayman to the people of the region, he decided to confront him. He ventured into the area where the criminal carried out his misdeeds, risking his own life. Despite this, he faced the highwayman, defeated him quickly, and immediately killed him, putting an end to the fears that had plagued the travelers.

With the highwayman dead, people could once again travel through the area with peace of mind, and the brave resident of San Marcos returned home, satisfied with having performed a great service for all the travelers.

The Weeper for His Sister-in-Law (Ri Ok'oyxna'n)

In San José Chacayá, a long time ago, there was a man who did not like to engage in anything. He was the epitome of laziness and lived in his brother's house. When mealtime came, he neither ate nor asked for any food. His sister-in-law, behind her husband's back who had forbidden it, felt sorry for him and gave him food.

One day, an illness struck the community, and the wife of the lazy man's brother was among the victims who died. From then on, no one took care of him, and bitterly, he cried out his suffering intensely every day.

A boy passed by the lazy man's house and saw that he was in great distress and weeping, so he approached him to ask who he was crying for. The lazy man, not wanting anyone to know his suffering, replied that he was crying for no one. The boy, intrigued by the situation of the poor man, continued asking:

- "Did your brother die?"
- "No," answered the lazy man.
- "Did your father die?"
- "No."
- "Did your mother die?"

- "No."
- "Did your sister-in-law die?"
- "You guessed it," said the man who was consumed with tears.

From that moment on, the boy gave him the nickname Ok'oyxna'n (weeper for his sister-in-law), which he was never able to shake off.

The Adventures of Domingo Yojcom

In the town of San Pedro la Laguna (Sololá), about two hundred years ago, there was a man named Domingo Yojcom, who was famous for his great adventures. He dedicated himself exclusively to fighting all the thieves who ravaged the towns, taking the money they carried, which served as his livelihood and, on many occasions, to help those in need.

Yojcom revered a statue of the "Lord of Esquipulas"⁴³ in his home, which gave him signals whenever some thieves were about to commit misdeeds, usually at night. These signals were manifested through stings he felt in his arms. When he felt the statue's warning, he would stand up and light a candle; then he would inform his wife that he had to urgently depart for certain distant places, like Mazatenango, Quetzaltenango, and the eastern part of the Republic, where there were thieves he felt compelled to confront, but that he would return soon.

He did not care about the distances and left without carrying any weapons, nor did he worry if the thieves were three or more, because he possessed great skill and physical strength, and fortunately, he was never struck a single blow. He easily defeated the wrongdoers using only his fists. After about five hours, he would return home with a good amount of money.

On one occasion, Domingo Yojcom received a warning from the Lord of Esquipulas that on the road from San Pedro la Laguna to Mazatenango, several thieves were lying in wait for some San Pedranos selling jocotes, who were heading to that town.

It was night, and walking quickly, he caught up with the travelers, who were very happy to see him, as they were fellow townspeople. They begged him not to leave them alone and to let them travel with him, to which he gladly agreed. He then told them that, not far from where they were, some thieves were waiting to rob them, but not to worry as he would defend them with all his means.

Indeed, they had not walked much when Yojcom located the thieves, who, hidden beside the road, numbered twelve. They had placed a coat across the road, on which they had laid several sharp machetes and a bag full of money, the loot gathered that night.

The leader of the thieves, seeing that Domingo Yojcom, whom he did not know, did not stop at the obstacle placed in the road, shouted that anyone who passed over it would die there. Yojcom paid no attention to this threat and replied, "As you wish, sir," and, without stopping, crossed over the coat. The thief then shouted again, "Look at that daring, ragged Indian!"

The bandit thought that it was just an ordinary person since he was unaware of Yojcom's exploits and did not consider it necessary for one of his more cunning subordinates to face him, so he assigned the last, least experienced member of the gang to challenge the ragged man.

The thief picked up his machete and, swinging it wildly, charged at Yojcom, who skillfully defended himself from the sharp weapon, whose whooshing only cut through the silence of the night. A small mistake by the thief was seized by Yojcom, who landed a powerful punch to his face, knocking him down and then kicking him aside. One by one, the other thieves charged at him, but all met the same fate as the first. Only the leader remained, who was quickly defeated.

With no more adversaries left, the brave Yojcom called the travelers, who were very scared by the unparalleled fight, and he searched the bags of the thieves lying senseless on the ground, taking the money they carried, as well as the loot on the coat. With the money in his hands, Yojcom ordered the travelers to discard all their cargo and promised to reward their bravery by giving them any amount of money they wanted. When they did not agree to his wishes, he decided to do it himself: he took the loads of jocotes and threw them off the road. Seeing that they made no

objections, he gave them enough money and invited them to have a drink with him in Mazatenango, as there was no closer place that sold liquor.

By nightfall, they arrived in that town, and on the other side of the town, they found an inn with closed doors. Yojcom knocked on the window, and from inside, the innkeeper asked what they wanted but did not open the door. He begged her, but as it was already midnight, she was certainly asleep and very tired, so he decided to take the liquor without her consent. With a small push, he opened the window and entered, took the necessary liquor for everyone, and did not pay for it. He then distributed the liquor to the travelers, and they all drank. Yojcom then bid them farewell and set off for home, arriving in a few hours.

Domingo Yojcom Disappears

It is said in San Pedro la Laguna that Domingo Yojcom disappeared suddenly upon returning from a trip to the town of Chichicastenango. The cause of this was never known, nor were there ever any further news of him.

However, it is remembered that in one of the municipal elections held in San Pedro la Laguna, Domingo Yojcom, who was highly respected and admired, was elected to serve as the town's Mayor. At that time, before taking office, it was customary to make a trip to Chichicastenango to buy kitchen utensils, mats, censers, etc., which were used in the inauguration ceremony. Yojcom, not wanting to break tradition, made the trip and was accompanied by a servant and two mules, one to ride and the other to carry his purchases.

On his return, Yojcom entered a forest to satisfy physiological needs. After a reasonable amount of time had passed, the servant, seeing that Yojcom had not returned, began to worry and decided to search for him. He tied the animals to a tree by the side of the road and searched for his master everywhere. He called him by name but received no response. Desperate after his fruitless search, he decided to continue the journey alone and notify the family of what had happened.

After twenty days had passed, a resident of San Marcos la Laguna visited Yojcom's presumed widow, telling her not to worry about her husband and that no one should

be sad because he was healthy and living happily, but he did not specify where. The stranger said only this and left, not giving Yojcom's family time to see which direction he took, as he disappeared instantly.

Since then, nothing more was ever heard of Domingo Yojcom, whose mysterious disappearance caused consternation among the locals, as he was a well-loved and respected man whom his fellow townspeople were proud of.

Foundation of the Town of Nahualá

Before 1862, the town of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán comprised a vast territory divided into two districts: Ixtahuacán and Qulak'asiwan, where all the inhabitants lived in complete peace and harmony, governed by Mr. Miguel Salquil, who, as the leader of the Ixtahuacán district, rose to such a distinguished position. Mr. Manuel Tzoc was the leader of the residents of the other district and served as Church Fiscal. Salquil and Tzoc were prominent figures in their respective communities and, both in official and private life, they loved and respected each other greatly; but, unfortunately, they both fell in love at the same time with a beautiful young woman, and jealousy caused them to forget the friendship that united them.

The residents wanted to build a church, and this prompted the Governor to summon them, along with other authorities, for a meeting. Once gathered, Salquil proposed that the construction be simple to avoid placing heavy burdens on the residents, who lacked sufficient resources, as his position required him to act in such a manner. These concerns did not matter to Tzoc, and, to contradict Salquil, he argued that the building should be elegant and with solid walls. As the opinions of the "principals" diverged more and more, it was not possible for them to reach an agreement, and this only fueled the animosity between them.

At that time, the Governor and the Fiscal enjoyed similar authority in the administration of justice. When a person committed a crime and was brought before Miguel Salquil, he treated and punished them leniently, as he had great affection for his neighbors. On the other hand, Tzoc, despite being the representative of the church, treated offenders harshly and imposed severe punishments.

In 1862, popular elections were to be held to appoint a new Governor. Manuel Tzoc, the undisputed leader of his district, seized the opportunity and launched his candidacy. He won the elections and was inaugurated to govern the destiny of his town.

Manuel Tzoc began to abuse his position and applied gross punishments to criminals as a deterrent, such as sentencing any man who engaged in illicit relations with a woman, whether married or single, to be crucified on a tall cross he had installed in the courtyard of the courthouse. He also ordered that a bone smeared with human excrement be placed in the offender's mouth one or two times, and the unfortunate person would remain in that agony for an entire day because Tzoc considered them a dangerous enemy.

Finally, this official, taking advantage of the position for which he had been elected, seized the opportunity to personally take revenge on Miguel Salquil, whom he viewed with hatred, believing him to be his greatest enemy, and he did not want to miss the chance, though he did not foresee the consequences of his actions. One of Salquil's sons committed a crime that was punishable as previously described, and Tzoc wanted to torture him in that manner. This provoked great indignation among Salquil's supporters, who did not allow the young man to be punished in that way and forced the authorities to release him, events that further deepened the hatred between the two principals.

Such was the resentment that Tzoc harbored towards the former governor that his thirst for revenge blinded him. He managed to convince the entire neighborhood of his district to take up arms against the residents of the Ixtahuacán district and to force them into submission. Indeed, from the early hours of Easter Sunday that year, they began their warlike actions, and their drums started to sound from the hills called Chui Santa Cruz, on the outskirts of the Ixtahuacán district. The residents of this place, unsuspecting of the events that were about to unfold, wondered in surprise why those drums were being played. Later, they saw the reason and were even more astonished, for the enraged hordes from the Quiak'asiwan district could be seen advancing in a warlike manner, carrying clubs, machetes, ropes, and shotguns. Leading this army as commander was Manuel Tzoc.

When the attackers came close enough to the Ixtahuacán district, one of the drummers shouted, "Come on, you cowardly Ixtahuacán residents, shoot here, in

the mouth of your fathers," while pointing to his anus. Then, Miguel Ajpacajá, one of the surprised residents, upon hearing the words that insulted the dignity of the neighborhood, took his shotgun and fired at the challenger, who, mortally wounded, tumbled down the hillside along with his drum. Seeing the first of their own fall, the enraged attackers became even more furious and advanced to the center of the town, where a fierce battle ensued.

The women of Ixtahuacán, seeing the danger looming over their town, decided to join the fight. They set large pots of water with chili peppers to boil, and when the water was boiling, they threw it at the faces of the enemies using gourds. The battle lasted for eight days, and since Miguel Salquil's supporters would not surrender, Tzoc's forces stationed themselves on the outskirts of the town to prevent anyone from leaving to seek help.

For this reason, the departmental authorities had no news of these events until a group of merchants arriving from Guatemala, to whom Tzoc had allowed entry and exit from the town, informed the authorities. Later, these merchants were regarded as the "saviors" of Ixtahuacán. Official intervention (authorities) ensued, and peace was restored, with the attacking forces withdrawing.

Since these events took place, the Qulak'asiwan⁴⁵ district separated from Ixtahuacán, and the insurgents took Manuel Tzoc with them so that he could continue governing them in the new town they later founded, which they named Nahualá.

The residents of Ixtahuacán elected a new governor and never again had any relationship with the "Nahualeños."

A Tyrannical Governor

In the past century, the inhabitants of San Antonio Huista, Huehuetenango, had not yet achieved harmony. Before General Justo Rufino Barrios governed the country, all towns had a governor as their highest authority, imposed by the priests.⁴⁶ At that time, a man named Andrés Ramírez governed in San Antonio Huista.

Governor Ramírez was the one who judged and condemned all the residents who committed crimes, but the cruel methods he used did not earn him the goodwill of the community, who were dissatisfied with him. The only punishment he imposed on the perpetrator of a criminal act was to tie them to a pole and whip them until they were nearly unconscious. Depending on the crime and how the person had committed it, as interpreted by the governor, so was the number of lashes the executioner would deliver on the bare body of the unfortunate criminal—sometimes twenty, forty, or fifty lashes—and then they were set free to have their wounds treated at home.

This attitude of the governor was interpreted in two different ways. Some people thought that he was trying to set a precedent to prevent all kinds of crimes, while others, which was perhaps the more accurate view, believed that he was merely satisfying his cruel tyrannical instincts by taking advantage of the authority he had been given.

But he did not remain in office for long, because once General Justo Rufino Barrios assumed the Presidency of the Republic, he issued orders that no principal government representative in a town should be appointed by priests. From then on, the President appointed such authorities, but no longer with the title of Governor, but rather as Municipal Mayor.

When Andrés Ramírez learned of the order given by the country's leader, he had to flee from his town. Some priests did the same, as they lost all authority in public affairs from that point on.

In this way, San Antonio Huista achieved social stability, allowing its residents to live in complete peace and harmony.

MYTHS

The Lord of the Hill Punishes a Woodcutter

Many years ago in San Pedro la Laguna, Sololá, there lived a woodcutter who was deceived by the "Lord of the Hill." He made his living by extracting resin from pine trees, a product he used to earn his daily bread. For this purpose, he often visited Chij Qulakay Hill, which was covered with thick vegetation and where red pine trees predominated.

One day, while on this hill felling one of these trees, he noticed another pine tree, redder in color, to one side, and he headed toward it. At that moment, he spotted a third tree that seemed even better than the previous ones, and he was preparing to cut it down when suddenly a little man dressed in red appeared and approached him, saying:

- The "Lord of the Hill" needs to speak with you and invites you to his palace.

As the woodcutter refused the invitation, knowing that he had not asked permission from the "Lord of the Hill" to cut down trees, the little man threatened to whip him with a large chain he was carrying. While the woodcutter was still recovering from the shock, he did not realize that the stranger had already led him into a palace within the hill. To his surprise, he saw that the place was filled with all kinds of chained animals that, upon seeing him, lunged at him. But the "Lord of the Hill," who was resting while seated on a throne, did not allow them to attack and asked the woodcutter:

- Why are you harming my leg, wounding it with the axe you carry?

Instantly, he rolled up one of the legs of his trousers and showed the woodcutter his leg, which appeared to have been struck by a weapon similar to an axe, indicating with his expression that by felling the tree without permission, the woodcutter had injured his leg.

- You see what you've done, "he said to the woodcutter" and you don't even bring me a single gift. Now you must heal the wounds you've caused."

The woodcutter didn't know what to do, but suddenly he heard a voice advising him to spit on the wounds on the little man's leg, which would make them heal. He

immediately tried this method, and soon the "Lord of the Hill," satisfied with the cure, allowed the woodcutter to leave the palace.

With fear still evident on his face, the woodcutter returned home, where he was asked why he had suddenly disappeared for eight days. He responded by recounting what had happened inside the hill, though he thought it had all been just a nightmare.

The Lord of the Hill Tricks a Hunter

Around the time of the previous events, there lived in San Pedro la Laguna a hunter named Salvador Quiacaín, who was renowned in his town as the best hunter, for he never returned home without some game, and he always brought back the finest catches. His aim was sure, and it meant death for any animal that crossed his path. Despite this, the "Lord of the Hill" decided to trick him.

One day, Salvador Quiacaín went out hunting with the goal of capturing a deer. He reached the top of a nearby hill and called for his dogs. The Lord of the Hill, who possessed many powers, heard the hunter's call to his dogs as if he were standing right next to him and said:

- Here come my children again to hunt deer.

The Lord of the Hill enjoyed rituals performed before hunting expeditions, as he loved the smell of copal and incense. However, on this occasion, Quiacaín did not observe these customs. Immediately, the "Lord of the Hill" selected and called upon two of the finest deer from his palace to serve as intermediaries to trick the hunter. In the presence of the deer, he spoke to one of them.

- "You," he said to the first deer, "approach the hunter, and when the dogs chase you, head toward the town to throw them off, then return here."

- Now you," he said to the other deer, "when the dogs chase you, head to the lake,⁴⁷ where they will attempt to hunt you. Wait until they start burning copal and incense, then escape immediately and return to the palace."

The deer set off to fulfill their tasks, and it wasn't long before they returned. The deer that was supposed to be caught came back smelling of copal and incense, which

made its master very pleased. Meanwhile, Salvador Quiacaín returned home furious because the animal he had managed to hunt had slipped through his fingers.⁴⁸

The Origin of the Snake Dance

The ancestors of the town of Chiché did not have a specific building dedicated to Catholic religious services, although they were organized into brotherhoods and had chosen Saint Thomas as the town's patron saint. The brotherhood that bore the name of the religious protector of the population was based in the home of the brotherhood leader, who was responsible for caring for the image and promoting the festivities held in its honor.

When the time came for the townspeople to build the church, they constructed an altar inside where they placed the image of the patron saint so that those who venerated it could see it and perform the customary rituals. They agreed to inaugurate the religious temple during the next upcoming feast, the day of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Early that day, all the townspeople gathered, including community leaders, brotherhood members, and municipal authorities, to organize a procession to transfer Saint Thomas to the newly built church. They prepared a platform, and several community leaders stepped forward to lift the image, but they were taken by surprise when they couldn't even budge it due to its excessive weight. Each person exerted all their strength, but they all failed in their attempt. Others tried, but no one succeeded. Seeing the resistance of the image, they temporarily abandoned their plans; everyone returned to their homes, and they postponed the transfer to a future occasion.

Days passed, and the townspeople kept trying to find a way to move the image from where it was, but nothing came to mind. The community leaders met with the members of the brotherhood to discuss the matter. They suggested that perhaps by practicing some "customs," they might achieve their goal, and most agreed to hold traditional dances. However, this measure also failed to yield results, so they decided to organize a new dance, which they named the "Snake Dance" (Xoj re Camatz).

For this dance, it was necessary to gather a group of young men who, wearing masks with horrifying expressions and dressed in old clothes, would dance to the rhythm of music played by a marimba made of gourds, accompanied by rattles, and they were supposed to play with a pair of snakes. They managed the first two things without much difficulty, but finding the snakes, since they were essential for the dance, proved to be a more challenging task.

They approached the residence of a “xamán” (shaman) and explained the reasons for their visit. The shaman replied that the snakes could not be easily caught without first asking the "Santo Mundo" (Holy World) through a ritual that had to be performed on the hill Ucal Quiej (Corral of Horses) on an auspicious day according to the ritual calendar. They chose the sacred day Jun I'x.⁴⁹ The shaman added that he was the one to carry out the "custom," accompanied by the dancers already in disguise.

On that day, the shaman set out for the hill, carrying candles, copal, and incense to burn. He was accompanied only by the dancers, who brought a gourd marimba and rattles. Once they reached their destination, the shaman selected an appropriate spot to perform the "custom," knelt down, lit the candles, and began to pray; he made a fire and burned some copal and incense. When he finished, the marimba players began to play their instruments, and immediately, a large snake slithered out from among the stones. The shaman wasted no time and burned more copal in honor of the snake, which coiled up in a sign of obedience. One of the dancers then picked up the animal with his hands and placed it in a box he had prepared for the occasion. Everyone returned very pleased.

But since they still needed another snake, the shaman repeated the "custom" just as he had done before, confident that the "Santo Mundo" would not deny him since it had already provided the first snake. After the ceremony, another snake appeared, slithering towards the shaman. It coiled up in front of him, allowing him to take it and place it in the same box where the other snake was waiting.

All the dancers rejoiced and danced to the music of the marimba. With the necessary snakes for the dance in hand, the group headed to the town and arrived at the brotherhood of Saint Thomas. The moment was very joyful for the entire community. The dancers immersed themselves in the dance, and the community leaders prepared to move the image of the patron saint to the church, which they did without much difficulty, amidst the cheers of the townspeople.

The "Snake Dance" led that display of religious fervor, followed by other groups, also dancing to appropriate music, with the dances of the Bull, Little Saint Michael, and the Deer standing out.

The Sigumonta⁵⁰

In El Tejar, there was a young man who was deeply in love with his sister-in-law. Due to personal reasons, he had to leave on a long journey, and during his absence, his sister-in-law died from an illness that consumed her. When the young man

returned home, he received the sad news; nevertheless, he could not accept it because he could not believe that his sister-in-law's death was real. As he suffered greatly from her absence and, in his desperation, suddenly ran out of his house to search for her. God, seeing that this man had strayed from His principles, punished him by transforming him into the bird "Siguamonta," destined to wander everywhere searching for his sister-in-law, singing sadly in a mournful and sorrowful tone.⁵¹

Those Who Never Married

Men who chose not to marry in their lifetime receive a severe punishment from God after death. Their souls are given an owl as a wife, who constantly scratches their faces, as a retribution for avoiding marital commitment.

Those Who Never Danced

People who never enjoyed marimba music or found pleasure in any particular piece or rhythm are subjected to a peculiar punishment in the afterlife. They are forced to play a marimba made from a horse skeleton, with the ribs serving as keys. Meanwhile, others who died in similar circumstances are condemned to dance to the music produced by striking the ribs of the skeleton.

Those Who Never Drank Alcohol

Those who never tasted alcohol in life because it repulsed them and criticized those who enjoyed it face a particularly harsh punishment in the afterlife. God condemns them to drink donkey urine continuously, as a form of humiliation and retribution for their disdain towards liquor.

Those Who Enjoyed a Good Salary⁵²

If a person enjoyed a good salary in life and became greedy because of it, their soul faces a specific punishment in the afterlife. Instead of counting money, they are condemned to count brazas (a measure of length). This task is never completed, as they are forced to start over whenever they make a mistake, suffering severe burns on their hands as a reminder of the pain caused by their greed.

The Rainbow

God created the rainbow as a sign that there would never again be a universal judgment like the one that brought forty days and forty nights of rain.

Fables

Lazy Juan and His Golden Dagger

San Juan Alotenango

In a distant place lived a newly married couple. From the beginning, they worked hard to build a small home. Though humble, it was a witness to the happiness that reigned in that household, happiness that grew even more when they realized the wife was expecting a child. They eagerly awaited the birth of their baby.

Finally, a boy was born, and they named him Juan.

Juan began to grow, reaching the age when children typically start speaking. His parents, with great anticipation, waited for him to start talking and tried to teach him to articulate words. But the boy showed no signs of wanting to speak, leading his parents to think that perhaps his speech was delayed and that they just needed to be patient. However, they did not know that all their efforts would be in vain because Juan was born without the gift of speech.

Years passed, and the father grew increasingly desperate as the moment to hear his son speak never arrived. This despair led him to change his attitude at home, and he decided to take drastic measures to force the boy to speak. On one occasion, he took a short whip and beat Juan until he was left nearly unconscious; on another, he ordered his wife not to give the boy any food unless he asked for it with words. The mother complied only when her husband was home, as she secretly fed Juan whenever the father left for his work in the fields. However, she was not always cautious enough, and one day, her husband caught her feeding their son. Enraged, he unleashed all his fury on the unfortunate boy, beating him again until he was left on the ground, silently crying in pain.

Time passed quickly, and Juan reached the age when a man should fend for himself, a fact that deeply troubled his father and compelled him to work harder. Juan never showed interest in learning a trade, likely due to his inability to communicate, but he did have a healthy appetite. These circumstances infuriated his father, who, blinded

by anger, went so far as to threaten to kill Juan if he didn't learn a trade. He began calling him "Lazy Juan," a nickname that soon spread among the neighbors, who also used it to mock the boy. Only his mother, who adored him, continued to call him by the name she had given him at birth.

The way his father treated Lazy Juan exacerbated the conflicts at home, as his mother could no longer bear to witness the tortures inflicted upon her son. She decided to intervene, even if it meant defying her husband. Without consulting him, she took Juan to the home of some friendly neighbors who offered him shelter, though not food, which she promised to bring herself. And so, Lazy Juan left his parents' home.

In the house that now sheltered him, Juan felt very happy, as he no longer had to endure his father's beatings or the mockery of others. His face showed how deeply he was moved, and his joy was so great that, suddenly and without realizing it, he spoke a few words. Noticing this, he continued practicing until he mastered enough words to express everything he wanted. He shared this news with his mother, telling her of the love he felt for her, and they both cried tears of joy.

The first night Juan slept in his new home, he had a wonderful dream that revealed to him the existence of a magical golden dagger, which possessed supernatural powers and could grant any wish to whoever possessed it. According to the dream, the dagger was hidden in the roof of his parents' house, and he was destined to retrieve it. Unable to sleep any longer, he awoke at dawn. When his mother arrived with breakfast, he told her about the dream, suggesting that he should find a ladder to climb up to the roof of his parents' house and search for the dagger, as the dream might just turn out to be true.

The next day, when Juan's father left for work, which he did very early in the morning, his mother quickly fetched the ladder and told Juan that it was the perfect time to check if the dagger truly existed. Juan hurried up to the roof of the house, moving as swiftly as his difficulties allowed. He lifted part of the roof covering, and after a brief search, he found a dagger with its sheath, which was quite sooty.

Surprised to see his dream coming true, he immediately shouted to his mother to let her know.

Juan took the dagger, and when he unsheathed it, the blade shone brightly because it was made of pure gold. The sheath was also made of gold, though it was dirty from having been in that state for who knows how long. He cleaned the dirt from the

sheath, and to his great surprise, as he ran his hand over the back of it, two large gold coins fell out, which he put into one of his pants pockets.

He climbed down to where his mother was and gave her the coins. Needing money, she sold them to a wealthy person who paid her a good sum of cash in the local currency. She used this money to buy clothes for Juan and to meet other needs of the household.

The young man continued to take gold coins from his dagger, and his mother took care of selling them, significantly improving their financial situation. When she had enough money to sustain herself, Juan told her that he was going to travel the land, thinking that he needed to learn a trade, as it would be impossible to return home without knowing how to work since his father had sentenced him to death if he did not. He said goodbye to her, leaving immediately, with only the dagger accompanying him, which provided him with the necessary money to meet his needs.

Seeing her son leave, the mother was overwhelmed with sadness, shedding many tears because she had the feeling that it was the last time she would see her son, which indeed turned out to be true.

When Juan's father noticed that his wife had a lot of money, he demanded to know where it came from. She responded by telling him what had happened with their son and explaining that it was Juan who had provided the money. Upon learning that his son could now speak, he told his wife to bring Juan home and promised never to harm him again. However, this promise could not be fulfilled because Juan had already left, fearing his father. The father tried every possible means to find him, but it was completely impossible. With the money Juan had left for them, his parents bought a large house that allowed them to live in great comfort.

Meanwhile, "Lazy Juan" arrived in a big city with the intention of disproving the nickname his father had given him. Despite his difficulties, he diligently searched for work because he wanted to be useful to society. At the same time, he thought that since he was now a man, he needed to settle down by finding a companion to have someone to fight for in life, thus establishing his own home.

He couldn't find the desired work anywhere, but eventually, he came to the house of a wealthy man and offered his services. The man needed a sweeper to clean the house and hired Juan. However, Juan was quite incompetent and never learned to sweep properly, which led to him losing his job after just a few days. But not wanting to give up on his plans, he went in search of another job, not caring what kind it was.

There's no doubt that Juan was very lucky, and he quickly found another job, still as a sweeper, in the home of a very rich family. The head of this household, who was quite benevolent, gave Juan every opportunity to learn to work, starting with teaching him how to sweep. He provided him with work and food, though not lodging, which Juan found in a neighboring house. As the young man quickly progressed in his job, his employer eventually gave him a room to sleep in within the house.

Juan never parted with his dagger, and no one knew of its existence. Every night, he occupied himself with cleaning it, which resulted in a considerable increase in gold coins because each time he rubbed the dagger, the sheath would always release some. This became his nightly entertainment, along with spending sleepless nights counting his money.

Juan never imagined that in this house, he would decide his fate, as it was here that he would find complete happiness. His employer was the father of seven lovely daughters, all in the bloom of youth; six of them, the eldest, were married and lived in the house with their respective husbands. The youngest, named María, was still single.

Juan was a handsome young man who attracted the attention of the girls in the house. Intrigued by his reserved nature and the fact that he never left his room at night, they decided to spy on him to find out what he was up to. Through a crack in the door, they observed him and discovered the money he kept hidden there. Among themselves, the married sisters would say, "It's a shame I'm already married; otherwise, I would marry Juan."

But María, realizing that she could marry him, decided to seize the opportunity and proposed to her parents that they arrange her marriage to Juan. However, they refused, thinking that Juan did not yet earn enough from his work to support a wife, as they were unaware of the wealth he possessed because their daughter did not tell them.

Since María had already begun to love Juan, she wondered how she could win him over if he didn't provide her with the opportunity she longed for. After thinking it over, she came up with an idea, though it was risky, and decided to put it into practice. She decided to win Juan over by visiting him in his room at night. These visits became frequent, and since the young man was deeply lonely, he found her company pleasant. Before long, they were deeply in love, leading to a close relationship.

The young couple continued their secret love affair, but only for a short time because it soon became impossible to hide their love. María became pregnant, and in that condition, her situation was critical. Her parents became suspicious, and when they asked her about the cause of her pregnancy, she didn't hide it and proudly stated that the child she was carrying was Juan's, with whom she wished to marry because they were in love. Though her parents were angry, seeing their daughter's resolve and to avoid neighborhood gossip, they gave their consent. Shortly after their marriage, the young couple was thrown out onto the street by María's parents, who gave her a large piece of land as an inheritance where they could build their own house.

Since Juan couldn't build the house, his father-in-law called him a fool and a lazy person, and said that he would build it himself as soon as he could because he had many personal problems to solve, which would take some time. However, he offered to have María live with him in the meantime, where they could live in peace. He did all this because he loved his daughter dearly, as she was the youngest and most spoiled.

One day, Juan went to the land his in-laws had given his wife, intending to reflect on everything that was happening to him. Sitting under the shade of a tall tree, he thought about the house he needed to live in with his wife. At the same time, he cleaned his Golden Dagger when suddenly, as if by magic, a beautiful house appeared on the land, which was more like a luxurious palace, complete with all kinds of comforts and many servants. He found himself dressed in luxurious clothing, giving the impression of being a great lord, and amazed by these events, he explored the entire palace where he noticed that the servants were also dressed elegantly. Not wanting to waste much time, Juan quickly brought his wife there, and she felt very happy.

After mounting a spirited steed that also appeared in the palace for his exclusive use, Juan went in search of his father-in-law. When he found him, the older man was astonished to see Juan arrive in such rich attire and asked the reason for his visit. Juan told him that he now had the house he needed and invited him to come see it. The father-in-law didn't believe the young man's words, but after much difficulty, Juan finally convinced him to accompany him to see for himself. However, he had to saddle a beast for him. They set off, and long before reaching the luxurious residence, they could already see the beautiful towers of the enormous and dazzling palace, which, as many people said, was of a kind never seen before in the world.

As they approached the palace, the father-in-law was so overwhelmed by the beauty of the sight that he fell off the beast he was riding. He quickly recovered and, without

saying a word, remounted his steed and urged it to gallop back to his home, where he shared the good news with his family.

Both his wife and daughters, being very curious, decided to verify the truth for themselves. They immediately set off for the newlyweds' new home, where they too were left speechless by the magnificence of the palace. The young women, surprised, sighed and remarked, "How lucky our sister is to have married such a rich man!" They said this because their own husbands were poor, working as masons, carpenters, and farmers—trades that did not yield significant financial benefits.

María's family frequently received invitations from Juan to visit them. Since Juan's actions had endeared him to them, her parents and sisters never missed an opportunity to visit. Besides, there was no reason to pass up the meals served there, which were among the finest. The only ones who didn't accept these invitations were the sisters' husbands, who envied him.

As envy seldom leads to good outcomes, a sudden economic crisis struck the households of María's sisters. Their husbands lost their jobs, leaving them without any means of income. After many days of enduring this distressing situation, they could no longer bear it and abandoned their wives, leaving for distant places in search of sustenance.

The wives didn't get angry or saddened by their predicament because they believed Juan would give them shelter and everything they needed. So, they decided to ask him to let them live with him, pretending to be helpless victims, saying they had been left destitute and needed his protection. Juan, being very humane but also growing increasingly vain and fond of the young women, decided to take advantage of the situation. He told them he would indeed take them in but only as his wives. They eagerly accepted his proposal because they were in love with him. Additionally, this arrangement would allow them to enjoy a better social standing and obtain everything they desired. They moved into the palace as quickly as they could to enjoy its splendor.

Juan's in-laws felt very lonely with the absence of their daughters, and since their love for them was great, they visited the palace daily. Because of this, they no longer stayed at their home during the day and only returned after sunset. Seeing that they now had several "black" servants at their disposal, they decided to reduce the servants' wages, as their duties had lessened.

Naturally, this decision didn't sit well with the servants, but rather than get angry with their masters, they directed their anger toward Juan, whom they blamed for their

predicament. They decided to take revenge. They devised a plan to kill their enemy but could never execute it because Juan never traveled alone, an opportunity they were waiting for.

Meanwhile, María's sisters' husbands returned from the journey they had undertaken in search of work. The first thing they did was look for their wives, but when they couldn't find them, nor their in-laws, they asked the servants about the family's absence. The servants, seizing upon the husbands' anger, turned them against Juan and decided to make them jealous by telling them that Juan had taken their wives—a deed that no one forgives.

Since both groups shared the same goal, the servants managed to persuade the husbands to join forces in taking revenge against Juan, as this would ensure their success. By then, the rumor had spread that Juan possessed a magical Golden Dagger that granted him everything he wished for and was the source of his wealth. They decided to steal it.

One dark night, they carried out their plan. They approached the palace and, without anyone noticing, as it was the hour when everyone was resting from the day's labors, they slipped inside. The shadows moved silently through the palace until they reached Juan's chamber, where he, unaware of the danger surrounding him, slept peacefully. The thieves seized this opportune moment to steal the Golden Dagger. Once they had it in their hands, they rubbed it and asked for the palace, with all its riches, to be moved to another location, that the servants, as well as Juan's wives and his own, would fall under their control, and that Juan would remain sleeping on the ground, exposed to the elements, with nothing to cover him.

A new day dawned, and the silhouette of a man could be seen sleeping peacefully on the ground. It was Juan, who, deep in the trance of his dreams, was unaware of what had happened to him. His father-in-law, who as usual arrived for a visit very early in the morning, was alarmed to find the palace gone. However, he recognized his son-in-law sleeping without a care in the world and woke him up, asking about the whereabouts of the palace and his seven daughters. Juan couldn't answer these questions, and when he reached for his belt, where he always carried his Golden Dagger, he realized it was missing—it had been stolen, which he immediately told his father-in-law. The older man then reconsidered his demands, seeing that it was impossible for Juan to recover everything lost in such a short time, and therefore gave him a year to bring back his daughters; otherwise, he would seek him out to kill him.

Juan was at a loss for what to do and finally decided to travel through entire cities, pretending to be a charcoal seller, with the goal of offering his product in every house and using this as a way to enter them and see if he could find any sign of his loved ones, as those who had stolen his dagger might have transformed the palace. But it was all in vain.

However, Juan continued searching for the palace when someone gave him somewhat pleasant news. He was informed of the existence of a man named Sol, who worked during the day, lighting up the Earth from the sky, and who, for this reason, could see what was happening at great distances, though his place of residence was unknown. Thinking that this man might be able to help him, Juan traveled through many countries until he discovered where Sol lived.

The house of Señor Sol was also a palace. Juan approached and knocked on the door. When it opened, a woman who worked as a servant in that household asked the young man the reason for his visit, to which he replied by asking for her master. Since Juan made this visit during the day, he was informed that the person he was looking for was not at home because he was working, but that he would return at six in the evening.

The woman added, in response to Juan, that she didn't recommend talking to her master because he ate people, and advised him to leave. However, the young man insisted on his purpose, so the servant called Señor Sol's mother, to whom Juan recounted his situation. Seeing the favor he was asking, she invited him to come in, locking him in a room whose door was secured with seven keys to prevent her son from discovering the young man's presence and trying to eat him.

When Señor Sol finished his work, he immediately headed home. Upon arriving, the first thing he said was that he smelled human flesh. His mother replied that there was no one in the house but them, and to distract him, she led him to the dining room and served him dinner. When she considered that her son, Señor Sol, had satisfied his appetite, she told him about Juan's troubles, and he requested the young man's presence to hear directly the reason for his visit. Juan was brought before Señor Sol and immediately told him everything he had heard about him. Trying to please him, he narrated the story of his life and explained the purpose that had brought him to Sol.

Then Señor Sol said to Juan, "Since your case is special and you have suffered much, I will help you." And at once, he summoned a vehicle to take him to the place where the palace he sought was located. Juan thought this vehicle would be a wheeled one, like those he knew in his land and during his travels through various

countries, but he was greatly surprised to see a huge bird arrive a hawk, the only means of transportation for Señor Sol.

After giving instructions to his hawk, Señor Sol urged Juan to climb onto its neck, telling him to hold on tight, as this vehicle would take him to his palace.

The great bird took flight, and after a long time flying over mountains and ravines, mingling with the clouds, Juan was further astonished when the bird spoke, telling him they were flying over the place he sought. The hawk landed, allowing only its passenger to disembark, and quickly returned to the skies, heading back to its home.

Surprised by how he had found his palace, Juan stood in front of it, delighting in the majesty it presented. But at the same time, he sadly pondered how he should enter and decided to disguise himself as he had done before as a charcoal seller. To do this, he smeared his face with soot and dressed in rags so as not to be recognized.

Juan offered his wares to the neighboring houses to conceal his true intention until he finally arrived at the palace. He knocked on the door, and a man answered one of the servants who had once worked at his in-laws' house. This man called for one of the captive women to come and purchase the charcoal, and María appeared. Her face and clothing showed signs of mistreatment. She didn't recognize her husband because of his perfect disguise. Despite being in front of his wife, Juan couldn't reveal himself to her to get any information about his dagger because the servant never left her side. After they bought his charcoal, he left, pondering how he would manage to re-enter the palace.

Juan, very sad, sat down by one of the palace doors that opened onto the street. As he lamented, a dog approached him, and Juan, seeing it as a silent witness to his sorrow, began to tell the animal about his troubles without expecting a response. While he was talking, a beautiful cat, which seemed to have just finished a good meal, also approached. Juan continued to narrate his misfortunes to both animals and, without thinking, said to the cat, "Oh little cat, it's a pity you can't do me the favor of retrieving my Golden Dagger from where it's hidden."

The cat didn't speak, but it did understand Juan's words, and it decided to help the young man in his plight. Immediately, the cat began to vomit up little mice, which quickly scattered in all directions, with some of them entering the palace.

Juan didn't understand why the cat was acting this way with the mice, and he continued to think about his dagger. Then, he noticed that beside him, from a small hole in the ground, ants were emerging, followed by one of the mice, the largest one,

dragging a long object with all its might. The young man hurried to see what the little animal was pulling, and realizing it was his Golden Dagger, he took it with great joy, thanking the cat and the mice for the service they had rendered.

Juan hid his Golden Dagger within his clothes, making sure that no one would see it and try to steal it again. Suddenly, he was overcome by a strong drowsiness. When he hid the dagger, he didn't realize that he had brushed it against his clothes, which was enough to immediately cause the palace to relocate to the place where it had first appeared.

Inside the palace were María, her sisters, and the rest of the servants, but the envious ones who had caused so much trouble were left outside. Juan appeared in his bedchamber, just as he had been when his dagger was stolen. When he woke up and realized what had happened, and after recovering from the surprise, he joyfully embraced his wife and the other concubines.

After that, he went to his in-laws' house to inform them that the palace was once again at their disposal and that they could retrieve their daughters whenever they wished. Once they confirmed that what Juan said was true, they agreed with their daughters' desire to stay and live in the palace. Additionally, Juan informed them that the ones responsible for all the trouble were his other brothers-in-law and their servants, whom he immediately ordered to be arrested and sent to prison to pay for all the harm they had caused.

Finally, after overcoming all the obstacles that had stood in his way, Juan achieved the peace he had longed for. Together with his wife, they lived very happily, and at last, the child they had been expecting was born. He secured the Golden Dagger in the same way that Señor Sol's mother had locked him in "a room whose door was secured with seven keys," so that it would never be stolen again and could be passed on to the little one when he became a man.

The Ox and the Tiger

San José Chacayá

Once, a tiger wandered through a mountain. He was the fiercest of all the evil that existed in that place, which allowed him to walk confidently without worrying about anything, as all the other beasts feared him. He roamed, lost in his thoughts, and thus did not notice the danger looming around him. Suddenly, a branch from a tree cracked and broke off from its trunk, falling on him. Despite his great agility, he had no time to dodge it and was pinned to the ground. The heavy branch pressed against

his body, preventing him from moving, and at times he felt life slipping away from him. Desperate, he could only growl in pain.

An ox was roaming nearby in search of food when he heard the tiger's painful growls. He quickly hurried to find the exact location where the sounds came from until the pitiful scene came into view. The ox could not bear to see anyone suffer, especially in the situation the tiger found himself in, and he thought that the tiger's life was lost unless someone saved him.

The tiger, feeling close to death, saw the ox and felt a glimmer of hope. He quickly said to him:

"Brother, you are so strong. You can save me by moving this heavy branch that is squeezing the life out of me."

The ox hesitated because he knew of the tiger's bloodthirsty tendencies. But without thinking further, and wanting to do a good deed, he pushed the branch off with his sturdy horns, revealing the kind heart that beat within his chest.

When the tiger found himself safe, he shook his body and took a few steps forward to make sure he hadn't suffered any fractures. Convinced that he was safe and sound, and without any intention of rewarding the ox for the service he had rendered, the tiger said:

- "I am hungry, my friend ox, and since God decreed that you serve as food for us, I am now going to eat you."

- "Oh no!" replied the ox, shocked by such an ungrateful proposal, and thinking he had made a mistake by saving the life of such a bloodthirsty creature. He continued, saying:

- "You don't know how to repay a favor, and I regret what I have done. But since what you want cannot be possible, before anything else, we must bring this matter to the authorities, so they can give their verdict and decide if what you intend to do with me is right or not."

Both went in search of the First Mayor, who was Mr. Opossum. When the ox explained his case, the mayor replied:

- "If it is the tiger's will to eat you because he is hungry, you must accept it."

Unsatisfied with this unjust ruling from the highest authority in the land, the ox suggested to the tiger that they visit the Second Mayor, who was Mr. Monkey, to see what his opinion would be. They did so, and found him outside his office, playing around. When he saw them, he immediately went into his office to hear them out. The ox once again explained the situation, to which the Second Mayor responded:

- "In my position as an official, I cannot prevent the tiger from doing what he wants with you. Therefore, you must resign yourself and accept his wishes."

The ox, feeling bewildered, thought that if the first two authorities hadn't delivered justice, there was still one final option—a third official who might give him justice, offering him one last hope. This was Mr. Rabbit, who held the position of Municipal Trustee. They searched for him and found him at home. The ox presented his case, but Mr. Rabbit only listened to a few words before saying:

- "Gentlemen, this is not my office, and besides, it's not public service hours yet. If you agree, go ahead and wait for me at my office, and I will arrive shortly."

The ox and the tiger headed to Mr. Rabbit's office, but as he took a long time to arrive, both decided to go meet him, as the tiger insisted on eating the ox due to his growing hunger, and the ox was tormented by the thought that if the trustee did not deliver justice, the tiger would devour him.

Coincidentally, the trustee was already on his way to his office, and once they were gathered in the office, he took his respective chair and sat down, inviting both the ox and the tiger to do the same in other chairs. He then asked the ox to explain his problem, which the ox did immediately, not leaving out any details in his defense, trying to convince the official that everything he was saying was true. After a while, the trustee said:

"I can't believe such a thing! How is it possible to repay good with evil? This can't be!"

To convince me of your words—added Mr. Rabbit to those who required his services—it is necessary that we go to the place where the incident occurred and recreate the scene, as these are procedures that must be considered in cases like this one.

The trustee took his staff, and they headed to the mountain. Upon arrival, he carefully examined the area and ordered the tiger to lie on the ground and have the same

branch placed on him, which the ox did under Mr. Rabbit's instructions. Immediately afterward, the tiger once again writhed in pain due to the pressure of the branch.

Despite everything, the ox wanted to show his good nature once more and was about to remove the branch that was killing the tiger, when Mr. Rabbit intervened to prevent it, saying:

"One moment, Mr. Ox, don't make another foolish mistake!" Adding action to his words, he tied the ox to a tree trunk and gave him a good whipping with a vine. Afterward, he untied him and sent him back home, but not without advising him never to do any favors for someone who doesn't deserve it. He too went home, leaving the tiger in that painful situation, suffering the consequences of his wicked heart.

A Bold Suitor

Livingston

It is said that once there was a young man of outstanding personality who fell madly in love with a lovely young woman, who, due to her personal qualities, was considered highly feminine. He showed his affection in many ways until he managed to win her over. They professed great love for each other and finally decided to marry, with the young man planning to present himself to her father to ask for her hand. However, they did not anticipate the great obstacle they would have to overcome to realize their dreams: her father, being an old man, did not want his daughter to marry out of fear of losing her and being left alone. For this reason, every time the young suitor made his request, the father dismissed it.

The young man, not wanting to wait any longer for fear of his dreams slipping away, decided to ask for his beloved's hand one last time. However, in case of another refusal from her father, he came prepared with spears and swords to abduct her and take her to live with him. When the old man saw such boldness from his daughter's suitor and noticed he was armed in this manner, he became greatly frightened and began shouting for help.

Many people heard the cries and rushed to see what was happening, but they didn't give much importance to the scene, as there was no real reason for alarm. The young man was merely trying to convince the old man with kind words to give his consent so they could marry. Once the townspeople learned of the young couple's feelings, they supported the suitor in his request, and together they managed to convince the old man to agree to his daughter's marriage. The wedding took place, and the newlyweds enjoyed great happiness.

[Note: This story, originating from the municipality of Livingston, a community of people of color located on the northern coast of the country by the shores of Amatique Bay, is distinctive for the way it is told. When the storyteller reaches the part where the bride's father calls for help, they sing, and when the people respond to the call, everyone listening to the story sings along until the story concludes.]

References:

1. Patata corriente.
2. In Nebaj, corn is found in three colors: white, yellow, and black. According to local accounts, these colors were adopted by the corn to please the people who discovered it, so each could choose the color they preferred and distinguish it easily.
3. In these two municipalities of the Department of San Marcos, the legend about "El Origen del Maíz" is told in the same way, so we have decided to publish only the one from Tectitán.
4. Words in the Kanjobal language that mean "Heart of Corn."
5. A Mam word meaning "Mother Corn."
6. A species of cat larger than the domestic one.
7. An insect that is almost imperceptible to the naked eye; it feeds on human blood and lives in clothes or hair. The indigenous people of San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán, like most people, consider them dangerous because they can cause diseases.
8. The name given to birds known for making holes in trees with their beaks in search of insects, where they also nest.
9. According to the indigenous people of the region, there are several lightning bolts of different colors, each possessing great powers.
10. According to the indigenous people of Santa Cruz Verapaz, Quiché Winak is the Sun God, and he was endowed with certain powers and virtues.
11. According to the indigenous people of this region, there are 13 seas.
12. Originating from the municipality of Rabinal, Baja Verapaz.
13. This cave, according to legend, is located on a hill near Santa Cruz. Since the events occurred, as told in the region, the hills Don Juan, Don Paxil, and Don Pablo are considered the fathers of corn, and people pray to them for a bountiful harvest. These hills have many caves, and it is said that deep inside them, stones in the shape of corn

cobs, piloy beans (large beans with spots), and common beans can be found. The indigenous people also visit these caves to pray for good crops and for their livestock.

14. In Santa Cruz, they believe that before corn was discovered, everyone ate Patz'pam (quequexque).

15. That is why the indigenous people say that when a fox harms the cornfield, it eats large amounts of corn, whereas the wildcat eats very little.

16. They also believe in the existence of 13 thunders.

17. Indigenous people say that this is the reason why there are three types of corn: black, red, and white.

18. A sorcerer who serves as an intermediary with the deities and is also a healer who uses ritual means.

19. Approximate date, according to the person who provided the information.

20. No translation into Spanish.

21. These grains are similar to beans and still exist in Patzité, although no longer in large quantities. Sorcerers use them during their evil rites, and therefore they are locally called "sorcerer's bean."

22. The founders of Santa María Patzité were very conservative and have passed on their customs from their old settlement to their generations; so much so that the women never abandoned their traditional dress, which is why today everyone still maintains their attire as if they still belonged to Santa María Chiquimula.

23. Indigenous priests.

24. This legend also tells of "The Origin of Corn, Sugar Cane, and Plantains."

25. Words in the Quiché language that mean: milpa, sugar cane, and plantain, respectively.

26. In the village of Chana, these stones are called "Piedras Magdalenas."

27. Nowadays, there is no place in Tajumulco called "Piedra Partida." In the municipal head, there is a settlement called "Piedra Redonda," but it is not known for certain if both names refer to the same place.

28. There is no other place called this, it is probably the settlement of Tuizquinque in the village of Chana, whose name may have changed over time.

29. According to locals, when narrating the legend, such signs still exist.

30. Estoraque is a resin used to fumigate images in religious ceremonies.

31. Sapuyulo is the name given to the seed of the fruit called zapote, used to prepare a type of atole that is drunk from small gourds.

32. The "cámara" is an artifact commonly called a "mortar." It is used by the country's indigenous people in all their religious celebrations and consists of a 11 cm tall by approximately 19 cm diameter iron container with a small handle for easy transport. Inside, a charge of one and a half or two ounces of gunpowder is placed, with a fuse coming out through a hole at the level of the flammable mixture. It is then compacted with powdered brick from pieces of clay tile, which should be as refined as possible. Once prepared, it is placed on the ground, and a coal or flame is used to light the fuse, leading to an explosion a few seconds later. Data provided by Mr. Rosalio Saquic C., member of the field department of the National Indigenous Institute.

33. This word in the Mam language means: malnourished. It is the indigenous language spoken in the Department of San Marcos.

34. Currently, San Antonio Sacatepéquez has municipal status.

35. These peaks are called so because they are in the municipality of San Carlos Sija, in the department of Quezaltenango.

36. This legend refers to the existence of the true image of the patron saint of the village of Hierbabuena, which is part of the Greater Community of the Mountains of Santa María, belonging to the municipality of Jalapa; as well as the patron saint venerated in the municipal head: "El Señor de Jalapa."

37. The current narration gave rise in the Greater Community of the Mountains of Jalapa to the belief that there is indeed a subterranean place that holds the true images of two venerated saints, to whom their devotees celebrate special festivals.

38. Maximón is a wooden image carved by indigenous people of Santiago Atitlán, dressed in the traditional attire of the Atiteco man. Indigenous people from the Tzutuhil region and many other places worship him and attribute supernatural powers to him. He is also known by the name Don Pedro de Alvarado (the conqueror of the country), and many Atitecos call him Mam, which means: old man, ancient, grandfather, and others call him Quimón, meaning Simón. Etymologically, Maximón means: Madon, and ximón = Simón.

39. It is currently said that when a man goes out at night with the intention of seducing a woman, Maximón appears to him in the guise of a street woman and, when the man thinks he has achieved his goal, Maximón reappears in his true form and, after mocking him terribly, departs, leaving the presumed seducer mad for life.

40. In the Kanjobal language spoken in San Pedro Soloma, these words mean "Virgin far away."

41. Within the Guatemalan indigenous communities, there is a rank called "Principal." It is exclusive to men and is given to those who have served in various public and religious positions for most of their lives. They must also be individuals of indisputable honor, recognized honesty, good manners, and married in the Catholic Church. This rank elevates them to a high social position within their community, and they are considered as advisors. They never cease to be "principals," unless they fail to behave as such.

42. According to people in San Pedro la Laguna, this image can still be seen today and on significant days (cowalaj k'ij) of the ritual calendar, the sound of the bell can be heard.

43. In the parish church of Villa de Esquipulas, in the municipality of the same name in the department of Chiquimula, there is a black crucified Christ sculpted by Quirio Cataño in the 16th century. Due to the many miracles it has performed for thousands of people, it is deeply venerated not only in Guatemala but also abroad, and it has long been referred to as the "Lord of Esquipulas."

44. This legend comes from Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán. Both this municipality and Nahualá belong to the department of Sololá and are part of the Quiché indigenous region.

45. We intentionally did not want to provide the meaning of these indigenous words until the end of the legend, as we believe this is the most accurate place for the explanation. "Quiak' asiwan" means: "Red ravine." Today, this name designates a village or canton in the municipality of Nahualá; it previously referred to the entire "nahualeño" territory.

46. In the past century, the highest authority in municipalities was designated as it is today: Municipal Mayor, and was elected by popular vote. There was a period from 1932 to 1944 when this position was renamed Intendente Municipal, who was appointed by the President of the Republic.

47. The town of San Pedro la Laguna is located on the shore of Lake Atitlán.

48. For this reason, when the indigenous people of San Pedro la Laguna hunt a deer, they burn a lot of pom and incense to please the "Lord of the hill" and avoid experiencing what happened to Salvador Quiacaín.

49. "Jun" currently means "one." "I'x" is the "sacred name of the earth deity, it is a good day. On this day, the main prayers to the mountain deities are said, as representative of the terrestrial deity..." No. 14, p. 36, "La Vida y las Creencias de los indígenas Quichés de Guatemala," by Dr. Leonhard Schultze Jenna. Translation by Lic. Antonio Goubaud Carrera and Herbert D. Sapper. National Typography. Guatemala, C. A. 1946.

50. The Siguamonta is a bird that abounds in El Tejar. It is also called the lazy bird or roadrunner because it does not fly as high and far as most of its species; its flight is about five meters and only happens when it gets tired of running. It resembles the grackle and feeds on insects and worms, with a plume on its head resembling a crest and a long tail. Its plumage is brown, and its skin has many colors, including yellow, dark purple, pale green, etc. This bird is not eaten because it is considered a bad omen, embodying the spirit of evil. When pursued, something unfortunate happens to those who try to hunt it; they might be bitten by a snake or have an accident. Anyone who sees this bird cross their path should spit on the tracks it leaves, or otherwise, they will be affected by misfortunes or other malevolent effects.

51. For this reason, in the local language, which is Cakchiquel, it is given the extended name Ok'oyrixnan, meaning "Weeper for his sister-in-law."

52. San José Chacayá (Sololá).

53. In the town of San Juan Alotenango, where this fable is told, there is a belief that in the past, the hills had their doors open to grant wealth to everyone. They say that these hills were the ones that granted Juan Haragán his "Golden Dagger"; however, since Juan's "black" servants and his in-laws stole the dagger from him, the hills closed their doors to prevent envy, which is why money is very scarce today, with these characters being the only ones responsible.