

MAXIMON

Luis Batz

Much has been written, much has been forced in order to give an interpretation of the origin of this legendary character, but none of it seems convincing. When they say that Maximón comes from the name Simon Judas, Judas Iscariot, etc.

The fact is: the name Maximón comes from pure Atiteco folklore, born from words, expressions, and the verbosity that is distinctly Tzutuhil.

SATAN

XIMON: TIED UP? WRAPPED UP? CLOTHING, FLAT KNOTS, COVERED, ETC. But if we left it at that, it would simply be a big doll. No, it has something that personifies it, something that dignifies it, and elevates it to the rank of the Tzutuhil gods. A silver heart is the center, the core, the essence, the experience, and at the same time, the foundation of faith of the ancient aborigines. Its lower limbs, a pitchfork made of pito wood (tzité).

In Tzutuhil superstitions, this character suffers from sexual debauchery and mercilessly punishes his rivals.

This character is given different names, but the most accepted name in the slang of roguery is Don Pedro de Alvarado, since Maximón, like REJALAJMAM (legendary man), does not sound good to their ears.

When someone looks around the corners of dark streets, sees a red-hot ember from a cigar, or hears the sound of hooves on the cobblestones, it is certain that Don Pedro has embarked on an inspection trip where his presence is requested to right some wrong committed against an innocent person and punish the evildoer.

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A tobacconist who often walks at night along all the roads of his domains, either on foot or riding on invisible horses, which can only be heard galloping and neighing from time to time in the silent nights of full moon and the smell of tobacco impregnating the atmosphere where he goes releasing puffs of smoke, that arrives as an aromatic grace to the noses of the tired travelers who spend the night in huts by the side of the roads, and only cross themselves by stammering a simple prayer to their gods, and to pass the earthly saint, nobody pronounces the name of Maximón or Rejalajmam, for being characters of high rank in the Tzutuhil belief.

Don Pedro's jurisdiction is vast, if any patient, not being Tzutuhil, requests his services, the personalities study and dialogue; because it will be necessary to request permission up to the high peaks of Maria Tecum, or to the limits of Pascual Abaj and if it were by the coast, it will be necessary to reach the domains of the great Nelson or to the Holy Stone. So that Don Pedro calmly arrives to prowl the house of the sick person, and to punish the enemies infiltrated in places, walls and other hiding places discovered by the great lord and Saint

As I said before: he is merciless against his rivals, one night there were heartrending screams in a part of the village, but who was able to intervene knowing that Don Pedro was the one who was viciously punishing some unfortunate, the inhabitants only stuck their noses next to the fence of cane of their ranchitos and only managed to see the victim, who was suspended and was shaken violently by an invisible force towards the cemetery.

The character is quite a womanizer and pursues with zeal the woman who charms him and surreptitiously makes his entrance without the girl realizing that she is being watched.

A renowned writer says that when the character was created by the Tzutuhil mythology, his first request was the company of a prostitute woman, yet this term is not applicable in our environment, among the Tzutuhil the term prostitute does not exist in the textual sense of the word, much less in the remote ages of our ancestors. A more appropriate term would be the unfaithful one, the one that fornicates, the adulteress, because all this is done on the sly and the love affairs of the great Don Pedro, all under a secrecy that not even the woman herself realized that she is the object of jealousy and sleeplessness of the legendary man.

A group of young ladies, for a July 25th, arranged to come to the party, coming from San Lucas Tolimán, in those days when there was still no road. Perhaps half an hour into the walk, when a gentleman's voice came from house to house asking for their names, when they opened the doors, they only heard the galloping of the beast through other nearby streets. At dawn, the news that Maximón de Santiago Atitlán had arrived for the tolimeñas (women of Tolima).

Many claim to have run into him in the streets and greet him reverently, but only half of the character turns aside and responds to the greeting and gestures with serious mockery. Hey.... Achy!

But if it is a woman, he follows her from door to door, from corner to corner, and becomes almost the size of the small ranchos lined up. Of course, without wooing her, he does not need to inspire her, much less convince anyone.

His nature makes him invisible to be able to raid the corners of the rooms.

He is the same silence, the same air that penetrates the vigils of the Tzutuhil maidens.

When we made our entrance, the ambassadors of the earthly god looked at each other sarcastically, we kissed the feet and hands of the main sorcerers seated in the bohemian atmosphere around a well polished table, where there were five personalities of the art of good majesty with their relevant surnames: Ma-chiguilif, Ma-Ajtzib, Ma-Televario, Ma-Ajchavajav. All of them are descendants of the Ajpop Dynasty.

The high tops of the enormous Texan hats highlighted the personalities. From their necks were knotted, showy colors of cloth, hanging on their chests, this garment they used to wear to defend themselves from the demand of liquor that they were given and this served them as a strainer where the liquor that escaped from their lips during the ceremonies was filtered and they were changed without the faithful realizing it, believing to be liberated with supermen, that the strongest liquors did not make effect in their organisms.

In the brotherhood, he shares equal or possibly superior powers with the other saints.

From a high throne, seated majestically and guarded by sentinel men who remain sheathed in a gabanes of ordinary jargon from head to toe and in a vertical line held in their hands cylindrical rods.

In front of the altar, there are fresh flowers, others withered, below a patriarchal chair adorned with high relief figures of birds, snakes, demons, etc.

On a table smoked by the smoke of incense, copal and pom (resin), cups are sliding from one side to the other by nervous hands, empty bottles, others full and the last ones started selling their contents in other dirty cups dripping with drink residues.

Rejalajmán

It is believed that he was not rendered useless by the nahuales; it was the Christian religion itself that relegated him to the secondary level.

The sorcerers had made him proud by fortune, he had climbed the highest positions within the faith, he occupied one of the sacred altars in the brotherhood, he had a prominent place in the church itself, in a word, he had dominated the whole house.

The diviners and sorcerers had cleverly intermingled in their pagan rituals the names of the saints of the church. Certainly they had not abandoned their forests, their caves, their grottoes nor their altars of sacred stone, but simply found easy

access to the neighborhood, a great tolerance on the part of those in charge of the flock, no one dared to drive them out, as the carpenter did with the merchants of the temple.

It was a time of confusion: the sorcerers and diviners were causing great havoc, taking advantage of the indifference of the indigenous people to receive the new religion of the whites, and at the same time, there were many Tzutuhil who half understood the language of the European.

Until a long time later, a priest with a strong character appeared, as his very name said. Godfrey: Inheritance to the rescue of the Holy Sepulcher, he threw out the ambassadors of the great Tzutuhil mafia. With shoves and kicks in the company of his earthly Saint Maximón, to clear the church of the pagan atmosphere that was already very dense. The courage of a man to oppose the feelings and beliefs of a people inherited from the past.

The priest spared no effort even at the risk of losing his life among the demonic mob, who shouted against the attack of their earthly god, the man was not intimidated and as the only weapon he had pressed to his chest a small cross and his bible and with the other arm he continued herding the enraged legion that between threats and shouts and insults in their dialect was yielding ground.

The priest took possession of the main entrance, and the mob was still crowded in the courtyard, raising hands and faces to the sky in protest, making gestures like kissing the sun. It was a long wait until the crowd started towards a certain place. And without the scholar guessing their plans, what would be their mood? When he saw that some of the crowd came out and placed themselves at the front but already with black coats and tied their heads with the ceremonial zutes, when there were already a good number of engabanados, they raised their earthly saint carrying it as a banner and started towards the main entrance possessed by the priest, who was still meditating.

The man had to face the mob again or flee before falling crushed at the feet of the vile legion, and as he understood that there was no way to avoid the advance, he chose to go out to meet the mob and in an act of gallantry snatched the doll carrying the engabanados, the mob to see that those in front were stripped of their banner, instead of attacking the enemy, they disbanded running in different directions crashing against each other. While panic spread and chaos began to reign, the religious man took the opportunity to walk upright towards the shore of the lake, with his cargo.

The doll-god seemed to be putting more and more weight on his captor, because after a few turns, he was already heavily laden and was constantly being shifted on his shoulders.

The whole town looked over the stone walls, astonished to see so much movement, so much daring on the part of the priest who was carrying the earthly saint.

The catechists, scattered among the crowd, followed them from afar, fearful of being pointed out by the zahoris as accomplices of the events and so that the curse of the earthly one would not fall on their heads, little by little they slipped into the crowd.

The expletives, curses and condemnations followed from the sorcerers and zahori, who could not defend their god.

The great men of mafia credulity declared themselves in permanent session, stripped off the garment that hung from their necks. They were pale and meditative because their saint had been snatched from them. What pretext were they going to give their faithful followers? Hadn't they made the people believe that their god was untouchable? Today, they regret their cowardice because they let him be taken away from them. Where would they go to look for him? How would they solve the case before the followers?

They then decided to set themselves the task of manufacturing another one with the same characteristics as the previous one, always with a silver heart and inner limbs made of a stick.

Then they condemned the attitude of the religious man: asking heaven for a curse, they made several sacrifices and some rites, asking for misfortune for the man who dared to snatch their god, the earthly Saint, Maximón.

San Pedro la Laguna, Sololá

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