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**División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades**

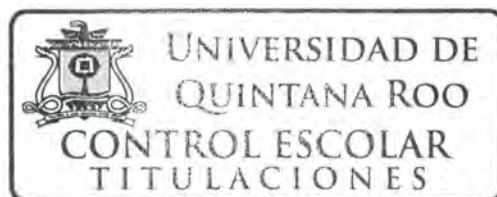
**TRANSLATION OF FIVE TALES FROM THE BOOK  
"CUENTOS, LEYENDAS Y TRADICIONES DE LA ZONA  
MAYA"**

**MONOGRAFÍA**  
Para obtener el grado de:

**LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA**

**Presenta**  
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**Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México, septiembre de 2018.**





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LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA

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## INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

The book “Cuentos, leyendas y tradiciones de la Zona Maya” (see: Attached Documents section) is a compilation of five short tales, three legends, and a set of traditions where we can find relevant information that Mayan people have transmitted to their children through generations. The compilation was achieved in the context of a program called “Los Aruxes” which aimed to bring different occupational alternatives for families in the Mayan region of Quintana Roo, Mexico in the year 1986. The program included activities such as sports, nutrition, handcrafting and arts.

Preserving legends, songs, dances, and traditions from the Maya region were important tasks for the aspect of arts within the program. The five short tales translated in this monographic work are a small part of what children and families from the Maya region brought to “Los Aruxes” program. In fact, in the prologue of the book it is explained that children themselves interviewed their grandparents and other old people to conform the compilation. This aspect of the book makes it valuable since it represents the voice of old people and brings us a wider scope of Mayan oral traditions in the Yucatan Peninsula.

Allan F. Burns, who is a professor in the Department of Anthropology College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the University of Florida, worked in the Yucatan Peninsula compiling stories and conversations from common people in different environments to analyse their language and ways of transmitting old stories and anecdotes to other people. He wrote a very interesting book called *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya* in which he explains how oral traditions are followed in everyday and common life:

*The brief exchanges at the marketplace, the greetings on the street, the stories told on the park benches at dusk, and the secret myths told late at night make up a rich tapestry of oral literature that is as strong today among the Maya as it has been in the past. The Maya are well attuned to the soundscape of their culture. There is a culture which pays close attention to the sounds that surround them, the sounds of unseen birds in the jungle, the sounds of the wind that bring rain, and the sounds of animals in the night. (Burns, 1983, p. 1)*

Professor Marcos Santiago Xiu Cachón, who is the compiler of “Cuentos, leyendas y tradiciones de la Zona Maya” (see: Attached Documents section) did a very similar work to that achieved by Allan F. Burns. In a brief interview carried out in the small city of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, he explained that oral tradition in the Mayan culture is a heritage that goes from old generations to new ones. In the same way Allan F. Burns did, Professor Marcos and the team of “Los Aruxes” program, gathered experience and anecdotes from people in different towns related to a variety of aspects of their daily lives.

Relevant information including legends, traditions, and stories, was compiled in a series of books that capture the knowledge and the wisdom of the Mayan people. However, all the material has remained forgotten and useless in old libraries or local government offices and there has been no effort in spreading this valuable information.

Evidently, nature and mysticism are clearly engaged in all Mayan stories, legends, and conversations. Unfortunately, as Professor Marcos Xiu expressed in a short interview, modern life and technology have changed in some way the dynamics of oral traditions in small villages, since young generations prefer the use of social networks and

other virtual means to communicate, and therefore demonstrate less interest in hearing old stories. Correspondingly, it is very important that oral traditions are preserved in written documents, such as this work, and concede future generations the gift of reading about ancient Mayan literature. Additionally, Burns explains in his book *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya* that people in these little towns are proud of their story tellers since they are helpful in bringing culture to a wide audience.

Translation is “a way to facilitate communication between people who don’t speak the same language” (Macola, 2008, p.2). Therefore, translation work is a very helpful process to bring information to people who are interested in Mayan oral traditions and American literature; especially if we take into account that these stories are full of Mayan terms that need to be “digested” into meaningful information. Correspondingly, it is very important that readers obtain faithful data since they trust in what we do in our jobs as translators.

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

Translation has been a necessary task for a long time in the History of humankind. It has been necessary to bring religion to different parts of the world and it has helped in several areas of human knowledge like medicine, politics, or literature, for instance. Translators indeed have had the important task of connecting cultures through language (Gómez, 2015). History of translation can be tracked to the epoch of Cicero when he made use of Greek to Latin translation to improve his oratorical abilities; or to Jerome, who is in fact considered the father of translation itself, thanks to his translation of the Bible. Jerome’s work has been the spearhead in this activity since he introduced the



definition of “sense for sense translation”, which implicated the use of syntax. His work was absolutely remarkable in the religious field in History to enhance evangelization around the world. (Robinson, 2002).

Within the anthropological field, there is relevant information to be rescued and valued particularly talking about oral traditions of American peoples. In the Yucatan peninsula, for example, there exist dozens of beautiful stories and legends that only a few writers have immortalized in written forms. Hence, the main objective of this monographic study is to rescue literary work from Quintana Roo, Mexico, through the translation of five tales from the book “Cuentos, leyendas y tradiciones de la zona maya” (see: Attached Documents section) in order to disseminate it among English language readers, mainly those from Zona Escolar 001 in the southern region of the state of Quintana Roo. The secondary school where I work belongs to this specific southern area and it would be easier to share the material among young readers and teachers.

Additionally, it is important to translate the texts in a pertinent way in order to transmit the ideas and feelings of each story using appropriate strategies for literary translation. This is a great opportunity to transmit important features of Mayan literature to all readers and to make them bearers of ancient oral traditions of such an amazing culture.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*La traducción es una actividad aislada mediante la cual el traductor, como dice Alfonso Reyes, realiza una “tarea humilde y dócil como el servir, y a la vez un peligroso viaje [...] sobre dos caballos de desigual carrera”, un viaje en el que el traductor debe mantenerse en equilibrio sin dejar que ningún caballo se desboque. (Reyes, 1962, p. 147)*

Jixing Long, who is an Associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages in Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang, China, wrote an interesting article called *Translation Definitions in Different Paradigms* in which he considers the definition of translation from three different criterions such as the linguistic, cultural, and social-psychological.

The linguistic paradigm considers that translation is always regarded as the exchange of messages between languages (Long, 2013). In this linguistic context, we can find three important authors who give us their definition of this very amazing process: John Cunnison Catford, Eugene Albert Nida and Peter Newmark. Firstly, Catford proposes that “translation is an operation performed on languages. In other words, it is a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” (1965, p.1).

As a second definition we have that, according to Nida (1964), who is considered a very important character in the world of translation, this process can be understood as a scientific subject where “the transference of a message from one language to another is a valid subject for scientific description” (Nida, 1964, p.3). Furthermore, Nida proposes a dynamic definition for translation and considers it as “the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.” (Nida, 1964, p.12).

Peter Newmark’s is definitely a third quite important definition to be mentioned. This author states that translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language (Newmark, 1982, p.7).

Cultural paradigm considers other definitions from four renowned translators such as André Lefevere, Susan Bassnett, Else Vieira and Edwin Gentzler, as well as Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, since they have influenced the thought and perspective of an important number of translators around the world.

Starting with André Lefevere, translation gets a meaningful definition in his book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, where he views this discipline as the fact of rewriting a message into another language. In his words, translation becomes “a rewriting of an original text” (1992, p vii). His work was especially oriented to literature translation, and he disagreed quite much with specialists who based their translations on theory rather than experience.

In a second place, there is Susan Bassnett who has a remarkable influence and reputation on the study of translation. Bassnett does not define this task without taking culture into consideration. She states that languages are as different as culture itself; therefore, “there are no two languages sufficiently similar” (Long, 2013, p.111). The idea of giving such a special place to culture in the field of translation is precisely the heart of her thoughts when she states, together with Lefevere, who was quoted in previous lines, that “translation is not a mere linguistic transfer but a cross-cultural activity” (Long, 2013, p.111).

In a third place, we find Else Vieira’s and Edwin Gentzler. These two authors have based their definitions of this discipline through studying translation in fiction writing. Vieira rethinks the definition of translation and, differently from other authors, under the traditional view who emphasize fidelity, she regards translation as a creative activity (Long, 2013).

Gentzler centers his attention in Latin America and analyses works from different authors namely Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa. In his analysis,

Gentzler broadens the horizon of translation by taking into account the view of these three authors in translation issues, and concludes that fiction and theory when blended with translation, offer us a new perspective for us to see the world. In conclusion, he offers us a perspective in which translation forms our identity (Long, 2013).

Finally, Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida (Long, 2013) situate translation in a more literal perspective. Benjamin (1923) specifically considers that translating a text must not need to be covered or blocked. He compares translations with paintings or poems and affirms that translators should not worry about those who might read the products, since artists never worry about those who watch or read their works. On the other hand, Derrida (2001) sees translation as a conversion that goes from the body of literalness to the ideal interiority of sense, as Venuti translated in a chapter of Derrida's book *What is a Relevant Translation?* (Long, 2013).

Two more definitions of translation are considered within the last paradigm that professor Jixing Long proposes in his article. Social and psychological paradigm includes a definition by Sherry Simon (2006) and Emily Apter (2006), and a new definition brought by Edwin Gentzler (Long, 2013) who was mentioned already in the cultural paradigm. Thus, Sherry Simon proposed a definition of translation, which is different from those presented in countries with one dominant language. Sherry Simon chose the city of Montreal where both English and French are spoken, carried out a language research and concluded, as professor refers in the article, that translations are “manoeuvres that represent shifts in cultural history or which consciously exploit the limit, raising the temperature of cultural exchange” (Simon, 2006, p.16).

As the years have gone by, dozens of definitions of Translation have given us an idea of what translating implies. They represent different perspectives and different ways of watching the texts to be translated as well as the possible results that we translators can get when finishing

the work. Each author will defend his or her view, and each writer will see translation from a different angle, depending on their backgrounds, on the research studies they have followed, on the specific language or languages they study, and of course on the discipline to which the original text belongs.

In this way, and taking into account the source texts in this monograph, another important definition has to be presented: literary translation. Everybody can call “literature” to any kind of writing. However, it is important to understand that literature involves superior written artistry of lasting value. They are not only tales or poems; they are pieces of work that were created to open our eyes and show us a wide world beyond our own.

Translation of literature is very different from other forms of translation. We cannot expect fidelity to the original work. Anyone who translates literature must get into the soul of the author in order to transmit the feelings and heartbeat of the work and not just literal meaning. When translating works of art, it becomes quite important to understand them so we can discover the personality of the writer and his relation with his social environment and epoch. Moreover, it allows us a deeper comprehension of both the artistic aim and ideological direction of the author.

Considering the experience and remarkable works in the field of literary translation, it becomes important to deal with André Lefevere and his point of view about the essence of this specific matter. Lefevere (Venuti, 2000, p. 235) describes rewriting as "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work." He truly finds in literature pieces the opportunity to rewrite to a certain ideology or to a certain poetics, and usually to both.

Translating literature involves more than just knowing both the source and the target languages very well. This discipline engages a great ability to understand deeply the piece of work to be translated and to “feel” and “perceive” what the author intends to transmit.

Translators and linguists have written entire pages related to these abilities when translating literature. Thus, I find particularly important to consider the act of “rewriting” when working with this kind of texts. Just as Lefevere states in his book *Translation, History and Culture*: all rewritings whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way (1992, p.xi).

“Rewriting”, as quoted by W.J.F. Jenner in his article *The Manipulation of Poetics in Literary Translation*, refers to a variety of processing of literary texts such as anthologizing, criticizing, editing, adapting and translating. In the same way, Lefevere confirms that translation involves trust, since the audience, which does not know the original, trusts that the translation is a fair representation of it. For this reason, some authors deny the necessity of transforming the source to be translated. Daniel Hahn, who is a British editor and translator, published an interesting article about literary translation for the British Council web page where he advises that taking something living and fresh and transforming it into something dull and dead in another language doesn’t seem like genuine faithfulness (2014). So, literary translation means giving the readers the closest structure of the original, but keeping the feeling and essence that the writer printed to the piece of work.

Apart from defining the term translation, it becomes very necessary to have a look at the different schools that have given shape to what we know these days as Translation Studies. First of all, it is important to mention that the main schools of thought have remarked the use of key theoretical concepts namely “equivalence” which according to the Russian tradition refers to a

one-to-one correspondence between linguistic forms or a pair of authorized technical terms or phrases. In the French tradition of Vinay and Darbelnet, the same term, however, is understood as the attainment of equal functional value, generally requiring changes in form. This idea of equivalence involved the use of procedures, techniques or strategies as a solution to some translation problems.

In her article *La traducción y el otro. El acto (invisible) de traducir y los procesos de colonización*, Nair Anaya Ferreira (2010) quotes three research groups that have become the most important within translation studies. The first of them is represented by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury from Tel Aviv and their theory sees literature as a “polysystem” formed by interconnected rules that limit the strategies and possibilities to the translator. The second group located in Netherlands and Belgium includes theorists like James Holmes and André Lefevere and considers translation as a form of rewriting in the frame of a literature phenomenon which involves aspects like criticism, editing and literary historiography. The third group can be found in England and it is represented by Susan Bassnett, who explored the logical consequences of translation, mainly in English speaking countries. She also analysed the form in which cultural rules regulate what texts must be translated, as well as how and why.

In fact, the history of translation theory can be imagined as a set of changing relationships between the relative autonomy of the translated text, or the translator’s actions, and two other concepts: equivalence and function (Venuti, 2004). Equivalence is understood as accuracy, adequacy, correctness, correspondence, fidelity or identity, and function, meanwhile function is the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and the production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own culture (2004).



In his book, *The Translator Studies Reader*, Lawrence Venuti displays chronologically how the translation theory has been perceived by translators, either because of the necessities of that epoch or because of the influence of culture or social values. So, between the 1900s and the 1930s translation is seen basically as an interpretation, which necessarily reconstitutes and transforms the foreign text. Some theorists like Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt, treat translation as a creative force in which specific translation strategies might serve a variety of cultural and social functions, besides being a focus of theoretical speculation and formal innovation (Venuti, 2004).

Between the 1940s and the 1950s, translation theory is dominated by the fundamental issue of translatability. Philosophers, literary critics and linguists from this time, ask themselves if translation can reconcile the differences that separate languages and cultures. It is the decade when translation methods are formulated with precision (Venuti, 2004).

The decade between 1960 and 1970 was highlighted by the concept of equivalence. During these years, the literature related to this term is normative and aims to provide analytical tools to describe translations as well as standards to evaluate them. Equivalence is hence submitted to lexical, grammatical, and stylistic analysis and it is established on the basis of text type and social function (Venuti, 2004).

Susan Bassnett leads the decade of 1980 with her book *Translation Studies* which consolidated various strands of translation research and filled the need for an introductory text in the translation classroom, especially in English-speaking countries. Bassnett's work allowed translation studies to become a separate discipline, perhaps overlapping with linguistics, literary criticism and philosophy, but exploring unique problems of cross-cultural communication. Her

approach emphasizes on literary translation and her theoretical assumption relies definitely on the relative autonomy of the translated text (Venuti, 2004).

Finally, but not less important, the decade of 1990 marks a worldwide proliferation of translator training programs besides a flood of scholarly publishing. The conceptual paradigms during this decade became a mixture of the theories and methodologies from preceding decades, but also involved some new trends namely polysystems, skopos (understood as the purpose of translation), poststructuralism, and feminism.

Even though translation studies have suffered important changes along decades during the twentieth century, there are methods or procedures of translation that have survived through the years and have been tremendously helpful in some translation tasks. Such procedures were proposed by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet in their *Methodology for Translation*. These authors introduce the terms of direct and oblique translation, where direct are represented by borrowing, calque and literal translation; and oblique include transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

In the first group of procedures we can find *borrowing* which is the simplest of all translation methods and it consists in the use of foreign terms in the source language to give a stylistic effect, especially in literary translation. For example, in the Yucatan Peninsula, some typical foods, drinks and fruits are kept in the same form in the daily written and oral language: *papadzul*, *balché*, *huaya*. This monograph contains a considerable amount of borrowings to maintain the feeling of the Mayan traditions that the author wanted to transmit in the original book.

Secondly, we have the *calque* procedure that is a special kind of borrowing but that translates literally each of its elements. After a period of time, many of these borrowings

become an integral part of the language. For example, the English word *supermarket* has been calqued into Spanish as *supermercado*.

Finally, in the group of direct procedures, there is the literal translation. This procedure consists in the direct transfer of a source language into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate target language text. It is very common when translating between two languages of the same family. For example: *He has been very kind* and *Él ha sido muy amable*.

The second group of procedures is the oblique, which includes transposition. It involves replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message. There are two distinct types of transposition: obligatory transposition and optional transposition. Good examples of transpositions are those when grammar situations need to be adjusted because the structure cannot be translated literally: *I can play the guitar* and *Sé tocar la guitarra*. In this example the word “can” is a modal verb that means “to be able to; have the ability, power or skill to” but also means “to know how to”. In Spanish, the verb “saber” implies having the ability to do something. Furthermore, the verb “play” means “perform on a musical instrument”. If we translated the phrase literally, we should take “play” as “jugar” which is not appropriate to the sense of the sentence. So the best option is “Sé tocar la guitarra” instead of “Puedo jugar la guitarra”, if our intention is to say that the person has the ability to play the guitar.

Modulation consists in using a phrase that is different both in the source and target language, but they convey the same idea. Such a change becomes necessary because the translation is grammatically correct, but sounds awkward. For example: *An idea crossed his mind* and *Le asaltó una idea* ; or *Snow Ball* and *Baile de invierno*. In this example there is a play on words since the phrase “snow ball” represents a ball of snow and a dance (ball) at the

same time. In Spanish it does not make sense to say “bola de nieve” to represent a dance so, it is more appropriate to give the readers the idea of a dance in winter season.

Equivalence is used when certain phrases or words cannot be translated by means of a calque. This applies especially for idioms, onomatopoeia, clichés, proverbs, nominal or adjectival phrases, etc. A good example is the idiom in English *It's raining cats and dogs* and its equivalence in Spanish *Está lloviendo a cántaros*, to express that it is raining heavily.

Adaptation is the last of oblique procedures, and it represents the extreme limit of translation. It is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the source language message is unknown in the target language. This is especially necessary when we come across cultural situations that can be embarrassing for the target language readers or can distort the original idea. It is widely used in movies or songs to make titles more attractive to people. A case that comes to my mind is the movie *Poltergeist*. The word in English implies a supernatural phenomenon, but the situation was unknown in the Spanish language, especially in Mexico where supernatural experiences are more related to spirits and death. The producers decided to avoid all the explanation and preferred to use the name *Juegos Diabólicos* which resulted much more interesting for horror movies fans.

Five procedures from the list presented above will be useful for the kind of literary translation done in this monograph work:

- a) Borrowing
- b) Literal
- c) Transposition
- d) Modulation
- e) Equivalence

I find these techniques more appropriate for the kind of texts I decided to translate. They provide elements that can be useful to translate certain structures in Spanish, as well as probable idioms or local expressions. It is also important to consider that the texts contain an important variety of word in Maya language, so the borrowing technique could be very useful.

This task will be a great challenge considering that English is not my native language. Nevertheless, I am sure that the techniques mentioned previously, as well as the appropriate guide along this work will lead me to success and at the end I will be able to achieve an accurate translation that can show English language readers the beauty of Mayan stories in Quintana Roo.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to accomplish an effective task, translators need to know about the theory of translation. However, this activity also implies a wide knowledge of the languages involved in the process as well as writing skills and an ability to solve language obstacles. Depending on the type of translation, tools like glossaries or dictionaries might be needed. Literary works like the one translated in this monograph require having knowledge of the vocabulary and oral traditions that surround the stories. The book *Cuentos, Leyendas y Tradiciones de la Zona Maya* contains an important amount of Mayan words. Most of them are of common knowledge in the Yucatan Peninsula, some others, especially fruits or trees, involve showing pictures or explaining the meaning, since they are very regional or endemic elements and people who do not know this region at all, could misunderstand them easily.

The first step in this monograph was to read the five tales carefully in order to identify the words that could be difficult to translate into English and include them in a glossary. In fact, the original book contains an interesting list of terms to express certain onomatopoeia or explain specific facts mentioned in the stories. On line Mayan dictionaries were necessary to revise the spelling and meaning of words, for instance *Diccionario Cordemex*, *Diccionario Introductorio de la Lengua Maya* (published by UQROO), and *Diccionario Básico Español/Maya* (designed by UADY). After identifying the words, I started an analysis of expressions that could be very typical of Yucatan Peninsula region. However, I found that the stories had been written in a standard style, so it was not necessary to make a list of specific typical expressions.

Peter Newmark states that literary translation is the most testing type of translation, because the word, as well as the line itself, requires continuous compromise and readjustment (1988, p. 162). Although his definition refers to serious literature, I considered these aspects very relevant when doing the translation of the five tales, especially the

*readjustment* factor, for example in the case of the opossums (see glossary at the end of the translated stories), since the text contains elements that need to be explained and clarified for the audience.

Some research was necessary in order to clarify specific terms such as the ones related to water sources in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Pictures were included in the glossary at the end of the monograph to bring the readers visual clues of how these water sources look like so they have a clear image in their minds of the scenario of the stories.

In order to give the monograph an additional value, I interviewed the compiler of the stories. During this interesting chat, Professor Marcos Xiu Cachón spoke about the reason for compiling the stories and traditions of the state of Quintana Roo. The interview gave me a closer idea of what to rescue and maintain in the translation so as to transmit this same feeling to the audience.



Professor Marcos Xiu Cachón, compiler of the five tales from the book *Cuentos, Leyendas y Tradiciones de la Zona Maya*.

A third step was the first revision of translation to check spelling, coherence, and mainly if the product in English had maintained the *touch* from the source text. This part of the work was demanding, due to the fact that the translation needed to match the register and the style in



which the stories were written. The compiler chose a very simple language, which is generally used by peasants and ordinary people in the country areas of the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico.

The following task was to determine which techniques were used to translate the stories in the monograph. Due to the literary nature of the texts, literal translation was not appropriate for the whole translation, so a variety of techniques were necessary to give the product a good shape and a natural tone. After compiling the examples, it was important to classify them into the different types of techniques and include them in two columns charts where the left column will show the source language and the right side will show the target language. This type of chart was implemented to organize translation examples in the different methods used to translate.

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE

Once the analysis was done, I wrote the conclusions with the results of the whole monograph. In fact, far beyond the technical results, the conclusions were very focused on the satisfaction of being able to rescue such a very important material which was written and created in the state of Quintana Roo, in a proudly Mayan region, with the help of children and old people willing to share with new generations what a great community like theirs has in their Mayan hearts.

TRANSLATED TALES

## OCHIL

(Land of *Opossums*<sup>1</sup> 🗣️)

People say that, many years ago in a very poor country home in a remote village of the Mayan Region, there lived a man who worked in the arduous task of the *milpa*<sup>2</sup> 🗣️ land. One morning, when he arrived at the plantation, he realized that his beautiful bean plantation had been diminishing gradually. He was very worried and angry for losing his sacred crops, so one night while having supper by the fireside, he told his wife: “Woman, we are running out of beans in the milpa”; “Really?” answered his wife; “Yes!” said the husband, “I think some kind of animal is eating the crops. I will crouch in the fields and bust that thief immediately.” As soon as he finished supper, he took his shotgun and his machete, and went directly to the *milpa*.

He arrived at the milpa without hesitation. He considered the wind direction and climbed a leafy *Chicozapote*<sup>3</sup> 🗣️ tree which had miraculously been saved from the fire that was set to prepare the land for planting. He made himself comfortable among the branches of the tree and waited patiently for the intruder. He remained quiet, with his ears attentive, and let the time go by. After midnight, he heard a noise... *pik'ich... pik'ich*<sup>4</sup> 🗣️ coming from the edge of the field. He prepared the shotgun, pricked up his ears and calculated the direction from where the sound was coming. Being watchful under the light of the stars, he noticed a huge mother opossum under the tree followed by six anxious and hungry baby opossums who hurled themselves upon the bean plants to devour them noisily. “What’s wrong?” the peasant asked himself, “I know opossums do not eat beans. This is so weird...” He left the shotgun and moved slowly towards the low branches. Watchful and intrigued, he waited for some minutes. The peasant was just about to climb down the tree when he saw the baby opossums around their mother shouting with

clear voices “A story, a story, a story!” Mother opossum wasn’t paying attention, so baby opossums insisted until they got her attention. Then she said “well, listen carefully my children, you know that the Great *Tatich*<sup>5</sup> of nearby towns is dying. He has a serious foot illness which no healer has been able to cure. However, I’m going to tell you a secret, I know the right medicine to cure him. Listen, if anyone catches a Green *tolok*<sup>6</sup>, removes its brain, rips its legs off and gives all of it to the *Tatich* to rub his feet with this medicine, he will surely be cured. Do not tell anybody, and let’s go because it’s getting late.

As soon as the opossums disappeared, the clever peasant climbed down the tree and ran immediately to tell his wife what he had heard. The lady, who was also very clever and knew the lord of the region was indeed very sick, encouraged her husband to try the recipe. Next morning the peasant found a green *tolok*, killed it with a rock, removed its brain and ripped its legs. He put everything in a bag and went to the *Tatich*’s house and offered to cure him. The *Tatich* accepted the remedy and, full of hope, rubbed it on his feet. He was happily cured, so he endowed the peasant with riches and luxuries, which the peasant took back home joyously. The peasant’s wife was very surprised to hear about the good news and being thoughtful said to him, “we must look after those opossums.”

Time went by and another great disaster came upon the village. This time, a terrible drought finished with the water sources where people used to get clean water. The wells, the *haltunes*<sup>7</sup>, the *cenotes*<sup>8</sup> and even the *Chultunes*<sup>9</sup> dried up. All dried up.

The situation became so desperate, that the *Tatich* asked everyone to pray and bring offerings to please their gods, who were punishing them so cruelly. Offerings were made and sacred sanctuaries were visited, but no result could be seen. The thirst suffered by both people and earth was just awful.

One night, the peasant's wife remembered mother opossum's recipe and asked her husband to spy on the animals again. The convinced peasant walked to his *milpa* once again, climbed the *chicozapote* tree looking for the lowest branches, and patiently waited for the time to go by. It was almost midnight when he heard *pik'ich... pik'ich* and the lively noise of the little opossums followed by their mother walking into the bean plants, which were dry and dying. After sniffing all around, the little opossums gathered around their mom and shouted, "A story, a story, a story!" The coddling mother opossum said, "Well, well, listen carefully my children... you know the village is having a terrible problem. The village is thirsty to death and nobody has found a remedy, but I know the solution. Listen, if someone asks the *Tatich* to bring down the great *Ceiba*<sup>10</sup> tree in the middle of the town, they will find a deep hole which is a water hole with clear and transparent waters. It will never dry, and those waters can save the village... but let's go my children. I've felt a strange smell, so we will change our usual route. And they ran away very quickly after saying this.

The peasant climbed down the tree anxiously and ran without stopping right to the *Tatich's* house. The *Tatich* heard him desperately and ordered his men to bring down the great *Ceiba* tree which remained luxuriant and still in the middle of the town. When people finally brought down the huge trunk, they were very surprised to find a deep hole in which they found fresh and crystal water. Excited and happy, everybody celebrated the miracle and thanked the peasant with praises and offers. The happy man went back home satisfied and moved.

The peasant tried to hear the opossums on later occasions. He waited in vain because the mysterious litter never appeared again. The humble man thanked the opossums so much, that he called the place *Ochil*, which means land of opossums in Maya language.

*Compiled by HORTENSIO MAY CAHUICH*

*Tourist guide in Noh-Cah, Quintana Roo, Mexico.*

## JUNTUL TOPA'AN KOS

(A Clever Hawk)

Once upon a time, there was a peasant who had three sons and a *chili*<sup>11</sup> plantation in the milpa. One day he noticed that something was eating his plants, so he asked one of his sons to keep an eye on the field and told him, “you will watch the chili plants tonight”. Take some cigarettes and some *Balché*<sup>12</sup> in your *calabazo*<sup>13</sup> so you don't fall asleep.” The son took all the things with him and went to the field. He climbed up a tree and when he had made himself comfortable, he lit a cigarette and drank the first swig of *balché*. Time went by. It was almost midnight when the boy started feeling sleepy and finally he fell asleep.

As dawn broke, the boy woke up and noticed that something had already eaten some chili fruits, so he decided to go back home. When his father arrived he asked his son if he had killed the animal that had been eaten the chili fruits. The son answered that there was nothing in the fields, and that he couldn't see anything because he had drunk too much and had fallen asleep. So the father asked the middle son “It's your turn to go to the fields tonight. What do you want to take with you?” The middle son also asked for cigarettes and *Balché* to spend the cold night. That night he also climbed up a tree, made himself comfortable, lit up a cigarette and drank the *balché*. It wasn't midnight yet when he was already deep asleep. When he woke up it was already dawn, so he went back home and told his father the same story.

The father was very desperate and asked himself, “Who shall I send now?” The youngest son told his father, “Father, I want to watch the chili field and kill the animal that is eating the plants.” His father answered: “No, you're too young.” But the boy insisted so much that he let him go and said: “Well, so you're going to the fields tonight. What do you want to take with

you?” The boy answered: “Just a shotgun and my little dog.” Having his father’s permission, he walked to the field to accomplish his task. When he arrived in the field, the boy hid himself under a huge rock, hugged his little dog and waited.

*Siete Cabrillas*<sup>14</sup> stars could be seen in the sky when the boy felt terribly sleepy. He was about to fall asleep when the dog started growling. The boy got on his feet, grabbed his shotgun immediately and waited with open eyes. Suddenly he heard a noise similar to a big bird coming down to the ground very close to him. He left his hiding place silently and approached a great *Kos*<sup>15</sup> who was eating some chili fruits quietly. The boy pointed at the bird with the shotgun. He was just about to shoot when he heard someone speaking: “Don’t kill me. Let me live and I’ll make you powerful.” The boy was surprised to hear the voice and said: “Is it you speaking?” “Yes” the *Kos* answered. The bird climbed down the chili plant, came closer to the boy and told him: “I will do you a favor.” The *Kos* took a tick from his feathers and killed it. Next, he rubbed the blood on the boy’s shotgun and on the small dog. Then he disappeared.

The boy was frightened and when he got home told his father part of what had happened. He assured his father he had killed the animal that had been eating the chili plants and as a proof of his story, he showed his father the blood on the gun and on the small dog. At that moment, the father grabbed a stick and hit his two other sons for not killing the destructive animal. Since then, the youngest son rests while his brothers work hard.

*Compiled by ALEJANDRO CAN TZUC*

*Tourist guide in Chanchén Comandante, Quintana Roo, Mexico.*

*Told by the boy SANTOS N. CHI CAN, 11 years old.*



## KON WAYUMO'OB

(*Huaya*<sup>16</sup> Fruit Vendors)

Once upon a time, there were three brothers who lived in a small village. One day they commented: "I think we should sell the fruits of our *Huaya* tree. The oldest brother told his father: "I'm going to sell *huaya* fruits." "Good! Go and sell them!" answered his father.

The young man filled his basket with *huayas*, took some *tortillas*<sup>17</sup>, some *pozole*<sup>18</sup>, and travelled to the next village. When he was in the middle of his journey, he was hungry and sat down on one side of the road to have something to eat. He was eating the *tortillas*, when he saw a little boy coming with his mom. He was crying. When the woman approached, she asked for some food for her little boy. She said he was very hungry. The young man answered: "I'm sorry woman, but I don't have enough food to give away." After hearing such an answer the woman never asked about the food again, however she made him another question: "Where are you going young man?" and he answered: "I'm going to the nearest village to sell some rocks."

When the young man arrived to the village somebody asked him: "What are you selling?": "I'm selling *huaya* fruit" he answered. However, when he uncovered his basket, he only found rocks in it. The young man thought it was the result of cheating the woman and the little boy he had met during his journey. When he arrived home, he was asked for the money he had earned but he answered that he couldn't sell anything and that he had given away all the fruit.

The second brother said: "I'm going to sell *huaya* fruit too." He took some *tortillas*, *pozole* and a basket of *huaya* fruit. In the middle of his journey he felt tired and sat down on one side of the road. Suddenly, he saw the woman and her child. They asked the second brother for

food, as they did with the previous young man but he also refused to help them. When they asked him where he was going, he answered the same phrase: “I’m going to sell rocks.”

When the young man arrived in the village, some people asked him: “What are you selling?” “*Huaya* fruit” he answered, but when he uncovered the basket, he only found rocks in it. When he returned home he was asked for the money he had earned. He answered that he couldn’t sell them either, and that he had given all of them away.

The youngest brother was the one left to do the task. He stated courageously: “I am going to sell all the *huaya* fruit, you’ll see!” He had some *tortillas*, some *pozole* prepared and the basket full of *huaya* fruit. Just like his brothers, he also felt tired and hungry. He sat down under a tree on one side of the road and he was ready to eat when he heard a little boy crying. The young man asked the little boy why he was walking alone in the wild forest, and told him: “Oh, you must be very hungry!” Suddenly, the woman who usually came along with the little boy asked the young man for food because they both were very hungry.

The youngest brother gave them some food and also some *huaya* fruit. When the three of them had already eaten their food, they asked him where he was going and he answered: “I’m going to sell *huaya* fruit to a nearby village.” When he arrived to the town, people asked him: “What are you selling?” He answered: “*Huaya* fruit”. He sold everything he brought in the basket, so he returned home very happy.

When he arrived home, he gave his father all the money he had earned. The old man scolded his two sons for not being able to sell the fruit the same way their brother had done. The old man sent his youngest son right away to fetch him a stick to hit his sons. When the young brothers heard this, they ran as fast as they could and no one saw them ever again.

*Compiled by ALEJANDRO CAN TZUC*

*Tourist guide in Chanchén Comandante, Quintana Roo, Mexico.*

*Told by the boy SANTOS N. CHI CAN, 11 years old.*

## CHAN ARUX

(Little Man)

Wise old men say that a long, long time ago there existed some suspicious people who, jealous with their belongings, appealed to the enlightened, powerful and well known *J'meno'ob*<sup>19</sup> to bestow them with an *Arux*<sup>20</sup>. After agreeing on the method of payment, the *J'men* made use of their power and knowledge, and every Friday of every week they made with *Sujuy K'at*<sup>21</sup> a doll not more than 30 centimeters high with the characteristics of a Mayan little boy. On the seventh Friday, when the work had been finished, a ceremony was celebrated. It was a delicate ritual called *Loj*<sup>22</sup>, where gods and spirits from the wild forest, from the winds, from the temples and from the caves, were invoked to give life to this *little man* who received the gifts thus becoming the loyal and relentless guardian of his master's belongings.

And that's how the *Aruxo'ob* were created. They were small elves made of clay that woke up in the middle of the night and slept the whole day in dark caves or in ancient temples within the wild forest. Their task was to avoid strange people from coming close or invading their master's fields. In case any absent-minded person invaded the lands, he was warned through some whistling coming from the wild forest. However, if the person didn't notice the warning, he was thrown earth or rocks. The wise persons would turn around and go on their way. Others received severe warnings, especially ambitious hunters who came around these lands. The elves pulled their shirts, made thrilling hisses, made the hunters' ears blow, or made dogs bark so that people could realize they were real. Elves could make hunters' preys run and thus make them feel frustrated. However, if behind all these warnings the hunter didn't leave, there came a worse punishment: a terrible fever that made him feel really sick for days.

*Aruxes* treated the hunters and the thieves really bad when they reached their lands. It was also said that when their masters were having a terrible harvest, the *Aruxes* changed the bad fruit by taking the best ones from other lands. This way, every land that had an *Arux* always had the best harvests.

If there was an elf in abandoned neighborhoods, or in deserted houses, it was very dangerous for the traveller to stay the night because he would surely listen to the whistles of the *Aruxes* and all his personal stuff would be moved from one place to another. It would not be strange either, that he didn't find his shoes when waking up because the naughty little man enjoyed hiding them in the backyard, or losing them in the wild forest.

In exchange for his service and protection, the *Arux* asked the master to celebrate a simple ceremony every Friday: to go to the depths of the wild forest and take a fresh drink made of corn called *Saka*<sup>23</sup> and a small bag with *Xunan Kab*<sup>24</sup> honey-smearred tortillas. The master had to place everything next to a tree previously chosen by the *Arux*. In case the master didn't accomplish these rituals, the *Aruxes* would claim for their rights sending some slight fevers for the master or his family.

Dear reader: get into the exuberant wild forests of Quintana Roo where you can find mysterious secrets and hidden spells that no one has been able to solve. But be careful when you walk these lands. If you ever hear strange whistles do not go ahead. Bow your head to *Aruxo'ob*, for they are sending you their messages.

*Compiled by MARCOS XIU CACHÓN*

*Former coordinator of Los Aruxes Social Program*

*in Quintana Roo, Mexico.*

## KOLNAL

### (MAIZE GROWER)

Old people say that there was a little house outside the village where an old woman lived. One day, she was very worried because her husband didn't come back on time from his fields. "Why hasn't he come back? It's already dark and he's never late" she wondered. Suddenly she saw someone coming and carrying something on his back. It seemed to be her husband in the middle of the darkness, but his way of walking was somehow different. When the man reached the little hut, he left his load on the floor and said with hoarse voice, "I'm tired, hurry up and come to bed." "Ok" the woman answered and she furtively saw into the bag and noticed there were bones in it.

When they went into the hut, the woman stopped boiling the *nixtamal*<sup>25</sup> and started boiling a big cauldron of water. She approached the hammock where the strange man that looked like her husband was resting, and lay next to him. Suddenly, with the light coming from the fire, she saw with horror that the person next to her had a long tail. Scared but quiet, she waited for the unknown to fall asleep; then, slowly and trying not to move abruptly -and trying not to wake the man up- she stood up, hugged her sleeping child, hid him under a large pan and took the boiling cauldron from the fire. She came closer to the hammock and with one fast movement she threw the water on him.

She dropped the cauldron, took the shotgun and started running towards the middle of the village. Horrible yells from the man followed her saying, "Wait, wait!" The woman noticed that the man was almost reaching her, so she climbed a big *mamey*<sup>26</sup> tree desperately. The horrifying man came near the tree howling, his eyes like fire and his mouth slobbering. He said

to the woman, “Oh, so here you are!” and he started jumping with great leaps trying to frighten her. The woman was still grabbing the shotgun, so she started shooting him but she noticed that bullets didn’t hurt him. He continued jumping and making strange noises to make her climb down the tree. When she ran out of bullets, the woman started throwing him some fruits from the *mamey* tree to defend herself from the attack.

She was getting weak when the roosters announced dawn. People in the village –already up- wondered about the scandal they had heard during the night. “Let’s check out” said the determined ones and walked to the place where they heard the shooting. When the woman saw the people coming she asked them for help and told them a terrible *Kolnal*<sup>27</sup> wanted to eat her. “He escaped and followed that path” said the woman. “Let’s follow him!” said the villagers and took their shotguns and ran to get the beast.

They saw him disappear in the woods into a dark cave. But they were cautious and didn’t want to get in the cave to get him. Then someone proposed, “Let’s burn him!” And then everybody answered, “Good idea!” and they spread in the forest and got enough dry branches that they threw into the cave and set it on fire. Later on, they heard a desperate howling and then a dying roaring, and finally nothing... A fetid smell came from the cave and chased them away. Meanwhile, the woman climbed down the tree and ran back home to get her child. When she got home, she found her boy sleeping quietly under the large pan. The villagers came back and told the woman they had finished the beast that killed her husband and tried to kill her too. They were all happy in the village so they made a big party to celebrate they had killed the *kolnal*.

*Compiled by HORTENCIO MAY CAHUICH*

*Tourist guide in Noh-Cah, Quintana Roo, Mexico.*

## ANALYSIS



The book “Cuentos, historias y leyendas de la Zona Maya” was originally compiled in Maya language by Professor Marcos Xiu Cachón, who then translated all the work into Spanish. The work in Spanish itself had syntax errors as a consequence of the linguistic interference between Maya and Spanish, as well as very long sentences which I had to divide into shorter ones because ideas expressed in English are usually concrete and precise. Another problem which represented a challenge when translating the text was the inappropriate use of negatives in Spanish; for instance “También no sería raro...” which should be “Tampoco sería raro...” It was necessary to “correct” the idea of the sentence in Spanish first, and then translate it into English so the reader had the appropriate and correct idea.

I used five translation techniques from the Vinay and Darbelnet taxonomy, namely: borrowing, literal, transposition, modulation and adaptation, because I considered them useful to translate literary works. Examples are presented in charts that contain the sentences in the Source Language (Spanish), their translations into Target Language (English), and below them the reason why such techniques were applied in each specific case.

The original book contains a glossary which which was enriched with pictures and descriptions of certain fruits, dishes and plants which are very typical of the Yucatan Peninsula and not common at all in English speaking countries. The use of electronic dictionaries was very helpful to achieve the task of translating this work, since they display a wide variety of options and examples which helped me decide the most appropriate ideas to what the author wanted to transmit.

## BORROWING

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...el gran Tatich de los pueblos de esta comarca se está muriendo.	...the great Tatich of nearby town is dying.
<p>In this example the word Tatich is kept in the Maya language to give the story the context of a very important person who is sick. The Tatich represents the town and he is a wise and respected person, so it is very important to help him and cure him.</p>	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...un Tolok verde...	...a green Tolok
<p>The word Tolok in the Maya language is widely used even these days among people from the Yucatan Peninsula. I decided to keep the word in the original language to maintain the feeling of the author when speaking of this specific reptile which is, by the way, a very common one in the region.</p>	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
Venteros de huayas.	Huaya Fruit Vendors
<p>I decided to keep the original name in this case because it represents the fruit in the way it is known in the Yucatan Peninsula. The picture can be found in the glossary, as well as the description of the fruit.</p>	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...y hasta los chultunes se agotaron.	...and even the chultunes dried up

The word chultunes was a difficult one to be translated into English, since there is no equivalent word for this type of water source. Besides maintaining the feeling of the original text, I decided to keep the word because it represents a specific kind of water source that is formed in some limestone in the Yucatan Peninsula.

### LITERAL

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
“¡Sí!” afirmó el marido	“Yes!” said the husband.
In this example, literal translation was a very obvious technique to be applied, since the structure of both languages (Spanish and English) matches perfectly in all elements of the sentence.	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...en el centro del poblado.	...in the middle of the town.
In this case it is very evident the use of literal translation to explain the location of a tree in the town. All elements match in form and meaning.	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...limpias y transparentes aguas.	...clear and transparent waters.
In this example there is also a good opportunity to translate through the use of literal translation. In fact, the author uses a specific order of adjectives before the noun in Spanish, which makes the right order to translate the same message into English.	

MODULATION

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
¿Qué pasa?	What's wrong?
<p>¿<i>Qué pasa?</i> in the Spanish language is used when we want to know why something happened. It is not appropriate to translate this expression into English as <i>What happens?</i> It is better to say <i>What's wrong?</i> since it is the most simple and common form to ask when something is not going well.</p>	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
A medio camino...	In the middle of his journey...
<p>The expression in Spanish “A medio camino” contains a preposition that expresses a place, but it does not have the references “between” this or that to complete the idea. Therefore, I decided to complete the idea by using the expression “In the middle of his journey” to explain that something happened while the person was travelling.</p>	

SOURCE LANGUAGE	TARGET LANGUAGE
...enanito...	...little man...
<p>This Word represented a special case of modulation for me because all the examples I found for “enanito” referred to European mythical creatures that do not match at all with the Mayan cosmogony. So, I decided to use the simplest idea and description of this being by saying “little man”, since “enanitos” (aruxes), in fact, look like human beings but they have a very short height.</p>	

## ADAPTATION

<b>SOURCE LANGUAGE</b>	<b>TARGET LANGUAGE</b>
zorros	opossums
<p>Without any doubt, the case of “zorros” needed this type of technique because the word is used incorrectly by speakers in the Yucatan Peninsula. People call opossums “zorros”.</p> <p>However, in the rest of the world, everybody knows “zorros” as foxes. For this reason, it was extremely necessary to rename the word “zorros” into the correct option in English which is “opossum”.</p>	

## CONCLUSION

The task of translating is an amazing process. Especially when we can see, like those brilliant people who can see patterns in the universe and nature, those specific patterns that linguistics and grammar can give us. Having the work translated in our hands becomes a revelation. Likewise, working with words and sharing unpublished stories to English language readers is an opportunity that can give us a lot of satisfaction.

The work “Cuentos, leyendas y tradiciones de la Zona Maya” (see: Attached Documents section) represents a remarkable challenge to me because I am not a Maya language speaker. Additionally, English, which is the target language of this monograph, is not my native language either, so the process requires a harder effort. Fortunately, nowadays electronic means can help us find almost everything online and paper dictionaries have become obsolete in many cases. Therefore, the use of electronic means facilitate the task of translating, since there is a wide variety of definitions and examples to clarify concepts or show us visually the image of certain objects that are totally unknown. In fact, it is the idea of “showing” that inspired me to enrich the work through pictures and a glossary, which in fact is included in the original work in Spanish.

The translation itself was not difficult, but it was a very demanding investment of time and concentration. It was necessary to find the right idea, the right equivalent, or the right adaptation so that the English reader would be able to understand and feel the mysticism of the story. This is the same mysticism the compiler wanted to print in the original work every time he found a new story in those beautiful Mayan villages he visited many years ago.

Before I started translating the stories, I thought it would be extremely difficult to deal with some expressions and mistakes, since the original text was compiled and recorded in Maya language before being written in Spanish. The process of translating was not that difficult for

me. However, the challenge of keeping the tone of the stories was a little hard due to the fact of fighting with both the correctness of the text and the style in which the translation should be written. So, I decided to focus more on feeling than correctness to give the stories the right touch.... In the end, I cannot say that I found so many difficulties in the path of translating the stories. I would rather say I found the regular ones namely specific words for specific water sources; or those related to the way we call certain types of animals in the Yucatan Peninsula but they have a different name in the rest of the world. Perhaps it was also an easier task because, in all cases, there was always a solution for the obstacle, and the wise advice of my advisor who made wonderful suggestions that showed me the correct path to be followed.

The use of techniques is extremely important, since they are like the “casts” where we can give shape to our translations. Perhaps Vinay and Darbelnet may seem a little bit old-fashioned, nevertheless their classifications of techniques are always necessary to organize the whole task of translating. I used five of these techniques, and I was surprised to observe that most of them prove to be very useful in specific translation cases.

The interview with the compiler Professor Marcos Xiu Cachón in the city of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo became an interesting and rewarding encounter where I understood the vision he had when he compiled the stories. He really captured traditions and a wide variety of descriptions related to food and fruits from the region. When I first read the stories, I truly imagined how everything looked like in each scenario; how tall or green the trees were; how the *Aruxes* behaved; therefore, all of this needed to be told in my translation.

I hope I have achieved all of this in the end. And I hope too, that every person who reads these stories can take in his heart a piece of the Mayan culture, and thus contribute in the preservation of oral tradition over the years.



## GLOSSARY

1. Opossums <sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: People from Yucatan Peninsula call opossums “zorros” although these animals have a completely different appearance from actual foxes. They are called “tlacuaches” in the rest of Mexico.



2. Milpa <sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: Plantations of corn or beans. In this particular story the compiler refers to a bean plantation.

3. Chicozapote <sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: Refers to the latex tree that is known as Sapodilla Tree in North America.



4. Pik'ich <sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: Mayan speakers represent with this onomatopoeia the sound of green branches when being cracked on the ground.

5. Tatich<sup>ꠄꠂ</sup>: This name refers to an ancient denomination given to town leaders in the Mayan Region.

6. Tolok<sup>ꠄꠂ</sup>: Green lizard with a crest on the head which is very common in the Yucatan Peninsula.



7. Haltunes<sup>ꠄꠂ</sup>: In the Mayan Region there are water-holding holes in limestone bedrock called haltunes where people used to get water from.

Retrieved from <http://www.backyardnature.net/yucatan/geology~.htm>

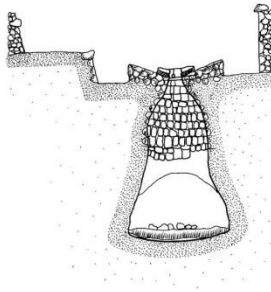


<http://www.backyardnature.net/n/10/100314ha.jpg>

8. Cenotes<sup>ꠄꠂ</sup>: A cenote is a natural hole in limestone bedrock -- a sinkhole -- with water at the bottom of it. Retrieved from <http://www.backyardnature.net/yucatan/geology~.htm>



9. Chultunes<sup>ꠄꠞ</sup>: A chultun (plural chultuns or chultunes, chultunob in Mayan) is a bottle-shaped cavity, excavated by the ancient Maya into the soft limestone bedrock typical of the Maya area in the Yucatan peninsula. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/chultun-ancient-maya-storage-systems-171589>



<http://www.pangea-project.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2-chultun.jpg>

10. Ceiba<sup>ꠄꠞ</sup>: Any of various tropical silk-cotton trees (genus *Ceiba*) (Agnes, M. (2000). *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. Foster City, CA:Webster's New World). It is considered a sacred tree by the Mayan people in Yucatan, Mexico because it represents underworld, earthly life and heaven from the roots to the leaves. Retrieved from <https://www.maya-archaeology.org/pre->

[Columbian\\_Mesoamerican\\_Mayan\\_ethnobotany\\_Mayan\\_iconography\\_archaeology\\_anthropology\\_research/sacred\\_ceiba\\_tree\\_flowers\\_kapok\\_spines\\_yaxche\\_incense\\_burners.php](http://www.playasmexico.com.mx/IMG/arton5120.jpg)



11. Chili🌶️: Peasants in Yucatan grow a kind of chili called *Habanero*, which is commonly used to prepare and spice a great variety of dishes.



12. Balché🌿: A drink used in Mayan ceremonies, made from the Balché tree bark and sweetened with honey.



<http://www.playasmexico.com.mx/IMG/arton5120.jpg>

13. Calabazo<sup>Ꞩꞩ</sup>: Water gourd. It is commonly used by peasants in Yucatan, Mexico to take drinking water.



Personal collection.

14. Siete Cabrillas<sup>Ꞩꞩ</sup>: A cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus, including six bright stars (Agnes, M. (2000) *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. Foster City, CA:Webster's New World). The author refers to these stars in the story to make us realize it is already late at night.



15. Kos<sup>Ꞩꞩ</sup>: Mayan word for *hawk*.

16. Huaya<sup>Ꞩꞩ</sup>: tropical fruit with a sweet taste which is common in the Yucatan Peninsula.





Huaya fruit



Huaya fruit tree.

17. Tortillas<sup>🌾</sup>: A thin, flat, round cake of unleavened cornmeal or, often, of flour, baked on a griddle or, originally, a flat stone. (Agnes, M. (2000) *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. Foster City, CA:Webster's New World)

18. Pozole<sup>🌾</sup>: Refreshing drink made with corn. It is served cold and is a supplement food, very much appreciated at midday when the heat is embarrassing. The author refers to the drink "pozol" in this story. He made a mistake by writing "pozole" which is a soup made of corn and pork. Retrieved from: <http://www.wordmeaning.org/spanish/Pozol.htm>

19. J'meno'ob<sup>🌾</sup>: Characters in the Mayan communities who have accumulated ancestral, pagan-religious knowledge from pre-hispanic ceremonies. They know much about plants,

insects, animals and all kinds of natural indicators that have to do with rains and agricultural cycles. It is equivalent to a medicine man in other tribes.

20. AruxꞨꞨ: It is the name that Mayan peasants from Quintana Roo give to mythical elves that protect milpas and archaeological vestiges. It is pronounced with an “R” and not with an “L” as it is done in Yucatan, Mexico.

21. Sujuy K’atꞨꞨ: It means *virgin clay* in Maya language. The compiler describes it as a little figure made of this clay, which is 30 centimeters (12 inches) high, and with Mayan characteristics.



22. LojꞨꞨ: It is a ritual ceremony celebrated to chase away the bad spirits.

23. SakaꞨꞨ: Fermented drink made with semi-cooked corn. It is said that dead people take this drink with them on their journey to the underworld. Retrieved from:

<https://es.slideshare.net/jmartinb/maz-en-amrica-8567560>





<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/>

[N9sV4a4WYng/Vftp\\_vXeicI/AAAAAAAAIp8/ZNwkuFnzYvE/s1600/pozol%2B2.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/N9sV4a4WYng/Vftp_vXeicI/AAAAAAAAIp8/ZNwkuFnzYvE/s1600/pozol%2B2.jpg)

24. Xunan Kab<sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: A kind of wild bee that lives in hollow trees, where it makes its honeycomb and produces delicious honey of yellow and light texture.



25. Nixtamal<sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: Limed kernels of corn that is ready to be ground into *masa* (dough).

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nixtamal>

26. Mamey<sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: an evergreen tree (*Mammea americana* of the family Guttiferae) native to the West Indies and tropical America that has an ovoid fruit with thick russet leathery rind and yellow or reddish juicy sweet flesh. Retrieved from: [https://www.merriam-](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mamey)

[webster.com/dictionary/mamey](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mamey)

27. Kolnal<sup>ꞨꞨ</sup>: Mayan word for peasant. Retrieved from:

[http://www.mayas.uady.mx/diccionario/k\\_maya.html](http://www.mayas.uady.mx/diccionario/k_maya.html)

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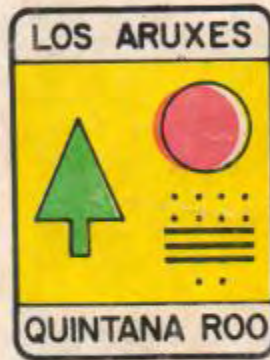
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2018]

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS



**CUENTOS,  
LEYENDAS  
Y  
TRADICIONES  
DE LA  
ZONA MAYA**



**CUENTOS,  
LEYENDAS  
Y  
TRADICIONES  
DE LA  
ZONA MAYA**



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## PROLOGO

El Programa Infantil "Los Aruxes" lleva aproximadamente tres años de ejecución en trece localidades del Municipio de Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo. Este ámbito geográfico corresponde al asentamiento indígena más tradicional de la Península de Yucatán, los auténticos herederos de las actitudes rebeldes de la Guerra de Castas, de aquellos que nunca fueron sometidos por las armas, de los que se replegaron en las selvas y fundaron un santuario conocido como Chan Santa Cruz Balam N'ib' Kampocolché (hoy Felipe Carrillo Puerto). Aquellos mayas rebeldes que aún después de la ofensiva de los Generales Ignacio Bravo, Victoriano Huerta y Aureliano Blanquet, enviados por Porfirio Díaz en 1898 para "pacificar" esta región y luego crear el Territorio Federal de Quintana Roo, se rehusaron a la humillación, entregaron su santuario y se internaron aún más en la selva, para no regresar hasta 1915, cuando Salvador Alvarado se los propuso, pero sólo para destruir los vestigios de la "modernidad" dejada por los "wachos". Es justamente la presencia de esta actitud, de este apego a la tradición, lo que ha hecho que la ejecución del programa "Los Aruxes" adquiera matices muy propios en esta zona de Quintana Roo.

El programa ha pretendido ofrecer alternativas de ocupación del tiempo libre a los niños del medio rural e indígena, pero ha ido más allá. Está organizado en cuatro talleres o grupos de actividad: deportes, nutrición, manualidades y artísticas. En una primera fase, el taller de deportes fue exclusivo para niñas siendo el "gancho" para captar el interés de los adultos hacia el programa, y promover la participación de niños de 8 a 12 años de edad. En virtud que el deporte favorito es el béisbol, se organizaron equipos dotándoseles de uniformes y utensilios deportivos así como asesoramiento especializado. En poco tiempo, y dada la habilidad natural de los niños del medio rural, se levantaron potentes equipos que han derrotado estruendosamente a los mejores equipos infantiles de Cozumel y Chetumal. Actualmente, este taller se ha extendido a otros deportes pero sobre todo, se ha procurado -

preservar algunos de los juegos infantiles propios de los niños indígenas, mismos que están cobrando un inusitado auge: el trompo, los zancos, el tirahule (o resortera) y las carreras con pequeños carritos hechos de troncos de palos, por mencionar sólo algunos.

El taller de nutrición tiene entre sus objetivos introducir y reafirmar hábitos de higiene y de consumo de alimentos que preserven la salud de los niños participantes en el programa. En primer término, se ha procurado preservar el consumo de productos muy conocidos entre los mayas y que son de alto valor nutritivo como la chaya, la miel de la abeja tradicional (melipona) y frutos de árboles como el ramón y el "pich". Asimismo, se ha logrado introducir ciertas innovaciones como la cría y el consumo del pescado. Entre los logros más relevantes de este taller conviene destacar que se tienen ya más de cien "jobones" o troncos huecos donde se producen más de seis variedades de miel de la abeja tradicional, y que en las localidades de Noh Cáh, Chanchén Comandante y H-Barzil se realizan con bastante éxito y con pleno respaldo de la Secretaría de Pesca, la siembra de peces.

El taller de manualidades se ha centrado en la preservación del conocimiento ancestral de los indígenas expresado en las artesanías, en la producción de objetos que tienen un valor de uso y que en el contexto de la cambiante economía campesina va perdiendo esta función. En este sentido, el verdadero maestro de este taller es el artesano, aquel que sabe localizar, seleccionar y tratar las plantas y árboles de donde extrae la fibra o los elementos necesarios para producir un canasto, una hamaca, un mecapsí, o bien incluso una silla o un tortillero. A través de este taller, los niños han vuelto a aprender el tejido con bejuco y las plantas que los aportan, y las niñas el bordado, el punto de cruz. De este modo, la sabiduría de los artesanos, todo ese conocimiento acumulado que no está escrito pero que permanece vivo en la memoria, se transcribe a las nuevas generaciones para su preservación y enriquecimiento.

El taller de actividades artísticas se ha ocupado de preservar leyendas, canciones, danzas y tradiciones de la zona maya. Han sido los propios niños los investigadores; ellos han sido quienes han hecho hablar a sus abuelos y las personas mayores que guardan las tradiciones. La mayoría de los relatos de este libro así lo patentizan. Por otra parte, ha sido muy alentador escuchar a los mismos niños interpretar, en su lengua materna, hermosas canciones hechas para enseñar a hablar a los loros o complicados cuentos de animales, milpas y duendes. La escenificación de ceremonias y danzas, ha correspondido siempre al respeto y veneración que el pueblo maya siente por sus tradiciones, pero que al ser interpretada por los niños, deja sentir un mayor aliento hacia la identidad étnica.

En la operación del programa "Los Aruxes" ha jugado un papel importante la comunidad, y en especial las autoridades tradicionales de los pueblos. Ellos han seleccionado a los "guías", que a diferencia de los promotores, no laboran tiempo completo sino solamente un par de horas por las tardes y en especial durante los fines de semana. El guía es quien conduce a los niños en las actividades del programa y es quien realmente marca el ritmo de acuerdo con su conocimiento de las tradiciones y sus habilidades artesanales. Por otra parte, en todos los eventos del programa, son las autoridades locales los invitados de honor. En casos de concursos de artesanías o juegos tradicionales, el jurado lo componen los artesanos más prestigiados o los sacerdotes más conservadores, según sea el caso.

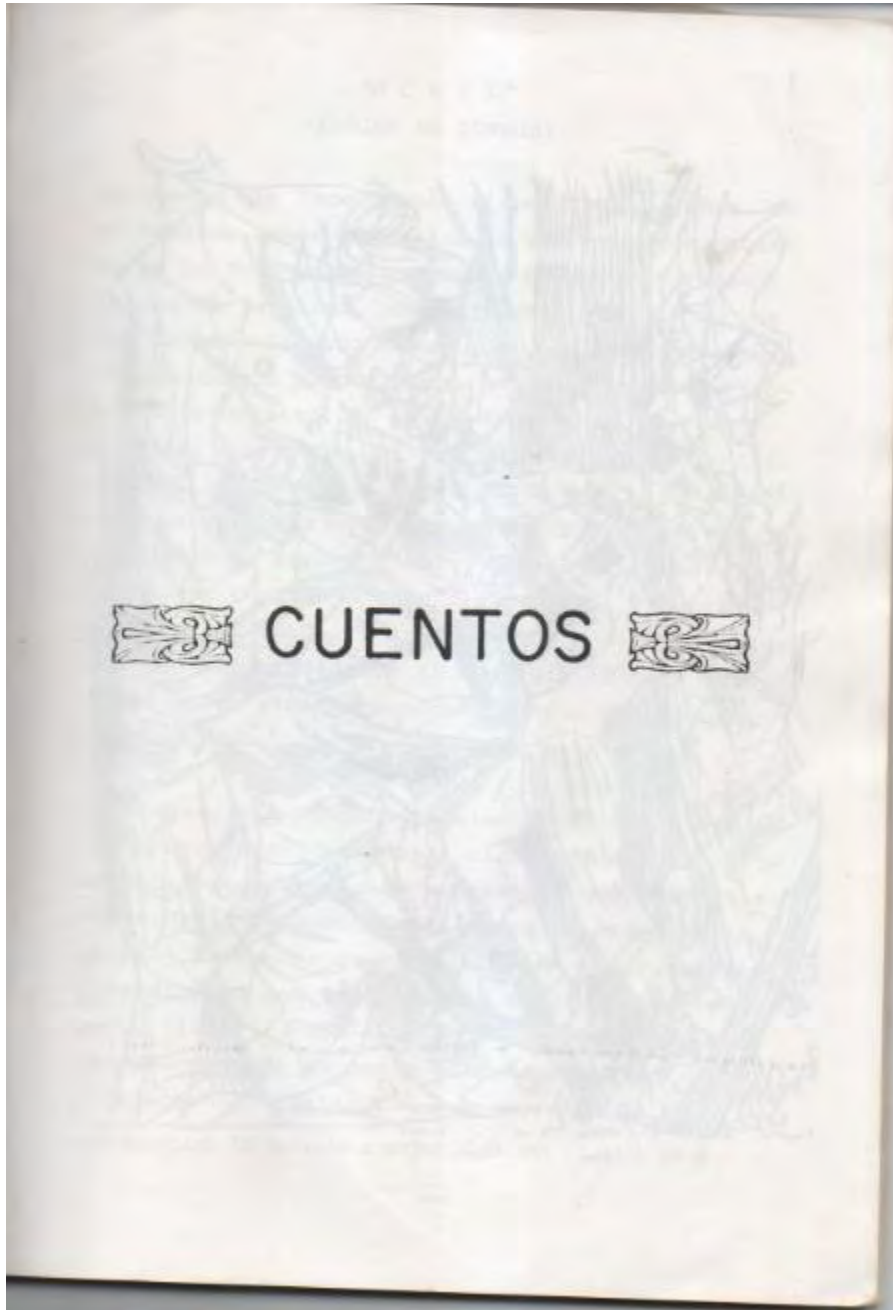
A través de "Los Aruxes", los niños de la zona maya han conocido el mar, las zonas arqueológicas y otros puntos del Estado e incluso del país. Sin embargo, a tres años de su inicio, consideramos que este programa debe entrelazarse más con el sistema educativo, con la educación formal, que puede incluso llegar a ser una opción muy precisa para dar el sustento real a algunos contenidos programáticos de las ciencias naturales de la educación primaria. Por lo pronto,



ha contribuido con acciones concretas para fundamentar la identidad étnica y con ello preservar el patrimonio cultural de la región del país. La vigorosa, lúcida y espontánea niñez de la zona maya de Quintana Roo, nos está demostrando que a pesar de la marginación y la pobreza, el legado de su pueblo puede ser profundamente decisivo si lo consideramos como el eje en torno al cual plantear nuestro desarrollo.

Cd. Chetumal, Q.R., a 16 de marzo de 1986.

Lic. Efraín Villanueva Arcos





.... y se dispuso con toda calma a esperar se desarmada.

"O C H I L"  
(LUGAR DE ZORROS)

Se cuenta que hace muchos ...pero muchos años, en un humilde hogar campesino de un escondido poblado de la Zona Maya, un hombre dedicado a rudas faenas de la milpa, se dió cuenta que cuando por las mañanas llegaba a su labor, su hermoso sembradío de frijol poco a poco iba disminuyendo. Preocupado y molesto por la pérdida de su sagrada siembra, una noche, al calor del fuego y mientras cenaba, le comentó a su esposa: "mujer, me están acabando los frijoles que sembré"; "¿de verdad?" respondió la esposa; "¡sí!" afirmó el marido, "creo que por las noches algún animal viene a comérselo, al rato iré a la milpa a espiar para acabar con ese bandido". Al concluir la cena tomó su escopeta y machete encaminándose decidido hacia la milpa.

Al llegar, sin ninguna vacilación se dirigió al frijolero y considerando la dirección del viento se subió a un frondoso chicozapote que milagrosamente habfa escapado de la quema al preparar la milpa. Entre las ramas se acomodó perfectamente y se dispuso con toda calma a esperar al desconocido. Inmóvil, con el oído atento dejó pasar el tiempo. Pasada la media noche escuchó un ruido.. "pik'ich ...pik'ich"<sup>1/</sup> que provenía de la ori--

lla de la milpa; preparó el arma, aguzó el oído y calculó la dirección que tomaba el mismo ruido. Atento a la débil luz de las estrellas notó que debajo del árbol se asomaba una gran Zorra<sup>2/</sup>, seguida por seis inquietos zorritos que hambrientos se abalanzaban hacia las jugosas plantas de frijol para ruidosamente devorarlas. ¿Qué pasa? se preguntó; sé que los zorros no comen frijol, esto está raro... dejando el arma, poco a poco se deslizó hacia las ramas más bajas y atento e intrigado aguardó unos minutos; estaba por descender del árbol cuando vió claramente que los zorritos se ponían alrededor de la madre y gritaban con audibles voces "cuentoo, cuentoo, cuentoo", como la madre no les hacía caso más insistieron, hasta que, quizá ya fastidiada, la madre zorra les dijo: "bien, escuchen bien pequeños: ya saben ustedes que el gran "Tatich"<sup>3/</sup> de los pueblos de esta comarca se está muriendo, tiene una gran enfermedad en los pies y ningún curandero lo ha podido aliviar, nadie sabe como hacer para que sane pero yo les voy a decir un secreto, yo sé cuál es la buena medicina para sanarlo, escuchen: si alguien atrapa un "Tolok"<sup>4/</sup> verde y le saca los sesos, le quita las patas y se lo dá al "Tatich" para que unta en sus pies, con esta medicina seguro sanará



pero ésto no se lo cuenten a nadie y ya vámonos que se nos hace tarde".

Cuando desaparecieron los zorros, el astuto campesino bajó de prisa y corriendo se fue a comentar con su mujer lo que habfa escuchado.

Astuta la señora y conociendo que efectivamente el señor de la región se encontraba enfermo, animó a su marido para que pusiera en práctica la receta. A la mañana siguiente el campesino encontró un "tolok" verde y de una certera pedrada le dió muerte, le sacó los sesos, le cortó las patas y poniéndolo en un morral se encaminó ante el Taticich a quien ofreció curar. Esperanzado éste, tomó el remedio preparado y untándose los pies con aquello, quedó felizmente curado. Enseguida otorgó riquezas y bienes al humilde campesino que alegre regresó a su casa.

Grande fue la sorpresa de su esposa cuando escuchó las buenas noticias que el marido le trafa y siempre previsora le dijo: "hay que cuidar a esos zorros".

Pasado el tiempo otra gran calamidad se abatió so

bre el pueblo, esta vez una terrible sequía fue a cabando con los depósitos de agua de donde se surtía el poblado, se secaron los pozos, las sartenejas, los cenotes y hasta los "Chultunes"<sup>5/</sup> se agotaron.

Llegó a tal desesperación, que el Tatich solicitó al pueblo que hicieran plegarias y ofrendas para aplacar a los dioses, que tan cruelmente los castigaba. Se realizaron ofrendas y se visitaron algunos santuarios, pero sin resultado alguno. La sed de los campos y de los habitantes de la comarca era espantosa.

Una noche, la esposa del campesino recordando la receta de la zorra, animó a su marido insistiéndole en espiar otra vez a esos animales.

Convencido el marido, esa misma tarde se encaminó hacia su milpa y de nuevo se encaramó en el chico zapote buscando las ramas más bajas y con atávica paciencia dejó que pasaran las horas. Alcanzaba ya la media noche cuando escuchó ... "pik'ich ... pik'ich", y viendo luego el inquieto alborozo de los zorritos quienes seguidos por la mamá zorra irrumpieron en la milpa donde el frijolar mustio

y seco moría.

Después de hociquear por distintos rumbos reuniéronse los inquietos zorrillos y con ansiosas voces pidieron: "cuentoo, cuentoo, cuentoo", la complaciente zorra madre dijo: "bien, bien, escuchen pequeños... sabrán ustedes que un grave problema se presenta en la comarca, el pueblo se muere de sed hasta el momento nadie ha encontrado el remedio pero yo conozco la solución, escuchen: si alguien le dice al Tatich que mande a derribar el gran ceibo que se encuentra en el centro del poblado, ahí debajo del tronco encontrará un profundo agujero que es un cenote de limpias y transparentes aguas, el cuál jamás se secará, con esas aguas podrá salvar a su pueblo... pero hijitos vámonos que he sentido olores extraños, cambiaremos nuestra ruta. Y al decir esto salió en velóz carrera seguida por sus pequeños zorrillos.

Ansioso el campesino bajó del árbol y sin detenerse se dirigió hacia el gran Tatich, quien con verdadera desesperación al escucharlo ordenó que se derribara el ceibo que fresco se erguía en el centro del poblado. Cuando al fin lograron derribar y arrancar el grueso tronco, con gran sorpresa se



encontraron un profundo agujero en cuyo fondo se divisaba agua fresca y cristalina. Ansiosos y alegres, todos festejaron el milagro y profundamente agradecidos le rindieron ofrendas y loas al campesino, quien emocionado y satisfecho regresó a su paraje.

En posteriores ocasiones trató de escuchar a los zorros, pero en vano esperó, pues la misteriosa camada nunca más apareció por esos lugares.

Tanto agradeció el humilde campesino a los zorritos que llamó a su paraje "Ochil" que significa "Lugar de Zorros".

*Compilado por el Gula:  
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En el poblado de Noh-Cah.*

"JUNTUL TOPA'AN KOS"  
(UN HALCON ASTUTO)

Había una vez un campesino que tenía 3 hijos. Poseía también un chilar en la milpa, un día se fijó que le comían mucho sus sembrados, por lo que dijo a su hijo mayor: "hoy por la noche irás a cuidar los chiles, pero llévate cigarros y un calabazo de "Balché" <sup>6/</sup> para que no te duermas". El hijo tomó éstas y se fue hasta la milpa; se subió a un árbol y cuando ya estaba acomodado encendió un cigarro, se bebió el primer trago de balché y así pasó el tiempo. Ya casi llegada la media noche, cuando el muchacho comenzó a sentir mucho sueño, hasta que por fin se durmió.

Al amanecer se despertó y notó que se habían comido varios chiles, por lo que decidió regresar a su casa; al llegar su padre le preguntó que si había matado al animal que se comía los sembrados. El contestó que nada había visto, porque se emborrachó y se durmió. Entonces el padre le dijo al hijo mediano: "esta noche te corresponde ir a cuidar el chilar" y le preguntó: "¿qué quieres llevar?" él también pidió cigarros y el balché para el frío. Esa noche, igualmente se subió a un árbol y se acomodó; encendió un cigarro y se dispuso a beber el balché. No llegaba aún la media noche, cuando ya estaba bien dormido. Al despertar

ya había amanecido, por lo que regresó a su casa contándole lo mismo a su padre.

Desesperado ya, el señor se preguntaba ¿ahora a quién mandaré? entonces escuchó al hijo menor que le decía: "padre, quiero ir a cuidar el chilar y voy a matar al animal que lo esté comiendo". El padre respondió: "no, tú estas muy pequeño". Tanto insistió el niño, que el padre por fin accedió: está bien tú iras hoy por la noche, ¿qué quieres llevar? el niño contestó: "sólo una escopeta y mi perrito". Con la propuesta aceptada, partió a cumplir la misión. Cuando llegó a la milpa, el pequeño se escondió debajo de una gran piedra, abrazó a su perrito y se dispuso a esperar.

Ya las siete cábrillas estaban muy altas, cuando él comenzó a sentir un sueño muy pesado, dormitaba cuando el perrito gruñó, se alertó tomando rápidamente su escopeta y con los ojos muy abiertos esperó. De pronto escuchó un ruido como de ave grande que se posaba cerca de donde estaba. Sigilosamente salió de su escondite y se acercó hasta divisar a un gran "Kos" <sup>71</sup>, que con tranquilidad se comía los chiles, el niño le apuntó con su arma, ya iba a disparar cuando escuchó que le de---

cían: "no me mates, perdóname la vida y yo te daré poder". Extrañado bajó la escopeta y dirigiéndose al "Kos" preguntó: ¿acaso tú hablas? "sí", contestó el "Kos", y descendiendo de la planta de chile se acercó al niño y le dijo: "Te voy a hacer un gran favor". El "Kos" quitándose una garrapata la mató y embadurnó con su sangre la escopeta que tenía el niño, así como a su perro, después levantando el vuelo desapareció.

Asustado el niño regresó a su casa y le contó a su padre parte de lo sucedido, porque afirmó que había matado al animal que se comía los chiles, y como prueba le enseñó la escopeta y su perrito manchados con sangre, el papá tomando un grueso bejuco golpeó a los dos hermanos mayores por no haber podido matar al destructor animal. Desde entonces, el pequeño descansa mientras los hermanos trabajan.

*Compilado en Chanchén Comandante  
por el Gula:  
Alejandro Can Tzuc.  
Relatado por el niño, Santos N.  
Chí Can de 11 años de edad.*

KON WAYUMO'OB  
( VENTEROS DE HUAYAS )

Había una vez en una población tres hermanos. Un día comentaron: "creo que debemos vender las frutas de nuestra huaya". Entonces el hermano mayor le dijo a su padre: "Voy a vender huayas". "Está bien ¡ve!" -le contestó el padre-

El muchacho llenó su canasta, tomó sus tortillas, su pozole y se marchó al otro poblado. Cuando iba casi a medio camino sintió hambre y se sentó a la orilla a comer; al momento que tomaba su tortilla escuchó que venía un niño llorando y levantándose enseguida vió que con el niño venía una mujer. Al verlo, la mujer le preguntó que si le podría regalar un poco de comida al niño porque tenía mucha hambre. El joven contestó "Fíjate, mujer, que yo no tengo comida para estar regalando". Después de escuchar tal respuesta no le volvió a mencionar algo relacionado con la comida, sin embargo la mujer le preguntó: ¿joven donde va? y él le contestó "voy a vender piedras".

Al llegar al pueblo le preguntaron: ¿qué vendes? él les respondió "Vendo huayas" y al destapar su canasta se sorprendió al ver que solo contenía piedras. Entonces pensó que por haber engañado



a la mujer y al niño le había sucedido esto. Al llegar a su casa le pidieron el dinero de la venta y contestó que no las había vendido sino que las había regalado todas.

El segundo de los hermanos dijo: "yo también voy a vender huayas"; tomó tortillas, pozole y una canasta con huayas. A medio camino se sintió cansado y se sentó a la orilla a descansar. Vió de pronto al niño y a la mujer. Estos también le pidieron comida, como se la habían pedido al otro muchacho, y éste, se los negó también. Cuando le preguntaron a donde iba, contestó que "a vender piedras".

Al llegar al pueblo le preguntaron: ¿qué vendes? respondió: "huayas". Destapó su canasta y vió que solo piedras habían.


Cuando retornó a su casa y le pidieron el dinero de la venta, respondió que tampoco las había vendido...sino que las había regalado todas.

Solamente quedaba el más pequeño de los tres. El comentó con mucho coraje y valor: "yo sí voy

a vender todas las huayas , ya verán". Le prepararon sus tortillas, su pozole y la canasta con huayas . En el camino también se sintió cansado y hambriento. Sentándose bajo la sombra de los árboles de la orilla del camino se preparó para comer, cuando de pronto escuchó que venía llorando un niño. Le preguntó qué andaba haciendo solo en el monte y comentó: "¡cuánta hambre sentirás!". En eso apareció la mujer que siempre acompañaba al niño, y le pidieron comida porque los dos sentían mucha hambre.

El niño vendedor no sólo les regaló comida, sino también un poco de huayas . Después de comer los tres juntos, le preguntaron hacia donde se dirigía y él contestó: "a vender huayas al otro poblado". Al llegar al pueblo le preguntaron: ¿qué vendes? El respondió: "huayas". Acabó vendiendo todas sus huayas, por lo cual, al regresar, venía muy contento.

Cuando llegó, le entregó a su padre el producto de la venta. Este regañó a sus otros hijos por no haber vendido tan siquiera una huaya como había hecho el menor. Enseguida mandó al pequeño



a buscar un bejuco para pegarles. Al oír esto, los dos salieron corriendo a esconderse sin que hasta el momento se les hubiera encontrado.

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Chí Can de 11 años de edad.*



"CHAN ARUX"  
( DUENDECILLO )

Cuentan los sabios abuelos, que hace mucho..... pero mucho tiempo, las personas desconfiadas y celosas de sus pertenencias recurrían a los iluminados "J'meno'ob"<sup>9/</sup> de reconocida fama y amplios poderes, para que les hicieran un "Arux"<sup>10/</sup>.

Previo acuerdo acerca de la forma del pago, el "J'men" haciendo uso de su poder y sapiencia se dedicaba cada viernes de la semana a confeccionar con "Zujuy K'at"<sup>11/</sup> un muñeco de no más de treinta centímetros las características de un pequeño maya. Al séptimo viernes, concluido el trabajo, en una ceremonia de un ritual muy delicado llamado "Loj"<sup>12/</sup> invocaba a los dioses y espíritus de los montes, vientos, templos y cavernas, para que le dieran vida y poder a este enanito, que al recibir estos dones quedaba convertido en el fiel e implacable guardián de las pertenencias de su amo.

Así creaban los "Aruxo'ob". Pequeños duendes de barro que despertaban por las noches y dormían durante el día, en oscuras cavernas o derruidos templos ocultos entre la floresta.

Su labor consistía en impedir que algún intruso



El "J'men" con su poder y sapiencia  
confeccionaba cada viernes un "arux"

se acercara o penetrara en las milpas de su dueño. En caso de que un despistado llegara a los terrenos del "Arux", era avisado con extraños silbidos que nacían de la selva, y si aún continuaba, recibía frecuentes pedradas o puñados de tierra. El hombre entendedor se daba media vuelta y desandaba el camino, para el que no hiciera caso de estos avisos, como el ambicioso cazador que tendiera su espiadero en estos terrenos, entonces las llamadas eran más fuertes. Le tiraban de la camisa, escuchaba también estremecedores siseos, le sonaban los oídos o se dejaban oír cercanos ladridos de perros -haciéndose notar que el "arux"-, ahuyentando las piezas para que el cazador quedara frustrado. Pero si a pesar de ello no se retiraba quien fuera, entonces el castigo era peor, pues al siguiente día el intruso despertaba con una fuerte calentura que le dejaba postrado por varios días.

De esta manera trataba el "arux" a los ladrones o cazadores que se aproximaban a sus cotos. Se decía también que eran tan fieles estos guardianes, que cuando la cosecha venía mala para su amo, se dedicaba a recorrer las milpas cercanas escogiendo los mejores frutos para cambiarlos para aquél. De este modo, en las milpas donde hubiera un "arux"



... escuchaba estremecedores ruidos.



siempre se daban las mejores cosechas.

En los abandonados caseríos, y en las desiertas viviendas donde aún rondara un duende, era peligroso para el viajero quedarse a pernoctar, por que en caso de hacerlo, llegando la noche escucharía con toda seguridad los silbidos del "arux", el adelante todas sus pertenencias serían revueltas y arrastradas de un lado para otro. También se sería raro que al levantarse no se encontraran los calzados, pues el travieso enano gustaba escondérselos detrás de la casa o perderlo entre el monte.

A cambio de los servicios y cuidados del "arux", su dueño tenía como obligación realizar cada vez una sencilla ceremonia: encaminarse a la espesura del bosque cercano a su milpa llevando una fresca bebida hecha de maíz llamada "Saka"<sup>13/</sup> y un pequeño morral con pequeñas tortillas untadas con miel de "Xunan Kab"<sup>14/</sup> y depositarlo al pie de un árbol escogido previamente. En caso de no cumplir con este ritual el "arux" reclamaba sus derechos mediante unas ligeras calenturas para el amo o sus familiares.



En caso de que un despiestado  
llegara a los terrenos del "Anax"...

Estimado lector: Entre la fronda exuberante de las selvas de Quintana Roo, perduran misteriosos encantamientos y ocultos secretos que nadie ha podido desentrañar. Por ello ten cuidado cuando transites estas tierras. Y si entre los árboles escuchas extraños silbidos, no sigas. Guarda reverencia a los "aruxo'ob", pues son ellos quienes te mandan sus avisos.

*Compilado por el Coordinador  
del Programa "Los Aruxes"  
Profr. Marcos S. Xiu Cachón.*

"K O L N A L."

( MILPERO )

Cuentan los viejos abuelos, que en una casita ubicada en las afueras de un poblado se halla una mujer extrañada por la tardanza de su marido, pues ya hacía mucho rato que la hora en que llegaba de su milpa había pasado. "¿Por qué no ha regresado? ya está entrando la noche y a él nunca se le hace tan tarde" -se preguntaba-. De pronto, vió que a lo lejos venía una persona cargando algo. En la semioscuridad parecía su marido pero en su forma de caminar tenía algo distinto. Este, al acercarse a la choza dejó caer su carga y con ronca voz le dijo: "estoy cansado, apúrate y ven a acostarte". Está bien, le contestó la señora, y disimuladamente se acercó a ver la carga, notando que eran huesos.

Al regresar a la choza suspendió del fuego su nixtamal y se puso a calentar una gran olla con agua. Se dirigió después a la hamaca en donde estaba el que parecía ser su esposo y se acostó con él. De pronto, con el resplandor del fuego, observó aterrada que la persona que se hallaba a su lado tenía una larga cola. Temerosa, pero sin decir nada, esperó que el desconocido se dur



quiera; luego lentamente y sin ningún movimiento brusco -para no despertarlo- se levantó y abrazó a su dormido hijo, lo ocultó debajo de una paila y seguidamente levantó del fuego la olla con el agua hirviendo. Se acercó a la hamaca y de un rápido movimiento se lo echó encima. Aventó la olla a un lado, tomó la escopeta de su marido y echó a correr hacia el centro del pueblo, seguida por los espantosos gritos del sujeto quién le decía: "esperate", "esperate". La señora viendo que ya casi la alcanzaba, desesperadamente se subió a un alto y frondoso árbol de mamey, hasta donde llegó bramando el espeluznante sujeto quién con la mirada echando fuego y la boca babeante le dijo: ¡Ah, con qué aquí estás! y agachándose en forma extraña comenzó a dar grandes saltos tratando de aterrorizarla. La señora, que no había soltado la escopeta, comenzó a dispararle; pero, para su asombro, las balas nada le hacían a aquella bestia con forma humana, que con extraños chillidos saltaba tratando de hacerla bajar. Cuando se le agotaron los cartuchos no encontró más remedio que tomar los frutos del mamey, cercanos a ella y lanzándolos se defendía del ataque.

Casi desfallecfa, cuando los gallos anunciaron la llegada de la alborada. Los habitantes del poblado -ya levantados- se interrogaban acerca del motivo del alboroto que por la noche habfan escuchado.

"Vamos a investigar", pronunciaron los más resacitos y se encaminaron hacia donde se escucharon los balazos. Cuando los vió venir, a gritos les pidió auxilio y les dijo que un horrible "Kolnal"<sup>15/</sup> la quería comer. Se escapó, se fue por este camino -les dijo-. ¡Pues a seguirlo! dijeron todos y tomando sus armas, a toda carrera salieron en pos de la bestia.

A lo lejos divisaron cómo se metía en el bosque y desaparecía en una oscura cueva. Precavidos y temerosos no se animaron a entrar en subúsqueda, hasta que alguien propuso: ¡Vamos a quemarlo! "Buena idea", respondieron los demás, y distribuyéndose, reunieron gran cantidad de maderas secas que prendieron y arrojaron a la cueva, donde ardió una gran hoguera. Al poco rato comenzaron a escuchar desesperados bramidos, después agónicos, y posteriormente nada... Un fétido

viento proveniente de la cueva los hizo retirarse a sus casas.

Mientras tanto, la señora habfa descendido del mamey y corrfa a su hogar buscando a su hijito. Al llegar, apresuradamente levantó la paila y ¡oh sorpresa! tranquilamente el niño seguía durmiendo. Cuando los hombres regresaron, le informaron que habían acabado con la bestia que había matado a su marido y quiso devorarla.

Felices por este desenlace, y para festejarlo, hicieron gran fiesta donde todos celebraron la muerte del "Kolnal".

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