

K'awiiil

an encounter

a photoalbum by Florentin Smarandache



Explanation

This album brings together photos from a documentary trip I made in December 2008-January 2009 in Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), to discover the old Maya civilization. In one of those blurry days caused by Pacaya volcano's debris and ash, along the ruins of Petén, I believe I must have had an encounter with the Maya deity K'awiil...

K'awiil: a Maya deity characterized by a zoomorphic head, with large eyes, long snout and serpent foot; identified with lightning, serpents, and fertility. Also, meaning sustenance or alms, used as offering to the gods (any precious substance, such as blood, semen, sap, and so on).

Petén: located in northern Guatemala; center of Classic Maya civilization until its collapse; largely abandoned after; now covered mostly by rainforest.

Pacaya: an active volcano in Guatemala at an altitude of 2,552 meters; erupted for the first time approximately 23,000 years ago.

The texts that accompany the photos are translated into English (from Romanian) after being extracted from the following journal: Florentin Smarandache (2015): FRATE CU MERIDIANELE ȘI PARALELELE, vol. V, second revised edition, chapter: CENTROAMERICA.

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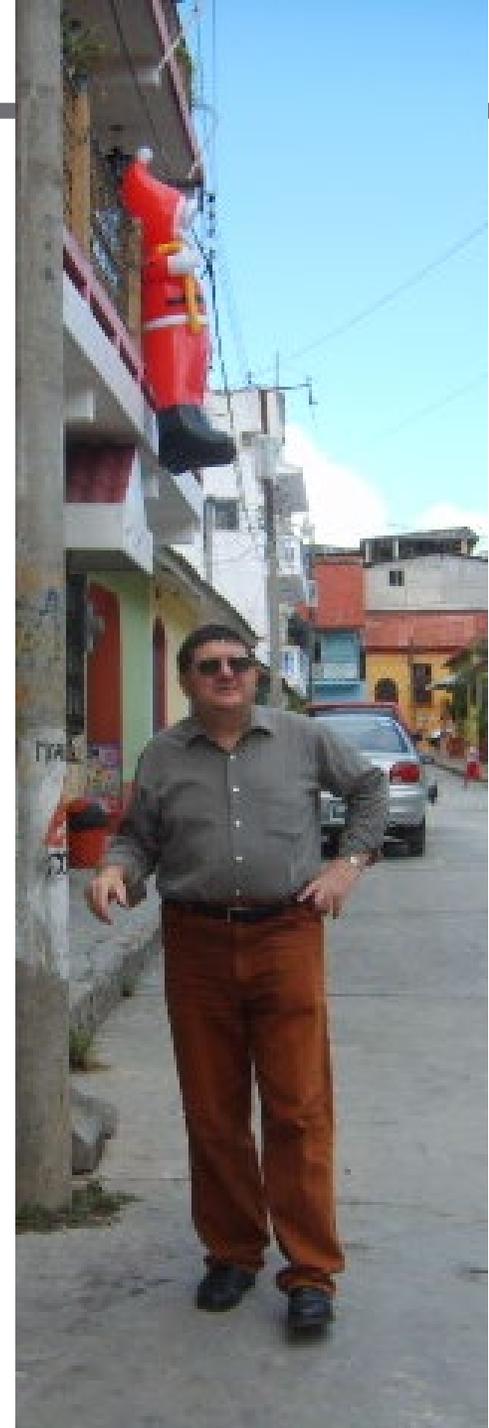
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A "signature" glyph of Maya ajaw Jewel K'awiil of Tikal. Vectorized by Mały Koleżka on *wikimedia* based on Martin, Simon; Nikolai Grube (2008). *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Thames & Hudson.



The author, walking on the streets of Ciudad de Guatemala.



A beautiful sunrise, at 7am, on the I40-east highway, direction Albuquerque.

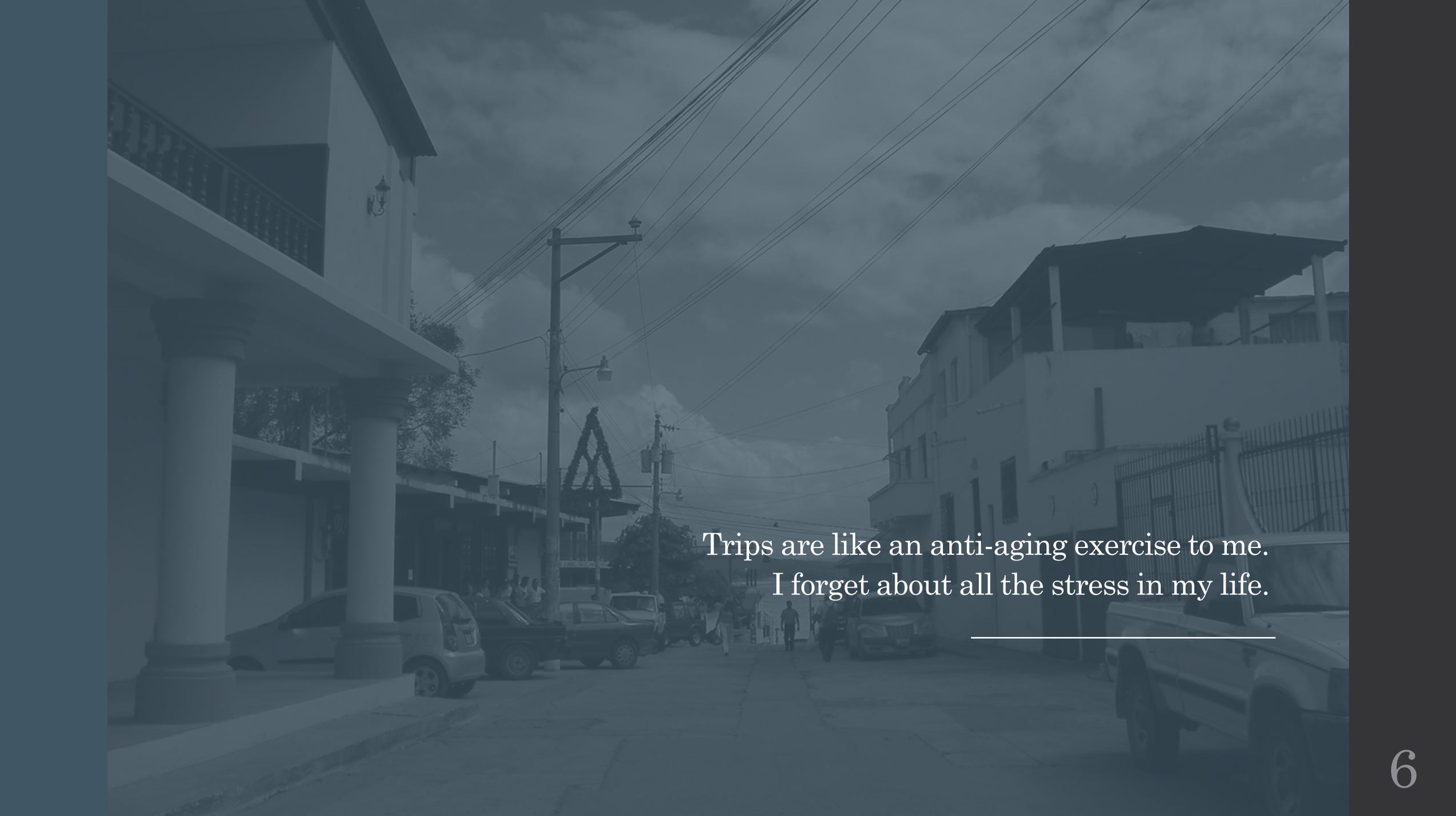
The horizon seems to be burning – a fire in the sky.

The sun is shining straight into my eyes, like a 500W light!



When I look out the airplane's window, the clouds seem to be bundles of snow on a field, and the plane feels like a floating boat – you'd think it isn't moving but staying still.



A street scene in a town with buildings, cars, and utility poles under a cloudy sky. The image is in a dark, monochromatic blue-grey tone. The street is lined with buildings, some with balconies and columns. There are several cars parked along the side of the road. Utility poles with many power lines are visible overhead. A person is walking in the distance. The sky is overcast with heavy clouds.

Trips are like an anti-aging exercise to me.
I forget about all the stress in my life.



Cute, rural atmosphere.

Roofs made mostly out of dried palm leaves.



Tikal National Park encompasses 575 square kilometers of jungle and of ruins.



Many Maya pyramids.
Others, still full of dirt,
grass, trees. Not yet
cleaned for the public.



During the eighth century AD, Tikal became the greatest city in the Maya world with a population of some 100,000 people.



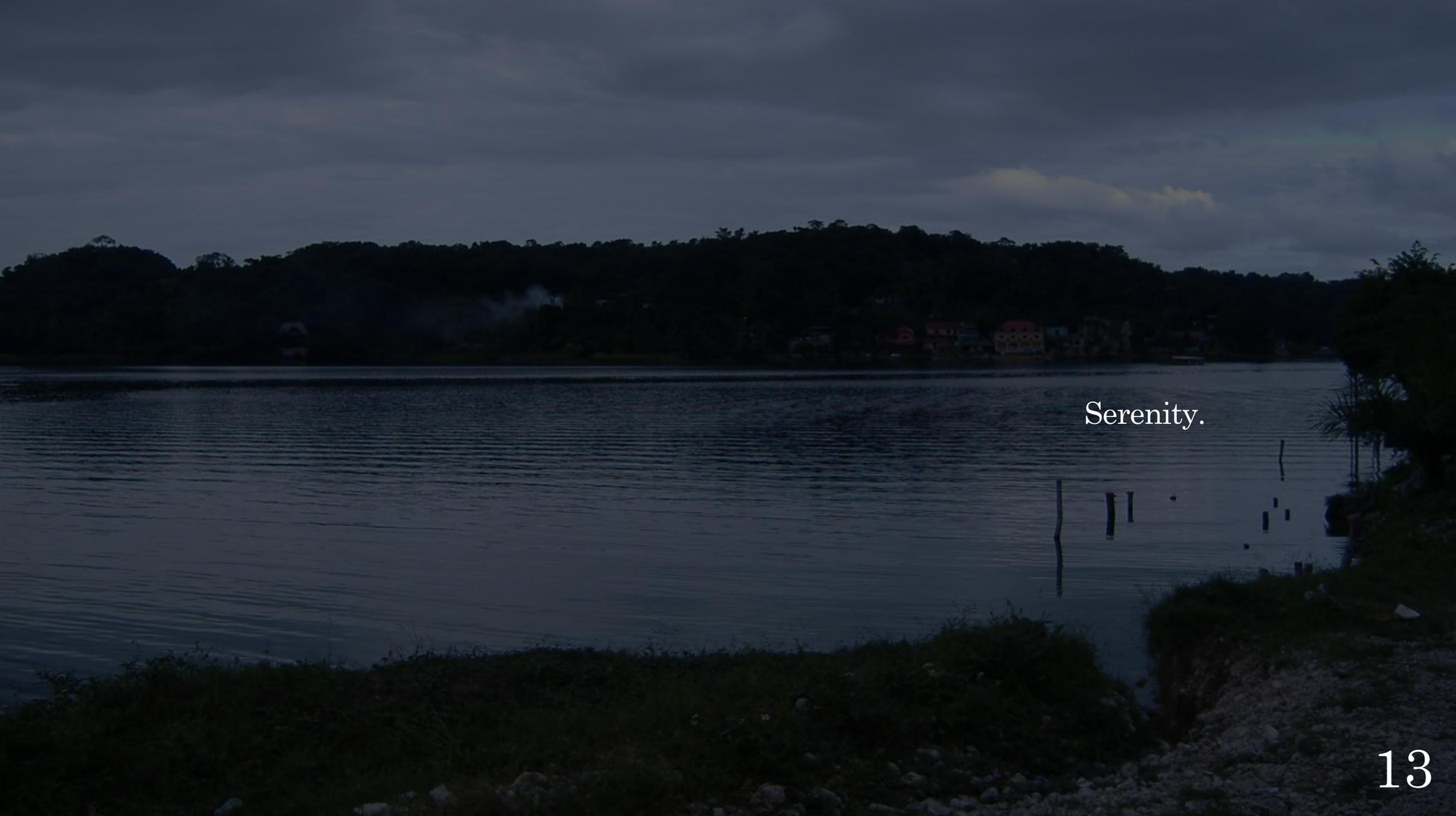
Admiring the Maya civilization.





Tikal is also part of the one-million-hectare Maya Biosphere Reserve.

It was created to protect the forests of the Peten.



Serenity.



The locals are open, friendly and modest.
They're not arrogant as if the world stopped spinning
in their absence!



The houses keep the Spanish colonial style, but they of course have electricity and hot water.

Small market in Antigua.





La Finca de Café Bella Vista.



The plantation is formed of green and red coffee beans.

The red ones are picked, left to dry out in the sun, then skinned.



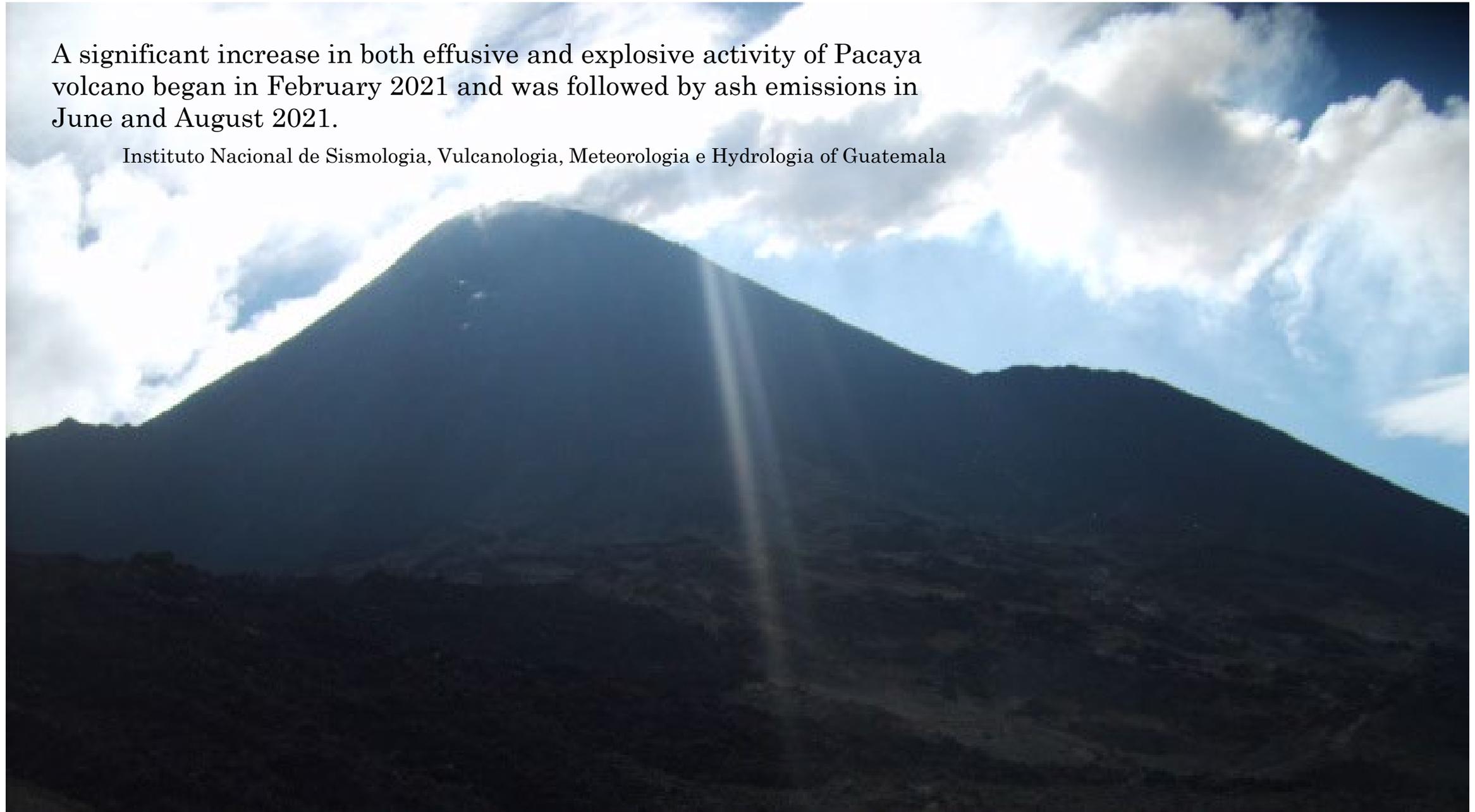
Intelligent and friendly. Kids are beautiful everywhere in the world.

Smoking volcanoes.



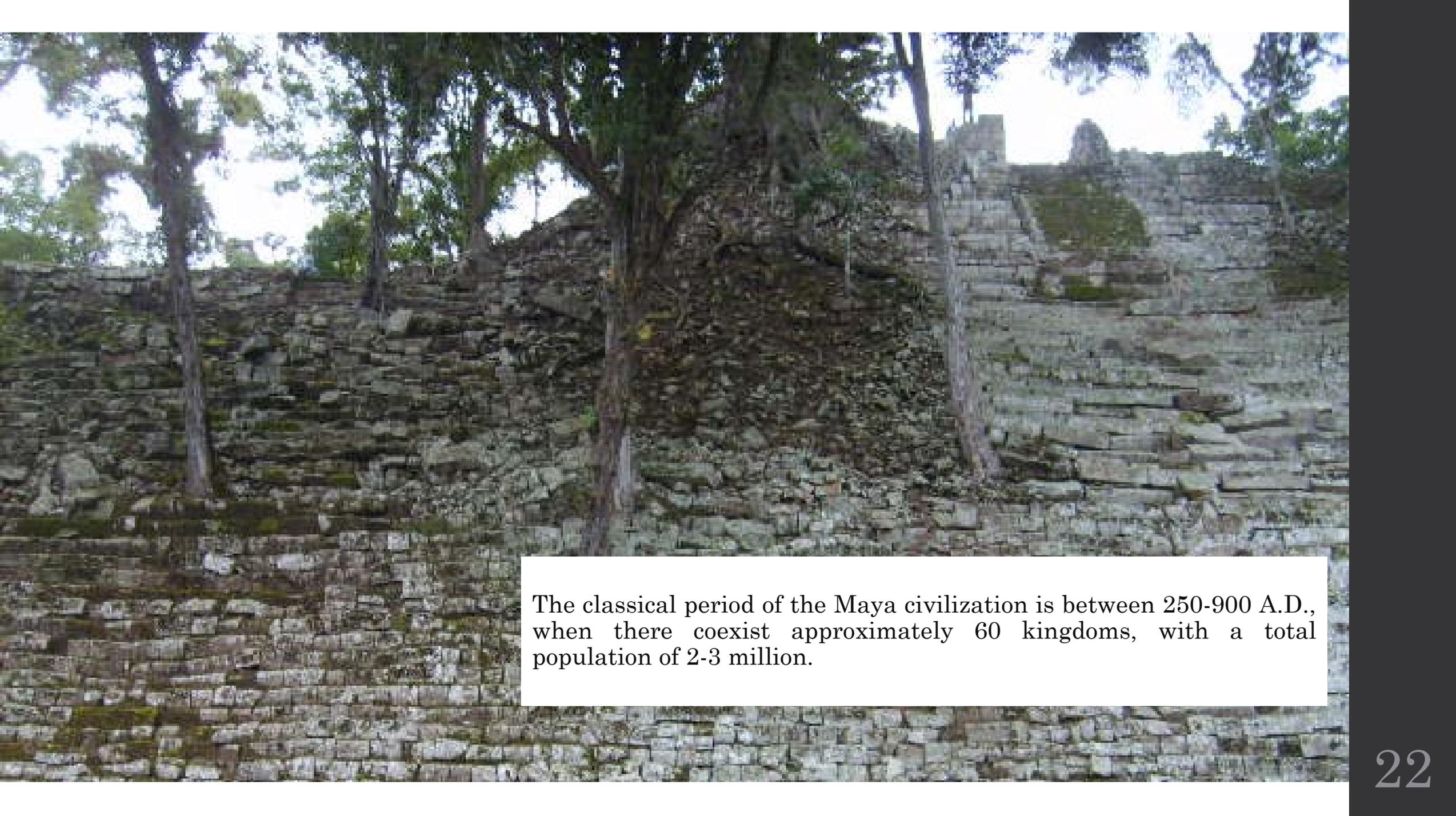
A significant increase in both effusive and explosive activity of Pacaya volcano began in February 2021 and was followed by ash emissions in June and August 2021.

Instituto Nacional de Sismologia, Vulcanologia, Meteorologia e Hydrologia of Guatemala





Ruins of Copan, showing off the Maya culture.



The classical period of the Maya civilization is between 250-900 A.D., when there coexist approximately 60 kingdoms, with a total population of 2-3 million.



It's showering in the Archeological Park of Copan.

My notebook got wet because of sweat as well – I was keeping it in the top pocket of my shirt.

I write with difficulty on the wet paper.

Their societies were theocratical,
and the scenes on the temples
described gods and priests.





The hieroglyphics of Copan reflect the life of the nobles – birth, ascension to throne, wars, conquests, death.

Diversity, the unusual and the exotic interest me.





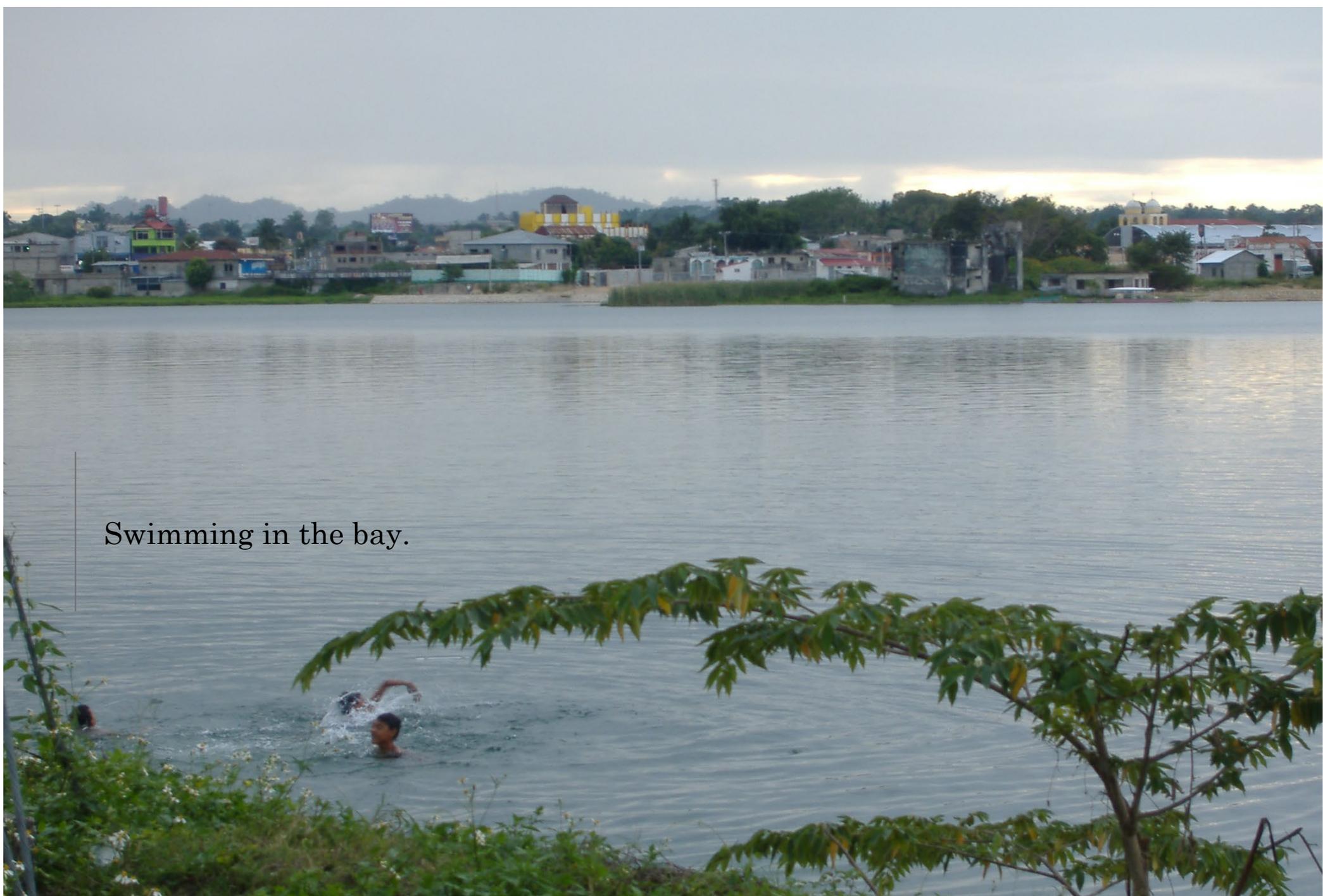
Tranquility.



Hidden in the shadow.



Solitude.



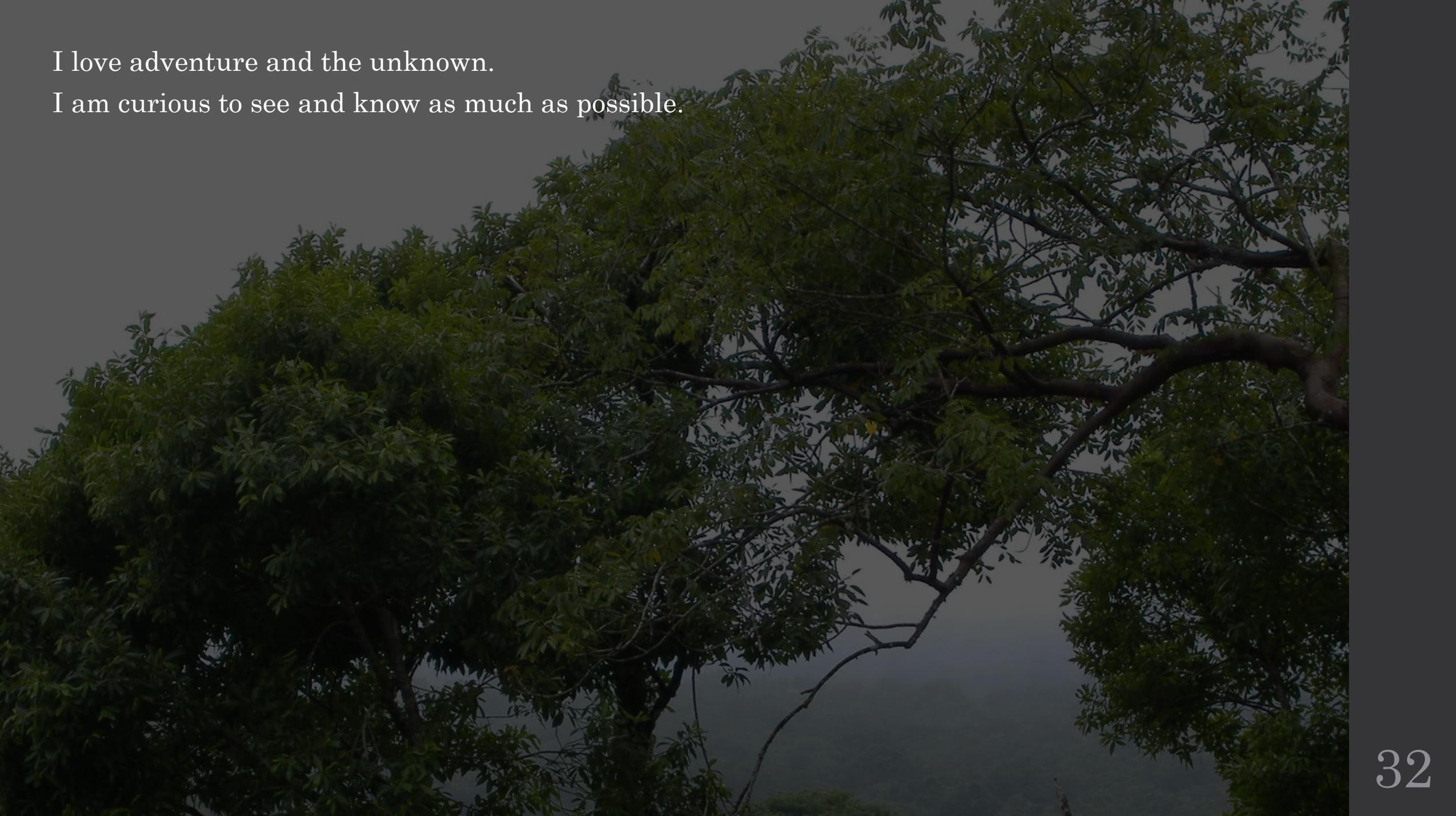
Swimming in the bay.



The white flower (*zac nic-te*) is the spiritual metaphor of the Maya.

I love adventure and the unknown.

I am curious to see and know as much as possible.





Xibalba is the other world, where the dead were dwelling. The legend says that the gods of Xibalba asked a hero, to spend a night in the House of the Bats, named *Zotzi Ha* – this is where the people to be sacrificed were kept.



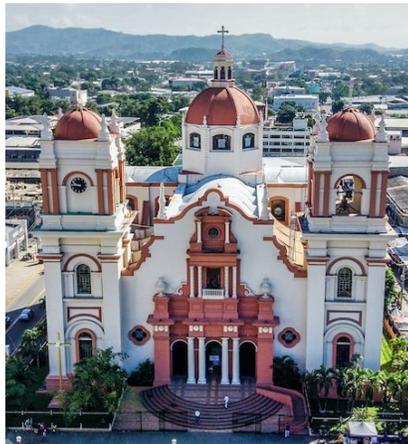
I keep making plans, checking which corner of the world is the best to retire in.



I remember the Spanish series *El Fugitivo*, from when I was a child.

A poster: *Una victima inocenta de la justicia...*

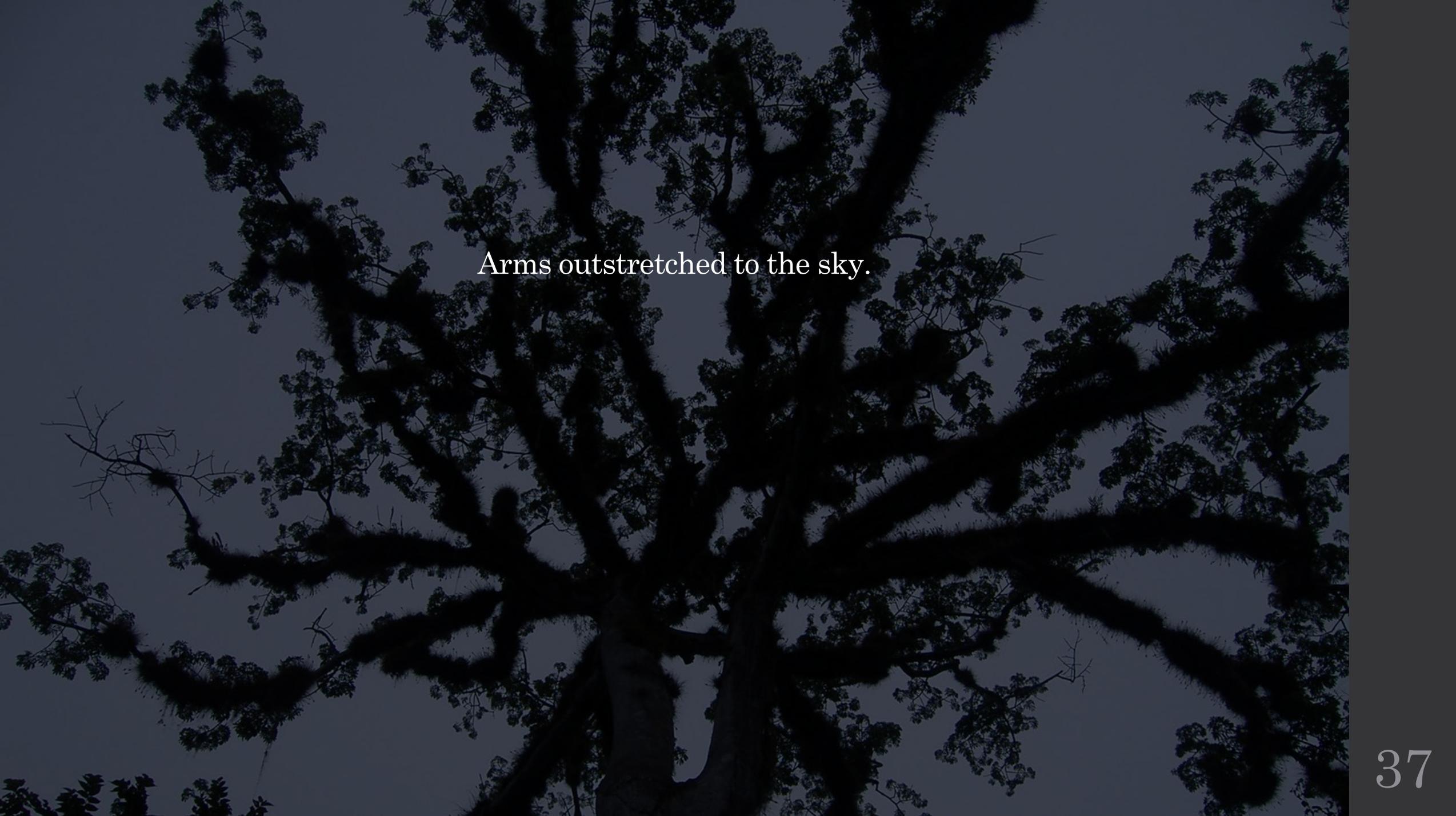
It almost seemed like it was written in Romanian.



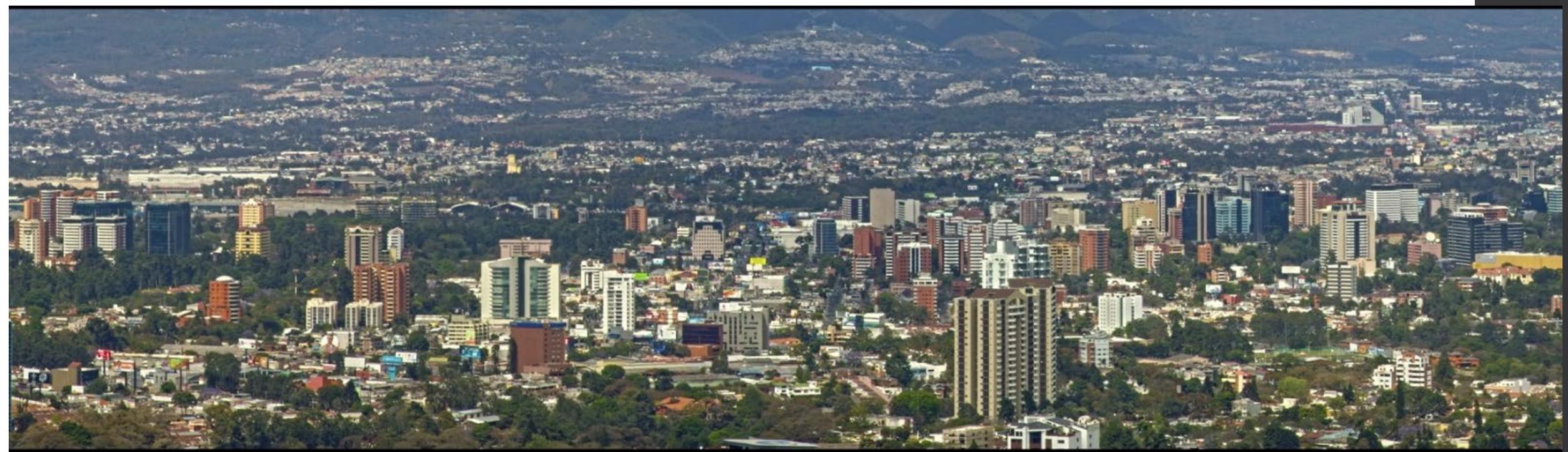
Catedral Metropolitana
San Pedro Apóstol.

In San Pedro Sula, guards with pistoles in stores, banks and even hotels.

San Pedro Sula is the capital of Cortés Department, Honduras.



Arms outstretched to the sky.



Central plaza and the National Culture Palace in downtown Guatemala City.

Above: A panoramic view of the city.



The Tally Hotel in Ciudad de Guatemala.



Ciudad de Guatemala, or New Guatemala of Assumption, or Guate, is the largest city of Guatemala, and also the most populous urban area in Central America.

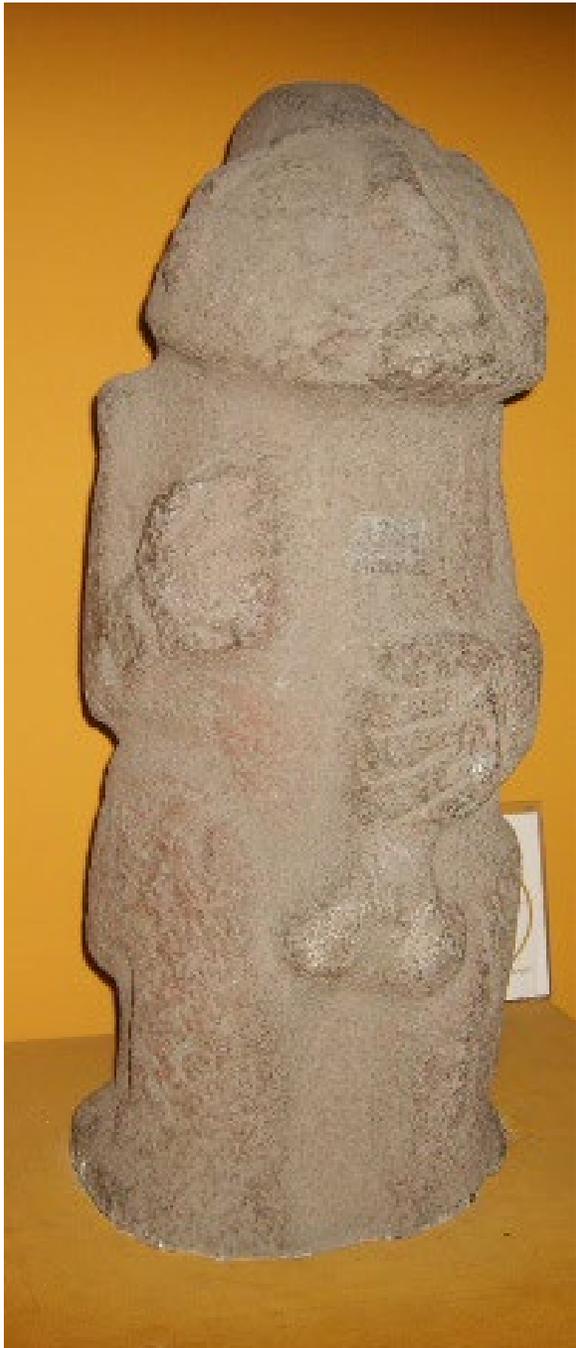
Pigeons, a fountain, street vendors, and a fanfare.



In the small indigenous village San Antonia Agua Caliente, with women working on rugs, a small museum and boutiques.



Mayan science is still uncovering secrets.



Reconstruction of acropolis of *piedra negra*.

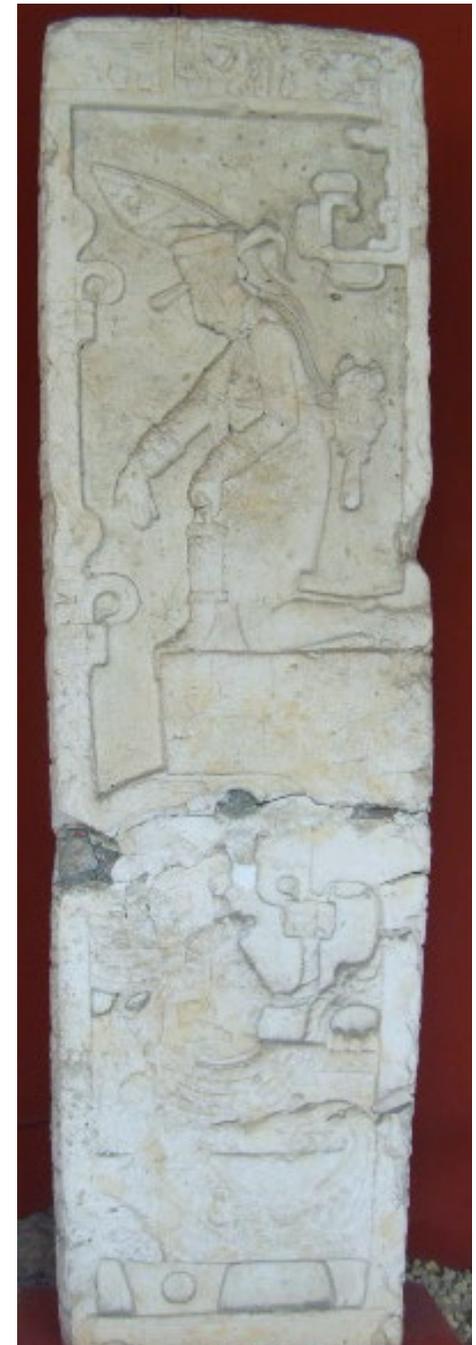


28 Maya languages are spoken to this day in the South of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras, by approximately 6 million people.





Stela is a big stone with inscriptions about a ruler on all sides.



Transtemporal time.





Transtemporal dance.



I keep asking myself if the natives from all the Americas (North, Central and South) were left to their own devices, uncolonized and unmassacred by the Europeans - at what level would they be today?



Why is it, always, in human history, some invaded others to dominate and exterminate? Couldn't nations live in absolute peace?

Now, seeing a lot of the world, it seems like things are quite the same everywhere...

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