

Maya Spiritual Elders Return to the Birthplace of Time



Los Guías Espirituales Mayas Retornan al Lugar de Nacimiento del Tiempo

Mission Izapa 2010

June 19 – June 27



Summer Solstice

Our goal is to facilitate the way for 13 Guatemalan Maya Spiritual Elders in a quest to retrieve and revive an ancient connection to the birthplace of their sacred and solar calendars. We will reactivate the latent spiritual energies of Izapa, Mexico, where ritual fire ceremony hasn't occurred for more than 800 years.

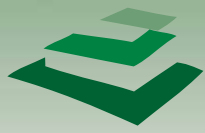
A sacred pan-Maya, pan-gender, pan-cultural, pan-generational, pan-traditional, international event.

This is the first major manifestation among the many goals and projects in support of preserving and protecting Maya cultural traditions for future generations, on behalf of:



The Maya
Conservancy

Preserving the Mesoamerican Legacy™



Mission

The Maya Conservancy's purpose is to aid in the preservation and protection of Maya and Pre-Maya archaeological sites throughout Mesoamerica. The Maya Conservancy provides educational guidance and financial assistance to private and governmental bodies in these countries to aid in the preservation and protection of historically and culturally important sites.

Goals

The Maya Conservancy hopes to work in collaboration with other non-profit, governmental and educational agencies, who are also working to preserve endangered archaeological sites. These collaborative efforts will enhance efforts to preserve national patrimony. The Maya Conservancy will be a source of funding for the purchase of real property to preserve Maya Cultural Heritage sites, to promote Maya Culture and archaeological identity, to conduct research throughout archaeological finds as well as plan seminars and conferences.

Our program for the conservation and preservation of Maya archaeological sites was developed over several years of increasing awareness on the part of the archaeological community that many critical sites crucial for the understanding of ancient cultures were on private lands with no protection from plunderers and looters. The government entities in charge of protecting these sites have limited resources and are forced to prioritize on a limited number of sites, with well-recognized sites receiving the most funding.

Izapa

The Izapa site is owned by three separate private landowners who raise crops throughout the site and is bisected by a highway, which is a major artery to the proximate Mexico-Guatemala border. Through raised awareness, after a series of lectures, local Mexicans were able to divert a major project for putting a four-lane highway through the center of the site. The new highway is now projected to go around it.

The site is of great importance to scientists because of its early religious implications. It is seen by many to be the possible birthplace of the Maya Book of Creation, the *Popol Vuh*. Many scholars have singled out Izapa as the place where what eventually became the Maya sacred and solar calendars were conceived. It was certainly a center for early mathematics and astronomy. The site needs an area for visitor parking, a visitor's center, an educational program, a community outreach program and a museum. A piece of land adjacent to the site could be purchased by a local Mexican non-profit organization created for that purpose. Many donors to The Maya Conservancy are donating specifically for this project.



Terzuola

The Terzuola site is a privately owned 2-acre plot of farmland in the Department of Zacapa, Guatemala. On the Discovery Channel program "The Mysteries of Jade" filmed in 1999, the program showed "a recently looted tomb". This looting of tombs is a regular activity that could be stopped if the property could be acquired by The Maya Conservancy and protected by a caretaker. The site could be opened to the public as an educational area to acquaint visitors with a Maya site in the Motagua River Valley.

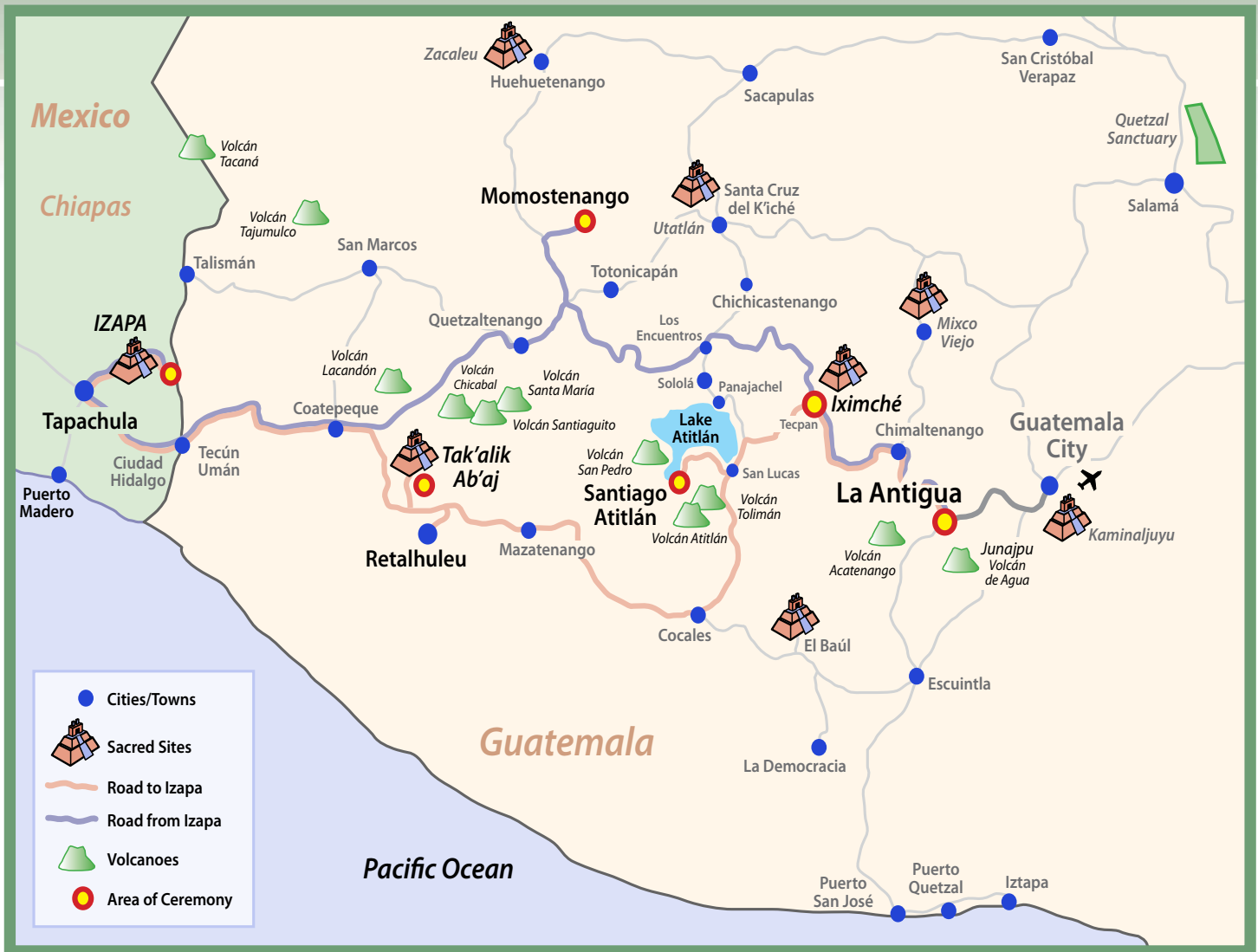
Mission Izapa 2010

This travel opportunity, "Maya Spiritual Elders Return to the Birthplace of Time", is a concept that has been conceived and developed by The Maya Conservancy. Now that a relationship between the Maya's sacred 260-day calendar, Long Count calendar and indigenous Maya daykeepers has been established, there remains a gap between the knowledge of the Maya daykeepers and the archaeological sites that pointed to the astronomical correlations of their creation story and calendars. This mission is being organized to bring together participants, Izapa researchers, Maya representatives and Maya spiritual elders to not only understand the importance of the site, but to facilitate its modern ritual ceremonial activation. By participating in this grand quest, you can help support our mission goal to introduce the modern Maya to the place where their calendar systems most likely originated. Most Maya timekeepers have never traveled far from their villages in Guatemala and none have ever visited Izapa. Ceremonial fire rituals have not been performed at Izapa for more than 800 years.



Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchavac is leading our group of 13 Maya spiritual elders, known as *Ajq'ij'ab'*. Representatives of The Maya Conservancy met with him in Momostenango, Guatemala, for a planning session on Feb. 4, 2010.

Ri Ajq'ijab' Mayib' Ketzilij pa ri U'kiyisib'al ri Q'ijsak



Geographics • Mission Izapa 2010 across Space

Guatemala

One of the most beautiful and culturally rich countries in Central America, Guatemala is bursting with beautifully striking features, rich biodiversity and an indigenous culture with a powerful and vibrant identity. Guatemala has a fascinating environment, with over 8000 species of plants in 19 different ecosystems. It overflows with an abundance of animals; 250 species of mammals, 600 species of birds and 200 species of reptiles and amphibians. Guatemala is also home to the resplendent quetzal, the national bird, which is often used to symbolize all of Mesoamerica. The landscape is awe-inspiring, from mountainous forest highlands, to jungle plains and volcanic beaches. There are 37 volcanoes (more than any other country in the world) and you'll get to see two of the three that are active. Guatemala's indigenous population still accounts for up to approximately half of the population, one of the largest indigenous populations in the Northern hemisphere. They continue to practice ancient Maya beliefs. In modern Guatemala, there are still over 20 Mayan languages in use.





Mission Izapa 2010 Daily Itinerary

*K'at rules the day – the Net – used to store things we will use in the future –
It is the power to unite the people and elements required to do what we need to do*



12.19.17.8.6
11 K'at
Net • K'an

Direction
West

Element
Earth

Key
Nets and
entanglements

Growth
Inner clarity
without
interference

Colors
Brown,
yellow, beige

Nahwal
Lizard,
spider

Famous
Martin Luther
King, Jr.
Pope
Benedict XVI
Queen
Isabella II
Henry
Kissinger
Christian Dior

Saturday, June 19

Participants arrive in Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport (GUA). When your flight arrives, we'll meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel accommodations in the quaint town of La Antigua, about 45–60 minutes away.



Note: If your flight arrives before or by 1 pm in the afternoon, we'll take you to the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, located near the airport. This museum has the most complete collection of archaeological pieces of Guatemalan Maya culture, including a collection of jade, ceramic artifacts, carved stelae, royal tombs and indigenous textiles. Dioramas exhibit life in a Maya city and a Guatemalan village.

The city of **La Antigua**, initially called Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala (St. James of the Knights of Guatemala), after the patron saint of the Spanish conquistadors, was founded in 1543. For 200 years it was the capital of an area that is now Central America and the Mexican state of Chiapas. Along with Lima and Mexico City, it was one of the three great cities of the Americas and a major political, religious, intellectual and economic center.



However, late in 1773, a series of devastating earthquakes struck, reducing much of the city's elegance to rubble. Reluctantly, the government relocated to a safer site in the Ermita Valley, 28 miles east, where Guatemala City now stands. Recent restoration projects have transformed this once-rustic hamlet into a hip and trendy – but still captivating – destination. Colonial and cobble-stoned-streeted La Antigua has three beautiful volcanoes that surround the city and usually at least one of them can be viewed down every street. Fuego volcano is presently active.

In the evening, we have an **Introductory Meet & Greet** with cocktails and a nice buffet dinner arranged for all participants, invited scholars, sponsors and our 13 Maya spiritual elders. They will be arriving from their points of origin, especially Momostenango, Guatemala. Interacting with and getting to know everyone involved with Mission Izapa 2010 is encouraged. The elders will perform a **Blessing of Mission Ceremony** and we will have entertainment by renowned flutist Pablo Collado.



K'iché Maya spiritual elder
Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchavac
and Mary Lou Ridinger.



Maya musical flute music by Pablo Collado.

Note: We will have the musical talents of Pablo Collado with us throughout our adventure. He is Guatemalan, but currently lives right outside its borders, in Belize. What a blessing to have him serenading us not only before meals and presentations, but also as we enter and exit the Maya sacred sites we will visit and the international borders we pass through! A perfect background sound track to the video documentary we plan to sponsor of this momentous mission quest.



Hotel, overnight in La Antigua For each night of our journey, The Maya Conservancy has secured very nice accommodations. Sometimes the whole group will be in the same hotel, at other times, depending on the better hotels available in the towns we will visit, we will be in two hotels. Most hotels have a restaurant and bar, some will have a swimming pool! You will be pleasantly surprised and enjoy yourself immensely.

Maya Spiritual Elders Return to the Birthplace of Time

DAY	12.19.17.8.6 11 K'at Net • K'an	12.19.17.8.5 12 Kan Snake • Chik'chan	12.19.17.8.6 13 Kame Death • Kimi	12.19.17.8.7 1 Kej Deer • Manik'	12.19.17.8.8 2 Q'anil Yellow-Ripe • Lamat	12.19.17.8.9 3 Toj Thunder-Pain • Muluk	12.19.17.8.10 4 Tz'i' Dog • Ok	12.19.17.8.11 5 B'atz' Thread • Chuwen	12.19.17.8.12 6 E Tooth-Road • 'Eb
	Saturday, June 19, 2010	Sunday, June 20, 2010	Monday, June 21, 2010	Tuesday, June 22, 2010	Wednesday, June 23, 2010	Thursday, June 24, 2010	Friday, June 25, 2010	Saturday, June 26, 2010	Sunday, June 27, 2010
DAILY ACTIVITY	<p>Arrival of Mission Izapa 2010 participants at La Aurora International Airport, Guatemala City, Guatemala</p> <p><i>Transfer to hotels in La Antigua, Guatemala</i></p> <p>Arrival of Maya Spiritual Elders for Mission Izapa 2010 to La Antigua, Guatemala</p>	<p>Buffet Breakfast Ceremony of Intent</p> <p>Day-long 2012 and Izapa Discussion – Interaction with Maya Spiritual Elders and Participants</p> <p>Buffet Lunch</p> <p>The day and evening will include possible presentations by Rigoberto Itzep and any other Elders, Robert Sitler, John Major Jenkins, Garth Norman, Marion Popenoe Hatch, Vincent Stanzione, Gasper González, Mary Lou Ridinger, Georgeann Johnson, Jim Reed</p>	<p>7 am, drive to Tecpan</p> <p>Buffet Breakfast</p> <p>Ceremony at Iximché</p> <p>Drive to Santiago Atitlán</p> <p>Lunch on the road (If we hold out to eat in Panajachel, some can take boats across lake depending on late afternoon lake conditions)</p> <p>arrive at hotels Santiago Atitlán</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Ceremony at Santiago Atitlán</p> <p>Encounter with Maximon</p> <p>Lunch in Santiago</p> <p>Drive to Retalhuleu, arrive at hotels</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Visit Museum in Reutaluleu</p> <p>Drive to Tak'alik Ab'aj</p> <p>Ceremony at Tak'alik Ab'aj</p> <p>Lunch on the road</p> <p>Drive through Mexican border at Tecún Umán to Tapachula, arrive at hotels</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Visit Soconusco Museum</p> <p>Drive to Izapa</p> <p>Day-long visit, tour of site, including Ceremony at Izapa</p> <p>Take lunch to Izapa</p> <p>(Tat Rigoberto is thinking of three separate fire ceremonies in three locations)</p> <p>Drive back to Tapachula</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Drive through Mexican border at Tecún Umán to Momostenango</p> <p>Lunch on the road, would be nice to eat in Quetzaltenango</p> <p>arrive at hotels in Momostenango</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Blessing Ceremony at Momostenango</p> <p>Drive back to La Antigua</p> <p>Lunch on the road, (we know a perfect spot!)</p> <p>arrive at hotels in La Antigua</p> <p>(Most of the Elders will remain in Momostenango)</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>International participants drive back to La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City for departure</p> <p>(If possible, try and arrange flights that depart after 11 am)</p>
EVENING	<p>Arrival Meet & Greet</p> <p>Cocktails, Buffet Dinner</p> <p>Music by Pablo Collado</p> <p>Blessing of Mission Ceremony</p> <p>Hotels in La Antigua, Guatemala</p>	<p>Nice sitdown Dinner</p> <p>Presentations and Entertainment:</p> <p>Music by a Marimba Band and Pablo Collado</p> <p>Hotels in La Antigua</p>	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Meeting with Vincent Stanzione, Entertainment</p> <p>Hotels in Santiago Atitlán</p>	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Evening Free</p> <p>Hotels in Retalhuleu</p> <p><i>Note: Throughout the mission we will have Pablo Collado spontaneously playing his flute at sites and restaurants, as well as before and after ceremonies.</i></p>	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Evening Free</p> <p>Hotels in Tapachula</p>	<p>Group Dinner</p> <p>Group activities in the Zócalo, Tapachula</p> <p>The Elders are willing to be publicly honored and our Mission intent recognized.</p> <p>Hotels in Tapachula</p>	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Evening Free</p> <p>(or perhaps Tat Rigoberto will have some plans for us)</p> <p>Hotels in Momostenango</p>	<p>Nice sitdown Dinner</p> <p>Acknowledgements, Entertainment Concert with Pablo Collado and Ranferi Aguilar</p> <p>Hotels in La Antigua</p>	<p><i>Everyone makes it back safe and sound to their point of origin ... refreshed and renewed.</i></p> <p><i>You have helped 2012 unfold as it should ...</i></p>

Daily Planner • Mission Izapa 2010 across Time



Sunday, June 20

12.19.17.8.5
12 Kan
Snake • Chik'chan

Direction
North

Element
Air

Key
Energy and inner fire

Breakfast, a walk around the Central Square, then Mary Lou Ridinger will give us a personal tour of the Jades SA jade factory and museum. Featured in *National Geographic*, Mary Lou and her recently deceased husband Jay, were the original discoverers of the ancient Maya jade quarries. Jades SA employs about 50 lapidaries and is the largest jade factory in Central America. The showrooms have a fantastic collection of replica masks, including one of King Pakal, found in the Temple of Inscriptions of Palenque, dated 692 CE.

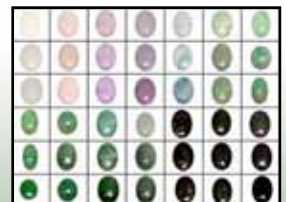


Jade replica of Pakal's mask.



Superb craftsmanship and a jade marimba!

Their jade color chart, superb colors!



Jades SA has recently opened an area of their museum dedicated to Maya cosmology with a representation of the ballcourt of Izapa aligned to the winter solstice – an alignment significant to the unfoldment of December 21, 2012. The Ridingers have discovered new and unique colors of jadite, surpassing other sources of jade in the world! Check out Jades SA at: www.jademaya.com

Summer Solstice, we embark on the Sacbé of Ceremony

We travel the sacred white road to Iximché and Santiago Atitlán – journeying through Kaq'chikel and Tz'utujil Maya realms. Kame rules the day – symbolizing death, harmony and rebirth



12.19.17.8.6
13 Kame
Death - Kimi

Direction
South

Element
Water

Key
Clarity and
rebirth

Growth
Resurgence
of spirituality

Colors
Yellow,
orange,
black

Nahwal
Owl

Famous
Bill Gates
Robin Williams
Charlie Chaplin
Paul McCartney

Monday, June 21

We'll get an early start out of Antigua, and in about an hour's time make it to **Tecpán** for a nice buffet brunch. Then, within minutes we'll arrive at **Iximché**.



After a quick pass through the site museum, we'll experience our way across the site to the Maya altar around back. There our Elders perform our first major **fire ceremony**, led by our two Kaq'chikel Elders who are us accustomed to working at this altar.

Iximché was the capital of the Kaq'chikel Maya, founded by refugees from the K'iché kingdom in the 1470s. Later, the K'iché attacked and tried to conquer the city at least once. This attempt met with failure and the Kaq'chikel captured many K'iché warriors. Spaniards under Pedro de Alvarado arrived in the highlands in 1524. With the Kaq'chikel as allies, they conquered the Guatemalan polities that had been enemies of Iximché. The Tlaxcaltec tribes that came with them, called Iximché, Tecpán Quauhtemalan (Place of the trees), that is where the name Guatemala originated. On July 25 of that year, Alvarado founded the first colonial capital of Guatemala in Tecpán, 3 km to the north of Iximché. Their patron saint was Santiago, or James. Later, this action led to the outbreak of hostilities between the Kaq'chikel and the Spanish and the ultimate destruction and abandonment of Iximché in 1526. The Spanish left Tecpán and went to Ciudad Vieja near La Antigua to set up the new Spanish capital there. President Bush visited Guatemala in early March 2007 and he was escorted to Iximché. The Maya performed rituals before and after his visit to ward of the negative spirits.

After our ceremony, we'll head towards **Lake Atitlán**. If we can make it to **Panajachel**, we can have a nice late lunch by lake side. Depending on the late afternoon conditions of the lake, we may be able to take a boat across the lake to our destination for the evening, **Santiago Atitlán**.

We'll arrive at our hotel, and in the evening, enjoy a nice dinner. Vincent Stanzione has a special presentation in store for us about Maya spirituality and the calendars.



More than 85,000 years ago, a volcanic eruption wiped out all forms of life from Mexico to Costa Rica, leaving a huge crater. The scene has dramatically changed since then! When the famous novelist Aldous Huxley visited the lake, he referred to it as being "the most beautiful lake in the world". Three spectacular volcanoes – Tolimán, Atitlán and San Pedro – surround the lake itself, and there are twelve villages (named after the Twelve Apostles), situated around its shoreline.



12.19.17.8.7
1 Kej
Deer - Manik'

Direction
East

Element
Fire

Key
Harmony
and nature

Growth
Working with
the four elements

Tuesday, June 22

After breakfast, we'll all meet with some local Tz'utujil Maya, then seek out our personal **encounter with Maximón** – who is more than a local legend!

Maximón is said to be a manifestation of the Maya god Mam, who reigned over the five-day period between the end of one year and the beginning of the next. When Catholicism was superimposed over Maya beliefs during the 16th and 17th centuries, Mam became integrated with St. Simon. His name combines *max*, the Mayan word for tobacco, and Simon. The Santa Cruz cofradia is responsible for taking care of Maximón, which spends the year "hidden" in the home of one of its members. He is seated in a place of honor, surrounded by flickering candles and burning incense, offerings of cigarettes, Indian liquor and money at his feet. Visitors ask his help in resolving health, love, family and economic problems. It is considered a serious breach of etiquette to come and leave nothing.





Day of interaction, discourse, learning, sharing...

Kan rules the day – signifies the serpentine fire, with a connection to Gukumatz', K'ukulkan, Quetzalcoatl – the telluric energy of Mother Earth



12.19.17.8.5
12 Kan
Snake • Chik'chan

Growth
Revealing inside
information
and handling
energy/power

Colors
Green, red

Nahwal
Snake

Famous
Jim Morrison
Marilyn Monroe
Luciano Pavarotti
Angelina Jolie
Clint Eastwood

Sunday, June 20, continued

What a very special day! After your tour of the jade museum, you'll have about three hours to explore the charms of Antigua. Shop, pass by the town square, or visit ancient churches and monasteries. It's a photographer's paradise! We'll offer suggestions of where to eat a tasty lunch. Antigua has so much great food available.

In the afternoon, we plan a presentation and discussion session with all of our participants. We've gathered together a great group of experts who will share their insights on Izapa, Maya spirituality, archaeo-astronomy, the Maya calendars, and the significance of December 21, 2012.

After a two-hour break, we'll regroup for a special dinner with entertainment.



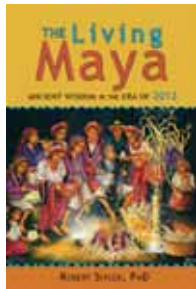
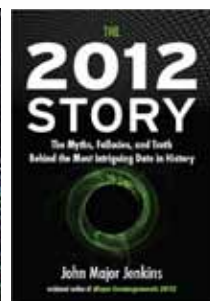
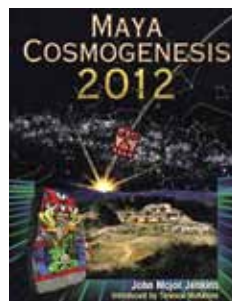
Nine of our thirteen Maya Ajq'ijab' after completing a very successful Wajshikib' B'atz' ceremony on the morning of Feb. 6, 2010 in Momostenango, Guatemala, for the initiation of the current 260-day sacred calendar cycle. **Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchavac** (5th from left) is the representative of our group of elders. Eleven are K'iché Maya from Momostenango, two are Kaq'chikel from Iximché, five are women. Members of The Maya Conservancy were present and key participants. We received a ritual blessing for our Mission Izapa 2010. View the video at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzXG69hffg4



Georgeann Johnson – President of The Maya Conservancy. She is a retired Educator with a Masters in Education from San Francisco State. She has long-standing interests in community-building, archaeo-astronomy, photography, Maya culture and history, sustainable advancement, and everything "Mesoamerican"!



John Major Jenkins is an independent Maya researcher and pioneer of the modern 2012 movement. Author of 10 books on the subject, he has worked to clarify misconceptions and is credited with showing how a rare galactic alignment underlies the 2012 cycle-ending date, and is a concept deeply embedded within Maya traditions. John is director of The Center for 2012 Studies and moderates the *Update2012.com* social networking portal. Visit his website at www.alignment2012.com



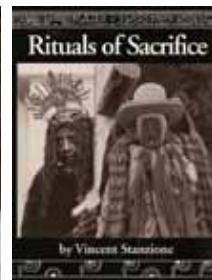
Dr. Robert Sittler is currently a professor at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida and serves as Director of its Latin American Studies Program, teaching courses in Spanish, Maya culture and the Latin American humanities. Recently he has focused on the significance of year 2012 in the Maya Long Count. His long-standing relationships with the Maya and their humble wisdom inform and inspire his book. Visit his website at www.robertsittler.com



Q'anjob'al Maya spokesperson **Gasper Pedro González** is a writer and artist, author of various novels including *La Otra Cara*, *Palabras Mayas* (poems), *El Retorno de los Mayas* and *13 B'aktun*, with translation by Robert Sittler.



V. Garth Norman is an archaeologist, archaeo-astronomer, epigrapher, and art historian with graduate degrees from Brigham Young University. Norman is best known for his pioneering research of the early or pre-Maya sculpture at Izapa. See his website at: www.vgarthnorman.com



Independent Maya researcher **Vincent Stanzione** received his Master of Arts degree in Spanish Literature and Language from the University of Colorado – Boulder. His deep interest in the Maya carried him away from the theoretical landscape of academia. He has lived among the Tz'utujil Maya of Santiago Atitlán since 1987. He is author of numerous books, including *Ritual of Sacrifice*, *Maya Gods and Goddesses* and *The Sacred Count of Days*.



Mary Lou Ridinger – Secretary Mary Lou is an accomplished archaeologist, explorer, researcher, lecturer and business administrator. From the 1970 Salvage Project during the construction of the subway in Mexico City to the discovery of the lost Maya jade sources and the subsequent creation of an important local marketplace for jade in Guatemala, she has been a leading character in the story of contemporary Mesoamerica.



Dr. Marion Popenoe Hatch is a mover and shaker in the world of Early Formative pre-Maya archaeology and research. She has done extensive work at La Venta, Kaminaljuyu and Tak'alik Ab'aj, and her insights in archaeo-astronomy help suggest an awareness of precession by the Maya. She resides in La Antigua and is the former director of the Department of Archaeology at the University del Valle in Guatemala.



Jim Reed, an independent Maya researcher, is currently the editor of the Institute of Maya Studies newsletter, and a former president of the Institute (2000). Reed's enthusiasm and dedication make him one of our primary coordinators for Mission Izapa 2010. He is helping to unite our efforts on behalf of the modern Maya Ajq'ijab'/Spiritual Guides. He shares a simple, easy-to-understand, yet colorful interpretation of the 2012 phenomenon that focuses on Maya Creation Centers, the *Popol Vuh* and Izapa.





Journeying from Santiago Atitlán to Tak'alik Ab'aj

Kej rules the day – the deer, harmony and nature – representing the four elements and the four manifestations of humans – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual



12.19.17.8.7
1 Kej
Deer • Manik'

Colors
Beige, yellow

Nahwal
Deer, coati

Famous
Mother Teresa
Elton John
Giorgio Armani
Johnny Depp
Stephen King

Tuesday, June 22, continued

After our encounter with Maximón, we'll have lunch in Santiago. Then, we'll head down out of the Highlands to the tropical Pacific coast of Guatemala. About 40 km beyond Masatenango is the largest town in the region, **Retalhuleu**, usually referred to as Reu, pronounced "Ray-oo". Set away from the highway, Retalhuleu has managed to avoid the worst excesses of the coast and has a relaxed, easy-going air. Founded by the Spanish in the early years of the Conquest, it remains something of an oasis of civilization, with a plaza of towering Greek columns and an attractive colonial church. You can have the evening free to relax or explore your surroundings – we'll suggest a few nice places to eat dinner.



12.19.17.8.8
2 Q'anil
Yellowripe • Lamat

Direction
West

Element
Earth

Key
Seed,
planting

Growth
Germination,
realization

Colors
Gray, white,
green

Nahwal
Rabbit,
harvests, plants

Famous
Carl Sagan
Jimi Hendrix
Elvis Presley
Babe Ruth
Daniel Ratcliffe

Wednesday, June 23

We'll have breakfast in our hotel, then visit the **Museo de Arqueología y Etnología** in the plaza. It's home to an amazing collection of anthropomorphic figurines and "pre-Maya" artifacts. Afterwards, we'll make our way to the Pre-Classic site of **Tak'alik Ab'aj**. The magic continues as our Elders perform a sacred **fire ceremony** at an altar shrine of their ancient ancestors.

Set among the coastal mountains amidst coffee plantations, here site archaeologists Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego Corzo will give us a personal update about the site and recent excavations. There is evidence here that the Maya were tracking the cycle of the precession of the equinoxes. Tak'alik Ab'aj was on the very early trade route (Camino Real) through which many of the customs and traditions of the Olmec and the Izapans went to Kaminaljuyú.

Archaeologists believe the site was inhabited from about 800 BCE to 1524 CE, with its peak importance coming in the second and third century of the common era, with a slight resurgence after the decline of Teotihuacan after 600 CE. The archaeologists may show us the site's storage rooms where we'll get to see many of the artifacts and ceramics excavated from tombs and ancient ritual offerings. They are constructing a new on-site museum that may be open in time for our visit. During a short tour around the site, we'll get to visit their very interesting zoo, with jaguars, monkeys, alligators and kinkajus!

Then, we'll head off to **Coatepeque** for lunch. Afterwards, we'll travel north to **Tecún Umán**, our border stop as we enter Mexico. Passing through the border and customs should be rather easy, and we'll make our way to **Tapachula**. This city has a mix of provincial and modern features with a touch of the European architecture. You'll have the evening free to relax or roam around. Take a stroll around the town square (Zócalo) and we'll suggest a few nice places to dine. We're at the same hotel for two nights.

*Q'anil rules the day – the seed, life and creation.
It is a day of abundance, of sharing harmony,
the fruit of love and understanding*



Izapa: Re-connection • Re-activation • Re-knowing

Toj rules the day – symbolizing Grandfather Sun and his representative on Earth – Tojil – the sacred ceremonial fire. It is the fire of the spirit of Ajaw: Heart of Sky and Heart of Earth



12.19.17.8.9
3 Toj
Thunder-Pain
Muluk

Direction
North

Element
Air

Key
Fire and
atonement

Growth
Liberation
from the past

Colors
Red, white

Nahwal
Fire, earth,
mushrooms

Famous
Che Guevara
John Lennon
Oprah Winfrey
Julia Roberts
Madonna

Thursday, June 24

Breakfast in our hotel. Then, we'll visit the **Soconusco Museum** where many important carved stelae and artifacts from **Izapa** are displayed. Located less than ten miles outside of town, Izapa is where we want to do our special **fire ceremonies**. Tat Rigoberto may conduct three separate ritual fires in three different plazas.

We'll have a chance to tour the site with John Major Jenkins and Garth Norman helping us to interpret along the way. We'll arrange a bag lunch and remain at the site into the afternoon.

Afterwards, we'll return to our hotels in Tapachula, for a little rest, then, we'll meet for dinner and some special festivities in the town square arranged by local coordinators in honor of our Elder's visit. There may be TV coverage and a press conference.

Izapa is a large Formative site that was once the thriving cultural and commercial center of a rich agricultural region called Soconusco. Among the early exports of the region were cacao, quetzal feathers and rubber. Izapan civilization became the heart of a phenomenal cultural development, including early writing and calendrical customs. It is one of the earliest and longest-lived periods of civic-ceremonial and urban development known, and its Late Pre-Classic period stylistic impact was felt across the length and breadth of Mesoamerica. Established in the Early Pre-Classic (2000-900 BCE), the site includes pyramids, sculptured plazas, and possibly two ball courts. Garth Norman has counted 89 stelae, 61 altars, 3 thrones, and 68 "miscellaneous monuments" at Izapa. Izapan sculpture features mythological and religious subjects, and is ceremonial and frequently narrative in nature, exhibiting early antecedents to the *Popul Voh*. The version of the K'iché's story of creation that survived and was penned to Spanish translation in the 1500s. The site lies in the area where researchers believe what eventually became the Maya's sacred 260-day calendar and the Long-Count calendar were conceived. Their Long-Count calendar turns over on 12/21/2012.



Stela 5 – a scene of original creation with a "Tree of Life". There are definite connections to the *Popul Vuh* depicted here. It is one of the most important sculptures in the Western Hemisphere.



Stela 11 – Who can deny that it does appear to be a solar deity, birthing from the jaws of a cosmic caiman, that is crouched upon a double-headed serpent (ecliptic). 12/21/2012 anyone?

Nowhere else is the concept better depicted.



The Group F ballcourt is aligned to the Winter Solstice.



12.19.17.8.10
4 Tz'i'
Dog • Ok

Direction
South

Element
Water

Key
Law and
authority

Growth
Eliminating
authoritarianism
and drastic
actions,
cultivating love

Friday, June 25

After breakfast at our hotel, we head out of Tapachula and back into Guatemala through the same border at Tecún Umán. Perhaps, we'll make it to **Quetzaltenango** for lunch. We will experience the change in terrain, from the Pacific coastal plain, up an ancient trade-route passage through the volcanoes, to the Highland town of **Momostenango**, surrounded by pine forests. This is home turf for Tat Rigoberto and our K'iché elders. We'll arrive at our hotel with a little time to rest. You might have the evening free or its possible Tat Rigoberto will have a special dinner planned for us. Here, we are his "honored guests". Momostenango actually means "altar town" – we're on ancient sacred ground here!

Colors
Yellow, white,
beige

Nahwal
Dog, coyote

Famous
Sammy Davis Jr.
Bob Marley
Nelson Mandela
J. K. Rowling
Mahatma Gandhi



T'zi' rules the day – the sign of both earthly and cosmic law and authority. It symbolizes fidelity, order and precision. It is the symbol of great scribes



From Momostenango to La Antigua ... back home

*B'atz' rules the day – symbolizing time unraveled, evolution and human life.
B'atz' is the deity that created Earth and Sky – the Creator of life and original wisdom*



12.19.17.8.11
5 B'atz'
Thread • Chuwen

Direction
East

Element
Fire

Key
Look for
answers in time
and space,
weaving the
threads to the
ancestors

Growth
Creativity and
community
service

Colors
Red, orange

Nahwal
Monkey

Famous
Dustin Hoffman
Jacques Cousteau
Sean Connery
Stanley Kubrick
Neil Armstrong
Harrison Ford

Saturday, June 26

Today is a special day for Tat Rigoberto as he conducts a **fire ceremony** for us at his hometown group shine, high atop a mountain overlooking Momostenango. Significantly, we have arrived on a day named B'atz' – a day to weave the threads of connection to the ancestors. In February, the ritual we participated in on behalf of The Maya Conservancy was to initiate this current 260-day calendar cycle. It was on 8 B'atz', and if it was any indication of what we might expect this morning, the ceremony might be timed to the rising sun. It started at 5 am and ended at 6 am. Either way, earlier or later, we'll have breakfast at restaurants in town.

This will be our final interaction with the Elders as most live in the area and won't be returning with us to La Antigua. We'll pass by the hotel to freshen up and gather our belongings, then head out on our final road trip.

Our sacred caravan will pass through the Highlands along the Panamerican Highway, with pine forests, cultivated fields and great views of volcanoes along the way. We'll stop for lunch at one of our favorite places, then arrive back in La Antigua to the same hotel as previous. In the evening, we'll gather for our **farewell dinner** which will include presentations, acknowledgements and some very special entertainment. We plan to have a concert with Pablo Collado and one of Guatemala's most famous musicians – Ranferi Aguilar. He is currently involved with an eight-year project of playing "Maya" music on "Maya" instruments. Should be a treat!



Our Wajshikib' 8 B'atz' ceremony on February 6, 2010, was very special and deeply moving. The elders started by making a cosmogram on the ground with sugar, then loaded on offerings of copal incense, candles, cacao and tobacco. Specifically-colored flowers were placed in the four directions. Vincent Stanzione was present with us. Photos: Oscar Palencia.



12.19.17.8.12
6 E
Tooth–Road • 'Eb

Direction
West

Element
Earth

Key
The sacred way

Growth
Experience
acquired through
travel and from
wise elders

Colors
White,
light blue

Nahwal
Wildcat

Sunday, June 27

Today is our travel home day. Auspiciously, it is a day for "experience through travel and from wise elders"! You can have breakfast in the hotel, then we will arrange various transports to the International airport depending on your departure time. If possible, try to arrange flights that depart after 11 am. If your travel plans include arriving a day earlier or later than our trip dates, contact Jim Reed – we will accommodate everyone as needed. Note: In previous years, there was always a \$40US airport exit tax, but now you are only responsible for a \$3US security tax when leaving Guatemala by air.

This mission adventure is an unprecedented opportunity of cultural interaction, learning and spiritual enhancement. We trust everyone will make it back to their point of origin, refreshed and renewed.

If you plan to join us for our Mission Izapa 2010, first contact Jim Reed to inquire about trip availability. Then, fill out the Registration Form and mail in your \$500 deposit as soon as possible. The form describes three price options that facilitate covering the costs of your journey; supporting our 13 elders and presenter/guides; and a tax-deductible donation to The Maya Conservancy.

For more information, contact: Jim Reed at mayaman@bellsouth.net or 404-680-1644

*E rules the day – symbolizing the path of destiny,
travel, the road of life, the guide, and the means.
It is the part of life that searches for realization.*

