

CHAPTER 6: MONTERRICO (House of Cold)



COLD HOUSE

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AND so they now entered the House of Cold. The cold here was immeasurable. The interior of the House of Cold was thick with hail. But straightaway the boys caused the cold to dissipate. They did it in. They ruined and destroyed the cold. Thus they did not die, but rather were alive when it dawned again. The Xibalbans had wanted them to die there, but this was not to be. Instead they were just fine when the dawn came.

So then their guardians came again to summon them.

"What is this? Haven't they died?" asked the lords of Xibalba.

And again they marveled at the deeds of the boys, Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

[Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Quiche Maya People, Allen J. Christenson, p. 159]

The twins were then sent into the Cave of Cold where it was so cold that it made one sick. In this House of Cold a thick ice whipped about, which the twins dissipated by burning old tree trunks, so they did not die there and were quite hale and hearty when dawn arrived.

[Esotericism of the Popol Vuh by Raphael Girard, p. 185]

Then came the third ordeal in the House of Cold. Here the heroes escaped death by freezing by being warmed with burning pine-cones.

[The Popol Vuh: The Mythic and Heroic Sagas of the Kiches of Central America, Lewis Spence, p. 21]

On our way to Monterrico, we crossed a muddy river that emptied into the Pacific Ocean. The river provided one of the few places for a port along the Guatemala coast. We passed Puerto Viejo (Old Port), and our minivan driver proceeded southeast to the oceanside village of Monterrico, which was named for the "rich forest" that used to exist in the coastal lands. Presently, the coastal waters provided an extensive habitat for mangrove swamps. Along the road we saw several loofa farms that had the cylindrical vegetable sponges hanging from long wires attached to posts.



Susie wanted to come to Monterrico because of the sea turtles. She had a love for wildlife that began in her childhood when she drew her first poster about saving various kinds of animals. Now she wanted to investigate the possibility of volunteer work to help save the sea turtles.

When we arrived at the beachfront hotel area, Elsa and Susie started their quest for a suitable place to stay at. They went to several hotels and checked the rooms. Elsa was not satisfied with the accommodations. Our patient driver suggested a place that he knew would be just right for Elsa's taste. He was right.

The Dos Mundos Pacific Resort offered the best of both worlds: a well-furnished bungalow with a beachfront pool, and a wonderful long beach to walk on. It was a place where the two worlds of land and ocean interacted to provide a unique coastal environment. It was well worth the extra money that it cost. Like I once heard from a comedian-entertainer: "Happy wife, happy life!"

The lobby of the resort had several fish handicrafts that intrigued me, especially a fish with many colorful designs on it. The people in the lobby were very cordial and helpful. Susie and I ordered tickets for a boat tour of the mangroves from them. Elsa wasn't interested in exploring the mangrove swamps. She would rather relax by the pool and read a book.



I asked the manager of the resort why it was called Dos Mundos ("two worlds"). He told me the resort was started by an Italian who blended the Italian old world grace and style with Guatemala's new world ambiance. I thought it was the old world of the Maya and the new world of the Spanish co-existing side by side.

The grounds of the resort were well-kept, with exquisite plants and volcanic rock islands in the midst of manicured green lawns. It was a place that we would enjoy for the next two days, a place where we would watch the sun rise above the palm trees in the morning, and where we would try to catch the fireflies in the darkness of the evening.



The pool area had beach chairs, lounge chairs, tables, an open-air restaurant, and service from a bar named El Alquimista ("the Alchemist"). What a way to relax after a week of touring the Maya archaeological sites! There was a unique perspective of the pool and the ocean that I was able to photograph by laying flat on the ground. It looked like Elsa and Susie were sitting in a turquoise pool and in a dark-blue ocean at the same time.



We also took turns relaxing in the hammock that was conveniently stretched out on the patio of our thatch-roofed bungalow.



After an afternoon snack in the open-air restaurant overlooking the ocean, we decided to take a walk on the beach in our bare feet. Walking on the black volcanic beach sand along the straight shoreline was an adventure in itself. Here we were, walking on volcanic sand that had washed down from the more than thirty volcanoes in Guatemala throughout the prehistoric ages. I had walked on the sands of many beaches in the world, but this was the first time I had walked on black volcanic sand.



The 50 to 80 feet wide beach appeared to stretch in both directions as far as the eye could see. We eventually decided to walk in the direction of the center of town, which was about two miles northwest of the resort. The undulating waves of the ocean looked like the movement of the Mayan feathered serpent. The sound of the breakers crashing on the slopes of the beach reverberated like the percussions of drum rolls. I could imagine in my mind the force of the undertow in such conditions. I knew I would not be going swimming at this treacherous-looking beach.

We finally arrived at the place where the central street terminated on the sands of the beach. A welcome sign stood like an arch to greet the visitor. The logo of the town on the sign had a sea turtle with an earth design on its shell. It was the legendary turtle that carried the earth on its back. Five sun rays emanated from the turtle design.



We walked up the Calle Principal (main street) all the way to the canal and the boat launch, where Susie and I would be boarding in the morning for our tour of the mangroves. We weren't particularly impressed with the many open-air restaurants on both sides of the street. I was more impressed with the art work on some of the walls that we passed. One painting in particular moved me: a scene of a fiery hot sky above and a watery cold ocean below, with a yellow doughnut-shaped sun in the center. To my mind's eye, the painting depicted the hot and cold currents that flowed through the earth, and through the human being. In the human being, the cold lunar current flowed through a subtle nerve (or air-tube) on the left side, and a hot solar current on the right side, of the entwined double spiral (caduceus) of the spinal column. It seemed that both India and the Maya world developed the spiritual science of the cosmic serpent at the same time: India called it the Kundalini with Ida (lunar) and Pingala (solar) currents of energy; the Maya called it the Plumed Serpent with the blow-guns of Hunahpu (solar) and Xbalanque (lunar) symbolizing the dual currents of energy. The central tube was the Sushumna, the trunk of the tree of life, the cosmic Milky Way – the spiritual center of our galaxy and the spiritual center of the human being.



The fantastic sunset that we anticipated seeing at the ocean didn't materialize. Clouds appeared out of the oceanic horizon to obscure the descending sun. For dinner, we settled on the beachfront restaurant next to the welcome arch at the end of the main street. The Mananitas Beach Lounge provided good food and the view of the ocean that Elsa required for an enjoyable evening. We walked back in semi-darkness along the white crests of the ocean waves. Several dogs barked at us and followed us part of the way. Eventually, the bright lights of the restaurant at the Dos Mundos Resort welcomed us back to our temporary home, where we watched the fireflies dancing in the night.

The following morning, a young driver picked us up at the lobby and drove Susie and me to the boat launch. We were greeted by a young father and his ten-year-old son. They had a spacious newly-painted red boat ready for us. We watched as a ferry boat with a canopy took off with about twenty passengers to La Avellana (the Hazelnut). A sign across the canal said that this was the Natural Reserve of Monterrico, a protected area of mangrove swamps that was for the benefit of everyone. We got into the red boat and watched as the father stood at the rear and pushed his long stick into the water and moved the boat away from the launch area. There was no motor on the boat. The rectangular-shaped arch at the entrance to the boat launch had the same village logo of the sea turtle that we had seen before.



The boat launch receded from view as the boatman continued to methodically propel the boat forward with his long stick. Susie struck up a conversation with the father, using her Spanish to learn something about the canal we were on. Every few minutes, Susie would pause in her conversation to give me tidbits of information that she had gathered.

“He says this is called the Canal de Chiquimulilla,” interpreted Susie. “It parallels the southern coast of Guatemala for about 140 kilometers. People use this canal to get from place to place.”

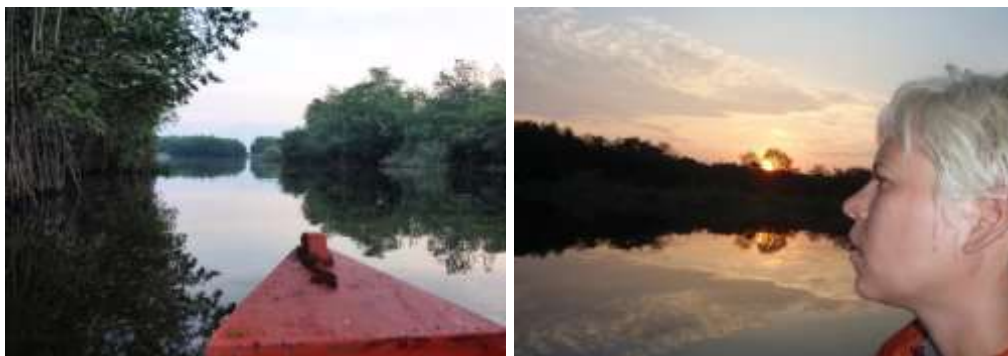
We were interrupted by the sound of the motor of a flat-bed ferry transporting a car and a motorcycle.



After the noisy interlude, the quiet motion of the boatman poling the boat through the smooth morning waters was a welcome return to the peaceful environment.

“Oh, yeah,” remembered Susie. “He also said that the canal separates the black-sand shoreline from the mainland.”

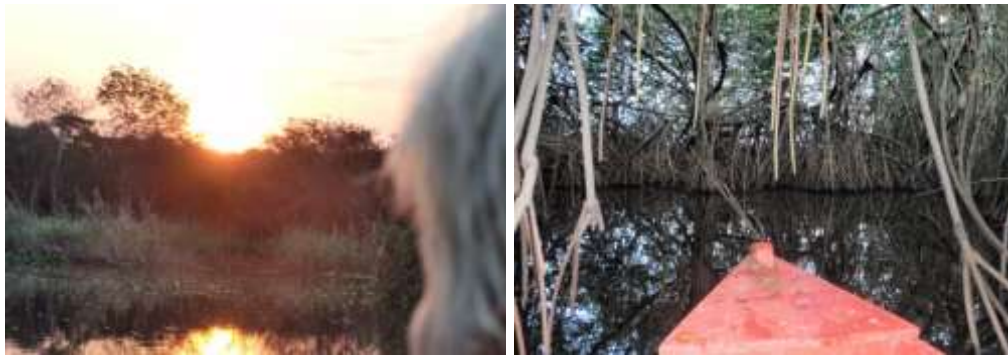
The moments of silence became more commonplace as we watched the dawning of the day and listened to the sounds of the swamp life. Slowly we began to see the colors of the sky change from blue to orange as the sun emerged from the underworld. The sun was reflected in the calm water. Susie looked meditatively at the unfolding panorama of sky and water.



Suddenly, the fiery red sun burst through the tree tops with a fantastic display of brightness. We could no longer look at the sun. The boatman took us through a tunnel-like opening, slowly maneuvering the boat through the tangle of mangrove vines. I thought of the tunnels we had gone into at Copan, and I also thought of the Maya concept of an opening being an entrance to the underworld – Xibalba. It seemed dark and sinister amidst the network of mangrove trees,

and it felt as if danger lurked behind the shadows. Perhaps a crocodile or a caiman alligator was lurking under the dense roots, whose reflections in the water made the entire swamp (above and below) a maze of intertwined limbs and roots.

Susie was finding out more about the mangrove forest we were moving through. “He says this is a red mangrove because of the roots that arch out of the water. They call this tree a walking tree because it looks like the roots are walking on top of the water.”



When we came out of the narrow channel, it became light again. As the boatman continued poling us forward into the wider waters, a marvelous scene momentarily appeared simultaneously in the sky and in the water. We saw three suns at one moment. I captured the image before it disappeared, for the sun was moving higher into the sky and the reflection of two suns in the water was a marvel of nature that I had not seen before. I thought immediately of the Maya story of the three suns, where the Maya people passed through three suns (or worlds, ages) and were now moving toward the completion of the fourth sun, which will end on December 21, 2012.



The marvelous vision of the three suns vanished from sight, and we continued onward in our journey through the peaceful mangrove swamp.

You never know what will happen, or who you will meet, on an adventure. Expectations are one thing, realizations another. I really expected to meet with more wildlife. We did see some egrets in the trees, and we did see a four-eyed fish, which really only had two eyes. The reason they called it a four-eyed fish was because it could see above water and below water; each eye was like a bifocal lens, one focusing on the world above and the other focusing on the world below.

What I didn't expect to see was a fisherman with a net. When he saw that I had a camera pointed at him, he put on a good show for us. He first pulled in the net and took out the few fish that were trapped in the net. We saw that the bottom of his boat had several small fish floundering in a pool of shallow water. Then he gathered up the net into folds and lifted it up for a moment, pausing long enough for me to take a picture. Then he made one quick motion with his body, twisting back and then forward, at the same time swinging the net with one throwing motion into the air, allowing it to unfurl and land spread out upon the surface of the water. I thanked him for the splendid demonstration of his net-throwing skill.



Our final voyage in the mangrove swamps was done in complete silence. After Patrick, the ten-year-old boy, took a picture of Susie and me, I turned on the video-camera mode on my digital camera and watched the boat move through a narrow channel on the small viewing screen and on the large viewing screen of nature simultaneously.



Mangrove

swamp boat ride at Monterrico, Guatemala

Our morning excursion ended too soon for us. We could have spent the entire day riding through the red, black, and white mangrove swamps. However, we had hired the boatman for only two hours, and our time was up. He brought us back to our starting point, where a driver waited to take us back to the Dos Mundos Resort.

After a hearty brunch, we were ready to go on our long walk to the turtle place that Susie wanted to see. We found out it was only five miles to the turtle center, and we all loved to walk. Especially on the soft, warm black volcanic sand, beside the scenic ocean, with the rhythm of the waves playing the symphony of the cosmic OM. I walked some of the time behind my wife and daughter, watching as they made footprints in the sands of time. I also meditated on the vast oceanic expanse that encircled our planet, and the vast cosmic expanse of which we were a part.



When we finally reached our destination, our feet were tired. Parque Hawaii (Hawaii Park) was constructed about one hundred meters away from the ocean, on top of the long slope that led to the water. It was a perfect place for a nesting area and a sea turtle hatchery. Our first order of business was to see some turtles. We were not disappointed. There was a fenced-in enclosure with

small sea turtles swimming around. Susie's eyes widened and a joyful smile spread across her face as she watched the creatures from the sea.



Next, we looked inside a large enclosure with sand in it for the nesting eggs. It was used as a hatchery for the eggs that were collected after the nesting turtle had finished laying her eggs. The eggs were buried in the sand, and the sturdy netting protected the enclosure from predators. Later, when the eggs began hatching, the hatchlings were released at night (or in the evening) into the ocean.

The hatchery also had a very informative lower wall with illustrations and explanations of what happened at the turtle-nesting ground. There were six panels that explained (in Spanish) the entire process: from when the female turtles returned as adults to lay their eggs at the beach where they were born, to the difficult life of the little turtles trying to survive natural threats and human threats, to the work of the volunteers to save the eggs and then their watchful care during the 45-50 day incubation period to make sure hatchlings are released as soon as possible to insure their chances of survival, and finally the importance of maintaining a constant temperature of 30 degrees Celsius. The transcribed panels are presented here for reference (to interested readers):

- (1) Las Tortugas llegan a adultas en 7 años. Solo las hembras vienen a poner sus huevos a la playa donde nacieron.**
- (2) Las tortuguitas tienen una vida difícil llenada de amenazas como depredadores naturales, basura y las redes de los pescadores. ¡Solo una tortuguita de cada mil sobrevive!**
- (3) Cada tarde las voluntarias hacen excavaciones de los nidos recién nacidos para sacar las cáscaras y huevos semi-cornados o infértiles. Aquí cerca de 90% de los huevos hacen.**
- (4) Durante la noche los voluntarios visitan el tortugario cada hora para ver si hay tortuguitas listas. Si hay se les liberan inmediatamente porque cuando nacen tienen mucha energía y más chances de sobrevivir.**
- (5) Los huevos están incubados por 45-50 días. Las tortuguitas tardan dos días en llegar a la superficie. Solo nacen en la noche. Los nidos con jaulas están los**

proximos para hacer.

(6) Las temperaturas de los nidos son muy importantes. Hay sensors en los nidos para ayudarnos a mantener 30 c.



The Camino de Legendas (Way of Legends) was more interesting for me. Susie was interested in the biology and science of the turtle; I was interested in the mythology and folklore of the turtle. I walked past the stepping stones that had the word turtle in quite a few languages: tortuga (Spanish), tortue (French), tartaruga (Italian), schildpad (Dutch), schildkrote (German), cherepaha (Russian), skilpad (Afrikaans), fakroun (Arabic), wangba (Chinese), kachua (Hindi), kame (Japanese), kaplumbaga (Turkish), chelona (Greek), Tao (Thai), and many others.

I wanted to see the wooden signs that told the various stories about the turtle from different cultures. The first one I saw was the one from my homeland: North America. It spoke of the native American Indian concept of North America being the Great Turtle Island. It also mentioned that the spiritual animal carried the earth on its back.

[Las tribus se refieren a norte America como la isla tortuga. La tortuga es un animal espiritual de la creacion del universo. Ellos creian que la tierra era sostenida en la espalda de una tortuga.]



The sign about the Chinese view showed the earth being upheld or supported by four elephants that stood on the back of a giant turtle.

[La gente de china creen que el mundo es sostenido por 4 elefantes soportados por bedwang la tortuga gigante. La gente de china cree que abuser o asesinar a las Tortugas trae muy mala suerte.] The sign about the Maya concept of the turtle included the cosmological view that the belt of Orion was part of an enormous cosmic turtle, and it also mentioned their belief that the Maize God rose from the carapace (top shell) of the turtle.

[Los Mayas pensaban que el cinturón de Orion es una parte de una enorme tortuga cosmica. Muchas pinturas Mayas descubiertas muestran al dios de maiz saliendo de la coparazon de una tortuga.]

Other signs of interest were the sign of the Australian aboriginal view that it was important to live in harmony with nature and not harm the turtle, and the sign from India that said the turtle represented the Hindu God Vishnu – the protector of the universe – and that turtles are an important symbol of longevity and fertility.



Susie wanted to see the main building where the people worked. She met an American Peace Corps worker named Theo and a German volunteer named Pablo. I had an interesting talk with the German volunteer, speaking to him in my limited German. I found out that Germany had a unique program for young people who wanted to serve their country, but didn't want to do military service.

So Pablo was serving his country through volunteer work that paid a small stipend and gave him credit for service to his country. Susie was given a personal tour of the workers living quarters, where she discovered that the beds were covered with mosquito nets.

We took a picture beside an oceanic painting together with the workers. I contributed to the cause by buying a tee-shirt that had the slogan: "Give a hand to save the turtles."



Near the entrance that connected with the main road to the facilities was a geographical map of the protected area. It showed the Canal de Chiquimulilla that Susie and I explored in the morning, and it showed the lagoons, canals, and other parts of the turtle-nesting area. Behind the map I noticed a large chart with pictures that explained the turtle's cycle of life. The chart was a treasure-trove of scientific information about the turtle. I started looking at the cyclical chart by beginning with the mating process, then continuing with the return of the female to the place where she was born, where she lays about 100 eggs and returns to the sea; then the little turtles hatch in about 40-60 days and race to the sea before the predators catch them. They continue swimming until they arrive at a safe place to feed themselves. Afterwards, they feed on crabs, shrimps and fish, and they migrate great distances by themselves. The transcribed chart is presented here (in Spanish) for reference (to interested readers):

- (1) **Hembras y Machos se Juntan Para Reproducirse – Alrededor de los 7 años, las Tortugas alcanzan su madurez sexual. Los machos, con colas mas largas y ganchos en las aletas frontales, se montan sobre las hembras para copular.**
- (2) **Las Hembras salen a la Playa a poner sus Huevos – La mayoría anida en la misma playa donde nació. Se tardan entre 1 y 2 horas en hacer el nido y poner los huevos. Si se les molesta con luces o ruido, regresan al mar y tal vez nunca regresen.**
- (3) **Cada Hembra Pone alrededor de 100 huevos – hacen un hoyo en la arena con sus patas traseras para construir el nido. El nido tiene forma de cantaro en el interior. Las hembras dejan caer los huevos dentro, tapan el nido y regresan al mar.**
- (4) **Las Tortuguitas Nacen Después de 40 – 60 días – Nacen de noche y en días nublados. Salen del huevo debajo de la arena y después de 2 días suben hasta la superficie. Al nacer son de color oscuro y muy pequeñas. Tienen yema de huevo en su cuerpo que las alimenta en los primeros días.**
- (5) **La Carrera Hacia el Mar no es Fácil – La luz atrae a las tortuguitas. Al salir del nido, se dirigen hacia la parte más brillante del mar. Muchos depredadores, como tacuazines, cangrejos, perros y pájaros, atrapan a los tortuguitas antes de llegar al mar.**

(6) Las Tortuguitas Nadan 24 horas sin Parar – cuando entran al agua las tortuguitas enfretan a otros depredadores en el mar. Ellas nadan sin parar hasta que llegan a una zona segura para alimentarse.

(7) Solo 1 de Cada 1000 Tortuguitas llega a Adulta – las Tortugas que llegan a adultas se alimentan de cangrejos, camarones y peces. Migran grandes distancias nadando solas en el mar.



There was a model of a leatherback sea turtle with a baby turtle on its back, and there was an enclosure with larger live sea turtles that we viewed. I kept thinking of the two-headed turtle that we had seen at Copan. And about the Maya stories of the turtle in the starry heavens. There was something primordial and cosmic about the oldest reptile from the Mesozoic era, about 220 million years ago. That was approximately what it took for our solar system to make one complete revolution around the center of the Milky Way galaxy. That was mind-boggling!



It was time for us to finally say farewell to the turtles at Parque Hawaii, which was run by the Association to Rescue and Conserve Wildlife (ARCAS). Susie had seen enough, and she was well informed about the living conditions of the station in case she decided to volunteer there.

We started to walk out to the road, which would lead us to the nearby village Hawaii, where we could catch a local bus to drive us five miles to our resort. We didn't want to walk anymore. Our feet were still aching from the walk on the beach in our bare feet.

However, something happened that made us change our minds quickly. A swarm of mosquitoes swooped down on us and started pricking our skin for sources of blood. Those blood-suckers! We panicked and retreated back to the beach. There was no way we were going to walk another foot on that mosquito-infested road, which ran next to the canal. We would rather continue walking on the beach another five miles. Which we did!

As I walked, I couldn't help but think of the mosquito story in the Popol Vuh as I scratched the itchy red bumps on my arms:

Then they (the Hero Twins) left, each with his blowgun, and descended to Xibalba. They quickly went down the steps, passing through various river canyons. They passed through the midst of many birds. "Flocks" was the name of the birds.

And again they passed over Pus River and Blood River. In their hearts, the Xibalbans had intended these as traps. But they were not troubled. They just passed over them, floating on their blowguns.

When they came to the four crossroads, they already knew the roads of Xibalba—the Black Road, the White Road, the Red Road, and the Blue/Green Road.

Then they sent an insect named Mosquito. They sent him on ahead to obtain for them what he could hear:

"You shall bite each one of them in turn. Bite the first one seated there and then keep on biting them until you have finished biting all of them. It will be truly yours then to suck the blood of people on the road," the mosquito was told.

"Very well then," said the mosquito.

So then he went along the Black Road until he alighted behind the effigies of carved wood. The first ones were all dressed up. He bit the first one, but there was no response. Then he bit the second one seated there, but he did not speak either. Next he bit the third one seated there, who was One Death—"Ouch!" said each one when he was bitten. "What?" was their reply:

"Ow!" said One Death.

"What, One Death? What is it?"

"I am being bitten!"

"It's just . . . Ow! What was that? Now I am being bitten!" said the fourth one seated there.

"What, Seven Death? What is it?"

Thus their names were named. Each of them revealed the name of the other. Each of the individuals in order of their rank had his name revealed by the one who sat

next to him. Not one of their names was missed until all of the names were named when they were bitten by a hair that Hunahpu had plucked from the front of his knee. It wasn't really a mosquito that had bitten them. And so Hunahpu and Xbalanque heard the names of all of them.

[Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Quiche Maya People, Allen J. Christenson, p. 149-151]

That was how the Hero Twins (Hunahpu and Xbalanque) began their conquest of the Lords of Death in Xibalba. They knew the first two were effigies of carved wood (like Maximon, whom we would meet later). The other twelve were One Death, Seven Death, House Corner, Blood Gatherer, Pus Master, Jaundice Master, Bone Scepter, Skull Scepter, Wing, Packstrap, Bloody Teeth, and Bloody Claws.

When we finally returned to our resort after almost two hours of walking, I heard a scream near the surf that sent chills up my spine. A man was sitting on the beach, clutching his arm to his chest. We found out that the man had gone into the ocean to catch a wave, as he said it. What happened instead was that the wave caught him unawares, tossing him upside down and carrying him out to deeper water with the strong undertow. He had separated his shoulder. He was in obvious pain. I shuttered to think that it could have been me, if I was foolish enough to venture into the powerful ocean waves. The ocean was unpredictable. It could be very treacherous and cruel. After all, it was the House of Cold.

[OCEAN at Monterrico, Guatemala](#)

Strong surf and dangerous ocean waves at Monterrico, Guatemala. Notice the black volcanic sand of the beach.

The next morning, Susie wanted to visit the other turtle hatchery that we had seen on the beach near the main street arch. I went with her. The sign in front of the turtle station said: *Aqui es El Tortugario* (Here is the Sea Turtle Hatchery). It was run by CECON, USAC (Center for Conservation Studies, Universidad de San Carlos).

The first thing we saw as we walked through the beach entrance into the sea turtle hatchery was a model of the largest sea turtle, the Leatherback, whose common name was Baule and scientific name was *Dermochelys* (genus) *Coriacea* (species). A sign in front of the cold-blooded creature who could swim long distances in deep cold ocean waters said: “*Camine por este sendero pensando como una tortuga*” (think like a turtle as you walk on this footpath). Think like a turtle! That was a new concept for us. It was like the familiar saying, “Walk a

mile in my shoes.” Can you imagine swimming in deep cold water for thousands of miles through the earth’s oceans? To think like a Leatherback was even harder, for it didn’t even have a hard carapace (upper shell) like the other turtle species. To think like a turtle was to think about survival and longevity. It was to realize the importance of the ancient turtle in the evolution of life on earth. It had survived ice ages and the separation of the continents through continental drift. The turtle had made one complete revolution with the solar system around the center of the Milky Way galaxy!



There was a beautiful large wall chart with pictures of the various sea turtles of the world. The pictures helped us visualize the life of each turtle. A circular pool of small turtles also helped us see what a turtle’s life was all about.



In addition to the baby sea turtles, the hatchery also had enclosures housing baby and adult caiman alligators, and cages and enclosures for baby and adult green iguanas.



There was lots of information on several charts that were posted at the visitor's center. One chart had a simplified cycle of the life of the marine turtle, with lines drawn from the mating to egg-laying to hatching and migration stages of their life. Another chart had extensive information about:

SPECIES OF SEA TURTLES THAT HATCH ON THE BEACHES OF THE MONTERRICO NATURAL RESERVE.

(1) Nombre Comun: Parlama Blanca

Nombre Cientifico: Lepidochelys Olivacea

Tiene 7 escudos laterals en su caparazon que llega a medir hasta 70 cms. De largo y pesar 90 libras, es de color verde grisáceo. Arriva a esta playa para desovar de Julio a octubre y pone de 30 a 120 huevos y su tiempo de incubacion es de 48 dias.

[It has 7 lateral shields in a shell that measures up to 70 cm in length, weighs 90 pounds, and has a grey green color. It arrives at this beach to lay eggs from July to October and lays about 30 to 120 eggs, and the time of incubation is about 48 days.]

(2) Nombre Comun: Parlama Negra

Nombre Cientifico: Chelonia Midas Agassizi (Tortuga verde del Pacifico).

Tiene 5 escudos laterales en su caparazon que llega a medir hasta 90 cms. de largo y pesar 140 libras y es de color verde oscuro. Arriva a esta playa para desovar de Julio a noviembre y pone de 40 a 120 huevos y su tiempo de incubacion es de 50 dias.

[It has 5 lateral shields in a shell that measures up to 90 cm in length, weighs 140 pounds, and has a dark green color. It arrives at this beach to lay eggs from July to November and lays about 40 to 120 eggs, and the time of incubation is about 50 days.]

(3) Nombre Comun: Baule Nombre Cientifico: Dennochelys Coriacea

Es la tortuga mas grande del mundo. Tiene 7 lineas o quillas o crestas a lo largo de su caparazon suave y coriacea. Que llega a medir 1.80 meters de largo con manchas blancas o palidas y puede pesar hasta 1.300 libras. Arriva a esta playa

para desovar de octubre a diciembre y pone de 30 a 100 huevos y su tiempo de incubacion es de 70 dias.

[It is the largest turtle of the world. It has 7 lines throughout its smooth and leather-like shell. It can measure up to 1.80 meters and can weigh up to 1,300 pounds. It arrives at this beach to lay eggs from October to December and lays about 30 to 100 eggs, and the time of incubation is about 70 days.]



The most interesting piece of information that we found out from the person who worked at the visitor center was that the CECON station releases about 5,000 sea turtle hatchlings per year. It was remarkable to know that the sea turtle stations in Guatemala were helping insure the survival of the turtle species. The rest was up to the human species – to help in the conservation effort. Susie was one of the members of the young generation that cared about the conservation efforts for all wildlife.

There was a beautiful mural of two turtles on a wall at the station, with the red sky and golden sun above the blue ocean of Monterrico. That was the last picture I took of the turtle world that we had experienced. It was good to know that the life of the turtle on our earth would be propagated as long as there were at least two turtles left to continue the species.



As Susie and I walked back to the resort, we reflected on the turtles that we had seen and learned to love. We paused to look at four young men carrying a boat from the shore. They had ropes tied from the boat to a wooden stick, which they used to lift and carry the boat. It looked like something the ancient Maya would have done after their fishing expeditions.

So that was the end of our journey to the world of the ocean and the turtles. The painting of the life of the ocean that I had seen at Parque Hawaii lingered long in my mind after we left Monterrico. It was an image of the turtles and other ocean life sharing the large expanse of water together.

