



The Great Jocote Tree

A Tale from Guatemala

By Courtney Hissong Willson

*Photos of the kindergarten and the
5th grade*

Once upon the time, there was a lonely Great Jocote Tree, with no friends. Its leaves left with the wind, the children from town have had already taken and eaten all its sweet fruits. Now, boys and girls weren't playing anymore among his arms, they wouldn't tickle his log when climbing to swing from his branches. The sun was shining, the moon dreaming, and the goat jocote tree was alone with no friends. One day, a bunch of little birds that loved to fly and sing, sat on one of his branches, they realized that he was a beautiful and vigorous tree that protected them from the wind, so, they asked the great Jocote Tree: "Pip Pip Pip, are you a great tree? Pip Pip Pip, can we sing in your lap?" The great tree, while listening to these words crumbled of joy and, shaking his vigorous branches, answered: "Ah... Ah... Be my friends, Ah... Ah..., I'll give you shelter."

And the little birds began fluttering and singing in between the Great Jocote tree's branches. Their singing was so beautiful that some squirrels that were eating an avocado got closer to listen better and jumped onto one of the Great Jocote Tree's branches and asked: "Chic Chic Chic, are you a great Tree? Chic Chic Chic, can we play in your lap?" When the Great Jocote Tree listened to these words, trembled of joy shaking his vigorous branches and answered: "Ah... Ah... Be my friends, Ah... Ah..., I'll give you shelter!"

And the squirrels began jumping from one branch to another. Some ants that were walking one behind the other on a long long line, got close to the Great Jocote Tree and realized it was full of animals playing, and asked the Great Jocote Tree: "Tuli tuli luri, are you a Great Tree? Tuli tuli luri, can we play on your lap?" When the Great Jocote Tree listened to these words, trembled of joy shaking his vigorous branches and answered: "Ah... Ah... Be my friends, Ah... Ah..., I'll give you shelter!"

And the ants climbed, one after the other on a long long line, to the Great Jocote Tree. And suddenly *fff...* the wind strongly blew and his branches waved from side to side. *fff...* but the Great Jocote Tree was huge and vigorous, he nested and protected all of his friends, the animals. The birds, the squirrels, the ants, and the Great Jocote Tree continued playing and singing until the sun began to hide. It is time to go back home. The ants waved goodbye saying: "The time to rest has come. Tomorrow we will meet and we will play again."

And so, the ants, one behind the other on a long long line, got back home. The squirrels waved goodbye saying: "The time to rest has come. Tomorrow we will meet and together we will play." And the squirrels jumping happily, got back home. The birds wave goodbye singing: "The time to rest has come. Tomorrow we will meet and together we will play." And the birds, flying, got back home. The Great Jocote Tree is not alone anymore, now he has a lot of friends. The moon comes up, the time to sleep has come, the moon guides our dreams and the nightly rest. The sun wakes up the day and the playtime of the sun and his friends.



The story comes from the Escuela Caracol Waldorf School, San Marcos La Laguna, Guatemala.

The name of the Escuela Caracol Waldorf School, which translates as 'the snail's shell', gives us a clue to the vision behind this school located in the village of San Marcos La Laguna, and the close relationship of this school to Maya culture: spiral forms symbolize the connections between life's manifold facets, and life as a whole. Around 120 children from Maya families and from families who have emigrated from the USA learn three languages: Kaqchikel, the Maya language, Spanish and English. The Escuela Caracol became the first ever school in the modern period to teach in Kaqchikel, and now state schools have followed its example. The majority of the parents from indigenous families have very low incomes and thus the tuition fees are hardly enough for the necessities of every day school life.

For the Escuela Caracol in Guatemala the Friends of Waldorf Education arrange educational sponsorships to enable the school to accept children whose parents can only afford part of the school fees that are actually necessary.

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www.waldorf-one-world.org