



Garbed in colorful feathered costumes, Mexican natives start their long spiral to the ground. They'll make birdlike noises on the way down.



Below the highfliers, villagers gape at their audacious neighbors during observance of the flying pole dance. Fliers are called "Voladores."

Photos: Pickow from Three Lions

HIGH FLIERS



Bizarre costumes show birdlike features. These men learn the ritual from childhood.

THE DANCE of the flying pole is a strange, centuries-old festival celebrated by Indian tribes in remote Mexican villages. Six villagers, clad in feathered costumes, climb to the top of a tall tree trunk, fasten ropes around their waists, and leap into space with a shriek. As they spin slowly earthward, the "Voladores" play birdlike tunes on fifes and accompany their glide with drum beats.

Frequent mishaps have caused the annual rite to be banned in many villages, but high in the Mexican hills it goes on much as it has for hundreds of years.