

# POPOL VUH



## The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life

REVISED EDITION

Translated by

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with commentary based on the  
ancient knowledge of the modern Quiché Maya

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE ANCIENT WORD, here in this place called Quiché. Here we shall inscribe, we shall implant the Ancient Word, the potential and source for everything done in the citadel of Quiché, in the nation of Quiché people.

And here we shall take up the demonstration, revelation, and account of how things were put in shadow and brought to light by

the Maker, Modeler,  
named Bearer, Begetter,  
Hunahpu Possum, Hunahpu Coyote,  
Great White Peccary, Coati,  
Sovereign Plumed Serpent,  
Heart of the Lake, Heart of the Sea,  
plate shaper, bowl shaper, as they are called,  
also named, also described as  
the midwife, matchmaker  
named Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,  
defender, protector,  
twice a midwife, twice a matchmaker,

as is said in the words of Quiché. They accounted for everything—and did it, too—as enlightened beings, in enlightened words. We shall write about this now amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now. We shall bring it out because there is no longer *time*

a place to see it, a Council Book,  
a place to see "The Light That Came from  
Beside the Sea,"  
the account of "Our Place in the Shadows."  
a place to see "The Dawn of Life,"

as it is called. There is the original book and ancient writing, but the one who reads and assesses it has a hidden identity. It takes a long performance and account to complete the lighting of all the sky-earth:

the fourfold siding, fourfold cornering,  
measuring, fourfold staking,  
halving the cord, stretching the cord

in the sky, on the earth,  
the four sides, the four corners, as it is said,  
by the Maker, Modeler,  
mother-father of life, of humankind,  
giver of breath, giver of heart,  
bearer, upbringer in the light that lasts  
of those born in the light, begotten in the light;  
worrier, knower of everything, whatever there is:  
sky-earth, lake-sea.

**T**HIS IS THE ACCOUNT, here it is:

Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still hums, and it is empty under the sky.

Here follow the first words, the first eloquence:

There is not yet one person, one animal, bird, fish, crab, tree, rock, hollow, canyon, meadow, forest. Only the sky alone is there; the face of the earth is not clear. Only the sea alone is pooled under all the sky; there is nothing whatever gathered together. It is at rest; not a single thing stirs. It is held back, kept at rest under the sky.

Whatever there is that might be is simply not there: only the pooled water, only the calm sea, only it alone is pooled.

Whatever might be is simply not there: only murmurs, ripples, in the dark, in the night. Only the Maker, Modeler alone, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, the Bearers, Begetters are in the water, a glittering light. They are there, they are enclosed in quetzal feathers, in blue-green.

Thus the name, "Plumed Serpent." They are great knowers, great thinkers in their very being.

SOVEREIGN PLUMED SERPENT: *Here he is seated, holding a snake in his hand. On his back he wears a quetzal bird, with its head behind his, its wings at the level of his shoulders, and its tail hanging down to the ground. From the Dresden Codex.*



DRAWING BY KARL TAUBE

And of course there is the sky, and there is also the Heart of Sky. This is the name of the god, as it is spoken.

And then came his word, he came here to the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, here in the blackness, in the early dawn. He spoke with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, and they talked, then they thought, then they worried. They agreed with each other, they joined their words, their thoughts. Then it was clear, then they reached accord in the light, and then humanity was clear, when they conceived the growth, the generation of trees, of bushes, and the growth of life, of humankind, in the blackness, in the early dawn, all because of the Heart of Sky, named Hurricane. Thunderbolt Hurricane comes first, the second is Newborn Thunderbolt, and the third is Sudden Thunderbolt.

So there were three of them, as Heart of Sky, who came to the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, when the dawn of life was conceived:

"How should the sowing be, and the dawning? Who is to be the provider, nurturer?"

"Let it be this way, think about it: this water should be removed, emptied out for the formation of the earth's own plate and platform, then should come the sowing, the dawning of the sky-earth. But there will be no high days and no bright praise for our work, our design, until the rise of the human work, the human design," they said.

And then the earth arose because of them, it was simply their word that brought it forth. For the forming of the earth they said "Earth." It arose suddenly, just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming, unfolding.



THE HEART OF SKY, NAMED HURRICANE: *Here he peers out from among swirls of smoke and flame (or clouds and lightning) that come from the obsidian mirror on his own forehead. From a Late Classic vase from the lowlands.*

DRAWING BY KARL TAUBE

THUNDERBOLT: A lowland Maya Chak or Thunderbolt god, holding a lightning-striking axe in his left hand and a representation of the sound of thunder in his right. From the Dresden Codex.



DRAWING BY CARLOS A. VILLACORTA

Then the mountains were separated from the water, all at once the great mountains came forth. By their genius alone, by their cutting edge alone they carried out the conception of the mountain-plain, whose face grew instant groves of cypress and pine.

And the Plumed Serpent was pleased with this:

"It was good that you came, Heart of Sky, Hurricane, and Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt. Our work, our design will turn out well," they said.

And the earth was formed first, the mountain-plain. The channels of water were separated; their branches wound their ways among the mountains. The waters were divided when the great mountains appeared.

Such was the formation of the earth when it was brought forth by the Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth, as they are called, since they were the first to think of it. The sky was set apart, and the earth was set apart in the midst of the waters.

Such was their plan when they thought, when they worried about the completion of their work.

NOW THEY PLANNED THE ANIMALS OF THE MOUNTAINS, all the guardians of the forests, creatures of the mountains: the deer, birds, pumas, jaguars, serpents, rattlesnakes, fer-de-lances, guardians of the bushes.

A Bearer, Begetter speaks:

"Why this pointless humming? Why should there merely be rustling beneath the trees and bushes?"

"Indeed—they had better have guardians," the others replied. As soon as they thought it and said it, deer and birds came forth.

And then they gave out homes to the deer and birds:

"You, the deer: sleep along the rivers, in the canyons. Be here in the meadows, in the thickets, in the forests, multiply yourselves. You will stand and walk on all fours," they were told.

So then they established the nests of the birds, small and great:

"You, precious birds: your nests, your houses are in the trees, in the bushes. Multiply there, scatter there, in the branches of trees, the branches of bushes," the deer and birds were told.

When this deed had been done, all of them had received a place to sleep and a place to stay. So it is that the nests of the animals are on the earth, given by the Bearer, Begetter. Now the arrangement of the deer and birds was complete.

AND THEN THE DEER AND BIRDS WERE TOLD by the Maker, Modeler, Bearer, Begetter:

"Talk, speak out. Don't moan, don't cry out. Please talk, each to each, within each kind, within each group," they were told—the deer, birds, puma, jaguar, serpent.

"Name now our names, praise us. We are your mother, we are your father. Speak now:

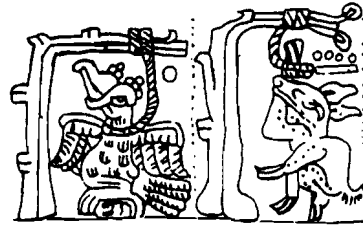
'Hurricane,  
Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt,  
Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth,  
Maker, Modeler,  
Bearer, Begetter,'

✓  
speak, pray to us, keep our days," they were told. But it didn't turn out that they spoke like people: they just squawked, they just chattered, they just howled. It wasn't apparent what language they spoke; each one gave a different cry. When the Maker, Modeler heard this:

"It hasn't turned out well, they haven't spoken," they said among themselves. "It hasn't turned out that our names have been named. Since we are their mason and sculptor, this will not do," the Bearers and Begetters said among themselves. So they told them:

"You will simply have to be transformed. Since it hasn't turned out well and you haven't spoken, we have changed our word:

JUST LET YOUR FLESH BE  
EATEN: A turkey (left) and  
deer (right) caught in  
bent-tree snares. From the  
Madrid Codex.



DRAWING BY CARLOS A. VILLACORTA

"What you feed on, what you eat, the places where you sleep, the places where you stay, whatever is yours will remain in the canyons, the forests. Although it turned out that our days were not kept, nor did you pray to us, there may yet be strength in the keeper of days, the giver of praise whom we have yet to make. Just accept your service, just let your flesh be eaten.

"So be it, this must be your service," they were told when they were instructed—the animals, small and great, on the face of the earth.

And then they wanted to test their timing again, they wanted to experiment again, and they wanted to prepare for the keeping of days again. They had not heard their speech among the animals; it did not come to fruition and it was not complete.

And so their flesh was brought low: they served, they were eaten, they were killed—the animals on the face of the earth.

**A**GAIN THERE COMES AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE HUMAN WORK, the human design, by the Maker, Modeler, Bearer, Begetter:

"It must simply be tried again. The time for the planting and dawning is nearing. For this we must make a provider and nurturer. How else can we be invoked and remembered on the face of the earth? We have already made our first try at our work and design, but it turned out that they didn't keep our days, nor did they glorify us.

"So now let's try to make a giver of praise, giver of respect, provider, nurturer," they said.

So then comes the building and working with earth and mud. They made a body, but it didn't look good to them. It was just separating, just crumbling, just loosening, just softening, just disintegrating, and just dissolving. Its head wouldn't turn, either. Its face was just lopsided, its

face was just twisted. It couldn't look around. It talked at first, but senselessly. It was quickly dissolving in the water.

"It won't last," the mason and sculptor said then. "It seems to be dwindling away, so let it just dwindle. It can't walk and it can't multiply, so let it be merely a thought," they said.

So then they dismantled, again they brought down their work and design. Again they talked:

"What is there for us to make that would turn out well, that would succeed in keeping our days and praying to us?" they said. Then they planned again:

"We'll just tell Xpiyacoc, Xmucane, Hunahpu Possum, Hunahpu Coyote, to try a counting of days, a counting of lots," the mason and sculptor said to themselves. Then they invoked Xpiyacoc, Xmucane.

**T**HEN COMES THE NAMING OF THOSE WHO ARE THE MIDMOST SEERS: the "Grandmother of Day, Grandmother of Light," as the Maker, Modeler called them. These are names of Xpiyacoc and Xmucane.

When Hurricane had spoken with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, they invoked the daykeepers, diviners, the midmost seers:

"There is yet to find, yet to discover how we are to model a person, construct a person again, a provider, nurturer, so that we are called upon ✓ and we are recognized: our recompense is in words.

Midwife, matchmaker,  
our grandmother, our grandfather,  
Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,  
let there be planting, let there be the dawning  
of our invocation, our sustenance, our recognition  
by the human work, the human design,  
the human figure, the human form.  
So be it, fulfill your names:  
Hunahpu Possum, Hunahpu Coyote,  
Bearer twice over, Begetter twice over,  
Great Peccary, Great Coati,  
lapidary, jeweler,  
sawyer, carpenter,  
plate shaper, bowl shaper,  
incense maker, master craftsman,  
Grandmother of Day, Grandmother of Light.

You have been called upon because of our work, our design. Run your hands over the kernels of corn, over the seeds of the coral tree, just get it done, just let it come out whether we should carve and gouge a mouth, a face in wood," they told the daykeepers.

And then comes the borrowing, the counting of days; the hand is moved over the corn kernels, over the coral seeds, the days, the lots.

Then they spoke to them, one of them a grandmother, the other a grandfather.

This is the grandfather, this is the master of the coral seeds: Xpiyacoc is his name.

And this is the grandmother, the daykeeper, diviner who stands behind others: Xmucane is her name.

And they said, as they set out the days:

"Just let it be found, just let it be discovered,  
say it, our ear is listening,  
may you talk, may you speak,  
just find the wood for the carving and sculpting  
by the builder, sculptor.  
Is this to be the provider, the nurturer  
when it comes to the planting, the dawning?  
You corn kernels, you coral seeds,  
you days, you lots:  
may you succeed, may you be accurate,"

they said to the corn kernels, coral seeds, days, lots. "Have shame, you up there, Heart of Sky: attempt no deception before the mouth and face of Sovereign Plumed Serpent," they said. Then they spoke straight to the point:

"It is well that there be your manikins, woodcarvings, talking, speaking, there on the face of the earth."

"So be it," they replied. The moment they spoke it was done: the manikins, woodcarvings, human in looks and human in speech.

This was the peopling of the face of the earth:

They came into being, they multiplied, they had daughters, they had sons, these manikins, woodcarvings. But there was nothing in their hearts and nothing in their minds, no memory of their mason and builder. They just went and walked wherever they wanted. Now they did not remember the Heart of Sky.

And so they fell, just an experiment and just a cutout for humankind. They were talking at first but their faces were dry. They were not yet

developed in the legs and arms. They had no blood, no lymph. They had no sweat, no fat. Their complexions were dry, their faces were crusty. They flailed their legs and arms, their bodies were deformed.

And so they accomplished nothing before the Maker, Modeler who gave them birth, gave them heart. They became the first numerous people here on the face of the earth.

AGAIN THERE COMES A HUMILIATION, destruction, and demolition. The manikins, woodcarvings were killed when the Heart of Sky devised a flood for them. A great flood was made; it came down on the heads of the manikins, woodcarvings.

The man's body was carved from the wood of the coral tree by the Maker, Modeler. And as for the woman, the Maker, Modeler needed the hearts of bulrushes for the woman's body. They were not competent, nor did they speak before the builder and sculptor who made them and brought them forth, and so they were killed, done in by a flood:

There came a rain of resin from the sky.

There came the one named Gouger of Faces: he gouged out their eyeballs.

There came Sudden Bloodletter: he snapped off their heads.

There came Crunching Jaguar: he ate their flesh.

There came Tearing Jaguar: he tore them open.

HE GOUGED OUT THEIR EYEBALLS: A human eye in the beak of a king vulture, still attached by the optic nerve. From the Madrid Codex.



DRAWING BY CARLOS A. VILLACORTA

They were pounded down to the bones and tendons, smashed and pulverized even to the bones. Their faces were smashed because they were incompetent before their mother and their father, the Heart of Sky, named Hurricane. The earth was blackened because of this; the black rainstorm began, rain all day and rain all night. Into their houses came the animals, small and great. Their faces were crushed by things of wood and stone. Everything spoke: their water jars, their tortilla griddles, their plates, their cooking pots, their dogs, their grinding stones, each and every thing crushed their faces. Their dogs and turkeys told them:

"You caused us pain, you ate us, but now it is *you* whom *we* shall eat." And this is the grinding stone:

"We were undone because of you.

Every day, every day,  
in the dark, in the dawn, forever,  
r-r-rip, r-r-rip,  
r-r-rub, r-r-rub,  
right in our faces, because of you.

This was the service we gave you at first, when you were still people, but today you will learn of our power. We shall pound and we shall grind your flesh," their grinding stones told them.

And this is what their dogs said, when they spoke in their turn:

"Why is it you can't seem to give us our food? We just watch and you just keep us down, and you throw us around. You keep a stick ready when you eat, just so you can hit us. We don't talk, so we've received nothing from you. How could you not have known? You *did* know that we were wasting away there, behind you.

"So, this very day you will taste the teeth in our mouths. We shall eat you," their dogs told them, and their faces were crushed.

And then their tortilla griddles and cooking pots spoke to them in turn:

"Pain! That's all you've done for us. Our mouths are sooty, our faces are sooty. By setting us on the fire all the time, you burn us. Since *we* felt no pain, *you* try it. We shall burn you," all their cooking pots said, crushing their faces.

The stones, their hearthstones were shooting out, coming right out of the fire, going for their heads, causing them pain. Now they run for it, helter-skelter.

They want to climb up on the houses, but they fall as the houses collapse.

They want to climb the trees; they're thrown off by the trees.



THEIR HEARTHSTONES WERE SHOOTING OUT: According to Classic Maya inscriptions, three hearthstones entered the sky and formed a new constellation at the end of the world that preceded the present one. The glyph at left (from a stele at Quiriguá) reads yax ox tunal, "new three-stone place," and repeats the sign for "stone" (tun) three times; the glyph at right (from a stele at Toniná) adds signs for smoke and flames to the stones.

DRAWING BY KARL TAUBE

They want to get inside caves, but the caves slam shut in their faces.

Such was the scattering of the human work, the human design. The people were ground down, overthrown. The mouths and faces of all of them were destroyed and crushed. And it used to be said that the monkeys in the forests today are a sign of this. They were left as a sign because wood alone was used for their flesh by the builder and sculptor.

So this is why monkeys look like people: they are a sign of a previous human work, human design—mere manikins, mere woodcarvings.

THIS WAS WHEN THERE WAS JUST A TRACE OF EARLY DAWN on the face of the earth, there was no sun. But there was one who magnified himself; Seven Macaw is his name. The sky-earth was already there, but the face of the sun-moon was clouded over. Even so, it is said that his light provided a sign for the people who were flooded. He was like a person of genius in his being.

"I am great. My place is now higher than that of the human work, the human design. I am their sun and I am their light, and I am also their months.

"So be it: my light is great. I am the walkway and I am the foothold of the people, because my eyes are of metal. My teeth just glitter with jewels, and turquoise as well; they stand out blue with stones like the face of the sky.

"And this nose of mine shines white into the distance like the moon.

Since my nest is metal, it lights up the face of the earth. When I come forth before my nest, I am like the sun and moon for those who are born in the light, begotten in the light. It must be so, because my face reaches into the distance," says Seven Macaw.

It is not true that he is the sun, this Seven Macaw, yet he magnifies himself, his wings, his metal. But the scope of his face lies right around his own perch; his face does not reach everywhere beneath the sky. The faces of the sun, moon, and stars are not yet visible, it has not yet dawned.

And so Seven Macaw puffs himself up as the days and the months, though the light of the sun and moon has not yet clarified. He only wished for surpassing greatness. This was when the flood was worked upon the manikins, woodcarvings.

And now we shall explain how Seven Macaw died, when the people were vanquished, done in by the mason and sculptor.

# PART TWO .. and Part Three



... and big huge  
long "quest" story  
of quibbling  
gods.....

# PART FOUR



AND HERE IS THE BEGINNING OF THE CONCEPTION OF HUMANS, and of the search for the ingredients of the human body. So they spoke, the Bearer, Begetter, the Makers, Modelers named Sovereign Plumed Serpent:

"The dawn has approached, preparations have been made, and morning has come for the provider, nurturer, born in the light, begotten in the light. Morning has come for humankind, for the people of the face of the earth," they said. It all came together as they went on thinking in the darkness, in the night, as they searched and they sifted, they thought and they wondered.

And here their thoughts came out in clear light. They sought and discovered what was needed for human flesh. It was only a short while before the sun, moon, and stars were to appear above the Makers and Modelers. Split Place, Bitter Water Place is the name: the yellow corn, white corn came from there.

And these are the names of the animals who brought the food: fox, coyote, parrot, crow. There were four animals who brought the news of the ears of yellow corn and white corn. They were coming from over there at Split Place, they showed the way to the split.

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## THE YELLOW CORN AND WHITE CORN WERE GROUND:

*This woman is rubbing a  
hand stone ("mano") over a  
grinding stone ("metate") that  
has stone feet. From a Late  
Classic Maya bowl.*



DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR



And this was when they found the staple foods.

And these were the ingredients for the flesh of the human work, the human design, and the water was for the blood. It became human blood, and corn was also used by the Bearer, Begetter.

And so they were happy over the provisions of the good mountain, filled with sweet things, thick with yellow corn, white corn, and thick with pataxte and cacao, countless zapotes, anonas, jocotes, nances, matasanos, sweets—the rich foods filling up the citadel named Split Place, Bitter Water Place. All the edible fruits were there: small staples, great staples, small plants, great plants. The way was shown by the animals.

And then the yellow corn and white corn were ground, and Xmucane did the grinding nine times. Food was used, along with the water she rinsed her hands with, for the creation of grease; it became human fat when it was worked by the Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, as they are called.

After that, they put it into words:

the making, the modeling of our first mother-father,  
with yellow corn, white corn alone for the flesh,  
food alone for the human legs and arms,  
for our first fathers, the four human works.

It was staples alone that made up their flesh.

**T**HESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO WERE MADE AND MODELED.

This is the first person: Jaguar Quitze.

And now the second: Jaguar Night.

And now the third: Not Right Now.

And the fourth: Dark Jaguar.

And these are the names of our first mother-fathers. They were simply made and modeled, it is said; they had no mother and no father. We have named the men by themselves. No woman gave birth to them, nor were they begotten by the builder, sculptor, Bearer, Begetter. By sacrifice alone, by genius alone they were made, they were modeled by the Maker, Modeler, Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent. And when they came to fruition, they came out human:

They talked and they made words.

They looked and they listened.

They walked, they worked.

They were good people, handsome, with looks of the male kind. Thoughts came into existence and they gazed; their vision came all at once. Perfectly they saw, perfectly they knew everything under the sky, whenever they looked. The moment they turned around and looked around in the sky, on the earth, everything was seen without any obstruction. They didn't have to walk around before they could see what was under the sky; they just stayed where they were.

As they looked, their knowledge became intense. Their sight passed through trees, through rocks, through lakes, through seas, through mountains, through plains. Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar were truly gifted people.

And then they were asked by the builder and mason:

"What do you know about your being? Don't you look, don't you listen? Isn't your speech good, and your walk? So you must look, to see out under the sky. Don't you see the mountain-plain clearly? So try it," they were told.

And then they saw everything under the sky perfectly. After that, they thanked the Maker, Modeler:

"Truly now,  
double thanks, triple thanks  
that we've been formed, we've been given  
our mouths, our faces,  
we speak, we listen,  
we wonder, we move,  
our knowledge is good, we've understood  
what is far and near,  
and we've seen what is great and small  
under the sky, on the earth.  
Thanks to you we've been formed,  
we've come to be made and modeled,  
our grandmother, our grandfather,"

they said when they gave thanks for having been made and modeled. They understood everything perfectly, they sighted the four sides, the four corners in the sky, on the earth, and this didn't sound good to the builder and sculptor:

"What our works and designs have said is no good:

'We have understood everything, great and small,' they say." And so the Bearer, Begetter took back their knowledge:

"What should we do with them now? Their vision should at least reach nearby, they should see at least a small part of the face of the earth, but what they're saying isn't good. Aren't they merely 'works' and 'designs' in their very names? Yet they'll become as great as gods, unless they procreate, proliferate at the sowing, the dawning, unless they increase."

"Let it be this way: now we'll take them apart just a little, that's what we need. What we've found out isn't good. Their deeds would become equal to ours, just because their knowledge reaches so far. They see everything," so said

the Heart of Sky, Hurricane,  
Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt,  
Sovereign Plumed Serpent,  
Bearer, Begetter,  
Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,  
Maker, Modeler,

as they are called. And when they changed the nature of their works, their designs, it was enough that the eyes be marred by the Heart of Sky. They were blinded as the face of a mirror is breathed upon. Their vision flickered. Now it was only from close up that they could see what was there with any clarity.

And such was the loss of the means of understanding, along with the means of knowing everything, by the four humans. The root was implanted.

And such was the making, modeling of our first grandfather, our father, by the Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth.

**A**ND THEN THEIR WIVES AND WOMEN CAME INTO BEING. Again, the same gods thought of it. It was as if they were asleep when they received them, truly beautiful women were there with Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar. With their women there they really came alive. Right away they were happy at heart again, because of their wives.

Red Sea Turtle is the name of the wife of Jaguar Quitze.

Prawn House is the name of the wife of Jaguar Night.

Water Hummingbird is the name of the wife of Not Right Now.

Macaw House is the name of the wife of Dark Jaguar.

So these are the names of their wives, who became ladies of rank, giving birth to the people of the tribes, small and great.

**A**ND THIS IS OUR ROOT, WE WHO ARE THE QUICHÉ PEOPLE. And there came to be a crowd of penitents and sacrificers. It wasn't only four who came into being then, but there were four mothers for us, the Quiché people. There were different names for each of the peoples when they multiplied, there in the east. Their names became numerous: Sovereign Oloman, Cohah, Quenech Ahau, as the names of the people who were there in the east are spoken. They multiplied, and it is known that the Tams and Ilocs began then. They came from the same place, there in the east.

Jaguar Quitze was the grandfather and father of the nine great houses of the Cauecs.

Jaguar Night was the grandfather and father of the nine great houses of the Greathouses.

Not Right Now was the grandfather and father of the four great houses of the Lord Quichés.

There were three separate lineages. The names of the grandfathers and fathers are not forgotten. These multiplied and flowered there in the east, but the Tams and Ilocs also came forth, along with thirteen allied tribes, thirteen principalities, including:

The Rabinals, Cakchiquels, those of Bird House.

And the White Cornmeals.

And also the Lamacs, Serpents, Sweatbath House, Talk House, those of Star House.

And those of Quiba House, those of Yokes House, Acul people, Jaguar House, Guardians of the Spoils, Jaguar Ropes.

It is sufficient that we speak only of the largest tribes from among the allied tribes; we have only noted the largest. Many more came out afterward, each one a division of that citadel. We haven't written their names, but they multiplied there, from out of the east. There came to be many peoples in the blackness; they began to abound even before the birth of the sun and the light. When they began to abound they were all there together; they stood and walked in crowds, there in the east.

There was nothing they could offer for sustenance, but even so they lifted their faces to the sky. They didn't know where they were going. They did this for a long time, when they were there in the grasslands:

black people, white people, people of many faces, people of many languages, uncertain, there at the edge of the sky.

And there were mountain people. They didn't show their faces, they had no homes. They just traveled the mountains, small and great. "It's as if they were crazy," they used to say. They derided the mountain people, it was said. There they watched for the sunrise, and for all the mountain people there was just one language. They did not yet pray to the tree-stone.

These are the words with which they remembered the Maker, Modeler, Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth. It was said that these were enough to keep them mindful of what was in shadow and what was dawning. All they did was ask; they had reverent words. They were reverent, they were givers of praise, givers of respect, lifting their faces to the sky when they made requests for their daughters and sons:

"Wait!  
thou Maker, thou Modeler,  
look at us, listen to us,  
don't let us fall, don't leave us aside,  
thou god in the sky, on the earth,  
Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth,  
give us our sign, our word,  
as long as there is day, as long as there is light.  
When it comes to the sowing, the dawning,  
will it be a greening road, a greening path?  
Give us a steady light, a level place,  
a good light, a good place,  
a good life and beginning.  
Give us all of this, thou Hurricane,  
Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt,  
Newborn Nanahuac, Sudden Nanahuac,  
Falcon, Hunahpu,  
Sovereign Plumed Serpent,  
Bearer, Begetter,  
Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,  
Grandmother of Day, Grandmother of Light,  
when it comes to the sowing, the dawning,"

they said when they made their fasts and prayers, just watching intently for the dawn. There, too, they looked toward the east, watching closely for the sun carrier, the great star at the birth of the sun, of the heat for

THEY DID NOT YET PRAY TO THE  
TREE-STONE: A wooden stele  
commemorating a new year. The  
cluster of branches and leaves at the  
top is the glyph for te' or "tree," while  
the glyph at the foot of the stele is for  
tun or "stone." The snake (kan) near  
the top is a pun on "sky" (kan); the  
inscription on the strip of paper  
hanging from the stele is represented  
only by footprints that signify the  
passage of time, following the reading  
order of a column of glyphs. From the  
Dresden Codex.



DRAWING BY KARL TAUBE

what is under the sky, on the earth, the guide for the human work, the human design.

They spoke, those who are Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar:

"We're still waiting for the dawning," they said, these great knowers, great thinkers, penitents, praisers, as they are called. And there was no tree-stone in the keeping of our first mother-fathers, and they were weary at heart there, waiting for the sun. Already there were many of them, all the tribes, including the Mexican people, all penitents and sacrificers.

"Let's just go. We'll look and see whether there is something to keep as our sign. We'll find out what we should burn in front of it. The way we are right now, we have nothing to keep as our own," said Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar. They got word of a citadel. They went there.

AND THIS IS THE NAME OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE THEY WENT, Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, Dark Jaguar, and the Tams and Ilocs: Tulan Zuyua, Seven Caves, Seven Canyons is the name of the citadel. Those who were to receive the gods arrived there.