

Skirted," also known as Tonantzin, "Our Mother"), is depicted in iconography as hideous. The Aztecs propitiated him with human sacrifices, usually enemies captured in war. There is a temple dedicated to him at the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlán (lit. "Beside Cactus Rock") which the *Columbia Encyclopedia* extols as "a great architectural achievement of pre-Columbian America." Later Aztecs associated Huitzilopochtli with the Toltec god Quetzalcoatl.

Huitzilopochtli is indirectly associated with rain, since the Aztecs noted that the hummingbird (*huitzilin*) makes its appearance there in the rainy season. But they also had a rain god, Tlaloc, to whom human sacrifices (especially of young children) were performed; his sister (or wife), Coyaxauhque ("Jade-Skirted"), was the goddess of water. Xiuhtecuhtli (the Fire God who was "Lord of Life") was thought to bring the soul into existence. There were many other gods as well, one of which was another sun god, Tonatiuh (lit. "The Sun"), whose face appears in the center of the famous Aztec Stone; surrounding him are four panels representing the four previous "creations" of the world, which were destroyed by jaguars (symbolic of earth and represented by Tezcatlipoca, god of night), wind (represented by Ehécatl, sometimes associated with Quetzalcoatl), fire (represented by Chalchiuhtlicue), and water (represented by Tlaloc, god of rain), in other words one each of the four classical elements. In fact, the Aztecs, like the Mayans, identified gods and goddesses which presided over all aspects of their lives. As in Hinduism, they often appear as couples, "based on the ever-present Mexican principle of duality," as Davies puts it (*op. cit.*, p. 143). The highest of these, the original creator pair residing in a remote heaven called Omeyocan ("Two-Place"), were Omecihuatl ("Two-Lord") and Omecihuatl ("Two-Lady"). Little more than lip-service was given them. A male god whose name suggests a duality was Ometochtli ("Two Rabbit"), god of the sacred intoxicating drink *pulque*, made from the agave fruit; he is also associated with the moon, since Aztecs, like Hindus, perceived the shadows on the full moon to form the shape of a rabbit. Somewhat related to the idea of a life-death duality are Tlazolteotl ("Goddess of Extrusion [or Emission]") who was associated with birth, sexual pleasure, and evacuation, to whom people would make confession at the end of their lives, and Mictlantecuhtli ("Lord of the Place of Death") who ruled the underworld and is depicted as a skeleton.

The Aztec priests believed in both magic and prophesy. Their "sacred book of fate," as Burland terms it (*op. cit.*, p. 50), was the *Teoamoxtli* which