

Toltec

Practices

There is debate as if there was an actual Toltec culture. Most of the information once viewed as historical data come from the surviving Aztec myths. "Toltecs" as described in the Aztec sources were merely one of several Nahuatl-speaking city-states in the postclassic period, and not a particularly influential one at that. One may thus view a "Toltec" to mean simply an inhabitant of Tula during its apogee.¹

Having said that, the mythical view of the Toltec as precursors to the Aztecs who represented a height in civilization has its appeal. The magnitude of the Aztec's reverence and respect is evidenced in the Aztec expression Toltecatoytl or 'to have a Toltec heart' which meant to be worthy and to excel in all things.

According to the Aztec legends the Toltecs believed that upon death the eternal self, the soul, would leave this earth and add itself to many souls. The many souls would remain forever, not in a heaven-like place, but rather as one whole being together.

It was thus believed that not a lot of emphasis was given on the death of an individual.²

Deities and Important Concepts

- Ce Acatl Topiltzin (Our Prince One- Reed Feathered Serpent also known as Quetzalcoatl)
The mythical lord of the Toltecs and their major city Tōllan.

Reigning in peace and prosperity he contributed much to the lifestyle of the Toltecs with basic ideas such as civilization. He was generally considered a god upon earth by his followers with similar powers to those of his namesake. According to legend, the most accepted fate of the god was that he migrated to Tlapallan where he either died or would rest forever.

He dispelled the traditions of the past and ended all human sacrifice during his reign. The translations claim that he loved his people so much he insisted that they only meet the ancient standards of the gods; he had the Toltec offer them snakes, birds and other animals, but not humans, as sacrifices.

- Tolteca and Toltecness
These words used by the Nahuatl (Aztecs) and reflect their respect for the Toltecs who were viewed as their intellectual and cultural predecessors.
"Tolteca" was synonymous with artist, artisan or wise man, and "toltecatoytl." "Toltecness" meant art, culture and civilization.

Modern Adaptations

- Speak of how the person displayed Toltecatoytl – a Toltec heart that excels in all things. Speak of the specific deeds that the deceased excelled in. Works in art, culture and civilization (such as civil service) are especially appropriate.
- Call on Ce Acatl Topiltzin and his love for his people and dedicate the deceased to him.
- Speak of how the deceased wisdom will merge with the ancestors. How they will become one in the great soul that reminds us of all those who have gone before us.

Sample Readings

The only text dealing with the Toltecs are the myths of the Aztecs.

¹ "Toltec." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Apr. 2014. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toltec>

² "Toltec Religious Beliefs – Toltec Civilization." N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <https://www.sites.google.com/site/tolteccivilization/religious-beliefs>

Resources

- Toltec (Wikipedia)
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toltec>
- Ancient History Encyclopedia : Toltec Civilization
http://www.ancient.eu.com/Toltec_Civilization/