

PACHACUTI AND THE BIRTH OF EMPIRE

We have seen how the Chanca culture inserted itself within the thread of the Wari, although as a culture of minor import in relation to the first. The Chanca's far superior force that now threatened the unfolding of a new spiritual impulse that wanted to enter the Inca nation through the person of Pachacuti. The following narrative, concerning the Inca emperor—originally called Cusi Yupanqui or Inca Yupanqui before his spiritual experience—is taken from the chronicle of Juan Betanzos.⁽⁵⁾

Concerning the character and virtues of Inca Yupanque and how he isolated himself from his companions, went into prayer, and, according to what the authors say, had a revelation from heaven; how he was aided, went into battle with Uscovilca, captured and killed him, along with other events that took place.

As a young man, Inca Yupanque was virtuous and affable in his conversation. He spoke little for such a young man, and he did not laugh in an exaggerated way but, rather, with discretion. He was fond of helping the weak. He was a chaste young man who was never heard to have been with a woman nor did those of his times ever find him telling lies or not keeping his word. He had these qualities of a virtuous and valiant lord, though still a young man, and he was very courageous. As his father thought over the character of his son Inca Yupanque, he was filled with envy and detested him. His father wished that his eldest son, named Inca Urco, had Inca Yupanque's character. Since his father saw Inca Yupanque's strength of character, he did not allow Inca Yupanque to come before him nor did he give anyone any hint that he loved Inca Yupanque. Since his father noticed that Inca Yupanque had so many good qualities, he feared that after his days the lords of Cuzco and the rest of the community would take him for their lord and that even if he left the title of lord to Inca Urco, these lords would take it away from him on seeing that Inca Urco was rather simpleminded and lacked the capacity and character of Inca Yupanque, whom everyone loved very much, as you have heard. After his days, their father wanted to leave his title to Inca Urco. Therefore, Wirakocha Inca made the lords of Cuzco and the rest of the people treat Inca Urco with the same deference and respect accorded to himself. Thus Wiracocha Inca had the lords of Cuzco

serve Inca Urco with the royal insignias used for him personally. No one was allowed to appear before him with shoes on, no matter how important a lord he might be, not even his brothers; rather, they came barefooted with their heads bowed all the time they were speaking before him or bringing him a message. He always ate alone, without anyone daring to touch the food he was eating. Lords carried him in a litter on their shoulders. If he went out to the square, he sat on a golden seat under a parasol made of ostrich feathers dyed red. He drank from golden tumblers, and all the other service dishes of his household were of gold. He had a great many women. Inca Yupanque had no part of any of this because, as you have heard, he was detested by his father, who loved Inca Urco. When Wirakocha Inca saw that Inca Yupanque had remained in the city of Cuzco, it pleased him. He thought Inca Yupanque would end his days there. When Inca Yupanque sent for the help about which you have already heard, Wirakocha Inca refused to come to his aid.

Inca Yupanque left his companions the night already mentioned to you [the night preceding the Chanca attack]; in this account they say that he went to a place where none of his followers could see him, a distance of about two shots with a sling from the city of Cuzco. There he started praying to the creator of all things whom they call Wirakocha Pachayachachic. Inca Yupanque was saying a prayer in the following words: “Lord God who created me and gave me the form of a man, come to my aid in this difficulty in which I find myself. You are my father who created me and gave me the form of a man. Do not allow me to be killed by my enemies. Give me help against them. Do not allow them to make me their subject. You made me free and your subject only. Do not allow me to be a subject of these people who want to subdue me this way and put me in bondage. Lord, give me the strength to resist them. Make of me whatever you will, for I am yours.” When Inca Yupanque was saying this prayer, he was crying with all his heart. And still praying, he fell asleep, overcome by fatigue. As he was sleeping, Wirakocha came to him in the form of a man and spoke to him: “My son, do not be distressed. The day that you go into battle with your enemies, I will send soldiers to you with whom you will defeat your enemies, and you will enjoy victory.”

When Inca Yupanque remembered this happy dream, he took heart, returned to his followers, and told them to be happy, as he was. They should not be afraid, for they would not be defeated by their enemies. He would have soldiers in the time of need, but he refused to say more about what, how, or where, although they asked him. From then on, every night Inca Yupanque would go away from his companions to the place where he had

said his prayer, where he always said it exactly as he had the first time, but not so that he would have the same dream as the first night.

However, the last night while he was praying, Wirakocha came to him in the form of a man, and while Inca Yupanque was awake, said to him: "My son, tomorrow your enemies will come to do battle. I will come to your aid with soldiers so that you will defeat your enemies and enjoy victory." And they say that the next morning Uscovilca was coming with his soldiers down through Carmenga, which is a hill on the side of town toward the city of Los Reyes. As Uscovilca was coming down with all his forces and soldiers, there appeared twenty squadrons of soldiers never seen or known to Inca Yupanque or his followers. These soldiers appeared on the Collasuyo quarter, on the road to Accha, and on the Condesuyo road. As these soldiers came up to him, Inca Yupanque and his companions were watching their enemies descend toward them. As the enemies approached, those who came to Inca Yupanque's aid surrounded him saying: "Let us go, our only king, and we will defeat your enemies, whom you will take prisoner today." And so they went up to Uscovilca's soldiers who, full of fury, were coming down the hills. As they met, they unleashed their battle, fighting from morning, which was when they started, until noon. The battle turned out in such a way that large numbers of Uscovilca's soldiers died and not one entered into combat without dying. In that battle Uscovilca was taken prisoner and killed. When his followers saw him dead and saw the great slaughter that was being made of them, they agreed not to wait any longer. Returning by the road on which they had come, they fled until they reached the town of Jaquijahuana, where they stopped to rest and recover.

Having escaped this defeat, some of Uscovilca's captains sent this news right away to their land asking for aid. They also sent the news to the captains Malma and Rapa, who had gone on a campaign of conquest across the province of Condesuyo up to the province of the Chichas, as you have already been told in this account. These captains were already returning as victors, triumphant over the provinces that they had conquered. They came with great wealth, bringing their spoils. At this time, the defeated captains who were conferring together in Jaquijahuana sent their messengers to the other two captains, whom Uscovilca had also sent from the town of Paucaray to discover and conquer whatever provinces and towns they could find. These captains had gone across the province of the Andes and had conquered up to the land of the Chiriguana, which is more than two hundred leagues to where they reached back to Paucaray. As these captains Yanavilca and Tecillovilca were returning as victors with great spoils, the messengers met them. When they found out about the death of Uscovilca,

how he had been defeated and the way it was done, they all made their way as fast as they could to join the captains who had escaped from Uscovilca's defeat to confer at Jaquijahuana, as you have already heard. We will now leave them all together and speak again about Inca Yupanque, who was victorious.

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There is a consistent pattern in the chronicles. Those chroniclers that devote most of their attention to Wirakocha Inca also attribute to him the resistance offered against the Chancas: Bernabe Cobo and Garcilaso de la Vega. Cobo explains that the invasion happened soon after Wirakocha Inca's vision. However, Maria Rowstorowski claims that twelve chroniclers attribute the defeat of the Chancas to Pachacuti.⁽⁶⁾ Among them are names we have often heard so far: Polo de Ondegardo, Sarmiento de Gamboa, Cieza de Leon, Acosta, Santa Cruz Pachacuti, and Juan Betanzos. This is therefore the version of the facts most often acknowledged by historians. Gamboa and Betanzos indicate that the young prince had reached somewhere between age twenty and twenty-three when the Chancas invaded Cuzco. In fact, this may have been one of many attacks.

The legend of the Chancas is intimately intertwined with Pachacuti's experience in Susurpuquio (close to Cuzco). So let us turn to the individuality of the young Cusi Yupanqui up to the point when he would assume the momentous name of Pachacuti, which means "world change," or "inaugurator of a new age." The young Cusi Yupanqui was the third or fourth son of Wirakocha Inca and his first wife Mama Runta. We saw that Betanzos attributes many virtues to the young Inca. He was affable, chaste, fond of helping the weak, sincere, and courageous. Santa Cruz Pachacuti confirms that he had a special predilection towards the dwarves and hunchbacks and that he offered them a house and special care once he became sovereign. To all appearances we have here to do with a special individuality even before his spiritual conversion. Some of his traits are reminiscent of the folklore attached to Thunupa.

The vision of Susurpuquio had a particular background to it that distinguishes it from Wirakocha Inca's vision at Urcos. It was certainly young Cusi Yupanqui's vision; however, in more than one way it was also a message to the young Inca nation. Cusi Yupanqui had made a desperate stand when few, including himself, had any hope that the Incas could resist the Chanca threat. Although he had called to the Incas and other nations for help, little had been offered. Betanzos explains that Cusi Yupanqui went to

pray in a state similar to despair. “He was crying with all his heart” and fell asleep overcome by fatigue. Let us quote some of the chroniclers in order to approach the nature of the vision and of the being who approached Cusi Yupanqui. Gathering the content of different chronicles, we are told of an anthropomorphic figure with impressive attributes: puma heads projecting from his torso, serpents twisted about his arms, golden rays about his face. (Polo de Ondegardo, Cobo, Molina, Betanzos) In Betanzos’s version—although after the facts and further in the text—we are told the following: “He took into account that the one he had seen there, whom he called Wirakocha, he saw with great brightness, as they say. And so much so that it seemed to him that the whole day was there before him, and its light, which he saw before him, they say gave him a great fright. And he was never told who it was. As he was planning on building this house [the Temple of the Sun], he judged by the brightness of the one he saw that it must have been the Sun, and on coming near the first word he spoke, ‘Child, fear not’; thus his people called him ‘child of the Sun.’ Taking into account what you have heard, he decided to make this house of the Sun.” Gamboa confirms the epithet “child of the Sun” three times. Nor is Betanzos’s version the only one to describe the traits of this being in the same way. Sarmiento de Gamboa indicates that it was a “personage like the Sun.” Cristobal de Molina attributed this sentence to the being who appears to Pachacuti: “Come my child, fear not. I am the Sun, your Father, and know that you will subjugate many nations.” (author’s translation)⁽⁷⁾ It was from this experience that Pachacuti proceeded to give the Sun the central cult of the empire. Although in Betanzos’s version Pachacuti first describes the being as Wirakocha, a little like Wirakocha Inca had done, when the description is given at length (later in the chapter) and compared with what other chroniclers say, it appears that it is a solar being. This is also abundantly borne out by later history and by the central importance given to the cult of the Sun in the empire founded by Pachacuti.

Who are then the helpers that the Sun being sends to Cusi Yupanqui? Gamboa says that the Chancas suddenly saw a multitude of men coming down from the hill who had been sent by Wirakocha. These miraculous soldiers are called *pururaucas*. The word has the meaning of “hidden bandit” or “hidden archer.” The tradition persisted at the time of the Conquest that the *pururaucas* were rocks found around Cuzco. Thus seven were found in the north quarter (Chinchasuyu), four in the south quarter (Collasuyu), and fifteen to the west (Cuntisuyu).

We can now attempt to reach the deeper meaning of the legend of the Chancas. A spiritual battle was engaged between the heirs of the decadent Fourth Age and the new spiritual impulse partly reinaugurated by Wirakocha Inca. The old emperor had reestablished the connection of the Inca Empire with the deeds of Wirakocha/Thunupa. This is made clear by many little indices. He is the being who appears bearded, accompanied by a tame animal on a leash. The imagery and the geographic placement of Urcos tie the apparition to the being who had supposedly guided the Incas from the Titicaca region to the Sacred Valley and later to Cuzco. This is therefore the being of Thunupa. This is only the first step of the restoration and new evolution of the Andean heritage that had been lost to the Age of the Warriors. After all, the staff deity was still known, albeit in a distorted fashion even among the Wari. It may have been this time of decadence itself that brought forth the confusion between the supreme being, Wirakocha, and its envoy Thunupa. In fact much indicates that Wirakocha Inca partly succumbed to the temptation of identifying himself with the supreme being Wirakocha.

Inca Yupanqui really inaugurated a new age, as the meaning of his adopted name—Pachacuti—indicates. After him the Inca called themselves the men of the Fifth Age. Martin de Murua refers to the Fifth Sun, indicating that this was the Sun whose symbol stood in the Qoricancha—the House of the Sun.⁽⁸⁾

The being that Pachacuti experiences is the very same inspiration that shines behind Wirakocha/Thunupa. It is the solar being “in the form of a man,” the Christ himself. It is this important distinction that prevented Pachacuti from confusing his personal role with the role of the supreme deity. As an initiate the emperor was brother to Thunupa, whom he called Illapa. He was truly a “son of the Sun,” much like the initiate at the time of Christ. In so doing he had reestablished the link between Thunupa and Wirakocha (Great Spirit) and the being of Inti, the Sun God or Christ. This allowed him to keep from identifying with either Sun or Supreme Being. The statues of the emperors that he placed in the Inti-Cancha looked away from the Sun at least until the time of Wayna Capac. Pachacuti himself took in battle the effigy of Illapa, his *huaoqui*, or brother.

The *pururaucas* are a well-known symbol to the people of the Third Age to whom they represent the immortal soul of the dead. This was also known through the mummies, or the lineage *wakas* in form of stones. Pachacuti in his despair had stood hopelessly against the invading Chancas. The solar being had shown to him that in fighting in his name he was

rallying the heritage and the help of the lineage *wakas*, of all the lineages established by Thunupa at the time of the Christ. The *pururaucas*, once they performed their function, reverted into stone. This is the same idea expressed in the legend of the four brothers founding Cuzco. Although at one point their mission comes to an end and they are transformed into stone, they do not stop being present in spirit.

It was the spiritual assurance of the support of all the dead and of the lineage *wakas* that gave Pachacuti the courage needed to fend off the Chanca invasion. It was a final acknowledgment of this fact that his father Wirakocha Inca reputedly gave him the name Pachacuti after bowing to him as a vassal in recognition of his previous lack of appreciation.

Wirakocha Inca had needed to subdue a rebellious nature. This had been possible in the meeting with the Lower Guardian at Urcos—a meeting in which he clearly saw all his failings. Pachacuti Inca had an otherwise more exalted nature than his father. It appears through the chronicles by many telling symptoms. Although aware of his father's deception and attempt to divest him of authority in favor of his other son Urcos, Pachacuti offered his victory against the Chancas to him, since he still was the legal ruler at the time of the events, in spite of the fact that Wirakocha Inca had fled the invading Chancas. Pachacuti's turning to the spiritual world is also the humble gesture of the one who has lost any hope, any of the supports offered by the lower ego. He has to place all trust in his higher self and find it in the figure of the Christ that supports and sustains it. Pachacuti's conversion is an initiation in and through the Christ.

Pachacuti absolved a role in all equal to that of Manco Capac and Thunupa. The spread of the cult of the Sun and the resulting meteoric ascent of the Inca empire lay down the basis of a cultural/spiritual revolution of an unprecedented nature, truly a Fifth Age.