

Ahau Trecena

by **Kenneth Johnson**

This is a day-sign of lordship and leadership, of struggle and heroism. It is a sign of life's eventual triumph through perpetual rebirth. This is the sign of the Hero Twin who was transformed into the sun, the sign of the divine energy perceived as the radiant sun. This is the day sign of all things lordly and complete, including the world of the Ancestors that lies behind us, linking us with times past in an endless revolution of days. In Guatemala, traditionalists who still keep the Calendar often decorate their cemeteries on these days. In so doing, they reinforce their connection with the spirits of their ancestors.

This veneration of the Ancestors is reminiscent of the Days of the Dead, celebrated throughout Mexico, during which villagers lay a path of yellow marigolds leading from the graves of their fathers and grandfathers to their own homes. It is believed that the spirits of the dead will follow this trail of flowers to their old homes. The Aztec name for this day was Flower, and it is possible that, on one level, the "flower" referred to is the yellow marigold (yellow for the sun) which leads the Ancestors back to our own world. There is another shade of meaning as well—the souls of the Ancestors will blossom again as flowers on the great World Tree.

In the metaphorical sense, we may well regard this flower as a symbol of higher consciousness, for the flower has been used to represent enlightenment by many spiritual traditions, including Tantric Hinduism and both Chinese and Western alchemy. To link one's individual consciousness with that of all the Ancestors, to establish a continuum between personal consciousness and the collective unconscious, may well constitute the ancient Mesoamerican definition of enlightenment. Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, taught that flowers were the most appropriate offering to the gods – and in Guatemala, they are still used in all ceremonies. The Aztec poets believed that these flowers were a metaphor for poems and songs—the best offering to the gods was one that consisted of both physical flowers and one's deepest, most poetic prayers or spiritual chants. Indeed, the Aztecs regarded this as the day sign of singers and poets.

In this day sign, we honor the first ancestors, the Hero Twins who conquered death. In

the beginning was the first set of twins. They played handball with such vigor that they attracted the attention of the Underworld Gods. They were commanded to enter the dark realm of Xib'alb'a to play handball with the Lords of Death. But it was a ruse, a trap. The Hero Twins were killed.

The next pair of Hero Twins to be born were skilled hunters with the blowgun who fought with and destroyed a number of dangerous cosmic monsters; the circular mouth on this day-sign glyph is symbolic of the Hero Twins as blowgun hunters.

In time, the younger generation of Hero Twins was likewise commanded to appear before the Lords of Death and play handball, but they survived the deadly trials of the dark world and triumphed to become the sun and moon of a new creation.

As an emblem of the sun, Ahau is also a symbol of wholeness, of completeness. The sun makes four stations in the course of a day; midnight, sunrise, noon, and sunset. Thus it establishes the four directions, the symbolic template of completeness. We can mentally expand this daily cycle to encompass an entire year: winter solstice (south), spring equinox (east), summer solstice (north), and autumnal equinox (west). Beyond that, we can even expand the fourfold metaphor unto the vast reaches of cosmic space: the celestial equator or ecliptic, often perceived as the Road of Life, conjoins the Milky Way, often perceived as the Road of Souls, in two places, thus dividing the heavens into four quarters.

This trecena is the time to express the intention that we remain safe, that our homes be filled with harmony, and that those who have passed before us be remembered and honored. This day brings us especially close to our ancestors; they stand near to us, and whisper in our ears. Because this day sign is symbolically linked with the mythic Hero Twins, its trecena may endow us with courage, valor and heroism. This is a time in which we may express our intention to cultivate wisdom, talent, and physical fortitude.

Whether we consider this day sign and its trecena the symbol of kings, of flowers, of poetry, or the Ancestors, it clearly represents that ecstatic process that connects us to the collective mind and to the cyclic flow of time itself.

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