

# Cosmic Rhythm and the Aztec Twin Temple

IWASAKI Takashi

Before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, the Aztecs had developed a highly elaborate urban civilization in the lake region of the Mexican high plateau, in which successive urban centers flourished, including Teotihuacan (200-750 CE), Tula (900-1150 CE) and the Aztecs' capital, Tenochtitlan (1325-1521 CE). It was not until the 13th century that the Aztecs appeared in the region as one of numerous immigrant groups from the northern part of the region. Within a few centuries, however, the Aztecs grew into the most prominent group and dominated a large part of Mesoamerica.<sup>(1)</sup> At the heart of their capital Tenochtitlan was the *Templo Mayor* ('Great Temple'), in which a number of important religious festivals were held. Four main streets, which extended from the temple toward each of the cardinal directions, divided the city into four districts, and gave it a highly symbolic urban design. David Carrasco, a historian of religion, is one of those who explored the city's symbolic character, and says,

These four guiding highways, which emerge from the central ceremonial precinct, the theater of sacred ritual, act as centripetal and centrifugal guides, magnetizing the sacred and social energies into the center, and diffusing the supernatural and royal powers outward into the kingdom<sup>(2)</sup>.

One of the most important parts of the temple is what is called the *Twin Temple*, composed of the northern altar to the rain god, *Tlaloc*, and the southern one to the Aztec tutelary god, *Huitzilopochtli*. Given results of archaeological investigations of the temple since 1978, various interpretations have been attempted concerning religious character of the Twin Temple. In this essay, I try to clarify the rich symbolism of the 'duality' of the temple by demonstrating analogical relationships among the rhythms of day and night, of maize planting, and of the rise and fall of urban civilizations. To that purpose, I will refer to important studies including Johanna Broda's basic interpretation of the duality of the Twin Temple, Michel Graulich's schema of analogical relationships among various aspects of the cosmos, and Alfredo López Austin's general interpretations of the cosmology of Mesoamerica.

## The Twin Temple and Duality

As a beginning, I would like to provide fundamental information on the Twin Temple and its interpretations as proposed by previous investigators. As for the southern altar, scholars agree that it is a visual representation of critical scenes of a famous myth of *Huitzilopochtli's* birth,<sup>(3)</sup> which appears in the Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia General*. The myth can be summarized as follows: on the sacred mountain *Coatépéc*, covered by sick darkness, *Huitzilopochtli* is born fully armed from an earth goddess, *Coatlicue*. Immediately he starts to fight against his antagonistic sister, *Coyolxauhqui*, and his brothers, *Centzonhuitznahua*, who try to annihilate him. In a cruel battle, *Huitzilopochtli* slaughters them, and wins a final victory.<sup>(4)</sup> Archaeologists have discovered at the foot of stairway of the southern altar the two circular stone sculptures of the dismembered *Coyolxauhqui* and several statues of the *Centzonhuitznahua*. They are thus representing the mythic drama of *Huitzilopochtli's* birth. Numerous scholars have interpreted the myth as the expression of a cosmic battle between the sun, which symbolizes brightness, and the planets, a force of darkness.<sup>(5)</sup> I will not discuss here the uniqueness of the myth in Mesoamerican religious traditions, or its relationship to the Aztecs' historical experience.<sup>(6)</sup> Nonetheless, we can understand the southern altar as a material expression of the myth of *Huitzilopochtli's* birth, which shows how the sun and brightness appeared triumphantly in the world.

The northern altar, on the other hand, belongs to *Tlaloc*, and its symbolism is explained through the god's character as a divinity of rain and fertility. Henry. B. Nicholson, a historian of Mesoamerican religion, says the god was the most popular deity of Mesoamerica, and it constitutes what he calls the 'Tlaloc Complex' characterized by fertility of plants, with its counterpart *Chalchiuhtlicue* and a god of wind, *Ehécatl*.<sup>(7)</sup>

A historian Johanna Broda has provided a widely accepted interpretation on the duality of the Twin Temple. According to her, the duality represents a rhythm of alternation of the rainy season and the dry season, which is one of the main characteristics of Mesoamerican natural environment.<sup>(8)</sup> In the central high plateau, rainfall is considerable from May to September, and maize is planted in this period. The rest of year is very dry, and after the harvest the corn fields are cleaned for next year. Based on this dualistic character of a year, she maintains:

Huitzilopochtli as the "day sun" was born at Panquetzaliztli, whereas Tlaloc

symbolized the “night sun” that presided over the rainy season and the mythical cycle of the germination and ripening of the maize plant. Solar events, climatological phenomena, and agricultural cycles formed the basis of that cosmivision, which was the driving force in creating the strange and fascinating product of human imagination, the Templo Mayor.<sup>(9)</sup>

It should be noted that her interpretation presupposes one popular theme in Mesoamerican studies, that is, a Mesoamerican religious dualism. Religious dualism is a way of thinking that divides a cosmos into two antagonistic and complementary realms, and almost all traditions of the world developed their own dualistic view of the cosmos, although the degree of its significance in a given tradition may vary.<sup>(10)</sup> For Mesoamerican people, a dualistic classification of the cosmos was one of the most fundamental principles that sustained their daily life. Here I present a series of symbolic oppositions, based mainly on the works of the historian Noemi Quesada.

Feminine: goddess-land-moon-death-low-dark-night-cold-water-wet

Masculine: god-sky-sun-life-high-bright-day-hot-fire-dry<sup>(11)</sup>

Broda’s concept of the “night sun” makes sense only in this classification, namely; it is based on Mesoamerican belief that after sunset the sun passes through the underworld.

On the whole, her interpretation is persuasive and seems to explain well the symbolic character of the Twin Temple. As the dominant group of the city state, whose political superiority was dependent on a control of maize planting, the Aztecs should have been preoccupied with a fair alternation of the two seasons. It is reasonable, therefore, to see this kind of concern in the duality of the temple. But I would suggest that the agricultural cycle by itself does not wholly clarify the rich symbolism of the Twin Temple. As well as religious dualism, we know another popular motif in Aztec cosmology, that is, the motif of the ‘fifth sun’. It is an idea that before the present age (or ‘sun’) there existed four other ages, and each one was destroyed by a certain cosmic disaster. My point is that we can not understand the rich symbolism of the Temple until we make clear the necessary relationship of the temple’s duality with the motif of the fifth sun. To support my view, first I try to examine the basic structure of the motif of the fifth sun, and then, I examine the pioneering interpretation of Michel Graulich, which integrates the two kinds of

religious motif in an interesting way.

## The Rhythm of Urban Civilization

### The Cosmogonic Structure of the Fifth Sun

The extraordinary importance of the fifth sun in the Aztec cosmology is suggested by presence of the famous Aztec relic, the *Piedra del Sol*. It is a giant stone 3.6 meter high and weighing 24 tons, and was created possibly by King Moctezuma II (1502-1520 CE), according to the 16th century document of the Dominican missionary Diego Durán.<sup>(12)</sup> On the surface of it we see a highly fascinating expression of the motif of the fifth sun. Due to the restriction of this paper, I want to focus here on five glyphs carved on the surface. At the central part, there is a glyph of '4-movement', which is surrounded by four other glyphs, '4-jaguar', '4-wind', '4-rain' and '4-water.' To understand them, a pair of the 16th century materials, which allegedly show the direct influence of Aztec cosmology, is available. They are *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, and *Leyenda de los soles*, both of which contain a myth of the fifth sun.<sup>(13)</sup> According to them, the first sun (or age) was 4-jaguar, in which people were giant and ate a food called *chicome-mallinali*, but they were demolished by jaguar. The second was 4-wind, in which age people ate *matlaktoromome*, and were destroyed by violent hurricane. The third was 4-rain, in which people who ate *chicome-tecpatl* suffered from rain of fire and were changed into birds. The fourth was 4-water in which people who ate *nauhi-xochilli* were demolished by flood and became fishes. Then the present age, 4-movement, is also destined to be ruined by a terrible earthquakes in the future.<sup>(14)</sup>

In addition to *Historia de los Mexicanos*, I would like to utilize one more important material, *Historia de México*. It is because these two contain not only stories which show a succession of the five suns, but also some other detailed stories on the creation of the cosmos. Before indicating the relationship between the stories of the suns' succession, and those of the creation of the cosmos, I will present the basic process of world-making, which is obtained by comparison of the latter groups of myth.

- (1) A world of silence: a supreme god of duality stays inactive.
- (2) Creation of the sky and earth, animals, plants, foods, and human beings.
- (3) Creation of the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>(15)</sup>

In *Historia de los Mexicanos* and *Historia de México*, the relation of these crea-

tion myths to the myths of the suns' succession is not clear. One version of world-making story in *Historia de México*, however, describes how the cosmos was "repaired" after a sky "fell down" at the end of the fourth age.<sup>(16)</sup> Are these cosmogonic stories to be understood merely as detailed descriptions of the beginning of the 'fifth' age? Close examination shows it is not true. In the part concerning the succession of the five suns, it is shown that each age has its own type of human beings and foods. Moreover, the destruction of each age is not partial but almost total, and they never permit survival of creatures as they were.<sup>(17)</sup> It is natural, then, to think that in each occasion when a new age starts, the three cosmogonic stages are to be repeated.

Now we have obtained the almost complete structure of the myth of the fifth sun. But here arises one problem: although the myths of the fifth sun above examined, are revealing a strong Aztec influence, none of them seems to be an 'official' myth of the Aztecs. (I use the term 'official' as something that directly reflects the ideology of the Aztec elite who controlled Tenochtitlan.) For example, there is no suggestion in the materials that the fifth (or present) age is that of the Aztecs, of Tenochtitlan, and of their tutelary god *Huitzilopochtli*. Such an omission would be unthinkable if they were 'official' myths of the Aztecs.<sup>(18)</sup>

Meanwhile, other important sources —documents of Sahagún, Durán, Mendieta, etc.— lack stories about the succession of the five ages, but they do contain certain fragmentary stories of a cosmogonic character, which can be thought as an almost 'official' myth (the best example is the myth of *Huitzilopochtli's* birth in *Historia General*). To attain a better understanding of the myth of the fifth sun, the following procedure may be required: (1) to extract the whole structure of the myth from varied sources, especially *Historia de los Mexicanos*, and *Leyenda de los soles*, (2) to contextualize fragmentary 'official' myths in the whole structure of the fifth sun.

I have already finished the first procedure. Before I begin the second procedure, a selection and classification of the fragmentary myths are needed. For the purpose of this paper some types of myths are omitted in spite of their popularity in the region, as an inclusive classification is unnecessary. I show only three types of myths: (a) the story of the Aztecs who departed the place of origin; (b) the story of creation of the sun and moon by sacrifice of gods in Teotihuacan; (c) the story of persecution and expulsion of Quetzalcoatl, the tutelary god of Tula.<sup>(19)</sup>

These three stories can be interpreted in the context of the fifth sun as following; the type (a) shows the origin of the Aztecs and it is easy to relate it to

the second cosmogonic stage (creation of mankind) in the fifth age. However, it is relatively difficult to understand type (b) and (c). In my view, it is probable that both of them belong to the fourth age, and while the former narrates what happened in the third cosmogonic stage, the latter explains how the fourth age came to an end. Although we know Teotihuacan and Tula had no direct relationship in *historical* sense (Teotihuacan; 200-750 CE, Tula; 900-1150 CE), it should be understood that both cities belonged to one great civilization of Tula in the *mythic* consciousness of the Aztecs. A 16th century document of Alva Ixtlilxóchitl reports:

Tulteca means skilled and wise man, because those people were great artists, and it is evidenced today by the ruins of their constructions in many places of Nueva España, especially in the village of San Juan Teotihuacan, Tula, Cholula, and many other villages and cities.<sup>(20)</sup>

It is possible that the ancient people in the lake region held the huge ruins of Teotihuacan and Tula as relics of a mythic urban civilization, Tula. León-Portilla has already proposed this kind of interpretation, and points out that for the Aztecs the ruins of Teotihuacan were the real center of the mythic Tula, while the historical (archaeological) Tula, to the north of Teotihuacan, was a minor revival of that great city.<sup>(21)</sup> It is strange, however, that León-Portilla himself has identified the story (b), creation of the sun and moon in Teotihuacan, with the origin story of the 'present' (or fifth) age, and not with that of the fourth age.<sup>(22)</sup> Today, the archaeological discovery of the southern altar has confirmed a central value of the *Huitzilopochtli* myth in the Aztec cosmology, and it makes this kind of interpretation unacceptable, as long as we agree the myth symbolizes an appearance of 'new' (or fifth) sun in Tenochtitlan.

Now I am obliged to explain why I had to carry out a lengthy examination of the basic structure of the myth of the fifth sun. As has already been shown, the Twin Temple is a material expression of the primordial rhythm of the cosmos (the day and night, the rainy season and dry season, etc.). The motif of the fifth sun carved on the *Piedra del Sol*, meanwhile, is an expression of another rhythm of the cosmos, namely, that of urban civilizations. It is thus clear that both of them are related to the Aztecs' consciousness of time, and my purpose is to clarify a rich symbolism of the Twin Temple by relating it to that of the *Piedra del Sol*.

## Maize planting, Urban Civilization, and Cosmogony

In this respect, one of the most important contributions ever presented is a schema of Michel Graulich, which shows analogical connections among the dualism, the rhythm of urban civilization, and the cosmogonic process. He demonstrates his schema by complicated graphs in his article, and I have simplified it and added some explanations to it not to muddle a reader in details of the original (see, Graph 1).

In the graph, the curving line from left to right shows a flow of time. When it passes above the central horizontal line, that period is tied to the celestial sphere (thus to day and the dry season), and when it goes below, it is tied to the terrestrial sphere (night and the rainy season). Up to this point, nothing new has been added to Broda's explanation. What is significant is the fact that the structure of his schema has a direct correspondence to the cosmogonic process. In many points, Graulich's understanding of cosmogonic process overlaps the three cosmogonic stages of my own schema. The graph is vertically divided into three stages, and the left part is indicated as a silent world with a supreme dual deity. He describes the central part as "infancy". A separation of the earth and sky and a creation of human beings are included in this stage. The left part is a climax of world-making, that is, the creation of the sun. In the graph, the left part is related to the masculine-bright sphere, the central to the feminine-dark, and the right to the masculine once more. Thus he tries to give a dualistic rhythm to the process of cosmogony. If we remember Mircea Eliade's insight that "primordial, sacred history, brought together by the totality of significant myths, is fundamental because it explains, and by the same token justifies, the existence of the world, of man, and of society",<sup>(23)</sup> the importance of Graulich's interpretation will be understood.

Another point which makes his schema valuable is that it also explains the successions of the five suns. He suggests that each age undergoes the cosmogonic process, and that the fourth age corresponds to that of *Quetzalcoatl* of Tula.<sup>(24)</sup> As for the fifth age, the left part is *Chicomoztoc* where the Aztecs stay inactive; the central is the period of migration to the promised land; then the right is the period in which they settle down and their urban civilization grows up.<sup>(25)</sup>

The importance of his schema is evident. And a variety of his interpretations on myths, rituals, and other religious phenomena of Mesoamerica are often based on this schema. However, there are certain respects in which his schema seems to be inadequate.

The left part of his graph is substantially equivalent to the process (1) in my

own schema. A contrast between the first stage and the other stages in the myths is so striking that López Austin distinguishes the former, calling it a stage of “divine intranscendence”, from the latter, a stage of “divine transcendence.” He says,

The concept of the mythic origin of world makes a distinction between *the other time* and *the time of man*. The former is, in turn, to be divided into the time of *divine intranscendence*, in which the divinity creates nothing, and the time of *divine transcendence*. ...The moment of the creation appears in the myths as an instant or a lengthy process. It happens in time (in the new or calendrical time) and gives origin to (calendrical) time.<sup>(26)</sup>

A cosmogonic story in *Historia de México* seems to support his opinion. In that text, a pair of gods, *Tezcatlipoca* and *Ehécatl*, creates the sky and earth “in the first day of a year.”<sup>(27)</sup> Thus, there does not exist any “time” in a usual sense in the stage of “intranscendence”, and the time starts to flow in the stage of “divine transcendence” (stage 2 and 3, in my schema). It is at this point that a problem of Graulich’s schema becomes apparent.

We see from his graph that the left part (the stage of silence) is indicated as “afternoon”, and is allocated a third part of the curving line (time’s flow). Graulich says,

In the beginning, creation was paradisaic, characterized by eternal life and light... After a transgression or a conflict, the paradise or primordial land was lost, and creatures were exiled to the earth and darkness, and were condemned to death without hope of survival. Thus at first there was eternal life and light, then night and death came.<sup>(28)</sup>

It is clear that he uses the term “light” as that of noon, and he asserts that this “light” existed first, then it was pushed out by darkness, but the “light” recovers its power by the ascension of the sun.<sup>(29)</sup> My critique is simple: the stage of silence or “intranscendence” can not contain time nor anything related to what was created in the process of “divine transcendence.”

As all these mythic aspects indicate, a relationship between the stage of “intranscendence” (or the first stage of my schema) and that of “intranscendence” (the other stages) is equivalent to the one between disorder and order, the undifferentiated and the differentiated. In other words, it is equivalent to the relation-



ship between chaos and cosmos, which is an essential aspect of archaic religion.<sup>(30)</sup>  
I am using these terms in this sense:

Chaos is a sacred power. ...It is that which is opposed to order, which threatens the paradigms and archetypes but which is, nevertheless, profoundly necessary for the very creativity that is characteristic of Eliade's notion of the Sacred. ...Thus chaos is never, in myths, finally overcome. It remains as a creative challenge, as a source of possibility and vitality over against, yet inextricably related to, order and the Sacred.<sup>(31)</sup>

It is curious that Graulich himself explains the stage of silence or "intranscendence" as "chaotic" and "undifferentiated."<sup>(32)</sup> Then, why does this stage contain the time and the light of noon, which are the very results of the differentiation of cosmos?<sup>(33)</sup>

In spite of this difficulty, I have to emphasize the importance of what he has tried to do, that is, to clarify the analogical relationships among the rhythm of maize planting, urban civilizations, and cosmogonic processes. He showed that all these rhythms have a basis in dualistic classifications of the cosmos. In this sense, we are facing the possibility of understanding the rich symbolism of the Twin Temple.

### Nemontemi

I have already shown the importance of the rhythm of maize planting in understanding the Aztec cosmology. And to overcome the problematic schema of Graulich, I propose, we need to explore a religious structure of the agricultural calendar, *Xiuhuitl*.<sup>(34)</sup>

*Xiuhuitl* is composed of 18 'months', and each of them has 20 days (18×20 days = 360 days). It starts with the first month of *Atlcahualo* ('Lack of Rain', from the 12th of July to the 3rd of March) in which children are sacrificed for the rain god, *Tlaloc*. After finishing the rainy season, the dry season comes. It is noteworthy that a main ritual of the 10th month, *Xōcottl Huetzi* ('The Fruit Drops', from the 11th to the 30th of August) is a human sacrifice by 'fire', and that of the 15th month, *Panquetzaliztli* ('Festival of the Flags', from the 19th of November to the 8th of December) is a ritualization of the Huitzilopochtli's birth, as already suggested by Broda.<sup>(35)</sup> The last five days of a year are called *nemontemi*, in which calendar system is not applied. Sahagún explains these five days as following:

...the Nemontemi, five days for which there were no day-names, which no longer belonged, which were no longer counted. ...And if one were then born, there was great fear of it, there was ignoring of it. And if it were a man, they named him Nemon, Nentlacatl, Nenquizqui. Nowhere was he counted, nowhere did he belong. He was a profitless man. ...And when it was this time, nothing was done. The palace, the court of justice were empty; no suits were judged. ...Indeed nothing was his day sign: indeed nothing was his name. Therefore no one could then practice medicine, heal one, read [the day signs] for one.<sup>(37)</sup>

That people born in this period are meaningless, and that no remedy is possible against the disease, are necessary results of the absence of calendar. It is well known that, in the Aztec society the personality and destiny of a person were believed to be dependent on one's birth date, or day-sign, so Sahagún reports a man born in the day 'I-Ocelot' tends to be adulterous and dies in war. Moreover, every important activity, like agriculture, medical treatment, marriage, or the swearing ceremony, were performed through close consultation with a sacred calendar book.

Whether favorably or not, the cosmos is given an order by the calendar. Thanks to this calendrical order, people can choose an appropriate day to plant or hunt, and can avoid bad consequences. *Nemontemi* is, however, a period in which such a social order is completely absent — a chaotic situation. It is in this connection that a necessary relationship between the *Xiuhuil* and the cosmogonic process is to be discussed. It was shown that the cosmogonic process of "intranscendence" lacks any kind of "time" and is really chaotic in sense that the world is not yet differentiated.

An analogical relationship is seen not only between *nemontemi* and the stage of "intranscendence." In the agricultural process, the calendar starts after *nemontemi*, and the seeds of maize sprout and their soft ears grow up in the rainy season. In the dry season, the soft ears get hard thanks to the now-vigorous sun. After harvest withered plants are burned and the fields are cleared for the next year. This process of maize planting shows a correspondence to the cosmogonic process. It is in darkness that deities create the sky, earth, planets, plants, human beings, etc., and all creatures have to stay in the darkness until the sun rises. It is useful here to quote a paragraph of *Pöpol Vuh*, a myth of Maya region, which narrates what effect an ascension of the sun had:

And then the face of the earth was dried out by the sun. ...Before the sun came

up it was soggy, and the face of the earth was muddy before the sun came up.<sup>(40)</sup>

In darkness, all things are created. "After 25 years since the creation of the world, it had been left in a darkness all the time. For the lack of the sun, three gods, Tezcatlipuca, Ehecatl and goddess Citlallicue gathered, and agreed to create the sun to illuminate the earth."<sup>(41)</sup> The creation of the sun is necessary, because to get a definite and stable form, creatures need a power of the sun. This is also the case with the life of maize, which grows in the rainy season, but to bear fruit that is not deformed, absolutely must receive enough sunlight. If the sun is feeble, the ears will spoil. Another myth of *Popol Vuh* shows the importance of keeping the two kind of forces in balance. It explains that there once existed two kinds of human beings. The first mankind was made of mud, then, "It melted into the water." The second mankind was made of wood, and "were without blood's flower, no moisture, no flesh, dry and yellow." In the end, a complete human being is made of maize. If we remember the intimate relationship between man and maize, an analogical relationship between the rhythm of maize planting, based on *Xiuhill*, and the process of cosmogony will be realized.

Now it is possible to present these analogical relationships schematically (see, graph 2),

The left part of the graph is *nemontemi*, and it is the stage (1) in the cosmogonic process, that of "intranscendence." The next part, allocated half of the curving line, is the rainy season, in which the feminine and cold force is dominant. This is the period of seeding and germination of maize, and the cosmogonic process (2) corresponds. This is followed by the dry season, in which the masculine and hot force is active, and is the season of fruition and harvest. The stage (3) corresponds to it.

As does Graulich's schema, this explains the rise and fall of urban civilizations. In the stage of *nemontemi*, *Quetzalcoatl* who represents the prestige of the mythic city Tula, is banished, and the fourth urban civilization collapses. A few ruins remain as reminder of that great age. After *nemontemi*, the order of the calendar is recovered, and the series of creation go on in a darkness. It is not until *Huitzilopochilli* wins his victory over the troops of darkness, that the Aztec urban civilization is put on a firm footing. However, Tenochtitlan also follows the dualistic rhythm of cosmos, and it is destined to decay someday like withered maize plant.

This is the message that Twin Temple conveys us by its dualistic form.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I tried to clarify the rich symbolism of the Twin Temple of the Aztecs. The temple was situated at the very heart of city, and expressed various rhythms of the cosmos — of the day, maize, and urban civilization. All of them share the primordial rhythm of cosmogony. It is this dynamic 'cosmic conviction' that was scattered over the four quarters of cosmos.

Somebody, however, may ask: how it is possible to understand a mentality which accepts positively the destructive destination of one's own civilization? To conclude this essay, I would like to cite one paragraph of Joseph Rykwert's book, *The Idea of a Town*:

There is a sense in which — as I have already suggested — urban life is a parasitical form of existence, a form of social disease. It is a particular form of the general human predicament, which was summed up in a somewhat rhapsodiè form by a French psychiatrist: "In the beginning environment was a moving ocean. It is becoming. From this becoming the human personality detaches itself to affirm itself in the face of it. ...But for this very reason it does it almost regretfully, and nurturing deep within itself the nostalgia of the union, of the intimate fusion with becoming which had enveloped it."<sup>(1)</sup>

- (1) Mesoamerica is a cultural area which approximately covers the southern half of present-day Mexico and Guatemala. A political, economic, cultural and religious unity within the area has been almost confirmed today. See: Matos Moctezuma, "Mesoamerica" in *Historia Antigua de Mexico*, vol. 1, ed. Linda Manzanilla and Lopez Lujan, (Mexico city, 1995), pp. 49-73; Lopez Austin, *Los Mitos del Tlacuache*, (Mexico city, 1996), pp. 25-40.
- (2) David Carrasco, "City as Symbol in Aztec Thought" *History of Religions* 20, (Feb., 1981), p. 213.
- (3) For example, see; Matos Moctezuma, *The Great Temple of the Aztecs*, (London, 1988), p. 141.
- (4) Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia General de las cosas de Nueva España*, (Mexico city, 1992), pp. 191-192.
- (5) Alfonso Caso, *El pueblo del sol*, (Mexico city, 1953), p. 47; Ignacio Bernal, *Tenochtitlan en una isla*, (Mexico city, 1974), p. 146.
- (6) I discussed the theme in my essay; "Myth and History; Birth of Aztec City-god", *Religion and Comparative Study*, vol. 2, 1999.

- (7) Henry B. Nicholson, "Religion in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico" in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 10, (London, 1971), pp. 414-416.
- (8) Johanna Broda, "Templo Mayor as Ritual Space" in *The Great Temple of Tenochtitlan*, ed. J. Broda, M. Moctezuma and D. Carrasco, (Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 72-77; Broda, "Relaciones políticas ritualizadas" in *Economía Política e Ideología en el México Prehispánico*, ed. P. Carrasco and J. Broda, (Mexico city, 1978).
- (9) Broda, "Templo Mayor as Ritual Space", pp. 76-77. Whereas I recognize the importance of her assertion, this kind of interpretation tends to overlook a proper role that the dry season plays in agricultural process. The point will be discussed later.
- (10) On a religious dualism in general, see; Mircea Eliade, "Prolegomenon to Religious Dualism: Dyads and Polarities" in *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, (Chicago, 1969), pp. 127-177.
- (11) Noemí Quesada, *Sexualidad, Amor y Erotismo*, (Mexico city, 1996), p. 20. The elements here mentioned are only a few of many. Moreover, oppositions of elements are not so definite that in a certain situation, what seems to be of feminine-cold character can belong to masculine-hot part of cosmos. Thus the moon and stars are feminine, but in other context, they can be masculine because of their 'brightness.'
- (12) Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, vol. 2, (Mexico city, 1984), pp. 485-487; also see, Esther Pasztory, *Aztec Art*, (New York, 1983), p. 171.
- (13) *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, in *Teogonía e Historia de los Mexicanos*, ed. Angel M. Garibay K, (Mexico city, 1965); *Leyenda de los Soles*, in *Códice Chimalpopoca*, (Mexico city, 1992); Michel Graulich, *Mitos y rituales del México antiguo*, (Mexico city, 1990), p. 38. An another couple of materials, which show Aztec influence and contain myth of the fifth sun, are consulted here; *Historia de México* in *Teogonía e Historia*, and *Anales de Cuauhtitlán in Códice Chimalpopoca*.
- (14) *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, p. 23; *Leyenda de los Soles*, p. 119.
- (15) There are a few exceptions in the materials, of course, that do not follow this schema. I omitted them because they clearly show some confusions in their plots.
- (16) *Historia de México*, p. 105.
- (17) "It is said nothing had been left without being destroyed." *Ibid.*, p. 105.

- (18) This kind of inconsistency of materials indicates the Aztecs' failure to propagate their religious ideologies over the lake region. Graulich says too rapid a extension of their political power is the main reason of the failure. *Mitos y Rituales*, p. 300.
- (19) The materials above used also contain these kind of myths, so correctly, only the parts of the fifth sun are not "official". These three motif are so popular because many materials carries some information related to them. See for example; *Códice Borturini*, (Mexico city, 1975), Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Cronica Mexicana*, (Mexico city, 1987), pp. 223-226; Sahagún, *Historia General*, pp. 193-204, 431-434, and others. I am well conscious about highly complex character of the myth of *Quetzalcoatl* above all, although, my aim is to clarify how these myths were integrated in the whole cosmology of the Aztecs, and not a thorough explanation of these three motif. For the further discussion on the symbolism of *Quetzalcoatl*, see; David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl: The Irony of Empire*, (Chicago, 1982).
- (20) Alva Ixtililxochitl, *Obras Historicas*, (Mexico city, 1975), p. 397. (My translation)
- (21) Leon-Portilla, *Los Antiguos Mexicanos*, (Mexico city, 1961), p. 34.
- (22) Leon-Portilla, *La Filosofia Nahuatl*, (Mexico city, 1959), p. 108.
- (23) *The Quest*, p. 76.
- (24) *Mitos y Rituales*, p. 209.
- (25) *Ibid.*, pp. 287-300.
- (26) Lopez Austin, "La cosmovisión Mesoamericana" in *Temas Mesoamericanos*, ed. S. Lombardo and E. Nalda, (Mexico city, 1996), p. 478. (My translation)
- (27) *Historia de Mexico*, p. 105. The same material shows the creation of sun was done in the '25th year' after the cosmic flood. p. 109.
- (28) Michel Graulich, "Reflexiones sobre dos obras maestras del arte azteca" in *De Hombres y Dioses*, ed. X. Noguez and L. Austin, (Mexico city, 1997), pp. 160-161. (My translation)
- (29) *Ibid.*
- (30) Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory*, (Chicago, 1993), p. 169. For further discussions on the theme of chaos and cosmos, see; ed. Paul G. Kuntz, *The Concept of Order*, (Seattle and London, 1968); David L. Hall, *Eros and Irony*, (Albany, 1982).
- (31) *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- (32) *Mitos y Rituales*, p. 75.

- (33) As I have mentioned, the stage of silence is that of a “god of duality”, *Ometeotl*. The god is also called, *Yohualli-ehecatl* (“Invisible and Impalpable”), *in Tloque in Nahuaque* (“Owner of the near and of the next”), *Moyocoyani* (“He who creates himself”), and so on. (see, *Filosofa Nahuatl*, p. 164.) But, why is it possible to attribute “duality” to the stage of the ‘undifferentiated’? It is to be pointed out that ‘*Ometeotl*’ is a singular form in Náhuatl language (pl. ‘*Ometeoteo*’). In my view, the name *Ometeotl* is a kind of metaphor to represent what is essentially unrepresentable; the chaos. As Norman Girardot points out, the chaos and cosmos have a dialectic “interrelationship of unity and multiplicity, plenitude and limitation” (*Chaos in The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, vol. 3 p. 214). A primordial duality is the first differentiation of what is “invisible and impalpable”, and it can be the most primitive way of chaos’s manifestation. *Ometeotl* is, therefore, considered to be a paradoxical way of expressing what is not “dual” nor ‘differentiated’ yet.
- (34) We are not concerned in this paper with other important cycles of 260 days and 52 years.
- (35) See the second volume of *Historia General*, pp. 98-100, 128-131, 142-147. *Climatologically*, the month of *Atlcahualo* is the driest season of a year, although, in my view, the child sacrifice meant an act of vitalizing the rain god to start the *mythic* period of the feminine-cold-wet force. The fire sacrifice of *Xócoll Huetzi*, in which month the precipitation is still considerable, is to be understood in the same way: it tries to animate the celestial divinities. (Xiuhitl, see; George Vaillant, *La Civilización Azteca*, (Mexico city, 1944), pp. 168-170.
- (37) Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General history of the things of New Spain*, vol. 2, (Santa Fe, 1950-82), p. 171-172. The 16th century’s mestizo, Bautista de Pomar is also reporting that “people thought the disease in this period was dangerous.” Juan Bautista de Pomar, *Relación de Tezcoco in Documentos para la historia de Mexico*, (Mexico city, 1972), p. 41.
- (38) *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 5.
- (39) See, for example; Fray Geronimo de Mendieta, *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana*, vol. 1, (Mexico city, 1997), p. 224, 285.
- (40) *Popol Vuh*, trans. Dennis Tedlock, (New York, 1996), p. 161, 285.
- (41) *Historia de México*, p. 109.
- (42) *Popol Vuh*, p. 37, pp. 103-104.
- (43) In Mesoamerica, a human being was believed to be cold in infancy, and as he

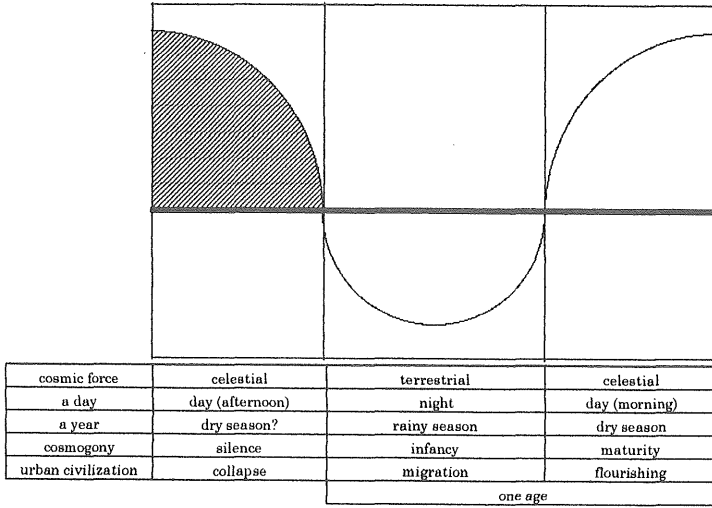
grew up he stocked a hot-celestial force in his body. See, López Austin, *The Human Body and Ideology*, (Salt Lake, 1988), pp. 283-286.

(44) Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, (London, 1976), p. 195.

(Graduate Student, Doctoral Program in Philosophy, University of Tsukuba)



Graph 1.



Graph 2.

