

The Pachamama

The Pachamama is usually translated into English as “Mother Earth”, although the more literal translation would be “World Mother”. She is an Andean indigenous goddess. She is worshipped in the region of Tawantinsuyu, the former Incan Empire, which now includes the Andean regions of Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and northern Argentina. In Incan mythology, she presides over planting and harvesting crops and can cause earthquakes.



She is also the goddess of fertility. In the Quechua cosmovision, the four principles – Water, Earth, Sun, and Moon – come from her. She is the mother of the Sun god Inti, and the Moon goddess Mama Killa. She is offered many sacrifices, especially animals like llamas and alpacas. Rituals to honor her are celebrated all year, but especially in August, which is the coldest month of the year in the southern Andes.

With the arrival of the Spaniards, in some regions of the Andes, the Pachamama was replaced by the Virgin Mary. But those who believe in the Pachamama can maintain a balanced, reciprocal relationship with her. It is said that if people treat the Pachamama well and offer her the best sacrifices, then she in return will give them a good harvest.

Read the text about the Pachamama and answer the questions.

- 1) What is the most common translation for Pachamama in English?
- 2) What powers does the Pachamama have?
- 3) What do people offer to the Pachamama?
- 4) How do people maintain a good relationship with the Pachamama?