

6 - THE COLLAPSE OF THE LAND OF FOUR QUARTERS

Tawantinsuyu had been torn in two by the civil war between Huascar and Atahualpa. Then it was turned upside down by forces from outside. In 1532 the Spanish adventurers, Francisco **Pizarro** and 150 soldiers, were moving south from where they had landed at **Tumbes**. They were armed with firearms, protected by steel armour, and mounted on horses.

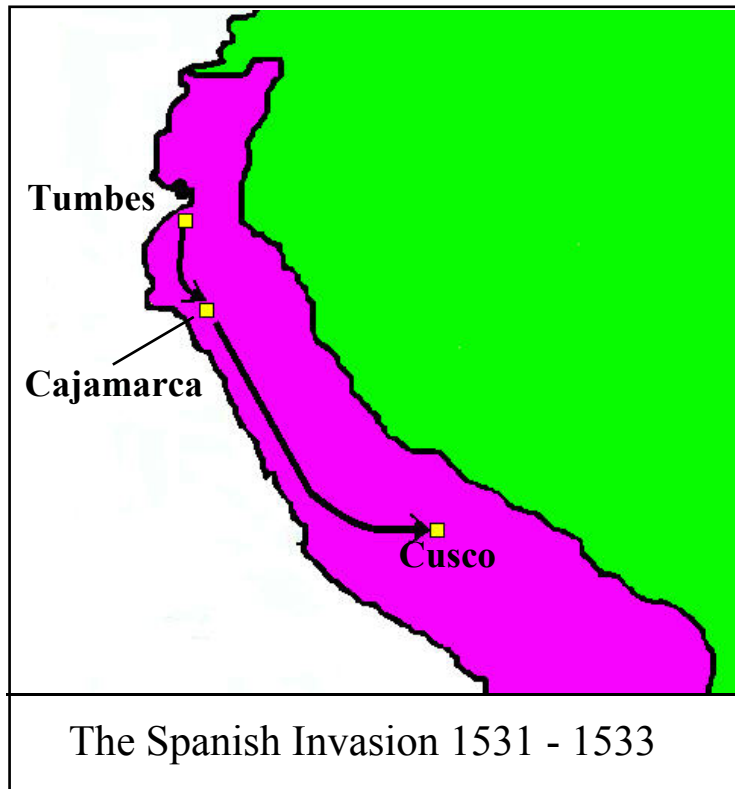
They also had a clear aim - to seize the vast amounts of gold and silver in the Inca empire and make themselves a fortune.

They had other aims too, to take the land on behalf of the King of Spain, and convert the 'Indians' to the Christian faith. These aims were genuine enough, but in practice not so important as getting the gold. Pizarro and his men had the advantage of coming from the Spanish Empire and had experience of conquering people in Europe and America.

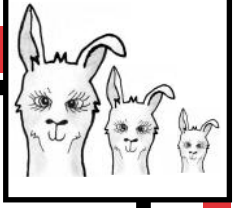
Pizarro had personal experience of this fighting.

Atahualpa, following his own armies southwards, had reached the abandoned town of Cajamarca. He had experience of war, but only according to the rules and customs of the people of the Andes. He and his

advisers seem not to have fully understood what Pizarro was aiming to do. They certainly underestimated him. Some of Atahualpa's advisers even thought Pizarro was sent by the god Viracocha and would bring a new



age to Tawantinsuyu, so they prepared to worship the strangers. Others considered the Spaniards were enemies who should be killed - after getting from them the secret of iron-making. Overall, Atahualpa and his advisers were curious about Pizarro and his men when they should have been cautious.



Atahualpa himself seems to have thought that the strangers would make good allies in his quarrel with Huascar. This may be why Atahualpa's army was not prepared for a battle when Atahualpa came to meet with Pizarro at the **plaza** in Cajamarca.

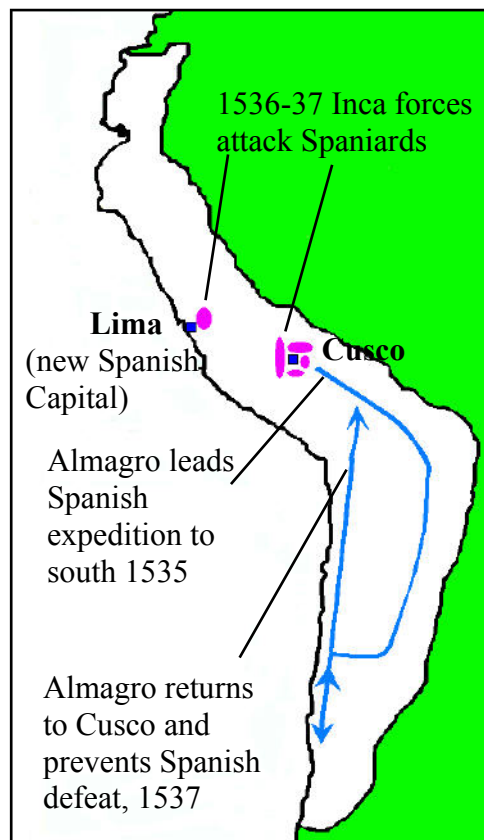
After a brief attempt to convert Atahualpa to Christianity failed, the Spaniards suddenly attacked. They used their cannon and their other superior weapons. They massacred hundreds of apparently unarmed Inca warriors. Pizarro himself captured Atahualpa by pulling him out of his **litter**.

The Conquistadors took Atahualpa hostage, and marched on to Cusco. They forced Atahualpa to use his power and authority to get them masses of gold and silver from all over the Inca empire. Atahualpa did this, but was fearful that the Conquistadors would hand over his empire to Huascar, who was still being held by Atahualpa's soldiers. So Atahualpa, from his prison, gave orders that Huascar should be executed.

By this time the Conquistadors realised they needed an emperor that they could control – a 'puppet' Sapa Inca. They gave Atahualpa a swift 'trial' on a number of charges, and he was then strangled to death. They made Tupac Hualpa the new emperor (in 1533), thinking that he would be obeyed by both the supporters of Huascar and those of Atahualpa. In fact he was part of Huascar's branch of the Inca royal family, and so was hated by

many Incas. He died shortly afterwards, perhaps by being poisoned.

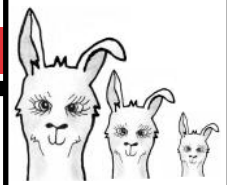
Manco Inca (1533-1545), a brother of Atahualpa, was appointed the next Sapa Inca by the Conquistadors. At first he submitted to them, because he thought they would help him finally end the civil war and bring Tawantinsuyu back under his control. In 1535, when he realised that they were not interested in reuniting the Inca empire, he escaped from the fortress of **Sacsahuamán** in



Spanish invasion and Inca resistance

Cusco.

By now Manco Inca was planning to drive the strangers out of Tawantinsuyu.



Once he realised the Spanish invaders were a deadly threat Manco Inca organised an army of over 40,000 men to destroy them. The Spaniards were now weaker, because part of their army had split off to explore the south.

Manco Inca had the advantage of a large army, and knew that he was facing a ruthless enemy. After days of fighting in which the city of Cusco was destroyed, his siege failed. He retreated to a remote area, where with a few loyal followers he set up the tiny Inca kingdom of **Vilcabamba**.

Tawantinsuyu had collapsed. It had depended on there being one strong Sapa Inca to give orders - and now there wasn't one. The only Incas with any power were the curacas (the local nobles who had accepted Inca control.) But they soon came to realise that the Conquistadors were only interested in looting all the gold they could find. So the curacas stopped helping the Spaniards and restricted themselves to following as few of their orders as possible. Eventually they had to submit to the heavy rule

(and heavier taxes) of the Spaniards.

The Conquistadors explored the entire length of Tawantinsuyu, looking for treasure. But they fought among themselves, and many were killed. They were replaced by other adventurers from Spain and from the **New World**. It was not until the late 1560's that the Spaniards set up an effective government for the Andes region. It was sited at Lima on the coast, where ships could keep the Viceroyalty of Peru in touch with Spain.

Meanwhile all that was left of

Inca rule was a tiny area. From this mountain 'kingdom' of Vilcabamba, Manco Inca carried on **guerrilla warfare** against the Spanish. His successors sometimes fought the Spanish and sometimes tried to come to an agreement with them.

In 1572 a new Spanish governor captured the capital of **Topa Amaru** (1571 – 1572). He had Topa Amaru publicly executed in Cusco. The remains of the mummies of the Sapa Incas were destroyed.

