

The inaugurations of Bolivian president Evo Morales

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LA PAZ, Bolivia – The second inauguration of President Evo Morales involved two gatherings, the first one in an ancient city and the second in La Paz, the modern capital of the country.

The first part of the presidential inauguration was held in a sacred indigenous temple in Bolivia Jan. 21, where he was granted the title of leader and spiritual guide of the country; and soon afterwards he delivered his speech in Aymara, Quechua and Spanish to tens of thousands of people.

The event, which has been described as being spiritual and political, took place in the [Temple of Kalasasaya](#) in the ancient town of Tiawanaku, seat of an Andean empire that flourished for more than 400 years. Archaeological research has shown how the Kalasasaya Temple was constructed to align parts of the building with each of the cardinal points – north, south, east and west – and was also used as an astronomical observatory marking the change of seasons and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. The principal descendants of the Tiawanaku Empire are the Aymaras, and so the site was chosen to honor the most famous contemporary Aymara, Morales.

Before addressing the crowds assembled around the temple, Morales first attended a private rite held in the Akapana pyramid, where indigenous priests and elders joined him for different cleansing ceremonies. Upon leaving the lower part of the structure, he was lead by hand by the 100-year-old Nicolasa Choque Santalla to the top of the pyramid. At that point, the president was dressed in white and greeted by four men and four women who provided water to him for a ceremony to clean away negative energy.

Morales then participated in a series of prayers and offerings that culminated in special prayers to the Andean deities for wisdom and guidance so “they allow

him to solve problems, provide work for everyone and that there is no more suffering” according to the press statement of the government’s Bolivian Information Agency.

After the ceremonies, Morales spoke about spiritual and temporal matters.

“From this millennial place a new light is born, a light of hope for the Bolivian people and for humanity,” he said, and added that Bolivians should be, “... remembering always the form of living experience in complementariness, in solidarity and especially in harmony with Mother Earth.”

The president said the Kalasasaya Temple had always inspired the people to fight for their rights.

“The people of the world will always be on their feet, not on their knees before capitalism and this is a millennial fight of our ancestors.”

As in prior speeches, Morales pointed to teachings from his Aymara heritage that inspired his service, in particular the principles of Ama Sua, or don’t steal; Ama Kella, don’t be lazy; and Ama Llull, or don’t lie.

He also returned to the theme of ending the legacies of the colonial state and its principal problem – corruption. The president said the colonial state allowed for the permanent sacking of their natural resources, and that it discriminated against the indigenous people, “... and always saw us as savages, as animals.”

“I feel that we have progressed in changing that dark history of our Bolivia,” he said. “Today, for the second time, I am in this sacred place, and for the second time in service to the Bolivian people. ... one president for two states,” Morales said in reference to the prior colonial state that would end upon the beginning of his second term, and the pluri-national state that would begin.

“One state died, and the other is born; a colonial state that leaves and a pluri-national one arrives with great hope for the peoples of the world.”

In his formal inauguration ceremony Jan. 22 in La Paz, Morales repeated some

of the same points he addressed in the Tiawanaku speech but made new comments about Bolivia's relationship to Chile under outgoing President Michelle Bachelet, and he declared Jan. 22, Pluri-National State Foundation Day.

Bachelet was in the audience for the official inauguration along with other heads of state such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Paraguayan President Fernando Lugo and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa.