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Body, Mind & Spirit

Legends and Prophecies of the Quero Apache: Tales of Healing and Renewal
Mara Yracbr
Bear and Company
978-1-879181-77-9
(July 30, 2002)

The more one reads world mythologies, the more one recognizes that although cultural differences influence language and symbol, there are still common themes about the story of being human: creation, the relationship of gods to mortals, vision and loss of it, the balance of life and death, of being male and female. In this collection, these themes are apparent in titles like "Creation," "Mystic Marriage," and "Nakía's Destiny." The tales, however, are equally a window into the spiritual viewpoint of the Apache Snake Clan.

Because the stories are metaphysical as well as mythological, and because some of the names are unfamiliar and long (Godiyihgo 'ishkiñihí), reading them and capturing their many layers of meaning requires time and concentration. To help the reader's understanding, the author follows each story with a brief explanation and discussion, along with a personal and spiritual example of the story in the author's own life and writing. Yet, since within the author's worldview there is no division between this level of reality and the metaphysical, her explanations are often as complex as the stories.

Yracébûrû is the granddaughter of an Apache holy man, Ten Bears, who trained her since birth as a tsantí, a storyteller, healer, ceremonial facilitator, and teacher of the Snake Clan knowledge and philosophy. She collected and wrote these stories because, as she says, "If I do not share, how can there be continuance?" To achieve her purpose, she works hard to help the reader into her world, providing an introduction that speaks of her background and the history of her tradition. The stories progress along a cosmological timeline—from creation to the introduction of the two-leggeds, blending mythical names with historical. A family tree of the Snake Clan is helpfully included at the beginning of the book.

As Yracébûrû explains, "The thirteen stories in this book are prayers and celebrations. They reflect a past steeped in tradition and reverence and the promise of a future of hope and peace. The wisdom of the legends I present is that of the very essence of life itself, so that those

who are alive will always have the possibility of knowing their connection to All That Is.”

Though categorized as folklore and mythology, this book might as likely be found in the religious section of any Native American bookstore or library. It will be appeal to any reader interested in the human story.

Paula Scardamalia