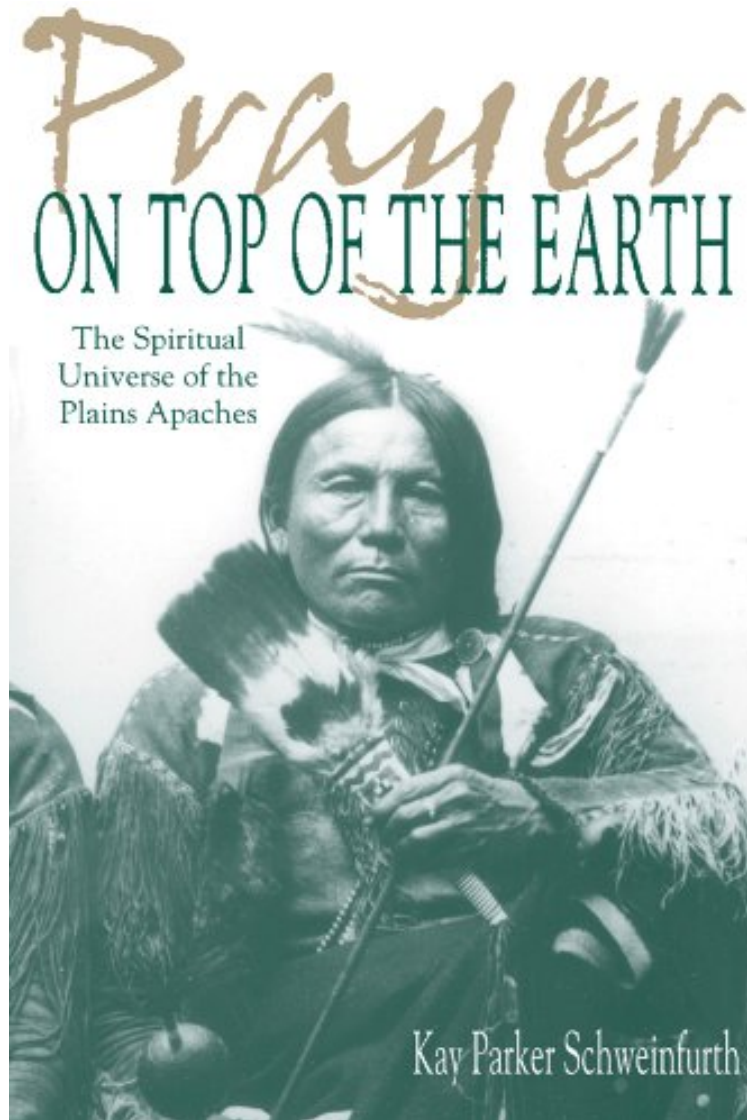


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## Prayer on Top of the Earth : The Spiritual Universe of the Plains Apaches

*Kay Parker Schweinfurth*

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**Kay Parker Schweinfurth : Prayer on Top of the Earth : The Spiritual Universe of the Plains Apaches** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prayer on Top of the Earth : The Spiritual Universe of the Plains Apaches:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. GREAT BOOK. GREAT PRICE By JOEL LEE WOLFEGREAT BOOK. GREAT PRICE. FACINATING SUBJECT, CAME AS DESCRIBED AND QUICKER THAN PROMISED!

WHAT MORE COULD I ASK FOR! THANKS! 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Oklahoma Apache Nation, or Plains Apache's Spirituality By E. Hansen Miss Kay's book is so filled with information that I'll be re-reading it for times into the future. The people spoke a language of Athalpascan or Athabascan which has a variety of spellings, and its language offspring are many children. The ethnic strain extended sometimes from Alaska down into Mexico, with many tribal names. They are the people whose stories appear in this book. The topics discussed by the author focus on the oral traditions of seven historians of the Oklahoma group. And some of their photos are eerily familiar. I had originally found this through 'Good Minds' [dot etc.] which is a site for the Canadian Iroquois Nations specializing in Native American literature which is culturally sensitive to objectively include the Indian perspective on their own cultures. I wish they were an marketplace affiliate, since purchases are transacted through bank transfers and [with fees] converted to Canadian currency. Still, was able to sell me the book I wanted and at a very discount rate. There's so much to learn in this book, I'd be remiss to focus on just the origins of Peyote religion for the Apache, or the Missionary influence on their culture. Though it's there for anyone who's interested in that. This book is the greatest collection of cultural legends for this tribe that I have ever seen. Their wisdom is intact, though speaking to and from aboriginal times. Aboriginal tales: One story of origins speaks of a continent full of ice storms which had not yet known the sun. The large animals hunted by the grand fathers had to be dug out of the ice and brought back to (geothermally) heated caves. There were large cracks in the earth with smoke coming out, and the people lived in caves. Another tale recounts, when man was first in the world, there were plants and animals but there was no sun. The sky was dark except for 'very bright stars'. Those bright stars were lighting everything, like a cloudy day hiding the sun now'days. I didn't recognize post-contact Biblical influence in Apache narratives. But they do put me in mind of a Biblical narrative which I consider to be pre-Edenic. Where Job chap. 38 says how the 'Sons of God' saw the stars created and shouted for joy. Other translations have them being, 'the Morning Stars' all sang together, [at the dawn of creation]. And that's just one more account which seems to focus on a time before the Eden legend. The Native American mind among the very most remotely separate cultures has remembrance of twin boys who were influential upon the forming/ordering of the created world. I've seen variations on this theme from Agua Caliente Indians of California, from Tuscarora Iroquois of North Carolina, and now this plains group of Apache from Oklahoma, who called them 'Fire-boy' 'Water-boy'. Dr. K.P. Schweinfurth cites other sources who suggest it may be the most important theme in American Aboriginal Epochs. When I read about Fire-boy Water-boy here, I understood some imputed teachings which are connected to the spirituality in all things. a.) believe in your friend. b.) be contrary to any everyone who tells you something is impossible. c.) educate yourself collaborate with your fellow man as a team. d.) and finally, never underestimate the force of nature. The number four is identified as a spiritual number for various reasons you can find in the book, but one associated teaching is how parents would forego disciplining their children for three times when they disobeyed, but the fourth time punishment came. One more aspect of 'this' First-Nation's spirituality is their dance. It is a sort of community spirit. One dance society discussed in this work is called the 'Manatidie'. Allusions to its being a unifying instrument of their culture are numerous. 'Manatidie' means the 'black feet' dance. Although the dance was adapted from the Pawnee, and said to receive its name from the Blackfoot tribe (proud feet), this is one of the dance societies perpetuated among the Oklahoma Apache. Someday I hope to witness Manatidie.

Kay Parker Schweinfurth's "Prayer on Top of the Earth: The Spiritual Universe of the Plains Apaches," offers numerous stories recounted by seven self-appointed tribal historians, the last surviving primary repositories of Apache history, born between 1876 and 1903. The Plains Apaches' mystical kinship with the land and the natural environment that the tribes perceived and nurtured is embodied in their four sacred medicine bundles-the no bikagseli, or "prayer on top of the earth."

This book exemplifies the best of the anthropological enterprise: well-trained students and excellent field notes...For all levels and collections. -- American Library Association About the Author Kay Parker Schweinfurth, a research anthropologist, has done extensive fieldwork among the tribes of the Southern Plains in her native state of Oklahoma.