

Website Resource for "Tale of the Sun," PLT Activity #18

Stanford Solar Center - <http://solar-center.stanford.edu/folklore/folklore.html>

For centuries, humans have attempted to explain the Sun in terms of their own worldviews. The Sun can be a god, a demon, a mischievous spirit, an omnipotent creator or a ruthless taker of life. Whatever role it plays, most cultures have recognized the significance of the Sun as prime controller of all life on Earth." At the Stanford Solar Center's website, you can learn about what role the sun has played in the early cultures of Indigenous Americans, Indigenous Australians, Mesopotamia, Judeo-Christians, Other Cultures, and Ancient Observatories. There are also interesting Quotes and Links sections.

"Indigenous American": Here you will learn about Early North and South Americans, how their beliefs differed from one another. The North Americans have some great folklore like Raven and the Sun, or Coyote and Eagle Steal the Sun and Moon, and Fifth World. All are very interesting reads. The South American allows you to check out the Incan and Aztec point of view on the sun. Read all about their Sun deities.

"Australian Aborigine": This section is brief but rich with Aborigine legend and well worth reading about the sun and moon.

"Mesopotamia": This brings up one of my favorite legends, the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Sun. Probably first composed around 2000 BC in Sumeria Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, sets out on a quest for immortality to the Garden of the Sun, the land of everlasting life. "To reach it, Gilgamesh must pass through the Sun's gate in the mountain of the horizon. The setting Sun disappears there and emerges from it at sunrise. A pair of terrifying scorpion-people stationed at the gate of heaven guard the Sun's path. But eventually Gilgamesh gains entrance to the next level." You can even learn more about the Epic of Gilgamesh. But it also talks about Shamash the Sumerian Sun god in this section as well, who not only represented the Sun but also Justice.

Check out the myths and legends about the Sun and its role in human life by reading the sections on "Judeo-Christian" and "Other Cultures."

"Ancient Observatories": This part of the site is so cool. Check out Maya Astronomy, which not only had a reason for the sun and moon but other parts of the solar system as well. Or check out Ancient Japanese Astronomy, where you can learn their star lore and a little bit of their culture from that time. And make a little time to check out the Rock Art (paintings and buildings dedicated to astronomy or the sun) they are really neat.