



STAGE 7- AWAKENING THE GREEN WORLD

We are now in the second half of this course and I urge you to keep re-visiting all the stages and themes presented for they will keep revealing deeper truths within you. By now you will see just how incredible the knowledge conveyed through story and the Celtic traditions truly is and although fragmented is still an inexhaustible storehouse of applied, practical and relevant tradition.

The first steps have created a continued practice, a safe place to nurture yourself, guides and deities to support you with stories and steps to connect deeply with yourself and nature. The detail is always in the doing and the practices are far more important than any academic or book learning.

Now we will go to the earliest stories which explain the origins of the Tuatha de Danann which in turn will help us to connect with the earliest Bards that we have already briefly mentioned as well as the first poets and the deep creative energies of the Earth mother that we have also already touched on.

This exploration will create a foundation stone from which all further explorations can rest upon. We will find that although the stories apply to a place initially as we begin to enter the otherworldly aspects of the story the destination is not on the physical realm. Scholars and seekers alike can keep looking for the physical manifestations of the place where the Sidhe live in splendour but ultimately it is the place where we all go beyond all boundaries and limitations.

An important aspect covered in this course is where you personally enter the otherworld has a physical location you are familiar with. This is imperative to enable us to remain grounded and clear thus knowing where our inner and outer worlds meet. The concept of disappearing into faerie realms may manifest in a person who is not fully present and working to embody their spiritual work in their outer lives rather than in literal terms.

These deep mythologies contain not only deep truths but key principles which act as maps to the inner world. This means they are universal in application as I will demonstrate.

You must never follow blindly and always make sure you keep your own council and instincts. If ever you feel advice or actions to be taken are against your own ethical values or are illogical you must listen to that. The more practices that you do the more in tune you will feel with the work which will begin to feel like an extension to yourself, it is at this point you will not need to challenge or question your realisations.

Let us begin with the ultimate power in the earth, the one whose movements have been mapped on cold stone by cultures pre-dating the Celts, the indigenous roots of the land as Corra the Celtic world serpent who we introduced in stage 5.

The First Woman – The Green world awakens (based on Lebor Gabala Erenn- The Takings Of Ireland).

In the beginning was the land, the Earth Mother, the serpent living in the depths of the fire of change, renewing herself in the tormented heat of passion as the devouring Goddess bubbling up from the terrifying waters of callous deeds. A coiling, spiraling energy imprinting herself onto cold stone in the light of the moon. She is betwixt night and day and life and death.

She is in the barrow mounds, the rising hills, the stone chambers and the darkest woods, she is the circle of stone, the uneven path and the tormented chamber. She knows of no heaven or hell, higher or lower, but has tasted the succulent fruit of honeyed bliss; in islands created by women who know the secrets of healing and of entombed kings waiting.

When you cross the bridge to meet her, fear can no longer exist. The cruel laughter and dark shapes of times before disappear into the abyss and the soul is freed for eternity.

She is Banba only known by Fionntan and this is where our story starts....

Banbha, the first woman sits with her company and as they chant and connect to all of creation the first rivers and lochs burst forth and the plants cover the land in a green carpet and fill the seas with an underwater forest rich in biodiversity.

The plants take oxygen out of the atmosphere to make it available for all life forms. They harvest the energy of the sun to feed all of the world. The plants absorb water so there are no floods and release water to avoid deserts.

They store carbon deep in the earth to make the atmosphere safe for us then reach down to obtain iron and transport it to the seas to feed the underwater forests.

Finally, when they die, they create soil and give everything back.

A billion years it took for them to create these perfect conditions, a billion years to balance soil, sky and earth.

The land joyously rejoices as the first women set foot upon it, a virgin landscape yet unnamed teeming with wildlife.

The women feel the ancient forces stirring, the folding of land to form the first mountains, the first rivers that cut their way through rock and stone taking hundreds of years to sculpture a perfect landscape.

The land delights in the first women, the first sheep and the first Bard from whom this story has been told by.

A landscape so beautiful, shining like a beacon of pure bliss in the hearts of those who truly look and feel that power of harmony and joy erupting both within them and in the eternal landscape. All that is left to do is gaze, vacant and pensive absorbing creation:

'Standing here in the deep, brooding silence all the wilderness seems motionless as if the work of creation were done. But in the midst of this outer steadfastness we know there is incessant motion and change.

Insect swarms are dancing in the sunbeams, burrowing in the ground, diving, swimming- a cloud of witnesses telling nature's joy. The plants are as busy as the animals, every cell in a swirl of enjoyment, humming like a hive singing the old new song of creation.

Butterflies coloured like the flowers wavering above them in wonderful profusion and many other beautiful winged people, waltzing together high overhead, seemingly in pure play and hilarious enjoyment of their little spark of life.

The blessed birds, great and small, stirring and sweetening the groves and the happy insects filling the sky with joyous hum.'

John Muir

The landscape remains but the first women pass below as the sea rises with a tremendous roar as uncontrollable forces are unleashed from the underworld and the Fomorian giants are born.

A power rising of adamantine, titanic elements as creation unleashes a force that is unstoppable appearing in disfigured grotesque forms, part animal, part beast and all strength and malice. The chaotic beginnings of the awakening green world finding a balance.

And then the most beautiful giants appear from the depths with the fairest of skin and long golden hair wearing mantles of gold and bearing swords with gold studded hilts. From these giants comes the very word for beauty, for forever after, all that is wonderful and shines is compared to them. These are the first creative powers created by the Earth Goddess Corra who came to Ireland as Banba and now rises as Domnu giving birth to Indech, Cichol Clapperleg, Elathan, Bres, Balor, Morc and Conan.

They care not for the green pastures or rippling fresh waters but for salty deep seas and the terrifying explosive energies of Nature. They build a stronghold on Tory Island known as Balor's castle, an outpost for outlaws, sea pirates, a stronghold to exact the energy of lesser races, a glass tower to perceive all the happenings of all of Ireland. But one stray sod remains and one bard to witness the land through the ages and he exclaims:

I am Fionntan the white, son of Bochra, I shall not conceal it;
After the flood here I am a great noble sage.
Ireland – whatever is asked of me I know pleasantly,
Every taking that took her from the beginning of the tuneful world.

Glamoury- Steve Blamires.

Fionntan blends into nature as Bird and fish, the main land sleeps once again waiting for further life to witness its changes, the Green World has awakened.

Meditation 7- The green world awakens

The above story could be applied to any patch of earth you call home and this meditation is an invite for you to witness and be part of creation in your own locality. You may use some of the beautiful writings of John Muir written above to create the feeling of the perfected landscape.

You are now familiar with your own entry point into the inner worlds, a well or body of water you have been using at the beginning of your meditation. If so far the well has been in your imagination rather than a physical location begin to place the well in the centre of a landscape you are familiar with. The landscape can be a park or even a verge as well as an expanse of wilderness. The key to this meditation is it is somewhere you can visit easily in order to have an ongoing physical connection. If for any reason you are housebound then your immediate surroundings or a memory of your nearest area will also work.

As with all visualisation it is best to not force imagery that is not there so if you have a patch of land without a well or body of water you can always go to the well as your entry point separately, but please do not over think it, allow it to simply happen.

Once you have settled in visualising your sacred spot you may wish to chant:

*Ancient Mother, connect us to the plants,
Connect us to the Soil, Sea and Sky,
Banba, Domnu, Dalny, Macha**

*Nettle and dock give true nutrition,
Avens, alehoof soothe our constitution,
Plantain, self-heal, yarrow, herb robert,
Heal our wounds make us whole.*

*Agrimony, speedwell, willowherb, clover,
Clear our lungs, cough no longer,
Dandelion, burdock, purify our blood,
Wood sage for our appetite, foxglove for the heart,
Archangel for stress, it gives a good rest.*

*Ancient Mother, connect us to the plants,
Connect us to the Soil, Sea and Sky,
Banba, Domnu, Dalny, Macha*

*so far we have only introduced Banbha and Domnu, the other Goddesses will be explored in the next stages.

Now bring to mind your spot of land. What plants grow under foot? What trees grow above you? Do you know its geology and how it was formed? Focus upon the land giving it your clear attention and sending it healing love. As the story expresses all land is alive and has an indwelling spirit.

When you are ready bring your attention to your entry point whether it be a well or another body of water. You may decide to just simply enter the landscape that is before you through a doorway.

Arrive in your inner landscape and focus on its inner beauty contemplating all that the plants give to us as mentioned in the story above.

Contemplate- **'Where would be without plants?'**

As you contemplate an especial plant may come to mind, hold this plant in your heart and see it as an ally for your meditation bringing it into to focus whenever you need to relax or meditate.

As the Green world awakens let us celebrate and honour the joy of plants.

EVERYDAY TRADITION THE FIVE INVASIONS AND FIVE EXTINCTIONS

These invasion myths are fascinating for they not only do they cover an evolution of the land but also its destruction as the various attempts of creation end in disaster. When we remember that this was written before science had uncovered so much of the earth's history, it is incredible the understanding it brings of ecology and evolution.

We now know that there have been **five mass extinctions** which demonstrates this concept of whole species being wiped out is exactly how the creative powers of evolution has behaved.

These stories ironically are often called the **Five invasions of Ireland**. We will continue these stories in more detail but for now the five races in this context would be the first race of Cessair or Banbha, followed by Partholon, the Queen of which was Dalny, the Neimheadh who's Queen was Macha and then the Firbolgs and the Tuatha de Danann who we have already given much focus to and are an important constant in the Irish mythology from their arrival right through to now.

This theme of extinctions has come to light in recent times as the actions the human race has had upon the earth are becoming more and more apparent. The five mass extinctions were often to do with change in atmosphere and climate and it is the plants that are needed to stabilise these effects. Once there has been a mass extinction the remaining species will then start to thrive. As with the story above it is like a constant balancing act as creation changes and responds to how species colonise, sea levels change and volcanoes erupt. The last extinction which wiped out the dinosaurs may have come from a shower of asteroids hitting the earth.

The further theme explored in the above story is how creation reacts to change. After Banbha is taken down to the sea the Giantess Domnu gives birth to the giants which start as disfigured grotesque beings and then become the most beautiful beings ever known. This as we have already explored is how nature is, embodying all aspects of dark and light.

After each extinction or successive wave of evolution the surviving species left can then flourish, they are the ideal species to cope with the new conditions and are now free from all competition.

We may well be currently in a sixth extinction which is a process that usually happens over millions of years. The fact is this latest extinction process is happening a hundred times more quickly than the natural evolution rate.

The facts are staggering and I write them here not to induce fear but to bring us into alignment of the truth of what is happening. Today we have to be careful about the sources that we study, we have to make sure the facts have been correctly gathered and researched.

Expert scientists that are well-informed by correctly gathered research include Sir Robert Watson who is the chair of the intergovernmental platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services, Professor Kathy Willis, a plant scientist and Professor Elizabeth Hadly who is a biologist as well as the important work of Dr Toby Gardner who is a director of Transparency for Sustainable Economies.

For the first time in history scientists and economists from all over the world have assessed human activities and their global impact. Many of these experts have been aware of this crisis for at least 25 years and because of the pressure from gigantic corporations and Governments, the facts have been completely ignored.

Currently we are destroying species from all parts of the world from all different orders and classes simultaneously at the highest rates ever in history!

- In 50 years 60% of all birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles have declined.
- Twenty five percent of our plant species are threatened.
- Five hundred thousand insects are in danger.
- Thirty percent of the world's soil has been degraded and now has a low biodiversity.
- Three quarters of all our large animals have disappeared from the areas they are historically found.
- Five hundred thousand species of animal and plant species are in danger of extinction.
- The land surface has lost ninety percent of its wetlands.
- Seventy five percent of the land surface which is not covered in ice is being used for just one species.

We currently destroy about ten million hectares of Forest per year. In just 40 years we have cut a billion hectares, an area the size of Europe. How can this not have an effect when we are aware plants support our key life cycles? Our crops depend on the soil and three quarters of the world's food crops require insect pollination.

Although climate change is rapidly becoming the biggest issue we need to face, currently habitat destruction is the most serious threat driven by our consumption of mainly soy, cocoa, coffee, palm oil and beef.

The incredible facts to currently note is we do have enough cleared land to feed the world especially when you consider forty percent of our food is wasted and the solutions are economically viable creating jobs and opportunity to come out of our current world recession.

Top economists such as Professor Lord Nicolas Stern and Sir Partha Dasgupta are stating that if companies pay a high price for extracting from nature it will benefit us all creating affordable food without the need for expansion and waste. The banning of CFCs was the perfect example of how quickly industry adapted to create more environmentally friendly products.

The above information is yet another example of how the most ancient mythology is still relevant today and as we continue the story cycle we shall see that working in harmony with the planet that was expressed from what seems as early as megalithic times is paramount to the intrinsic motivation of all indigenous people from around the world.

It seems the hunter gatherer communities even today bear this out in all their actions and beliefs. The words below come directly from the voice of the Penan people from Borneo in South East Asia:

'We as Forest people have to be equal to one another. There's absolutely no one above the other. We are exactly the same.

Trees are like humans. If the really big trees die, so do all humans.

If the forest dies, humanity dies. The Forest may die.

The forest says: We are all part of the same family'

These simple words are now being conveyed by our top scientists.

When we meditate, we enter into the imaginative world of metaphor and simple but profound messages. The simple inner messages we receive can lead us into an ever-expanding knowledge of our inner worlds which go deeper into the mysteries than science is currently able to.

This distinction between science, art and practical application is very recent in our history, it wasn't that long ago that people used all the disciplines together to explore their findings.

The words above from the Penan were said to Bruce Parry who has spent time with tribes from many parts of the world. He stated the Penan despite wearing football shirts, smoking cigarettes and being Christian were one of the few remaining equalitarian societies left on earth. This equalitarian way of being is thought to have been how we as homo sapiens have lived on this earth for 90% of our time.

Despite the Penan's apparent Western influences they seemed to have an ancient mind set of equality and a feeling and longing that is reflected in the Celtic poems and stories that we have explored. They call this feeling and longing 'Tawai' and it embodies a connection to nature which is ancient and not known in our literal mindset.

The Irish tales use the word 'Glefiosa' which means the bright knowledge and this was kindled in Fionn MacCuill as discussed in stage 6 and enabled Fionn to tap into this deep connection with the web of life. Every land has its own song and words to describe this feeling of being connected to nature.

We shall continue our exploration of creation through the stories of the Lebor Gabala Erenn-
The Takings Of Ireland in the next stages.