



STAGE 8- THE EVOLUTION OF RACES.

We will now continue our story of creation unfolding through the texts of the Lebor Gabala Erenn contacting with the wisdom of the deep mythologies and what they can teach us about our connection to the natural world and how we can be in harmony with the web of life.

The story continues with:-

Dalny - the touch of the green world

The opposing chaotic forces of nature settle for no less than 300 years as the seas abate and the land greens once more as a single fertile plain. The creative forces stir as rivers burst forth into new lochs, flowers bloom, the sun shines, the moon glistens and nature once more stirs in beauty.

'The sun shines not on us but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every *fibre and cell of the substance of our bodies, making them glide and sing. The trees wave and the flowers bloom in our bodies as well as our souls, and every bird song, wind song, and tremendous storm song of the rocks in the heart of the mountains is our song, our very own, and sings our love.*'

John Muir

Dalny, she came from the south west onto the shores of Kerry, from the soft murmur that caresses the soul in beauteous awareness. She stood noble and powerful as the gentle green world flowed through her. Flowers decorated her hair and jewels shone as stars upon her soft neck and bronzed skin.

As she arrived the tundra warmed and the snow-covered lichen grazed by the reindeer gave way to taller species of plantain, mugwort and shepherd's purse. The first trees of willow and aspen stood but a foot tall yet fully formed of branches, bark and catkins. The great mount Dagdha known today as Brendan from where all pilgrimage begins rose from the roots of the earth connecting landscape to sky in ways of such harmony the breath stops; to soak in the deep power of its unfolding joy. The soft grass, the rising mountains, the magnificent shore and the expansive sky.

'All the wild world is beautiful, and it matters but little where we go, to highlands or lowlands, woods or plains, on the sea or land; through all the climates, hot or cold, storms and calms, everywhere and always we are in nature's eternal beauty and love. So universally true is this, the spot where we chance to be always *seems the best.*'

John Muir

The first ale is brewed from ferns, the first guest house opens, cooking and duelling begins in earnest, the first plains are cleared and the first cattle graze. All is in harmony. Dark forces watch from Northern lands, the sky darkens, the shadow rises, the earth shudders and the gigantic grotesque forms of disfigured giants rise once more and march to war led by Cichol Clapperleg.

They walk on single legs wielding tremendous clubs from their one arm but Dalny senses their coming long before they arrive and musters a great army who carry glistening swords and robust shields to meet the dark Fomorians with such glaring light they are forced back to their Northern territory.

Dalny and her race the Partholons live in peace and prosperity for 550 years until the restless forces of nature stir once more and disease spreads across the land. No-one survives except Tuan MacCarrill who witnesses the story of the land blending into the landscape just like Fionntan as stag, boar, eagle and salmon.

He exclaims:

*I'm Tuan MacCairill, ancient bard of old,
remembering our Celtic ancestry and the stories once told.
'I approached the caves of the hoary sleepers. I was old and decrepit.
In the cave I was born again, young and glad of heart.
I was a stag of nine tines, king of all deer,
Victory and joy were easy for me.
I witnessed all the deeds of Neimheadh.*

*I was a bristly black boar, king of all boar herds,
Faithful to any custom.
I witnessed all the deeds of the Fir Bolg.*

*I was a great eagle,
King of all the sky,
I rejoiced in youth and vigour.
I witnessed all the deeds of the Tuatha de Danann*

*I was a speckled salmon,
In a faerie pool,
Wise beyond all years.
I was eaten by the Queen of the Milesians and as a human born again.'*

Macha – Mother of races

The land sleeps once again to be awoken by Macha who comes with the people of Nemedian in her grand chariot pulled by the finest pure steeds, a raven perches on her shoulder and powerful sorcery is known to her.

She is as bright as the sun, as terrifying as the grandest of storms and she seeks gold, the shining mineral of her sovereignty. She has already lost much of her people in trying to capture gold and she now descends upon the North of Erin to fight victoriously against the monstrous Fomorian giants.

The Hosts of Faery

White shields they carry in their hands,
With emblems of pale silver;
With glittering blue swords,
With mighty stout horns.

In well-devised battle array,
Ahead of their fair chieftain
They march amid blue spears,
Pale-visaged, curly-headed bands.

They scatter the battalions of the foe,
They ravage every land they attack,
Splendidly they march to combat,
A swift, distinguished, avenging host!

No wonder though their strength be great:
Sons of queens and kings are one and all;
On their heads are
Beautiful golden-yellow manes.
With smooth comely bodies,
With bright blue-starred eyes,
With pure crystal teeth.

Good they are at giant-slaying,
Melodious in the ale-house,
Masterly at making songs,
Skilled at playing fidchell.

Translated by: Kuno Meyer (1858-1919)

She knows no fear, outnumbered but determined she wins through and they settle in Erin. The land greets and welcomes them as new lakes burst forth and more fertile plains are formed.

Yet once again plague begins to spread, the giants overcome them and Ireland is laid waste:

‘Myriads of rejoicing living creatures, daily, hourly, perhaps every moment sink into death’s arms, dust to dust, spirit to spirit-waited on, watched over, noticed only by their Maker, each arriving at its own Heaven-dealt destiny. All the merry dwellers of the trees and streams, and the myriad swarms of the air, called into life by the sunbeam of a summer morning, go home through death, wings folded perhaps in the last red rays of sunset of the day they were first tried. Trees towering in the sky, braving storms of centuries, flowers turning faces to the light for a single day or hour, having enjoyed their share of life’s feast-all alike pass on and away under the law of death and love. Yet all are our brothers and they enjoy life as we do, share Heaven’s blessings with us, die and are buried in hallowed ground, come with us out of eternity and return into eternity. Our lives are rounded with a sleep.’

Macha and her companions however do survive and escape to other lands and create other races.

From Macha is born the great early races of the Britons who inhabit the land of Albion, the Fir Bolgs or Belgae tribe who travel to Greece and become slaves and finally the third race of the Tuatha de Dannan who go to the far Northern lands to hone their skills in magic, science, and in all the arts and crafts of the world.

Now from the plains the trees shoot up as the climate warms quickly from the heat of the sun. Birch appears first, growing in open, more infertile acid soils producing nitrogen rich leaves, which feed and de-acidify the soil. Birch has a shorter life span than many forest trees and is less tolerant of shade so she paves the way for future successions of trees, and over time the forests dominate the landscape.

Now this land is known as- **The Island of the Woods.**

Meditation 8- Macha- Mother of Races.

In our last meditation we connected to the plants and creation through the four women of power Banba, Domnu, Dalny, Macha. We shall now continue to connect with these powerful sources through our connection to the trees.

In this meditation we shall call to the ancient Father in the form of the Dagdha to connect with the trees.

The Dagdha as we have already explored caresses the seasons into being by the music that he plays on his harp made of oak. He has a huge pronged club which can both take and give life. He has many titles including the Father of Many and the Good God. The word 'good' relating to his skills rather than his character. He has a huge presence with a large red beard and an ability to build raths (circular earthen walls forming an enclosure for the tribal chief) in a single day. This means he not only maintains the farming lands but builds the dwellings for the Sidhe chieftains. As the father of Brigit and lover of the Morrigan he is connected to the most potent and powerful forms of the Earth Mother.

As a key chieftain to the Sidhe it can be a surprise that he is mocked as a deity wearing clothes that do not fit and eating porridge by the bucketful. This is the Dagdha as the trickster or fool in the old stories mocking authority and hierarchy, lightening our moods to become more receptive and tricking our minds to enlighten our souls and find true wisdom.

In the works of Fiona MacLeod she speaks of Dalua who becomes a fool as he enters our world and then in his world he is a being of such immense power all beings fear him as the one who creates illusion.

Maybe our greatest enemy is illusion for it limits our souls so we cannot see the truth?

We shall call to the Dagdha once more with a focus on the trees:

*Good God Dagdha, connect us to the trees,
Connect us to the Soil, Sea and Sky.*

*Alder, ash, aspen, black poplar, bird, wild cherry and beech
Common and sessile oak, box, crab apple, silver, downy birch and maple
Small, large leaved lime, midland and common thorn, whitebeam, wild service and rowan,
Pine, strawberry tree, holly, hornbeam, hazel, juniper and elm.
Crack, white, bay, goat willow, plymouth, wild pear and yew.*

*Good God Dagdha, connect us to the trees,
Connect us to the Soil, Sea and Sky,*

*Beithe, Luis, Fearn, Sail, Nion, Huath, Duir, Tinne, Coll, Quert, Muin, Gort, Ngetal, Straiph, Ruis,
Ailm, Onn, Ur- Heather, Eadhadh, Idhadh.**

*(Birch, Rowan, Alder, Willow, Ash, Hawthorn, Oak, Holly, Hazel, Apple, Vine, Broom,
Blackthorn, Elder, Pine, Gorse, Heather, Aspen, Yew)*

**Ogham names as mentioned in stage 5*

We enter the wild ancient woodlands....

Now imagine going deeper into the memories of the land, to a time when the land was only
just forming.

The first woman Banbha steps upon the land and it greets her with delight, the land folds,
mountains form, rivers burst forth and a green carpet covers the landscape.

The water's rise and Banbha is taken down into the depths of salty water to rise again as
Domnu giving birth to the giants who represent the early people and the elemental powers of
the Earth.

Dalny comes from the south west and her gentle strength creates more lochs and rivers to burst forth but then plague takes her back into the depths to resurface as Macha, the mother of races who comes forth from the North challenging the giants on a chariot decorated with gold, a raven upon her shoulder and the confidence of a warrior. She gives birth to the races of the Fir bolg, Tuatha de Danaan and the Britons before going back into the depths of the Earth as the Earth Mother of all.

Meditate on this early stirring of creation and the early races subdued by nature's forces. Meditate on our origins as a shared ancestry and how the land feels as she responds to our actions.

Re-read the story above if you would like to, remembering the details of this evolution of the land which could be applied to any of the countries or continents across the world.

EVERYDAY TRADITION

We have explored woodlands many times throughout our courses and our tree folklore course covers the history and evolution of woods. Here it is enough to say Britain and Ireland were indeed covered in woodland and in the next stage I shall introduce the early woodland dwellers who were also the pioneers of early farming.

The giants remain as a constant and it is only through other races that they are affected rather than any natural disaster. The next two races after the giants introduced above are wiped out through plague. Macha of the Nemedian manages to survive giving birth to the next three races which settle in Ireland and Britian.

Plague is a difficult subject to address especially at this time but has played a key part many times throughout history. This theme was briefly mentioned in stage 6 and in Celtic lore seems to indicate it is something that happens when things are out of balance.

This again re-enforces how story addresses extremely real issues and the core themes that come from them.

Did our ancestors know there were thousands of viruses locked up in our eco-systems and that when we disturb this delicate balance they are released? They expressed this in story in the form of disfigured giants and demons arising from the depths. Are these corrective forces or unleashed powers that come about when we disturb natural order?

Our scientists have known for at least 20 years that human activity is driving many of our emerging pandemics and that habitat destruction is responsible for at least 30% of our emerging diseases.

Pathogens are mainly spread from smaller species such as bats, mice and rats which breed at high rates when not kept in check. As we destroy habitats and make the top predators extinct these species are not kept in check.

When we destroy a habitat to grow crops we expose ourselves to disease bringing ourselves into closer contact with species that we wouldn't normally be so close to. Then we usually build a transport network to deliver the product and inadvertently spread the pathogens beyond their usual geographical limits .

Current research is estimating that five new emerging diseases are appearing every year, if we only have a severe outbreak every ten years we would not be able to sustain the results of such an outbreak.

As explored in the last stage we have the solutions they just need to be applied.

As individuals on a spiritual path we can limit our own impact and campaign when necessary. However I feel it is important not to underestimate our efforts of studying and practicing our chosen tradition.

These facts if we choose them to be can be empowering rather than depressing for we can then be part of the solution enabling our small actions to tap into the whole.

From a holistic perspective we do not rely on definite results to be in harmony with life but accept the opposing forces and the destiny that unfolds from them whilst still playing our own part.

We will continue with the evolution of these opposing forces as the stories explore the acceptance and sharing of resources between invading races and how this relates to our current situations today.