

## Rite of Dana

by Olivia Robertson

(This ritual has been updated by the author from the original 1992 rite.)

### RITE OF DANA Initiation of a Candidate as Companion of the DCD

*An outdoor grove is preferable but a room in a city is accepted. The Grove Goddess may be of any race or tradition. Let there be a Dolmen Altar, a spring or cauldron of water, a bonfire or burning charcoal. Companions wear many-coloured hooded robes, gold lunulae and Druidesses carry wands, Druids, staffs. All wear chaplets of leaves. The Triad: Archdruidess, Archdruid and Bard wear three gold bars of light above brow on headdress. Candidate outside Temple is in white. Druidess and Druid on either side.*

**ARCHDR:** Who seeks entry to our Sacred Grove of \* \* \*?

**BARD:** One who seeks initiation into our Mysteries.

**ARCHDR:** Let the Candidate undergo three trials.

*(Bard leads Candidate to a gateway, entrance to labyrinth, Druidess and Druid on either side.)*

**BARD:** *(to Can.)* Are you willing to undergo the Initiation of the Morrigan?

**CAN:** With the Morrigan's help I am.

*(The Oracle sits at the entrance of the gateway, veiled in black.)*

### ORACLE OF THE GODDESS MORRIGAN

**INVOCATION:** Holy Goddess Morrigan, Divine Maiden of the source of life, wife of the God Dagda, Goddess of full rivers, the Black Crow when the rivers divide, help us to face this initiation!

**ORACLE:** “Dark and forbidding are the three mighty portals of the Underworld which you call earth! The maiden sheds her blood to give birth. The Great Queen rules with severity and compassion. The Ancient One, the Black Crow, gives her life that Her Daughter, the tributary, may share with Her the onrush of life into the oceans of starry space.

“So many of you in these days of luxury wish to enjoy ease and comfort, from youth to old age. You seek to cure all ills, provide yourself with food and shelter with little work, and above all, to escape from suffering.

“But every stage in your life’s journey entails suffering. When you are young, you are tortured by unrequited love! When you are at the height of your powers, you are bitter at lack of success. What can be more dreadful, as you grow old, as the prospect of relegation to some easeful but boring institution, deprived of creativity, health and hope!

“But if you submit to My rule, that of the Fates, you will have the benefit of My own experiences when I incarnate on earth. Your love will never be unrequited – because you love all. Your success is assured, because the only satisfaction you seek will be to enjoy the Divine reality all around you. As for old age – it will not exist for you. For with Me you shall live joyfully in Tir na NOg, the Land of Everlasting Youth.”

*(While the Oracle is recovering from trance, the Sponsor of the Candidate or the Arch/Druidess of the Grove gives a magical journey through the 3 Dolmen Gateways through the Underworld, ruled by the Maiden, the Queen and the Enchantress.)*

**BARD:** You must pass through Her magical Dolmen, Gateway of the Sidhe.

*(Druidess places white veil over woman candidate, or Druid a white hood over head and face of man so vision is obscured. Arch/Druidess places her hands over Candidate's head and face so that cold tingling may be felt down spine and violet light seen. Candidate is led through gateway. SILENCE.)*

**BARD:** The second trial is that of Dana. You must tread Her labyrinth with calm mind and heart. Are you willing?

**CAN:** With Dana's blessing, I am.

*(Arch/Druidess passes hand over Candidate until power is felt in heart and gold light is seen. Candidate is led through the labyrinth moving alternately on the serpent paths of Sun and Moon on left until the centre is reached. SILENCE. )*

**BARD:** You are at the heart of the Labyrinth.

*The Arch/Druidess now queries the Candidate on his/her choice of Soul Friend – totem guide – among trees and plants, insects, reptiles, birds, animals and Spirit Guides. The chosen Soul Friend thus will act as Guide and Guardian.*

*(The Oracle sits at the center of the labyrinth and is veiled in blue.)*

## **ORACLE OF THE GODDESS DANA**

**INVOCATION:** Divine Dana, we cannot live happily without hope. Be present with us, during our arduous pilgrimage through life's labyrinth, smoothing our way with joy, laughter and love.

**ORACLE:** “You need to return to your roots in order to grow! It is through love of those living with you that you attain a wider love, and not through spurning your family! It is from your children that you may again learn the language of birds and trees, and through your grandparents that you may hear the music of the spheres!

“As you develop the magical language of the Angels, you will find your own spiritual family. It comprises humans, Deities, Nature Spirits, animals, trees and stones, not only on this planet but from the stars. Such families are as constellations in the great galaxy. My Tuathe De Danann came from the sky, yet also dwell within the hidden sun at earth's matrix. The Golden Age shines about you, resplendent in the matriarchal darkness. Naught is alien when all is known and loved. You are kin to all beings in the cosmos and all are kin to Me.”

*(While the Oracle is recovering, the Sponsor or Grove Arch/Druidess gives a magical journey through the spirals of earth and nature spirits, moon, sun and stars and the Deities thereof.)*

**BARD:** Now face your third and final ordeal of Brighid's Well. Can you face the Goddess Herself?

**CAN:** With Brighid's inspiration, I am willing.

*(Candidate is led before small cell before which is a spring or cauldron of water. Arch/Druidess anoints Candidate's brow with water until silver power and light are experienced. Candidate is led into a room and left alone, door shut behind him/her. Candidate faces Oracle in white veil covering her face and body. She is in trance.)*

### **ORACLE OF THE GODDESS BRIGHID**

**INVOCATION:** White-veiled Bride, Inspirer of all who work in the crafts, Warrior Queen, bestower of the Eternal Flame, inspire us in our work for our Druid Clan!

**ORACLE:** “You cannot do well by the Clan if you do not do well for your own self! You do not help your people and your own particular land by ignoring the rest of the world. When you seek inspiration, you need clear aim and dedication, yet must bear in mind the welfare of those who follow differing paths.

“The misfortune of this unhappy planet is division. You divide obedient sheep from wild goats: sinners from the righteous: those who agree with you from those who disagree, and therefore deemed wrong. And this is the heavy burden of humanity, for each has a spark from My eternal flame which you guard passionately, jealously, adoringly. Some call this Ego – but Ego is good: it is a seed, an egg! But this divine gift of individuality, creates the mad scientist, the eccentric idealist, the dissident, the warrior. For in verity I am the soul of eccentricity! When you receive a wild idea, a heresy, a sudden inspiration, follow this with all your heart, mind and soul. But balance this with the knowledge that your enemies, the establishment, the opposition, the tyrants, the power hungry, are also inspired by Me!

“The time has come for you to awaken your psychic gifts, especially telepathy. Then you will realise other people’s point of view. You will rejoice in the diversity of the cosmos. For although the Divine Archetypes, the Cosmic Rays you call Deities are specialists and so have their reverse aspects, we the Helpers are the Rainbow Ones like yourselves.”

*(As the Oracle recovers from trance, the Sponsor or Arch/Druidess gives a magical journey into the many-coloured lands of Hy Brasil, Elyseum, Paradise, Amenti, Arcadia, or Valhalla.)*

*(Candidate is led from the labyrinth to the Dolmen Altar. Veil or hood is removed.)*

**ARCHDR:** My friend, what did you experience with the Dolmen Gateway and the Oracle of Morrigan?

Candidate gives report.

**ARCHDRS:** What was your experience when you trod the Labyrinth and heard the Oracle of Dana?

Candidate gives report.

**ARCHDRS:** What did you experience with the waters and Oracle of Brigid? Candidate gives report.

**ARCHDR:** Companions, do you accept this Candidate as Companion of our Grove of \* \* \* in the Druid Clan of Dana?

*(Those who agree lift wands or staffs. Acceptance must be unanimous.)*

**ARCHDR:** *(to Candidate)* We accept you!

**BARD:** *(Raises staff in N.)* I invoke the Goddess Brigid and the God Lir, May inspiration and Creativity be bestowed!

**ARCHDRS:** *(Raises wand in N.E.)* I invoke the Goddess Dana and the God Manannan. Let love and joy be with us!*(Raises wand/staff in E.)* I invoke the Goddess Morrigan and the God Dagda! May we be wise in all magic! *(BARD places lunula round Candidate's neck)* In the Name of Brigid, wear this lunula. It is in the shape of the moon and of the metal of the sun. Bring harmony through arts and crafts.

**ARCHDRS:** *(Crowns Candidate with chaplet of leaves)* In the Name of Dana I crown you! Bring love and happiness to all beings whose lives touch yours.

**ARCHDR.** *(Presents wand/staff)* In the Name of the Morrigan I present you with this wand/staff. Use its magical power with strength and compassion.

**BARD.** *(Throws herbal incense on fire.)* We offer incense to the Goddess \* \* \*, and her consort \* \* \* of this Grove! You are her kin.

*(Companions embrace new Druid/ess and present tokens as gifts. MUSIC. A shaman journey or pathworking of the Grove's tradition may be given: or this Irish Magical Journey be undertaken.)*

**BARD:** Companions, who long to travel to the Many-coloured Land, hear how the Fenians of Eire discovered a Hill of the Sidhe! 'We hunters roused a beautiful skittish wild fawn at Tory,' said Caelte, 'and we chased him to the mountains of Aighe, and the fawn went head-first underground there! And a great heavy snow fell, so that it made the crest of the wood into twisted wickerwork. And Finn said to me: 'Caelte, will you find shelter for us this night from the storm that is here?' And as I searched around I found a Faery Hill brightly lit! And I spied a doorway in the side of the hill. I made my way into that hill, and I found myself in a mighty Hall! And I seated myself upon a crystal chair. I saw that there were twenty eight warriors on one side of that Hall, and a lovely damsel was beside every man of them. And on the other side of the Hall were six gentle young maidens with woolen cloaks about their shoulders. And a damsel was seated on a throne, and she had a harp in her hand which she was playing sweetly. And I told them all that Finn, son of Cumhall, desired lodging and food for the night in their Hill of the Sidhe. Then one of the warriors spoke. He said: 'Go, Caelte of my soul, and fetch Finn son of Cumhall, for no man was ever turned away from Finn's door; and so he shall not be turned away from us!' Then I went forth and brought Finn into the Hill. And all of us spent the night there with merriment, music and friendship!'

**ARCHDRS:** Companions, let us have the joy of introducing our new Druid/ess to the Land of Heart's Desire. Once the path is known it is always open to us.

## **MUSIC.**

**ARCHDRS:** Let us through dance create Manannan's Magic Wheel that travels through time and place!

*(Spiral Dance in which a shining sphere is created psychically round the company.)*

**ARCHDRS:** We must make a still hub within the wheel that we may travel therein!

*(Crystal hub is created through dance.)*

**ARCHDRS:** Let us sit in a circle with eyes shut, the better to see with inner vision. Behold, our Guide appears amongst us. She is the lovely Niamh who guided Oisín to Tir na nÓg, Land of Immortality. She bears the sign thereof, a silver branch from which hang three melodious golden apples! She moves her hand and the wheel begins to whirl around us, at ever increasing speed. \* \* \* We see glorious colours and hear beautiful music. \* \* \* In silence we enter the Land of our Heart's Desire.

## **SILENCE.**

*(After about 15 minutes, Archdruidess brings companions back in Manannan's Wheel now rotating in reverse direction slower and slower. On return to Earth Niamh bids farewell and the wheel is dissolved through dance.)*

Reports are shared and Rays of Love, Joy and Wisdom are sent forth to all Beings. Thanks are given to the Deities. Feast is celebrated in honour of new Companion.

## **End of Rite.**

RECOMMENDED READING: "Lebor Gabala Erenn", trans. Macalister, Irish Texts Society. "General History of Ireland", Keating, trans. O'Connor, pub. Duffy. "Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race", Rolleston, Harrap. "A Celtic Miscellany", trans. Hurlstone Jackson, Routledge and Kegan Paul. "The Candle of Vision." "The Avatars." "Song and its Fountains.", AE., MacMillan. "The Crock of Gold." "The Demi-Gods," James Stephens, MacMillan. "Verse Plays", W.B. Yeats.

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