

Gaea, Initiations of the Earth

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Part I Introduction: Elemental Initiation

As we search for a better world amidst the death-bringing civilisation that is poisoning us, we seek once more for the very Nature we are desecrating. The great world religions have brought us spirituality; but it is to small things we turn when we long for the Earth Mother: a stream flowing at the end of our garden, now under an asphalt car-park: a tree in which we used to make a tree house, later felled to make way for road-widening: a river too polluted for fish to swim in.

We have been taught to despise the earth. The mind of man has devised ethical systems in which Nature is exploited by intellectual robots who have lost touch with their own souls. So the young, the psychic, the dreamers seek refuge in fairy stories of happy lands amidst the stars, beneath the oceans, in hollow mountains where they will find release from greed, cruelty and boredom.

The myths of the British Isles and Europe have been ignored, yet these should provide milk to sustain the soul. Every year police guard Stonehenge from hundreds of people who wish to greet the Summer Solstice sun as did their forebears. Compared with the living panorama of the great Indian religions, Europeans and white Americans are starved of communion with the Nature Spirits of their countryside. Possibly this very attrition led to the restlessness that has created scientific, political and financial empires. The East, especially China, has been converted to Western technological materialism: the West has turned to Palestine for religion. This faith, though teaching peace and compassion, has taught its followers to reject indigenous nature religions as "Heathern".

Western empires are crumbling under stress. The veil between the ether and matter is becoming thin. So we seek for prophets and visionaries to light our way toward the new Aeon. One of these took the name of Aeon: AE. He was George Russell, one of the greatest Irish mystics and seers. He had the gift of seeing Gods and Goddesses in Their Bodies of Light, communed with Them, learnt from Them. Because he also wrote of Them and painted Them, he had a profound effect on his contemporaries at the turn of this century. He brought authenticity to the Gaelic Pagan revival and was a friend of W.B. Yeats and James Stephens, poets of the Gods. He also attuned the Atlantean Path with Hinduism and was friend of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian mystic and poet. He brought new understanding of the Star Beings and dwellers in the interior of our own earth. He deeply venerated the Earth Mother Who Herself manifested to him.

Medieval theologians who, like their eastern contemporaries, worked on the ladder of Light theology, regarded Heaven as up in the sky, a place of Light.

Hell, they taught, was an underground place of punishment, ruled by a Horned Devil with cloven hoofs, ruling over such subjects as red demons, weird monsters, and plenty of human sinners. Thus hell was populated with embodied phobias of schizophrenics, none the more pleasant for that. Who would dwell in the mind of those who make video "nasties?" But the noble mind of AE presented a totally different insight into earth's interior, one of resplendent beauty.

AE saw in vision the Palaces of the Sidhe, nature Spirits, beneath the earth's crust. To them, as to himself, solid rock was transparent. And deeper still, within the hidden sun of earth's matrix, on thrones of light, reigned Gods and Goddesses. Nowadays we know scientifically that the inner sun of earth is as hot as the

exterior of the sun itself. Hence only those Beings with perfected solar bodies may dwell within the earth's matrix. Thus the chakras - psychic centres of the planet are within her, and these indeed are earth's treasures, glorious in rainbow colours. We through Initiation of the earth may attain use of our own bodies of Light. We too shall enter earth's inner sun and gaze at the stars through transparent magma and rock.

The Initiation of the four Sacred Elements of earth form part of the experience of all lands, of all faiths. Children can recognise the separate identity of earth that they stand upon, air that they breathe, fire that burns, water that they drink. Initiation may involve the Vedic Elemental Gods of India and the Elemental Deities of Egypt, China, Greece. The hero may be Gilgamesh of Babylon, Faran of Africa, or Psyche, heroine of Hellas. The expansion of consciousness through harmonising body, feeling, mind and soul is the same. Not for nothing are Hindu Deities shown with four arms!

In May 1989, a young American, Douglas R., knocked at our castle door and asked my brother Lawrence to bestow on him the Accolade of Knighthood. He was a member of the Fellowship of Isis, but we had not met him before. He explained that he wished to found an Order of Chivalry with the intention of conserving nature. His first aim was to help cleanse the Irish sea of pollution from nuclear waste. He said: "Why should the British have all the good things? Why shouldn't ordinary people be Knights and Dames?"

My brother and I considered the idea, and agreed to be Chancellors of Douglas' proposed Noble Order of Tara. The Chief Herald of Ireland had matriculated Lawrence as 21st Baron Strathloch in 1979, so he had the authority of bestowing knighthood through his baronial Court. I felt we certainly had the right setting for a very enterprising project! A dragon from the film "Excalibur" graced our courtyard. Within the Castle was an eight-foot high statue of the Archangel Raphael, facing a wooden dragon carved by my nephew David. A Chinese screen above the entrance stairs depicted a rampant golden dragon. Higher up the stairs was a large painting of a golden curled, smiling Archangel Michael wielding a sword with the St. George's parry, piercing it through a prone hairy man with a bristling black beard. Throughout the basement we had a Temple of Isis with side chapels, a magical well, a dungeon and assorted armoury. Therefore we could magically be transformed into a Castle of the Danaans, of the Graal, of the Well at the World's End.

Why do many people long in their hearts for Romantic adventure? The World is the many-coloured mantle of dreams which we wrap about our earth, with background the sighings of winds, the call of seagulls and the barking of dogs hunting in their sleep. The world has been created by the imagination of our forebears. What we think, feel and imagine now, if we act upon it, will make our future. Our intention to save the earth is good. But people striving for green objectives cannot work without inspiration and hope. Nothing stifles the ardent soul more than bureaucracy. Opposing a County Council is harder than fighting a dragon. The humblest ecological project requires Divine Guidance and the co-operation of nature Spirits. To do this we need telepathic communion with Deities through the magic of associative symbols.

With this in mind, Lawrence and I arranged the Tara ceremony, and offered the motto "pro Dea et Natura" alongside Douglas' "as an bhean O Tara." Lawrence pointed out that the name Tara came from the Goddess Tea or Tephí who presides over Ireland's royal mound and her Stone of Destiny. The Stone of rulership of every land is in the aegis of the Earth Goddess.

Before our ceremony I had to find a sword. I thought this would be easy as we used to have a fan of swords that had been taken down after two young men had fought a duel after a rather wild wedding. During our idealist "sixties" period all swords and other weapons had been banished. So Lawrence and I searched in a dirty old workshop of great length and darkness, filled with every sort of debris. We had to use torches. There was no sword. Finally I found one, and triumphantly drew it from its scabbard and brandished it. There was no blade, only a short shaft of wood. I could have cried. So much for pacifism. My brother left, and I searched frantically. My groping hands came upon a rusted scabbard. This was a

heavy broad-sword. I brought it into the light of day and attempted to draw it. It was immovably rusted up. So much for the Establishment. It was too set in its ways. I searched again. After a long while groping around by the light of my torch, my hand closed on a hilt. This was my third sword! I came into the light of day covered with dirt and cobwebs, like the Morrigan in her Macha-Crow form! I drew the sword with a flourish, and a great long curving blade gleamed in the light.

I examined the blade, seeking for guidance; by the hilt was engraved the Star of David. So this was Michael's sword, as depicted in our painting! I turned over the blade and lower down was, as beseeemed the Rifle brigade, the Royal Crown of England. So I held Excalibur.

That evening Douglas held vigil over the Sword in the Temple of Isis before the High Altar. I was with him when the Goddess appeared to him and said: "In you am I well pleased. This is the Time. It is now." So I knew that the Order was accepted and that Douglas was Premier of it.

The ceremony began from our ruined Abbey of Dana and made its way to the castle gateway, before which stood the Guardian with his halberd barring the way. Representing the World, was our friend the Count. He was Count of the Holy Roman Empire, an ancient Vatican title and a Knight of Malta, also a Catholic Order. He did not officially represent either, but helped us as a well-wisher. He was able to give us much information as to the ethos of such ceremonies. The first part of the Rite was conducted round the well, and I enjoyed myself plunging the sword into the well, and drawing it three times in the water! There were no vows; instead, dedication to the intention. The earthly elements were not conquered but absorbed. The Deities of the Land were offered incense in honour of Their Divinity. Direct spiritual Power was channelled through the Priestess's hands from, the Goddess, to empower the candidate for his work.

When we are inspired by the Deities of the land, that which appears impossible may come to pass. We may yet save rain forests, oceans, the atmosphere, from destruction and pollution. However, small projects also matter. The efforts of knights, dames and companions of a Chapter to save a pool, a grove of trees, a field, contribute to the whole beautiful dream of Gaea for Her Earth, which will therefore manifest in the future. We shall ourselves be part of that future To commune with the Earth Goddess is to love one's Mother, and so share in her Divine Creation.

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