

[The Celts, Part II](#)

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Over the past 100 years a frothy resurgence of Celt spirituality has emerged, karmically timed with a renaissance of pure Vedic religion in India-the Arya Samaj, for instance. While in Europe, Swami Vivekananda once said of a lady devotee that she had the spirit of a Celt. The parallels [see Part I for a side-by-side comparison] between Celt and Vedic religion are remarkable, nearly twin DNA's. Our study continues:

Four thousand years ago summers drew very long with short, hot nights, the autumn turned ruddy quickly and the winter snows drifted light. Perfect traveling weather. Decade after decade. The tribes of the Celts slogged through swamplands, forded rivers and streams, hiked mountain passes and tracked through tall oak-and-pine forests. They settled meadowlands, alpine and river-fed-always near water for the sanctity of their rectangular tree-grove temples (called nemetons) and personal ablutions. Timber and stone villages were layed out, every aspect revolving around the nemeton and their spiritual worldview. Fire ceremonies held daily in public and at home, followed a precise moon calendar that navigated auspicious and inauspicious days and hours. The druids formed courts, set up clinics, astronomical study sites and training schools in intellectual and spiritual attainments. The Celt tribes led a town life, just as we do in the 1990's, and the Vedic Hindus 3,300 years ago. But these towns could move. No wealth was put into grand and expensive architecture like the Greek cities. Most of the Celt wealth was portable, wearable, and they could build a rudimentary town in weeks. Some Celt tribes moved constantly. Others rooted, constructing to stay: a timber/stone metropolis for 10,000 in the wetlands of the Danube River, a city spinning the economic hub of fast-moving trade with Greece, Rome and Persia.

The intellectual and spiritual pinnacle of the Celt society were the druids, the secretive, mysterious order of wisdom seekers that enchanted the Greeks and Romans and enthrall us today. In the Celt universe, everything in body, nature, mind, stellar space, time and otherworlds-either friend or fiend-was interconnected

by a web of spiritual force and purpose. The druids were guides, invokers and protectors on the web. The invisible worlds-where humans went at death, and reincarnated from at birth-were as real as earth. Capital punishment for criminals was to be ritually killed as part of a reincarnation sacrifice.

Druids are a unique spiritual phenomenon, their only counterparts are the rishi seers and brahmins of ancient India. The Greeks, who managed to bring yogis back from India to Athens, rarely saw, let alone conversed with, druids. The Romans only witnessed them at a distance, including Julius Caesar, who in his long war campaigns in Europe made observations on the Celts. One Greek historian's eyewitness description of an old, bearded druid has him draped in a white, cowled cloak, wielding a sacred gold sickle to harvest a branch of mistletoe from an old oak tree. The woolen cowled cloaks were an insignia of druidship-though not always white-as were triple-ended staffs and other talismans embossed with chariot wheel, swastika or triple-swirl symbols. The white robes may have been reserved for the most sagely, psychic druids, called uates. Their hair swept long, often braided or curled in a topknot.

Though each druid entered by birth a specific Celt tribe, they weren't bonded to it. They could roam at will, cross from Britain to Bavaria unmolested and be honored and utilized by any Celt tribe. They were exempt from taxes and from warfare, but taught warriors breathing and chanting techniques to induce a battle-trance and high body heat, a sign of psychic energy. Foreigners who visited Celt towns never saw the druids living as part of the community-nor were they permitted to see where the women congregated. The druids must have lived in austere timber cloisters, similar to an ashram, keeping their own company and ways except when duty or happenstance beckoned. There was a community of priestesses who lived on an island off of Ireland.

Depending on his advancement and personal bent, druids served as enlightened seer, nemeton priest, judge, king's counselor, keeper by memory of the sagas and laws, bard, healer, astronomer, alchemist. But, as far as is known, the druids were not a hereditary caste. Neither was the brahmin caste in India strictly in its genesis. Boys from any caste could be chosen or accepted for Vedic training. The criteria were character and spiritual propensity, rather than birth. There is no record of married druids and the psychic power of celibacy was bodily cached by them. A druid candidate was hand-picked from the cream of the Celts, and could come from any class: a boy of intelligence, sharp memory, peaceful nature and perhaps dreamy or even visionary eyes. There was undoubtedly a whole list of signs. He entered a world that is still cloaked to us: twenty arduous years of training under

various masters in the druid mental/science powers, and if he showed ability, in the spiritual/ psychic arts. As a key cosmology of the fire sacrifice rituals, the druid apprentices identified their organic bodies with levels of earth, space and innerworlds. Each time the nemeton fires were lit, the druids psychically participated in the sacrificial creation of the cosmos. Because of resolute secrecy, we have no real window into these long apprenticeship years: their exact initiation stages, physical regimen, diet or sleep patterns or memory techniques. We don't know if they changed masters or moved to different locales for specialized training.

Druids sought successive levels of meditative ecstasy, and, according to some scholars there is symbolic representation of kundalini rising-a swimming or leaping salmon fish is one. From the old Irish bard-training schools (which evolved out of the druid system) young lads were kept in all-night vigils in pitch blackness, lying on their backs with a weighty stone on the stomach to foster deep diaphragmatic breathing. Their goal was to achieve clairvoyance and sagely poetry. From the Celt metalwork and sculpture, we know special yogic sitting postures were utilized for spiritual purpose.

Speech was not merely a medium of communication, but a power unto itself; a principle known and used by the Vedic Hindus. Words-used like mantra spells -could transmute nature's laws as well as alter a man's mind or character. To the druids, things in threes were impregnated with power. There were triple-headed deities, the three cauldrons of knowledge (cauldrons were an important metaphor), and the druids spoke often in rhythmic triple sayings: worship the Gods, no injustice done, manly behavior maintained.

The Celts, after a 2,500-year history, were incinerated by the dragon of karma-the Roman/Catholic hegemony. The druid magic could not repel it. Even the Irish and Scots abandoned the old, old harmonies of fire sacrifice and cosmic seership, of Gods and Goddesses, of evolutionary interweaving of nature, fairies, beasts, demons, man, astral humanity and the pantheon of deities.

Stonehenge

Before the Celts bestrode Europe, another cluster of advanced societies lived there. Little is known of them. But what they left behind is among the most intriguing of human accomplishments. In England, there are the megalithic stone ceremonial observatories, including Stonehenge. Astronomer Gerald Hawkins has

shown Stonehenge is an astronomical calculating machine, capable of yielding an array of accurate data on the moon orbital cycles, and precisely setting the equinoxes. Scholars believe the Celt druids learned and utilized these instruments.