



Dragon Activity: Marrying the Land

This ancient European Ceremony was practiced for many centuries to ensure that the People and the Earth would be in balance, health and harmony. Ours is the first contemporary community that we know of, who have reclaimed and recreated this ritual for the 21st Century.

The Autumn Equinox is a time of balance as the Sun “stands still” and signifies a time of equal Day, equal Night, equal Masculine, equal Feminine, equal Dark, equal Light and the requirement for a commitment to balance between Humans and the Earth.

At the Vinotok Harvest Feast, in the beginning of the All-Community Handfasting ceremony this Wedding with the Earth Ritual is performed with the chosen Leader, our beloved Green Man and a mature woman and healer who embodies the Earth Goddess in the form of *Sovereignty*.

Sovereignty is the force of Nature who must be obeyed. She is the divine Feminine Wisdom figure who stands as the ultimate, and independent maker of Earth destiny, requiring compassionate reciprocity between humans and the Land. She alone decides how this balance is to be established. If humans lose their way, raping and pillaging Sovereignty’s Lands, she retaliates by creating the **Wasteland**. This is the ultimate suffering for humanity, and may only be healed when kinship and honorable service is reestablished with the Earth. As the Green Man honors her, so shall the people join in honoring her laws.

Sovereignty enters the gathered community singing an ancient love song, beckoning the Green Man and the community to join her in a beloved and powerful ceremony.

When we ennoble the personhood of all species and life-forms, exalting all of her Lands, we are courting the Earth in our dedication to the spirit of Place and our valley home. As we establish our compassionate kinship and serve her we can be said to Marry the Land, to promise to make our pledges to the Earth as we preserve and protect the fragile balance of health in our environment.

As Sovereignty beckons the Green Man she bids him and all of the men who wish to kneel before her to pledge his Oath.



The Ceremony

Gather a chalice or goblet of sweet pure water and a cup of Earth.

Write your vows, promises, commitments to the Earth for the coming Year and a Day.

These can best be drawn from your Journaling activities which are written during Vinotok week. (See the vinotok.org Walking the Way Pilgrimage instructions).

Create Sacred Space. Choose a special place in Nature as your wedding bower. Make a circle identifying each of the 4 Directions with a small altar of stones, natural totems, biodegradable offerings that can feed birds, animals, the Earth.

Don Regalia. Sovereignty loves natural beauty! Wear clothing that makes you feel wonderful and feels honoring and appropriate for an Earthy ceremony. Head wreaths are highly recommended for everyone! Gathering natural fresh and sustainably harvested greens, willows, dried herbs which you collect in the woods or from your garden are a lovely ritual in themselves. Plus, you can let them dry and place them on your door. (see Wreath-Making Instructions on vinotok.org or in the Fire Circle of Altars)

The Ceremony. When you have prepared your sacred space in nature, placing the goblet of water and cup of Earth in the center of your circle, you may want to purge and protect the space and the participants. Make and use a smudge-stick of dried sage tightly bundled together with natural thread, then lighting it safely, waft the smoke around the circle, yourself and others if they are joining you.

Plighting Our Troth. Each individual will read/speak their vows or promises and accountability to our Mother Earth. As you do this, we may choose to kneel on one knee to show our respect and reverence. Begin speaking your vows by honoring your Ancestors and all of the Spirit and Nature Kin who are joining you for this ceremony. Begin your vow sharing by saying:

“As I love myself, I love the Earth. As I love the Earth, I love myself. I speak these commitments so that I may offer myself in joyful service to the Sovereignty of the Land. May all things be blessed and balanced.”

Take up the cup of Earth and take a small pinch of it to place on your forehead and rub between your hands. Pass the cup around if others are with you and each will do the same. Then each says:

“With this precious Earth, I humbly pledge body, spirit and service to protect, preserve and support the health of Our Mother.”

Take up the goblet and pour some on the Earth, then drink, and pour some on your hands. Pass the goblet of water, or everyone may wish to have provided their own goblet.

Sealing the Vow. Feeling the Earth and water forming moist mud in their hands each says:

“With this precious Water of Life, I pledge to feed the Spirit of the Land, to guard her waters, children and All Beings.”

All say together:

“With this pledge The Wasteland disappears. The Earth Thrives and loving balance shall be restored. It is so. And it shall be so. Bless us All!”