

TALKING WITH TREES

THE ART OF THE DRUIDS CLEARLY EXPLAINED

DRUIDS WISDOM VOLUME 1

HAPPY PLANTS

FOR HAPPY

PEOPLE

BEN LINDEMANN

IN MEMORY OF HORST MARTIN
FOR ALL DRUIDS WHO HAVE BEEN
ARE
AND WILL BE

©BEN LINDEMANN 2019

ISBN: PAPERBACK: 978-3-7428-5606-9

HARDCOVER: 978-3-7428-5607-6

E-BOOK 978-3-7428-5608-3

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE 3RD REVISED EDITION OF
"LINDEMANN, BEN: SPRECHEN MIT BÄUMEN 2013, BoD"**

IN SPITE OF HAVING CARRIED OUT CAREFUL RESEARCH, THE AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER ADMIT ABSOLUTELY NO LIABILITY FOR THE SUGGESTIONS AND RECIPES CONTAINED IN THIS BOOK AND HEREWITH GLOBALLY REJECT ANY LIABILITY FOR CORRECTNESS OR HARM ARISING FROM READING OR FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS AND EXERCISES. ANY INDICATION OF EFFECTS OR EDIBILITY OF ANY PLANT DESCRIBED ARE FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY. IN OTHER WORDS: I DECLINE ANY RESPONSIBILITY IF YOU KNOWINGLY OR NOT POISON YOURSELF, FALL FROM A BRANCH YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE CLIMBED GET A BRANCH ON THE CONK OR HARM YOURSELF OR OTHERS IN ANY WAY AS A RESULT OF READING THIS BOOK. FURTHERMORE THE LANGUAGE AND VIEWS IN THIS BOOK ARE MINE AS AN ADULT SWISS CITIZEN. SHOULD THEY AGAINST MY BEST CONSCIOUSNESS BE FOUND OFFENSIVE OR OTHERWISE INDICTABLE IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY I HEREWITH FORBID TO READ, CITE, SELL LEND SHOW OR OWN THIS BOOK THERE. THIS BOOK NEITHER IS FOR MORALINE-SOUR NEO-PURITANS NOR APOSTLES OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS. IT IS YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO BE OFFENDED, HURT OR TRAUMATIZED. IF YOU COULD FEEL OFFENDED BY MILD SEXUAL REFERENCES OR LOVE OF LIFE DO NOT READ IT. - ALL OTHERS PLEASE CONTINUE READING WITH A GRIN.

**COVER DESIGN, PHOTOS, LAYOUT AND TYPESETTING: BEN LINDEMANN
TRANSLATION: JOHN WATERFIELD, BEN LINDEMANN**

Contact: info@druidenwissen.ch

Website: <http://www.druidenwissen.ch>

MORE THAN JUST SUPERSTITION..... 1

TALKING WITHOUT MOUTH – LISTENING WITHOUT EARS.....2

WHO IS A DRUID3

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT CITY DRUIDS4

HOW TO IDENTIFY TREES.....5

COMMUNICATION BY MEANS OF EXISTING PATTERNS5

TREES, RELIGION AND MYSTICISM8

CELTIC COGNITIVE MODELS BASED ON TREES10

HOW TO FIND SUITABLE TREES11

SACRIFICE, PUJA, RITUAL: THE LOVING GESTURE COUNTS12

WHEN NO TREE IS WITHIN REACH14

Embracing a virtual tree.....14

Standing like a tree.....15

Talismans.....16

SICK AND INJURED TREES16

SPIRIT OF THE WOOD, INDIVIDUAL DRYAD, NYMPH OR DEVA18

PROPRIETORIAL CLAIMS ON A TREE19

THINGS TO AVOID.....20

NATURE’S MASTERPIECES21

THE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE22

Roots22

Trunk24

Crown.....25

Branches26

Leaves27

THE TIMESCALE OF TREES.....28

THE TREES FIELD OF RESONANCE29

GETTING INTO A MEDITATIVE STATE.....	30
CHAKRAS	30
THE INNER SMILE	32
THE INNER SMILE	32
LIMITS OF THE METHOD	33
EVERY BEGINNING IS EASY	33
RELEASING TENSIONS	33
WAKING UP YOUR OWN ENERGY	35
USING THE PROTECTIVE CIRCLE	35
MEDITATE	36
GROUNDING	37
BUILDING THE INNER CIRCLE AND HARMONIZING THE CHAKRAS	38
THE INWARD SMILE	41
LINKING CIRCUITS	44
BECOMING AWARE	45
ENDING COMMUNICATION	48
HELP, MY TREE HAS FALLEN!	53
MY TREE WON'T TALK TO ME – WHAT CAN I DO?	54
PORTRAITS OF DIFFERENT TREES	55
ALDER	56
ALDER BUCKTHORN, GLOSSY BUCKTHORN, POWDER TREE	58
APPLE.....	60
ASH	62
ASPEN, TREMBLING OR WHITE POPLAR, QUAKING OR GOLDEN ASPEN.....	64
BAMBOO.....	66
BEECH, COMMON, COPPER, EUROPEAN BEECH	68
BENJAMIN FIG, PENCIL-PUSHER'S TREE	70
BIRCH, SILVER BIRCH, WARTY BIRCH, WHITE BIRCH	72

BLACKTHORN, SLOE..... 74

BODHI TREE, PIPAL TREE, SACRED FIG 76

BOX, BOXWOOD, COMMON BOXTREE 78

CEDAR 80

CHERRY, BIRD CHERRY, SWEET CHERRY 82

CHESTNUT, HORSE-CHESTNUT 84

COMMON HORNBEAM, EUROPEAN HORNBEAM, WHITE BEECH 86

COMMON WALNUT, PERSIAN/ENGLISH OR CIRCASSIAN WALNUT 88

CYPRESS, SEQUOIA, REDWOOD, THUYA, TREE OF LIFE 90

ELDER, ELDERBERRY 92

ELM..... 94

EUCALYPTUS..... 96

FIG, COMMON FIG..... 98

FIR, SILVER FIR 100

GINKGO, MAIDENHAIR TREE..... 102

GRAPEVINE..... 104

HAZEL 106

HEMLOCK 108

HAWTHORN, WHITETHORN, QUICKTHORN, THORNAPPLE, MAY-TREE 110

HOLLY 112

HOLM OAK, EVERGREEN OAK, HOLLY OAK 114

IVY, BINDWOOD, LOVESTONE..... 116

JUNIPER, COMMON JUNIPER..... 118

KAKI, JAPANESE PERSIMMON 120

KAURI, NEW ZEALAND KAURI, DAMMAR 122

LARCH 124

LAUREL, BAY TREE, ORNAMENTAL LAUREL 126

LEMON 128

LILAC..... 130

LINDEN, LIME, BASSWOOD 132

MAPLE..... 134

MISTLETOE..... 136

OAK 138

OLIVE TREE..... 140

PEAR 142

PALM..... 144

PLANE, MAPLE-LEAVED PLANE OR LONDON PLANE..... 146

PLUM, DAMSON 148

QUINCE..... 150

ROBINIA, LOCUST, BLACK LOCUST, FALSE ACACIA 152

ROSE, WILD ROSE, DOG ROSE 154

ROSEMARY, ANTHOS 156

SCOTS PINE, PINE..... 160

SERVICE TREE, ELF TREE, CHEQUER TREE, SWISS PEAR, DYSENTERY PEAR 162

SPRUCE, NORWAY SPRUCE, EUROPEAN SPRUCE..... 164

STRAWBERRY TREE..... 166

SWEET CHESTNUT, EDIBLE CHESTNUT, MARONI TREE..... 168

TULIP TREE, TULIP OR YELLOW POPLAR, CANOEWOOD, SADDLE-LEAF TREE 172

UNKNOWN TREE 174

WILLOW, SALLOW 176

YEW 178

LIST OF REFERENCES..... 180

More than just superstition

Much has been written about the effects and the being of trees. From the 'tree horoscope' to 'channelling the angelic beings of plants'. Some authors are evidently, or supposedly, getting into close contact with plants, or even regularly falling into a kind of connected trance. The methods they use are various: starting from ancient pujas to homespun sacrificial rituals of many different kinds and extending to purely imaginary 'tree tripping'. Likewise, the results vary, from your simple esoteric trip to a state of deep connection.

The ancient Celts saw it in a quite more pragmatic perspective. Druids communicated with trees just as a matter of course, and thereby acquired great wisdom. As a result, the entire Celtic culture was permeated with joy in life, confidence and a deep trust in life's eternal laws.

The aim of this book is to present the technique of communicating with trees which has been practically identical in all parts of Europe and Asia, so that anyone will be able to charge themselves with primordial energy and, with a little practice, get advice and help from our leafy companions. All you need for this is knowledge of the ancient method and a little practice. The techniques which are described here in simple terms, and their effects, have little or nothing to do with superstition or any kind of religious persuasion, but are intended for all those with open eyes and ears, who would like to walk life's winding road smiling and with a straight back. The path of the ancients not only permits us to communicate with trees. It also teaches us, irrespective of our world view or religion, a deeper understanding of ourselves and of the world we live in. It encourages us to develop patience and strengthens our trust and joy in life in a peaceful and persistent way.

But let's make a start – there's a new world out there waiting to be discovered!

2 Introduction

Talking without mouth - Listening without ears

It is hardly likely that you will ever find yourself directly addressed by a tree – seeing that trees don't have a mouth for talking to us directly. All the same, from the dawn of time it was possible for the Druids to contact trees and actively exchange with them.

The abilities and basic techniques required for this are best learned step by step. One may need several months of practice, while another will get it on the very first day. The treasure of wisdom and personal counsel which then becomes accessible is truly inestimable. Depending on the sort, the location and the individual tree, they may be infinitely wise, loving and beneficent, though they can also be grumpy and recalcitrant.

When our human understanding and logical thinking fall short, the thoughts and images they communicate to us are very helpful.

Just to head off any unrealistic expectations – a tree neither is an omniscient oracle, nor is it a wishing well. 'Dear tree, please give me loads of money' is not an approach that will work. And there can also be situations where a tree just prefers to remain silent.

Perhaps for that very reason there are said to have been Druids, like the fabulous Merlin, who preferred the society of trees to that of human beings.

Who is a Druid?

Anyone who has read Asterix is familiar with the character Getafix, and therefore has a clear idea of what is to be expected of a Druid. He has a long white beard, is exceedingly wise, cuts mistletoe with a golden sickle and concocts various magical potions. Nice but not quite true nowadays.

I am not concerned here to write yet another histological treatise about Celts and Druidry. In addition to Celtic sources, to get the whole picture I also draw on Germanic, Nordic and Indian ones.

The knowledge and philosophy that lies behind Druidism is actually primevally Indo-European in its roots, whether we are talking about Gaulish, Hibernian, Hyperborean or any other kind of Druid: when we refer in this book to Celts and Druids, we are not referring to a particular place or specific time frame.

Provided their effects prove beneficial, many quite new methods have won acceptance as well. From this perspective, some New Age believers and Neopagans can equally well be described in a loose sense as modern Druids. Their role models – the Druids of the Celtic tradition, the Indo-Germanic seers and oracles and the shamans of the Indian-Asiatic tradition would not be likely to take it amiss.

The idealised picture of a Druid is best summed up in the person of Merlin. He draws on the wisdom of nature and uses the powers he acquires wisely. For this he doesn't need a doctorate, or hierarchical rank of any kind – just open senses for perceiving the world around him openly and without prejudice.

4 Introduction

Some thoughts about city Druids

Even trees along city streets and in parks can be exciting to talk to and can give you a lot of knowledge about sense and values illusiveness and life itself.

If it is impossible for you at the present time to access a tree directly, there is still a way you can communicate with it.

Even if you can't leave the house you are living in, it is still possible for you to visit a tree in thought. Try to get hold of a tree lexicon, ideally with good illustrations, and look at the photos of the trees depicted.

Just immerse yourself in the picture and try to put yourself completely into the location of the photographer or painter. What was the weather like, the wind, the sounds? What did the surroundings feel like in other ways? Try simply to merge with the picture. This works even with painted trees in books! In certain circumstances it is even sufficient if you close your eyes and picture a tree intensively in your mind's eye.

Later on, we will describe two other possible ways by which, with a bit of practice, you can link in with the power of trees.

Nonetheless direct contact makes a whole lot more sense, as then you won't have any external 'interference' jamming the signal, and the mutual pictures, feelings and concepts are also very much easier and clearer to perceive.

How to identify trees

Even an educated Druid can't possibly know every tree species from all over the world. Therefore, I would advise you to get hold of a tree reference book, ideally a well-illustrated one, for the region where you want to converse with trees. A pocket edition is quite sufficient for consulting when you are out walking. In botanical gardens you don't often need to look things up, as almost all the plants will be labelled. It is a good way of getting to know trees in an uncomplicated way, even if you live in the city. In the second and third parts of the book, we will introduce the being of trees and their likely characteristics in greater detail.

Communication by means of existing patterns

When a Druid talks to a tree, it's all pretty unspectacular to look at. First, he takes a deep look, then approaches the tree, perhaps looks around the landscape a bit, attends to noises and other sources of disturbance. When he feels the time is right, he moves into the zone between the crown and the rootstock, positions himself carefully (seated or standing), perhaps closes his eyes and waits in this attitude for a while. Inside him, however, a well-trained process is going on, one that is fundamentally different from the purely imaginative procedure commonly used in esoteric practice which relies on the person's own power of imagination.

After a certain period of preparation, which serves to calm and pacify his own conscious mind, the Druid opens up to the content of the tree's consciousness. This is because if we are to be capable of receiving an influence, we first have to tune our senses to it. In this way not just the ancient Druids, but anyone at all can communicate with the tree, through resonance in the form of feelings and emotions, and even in proper sentences.

Just as in a conversation between two humans, the tree can only make use of the feelings, emotions and language already present in its human counterpart.

6 Getting in contact

The first time I talked to the mightiest kauri tree in New Zealand, a true wise archont of the kingdom of plants I was very surprised it could switch between English and German. In doing so it was just alternating between my linguistic sets, in keeping with my expectations.

Conversations with trees are usually very pleasant and extremely rewarding, though sometimes they can be serious and full of wise words of advice in a situation of need. A hazel bush will undoubtedly convey a different kind of conscious contents than a beech tree. It can only become threatening if you try to force a tree into dialogue against its will. From the birch to the yew, tree beings have one property in common: they like us, seeing us as children. That, incidentally, is how they refer to us as well – ‘children’ or ‘the young folks’.

The nature of dryads

Human beings and animals possess a separate individual consciousness. Plants share a great part of their consciousness with all other members of the same species. This species awareness is generally distributed in a kind of dream state among all representatives of a genus.

The mightier the tree you visit, the more powerfully this consciousness will be awake in the tree itself. Though that shouldn't stop you talking to a sapling. It is just going to show you a quite different facet of the same consciousness.

Your experience will vary depending on the species, the individual tree, and the wood or the surroundings. Based on these factors, you can expect either a pleasant chat or gain profound lore and wisdom.

Every large wood will have one or more 'aspect trees', which are permanently in contact with the other trees of the wood and with neighbouring aspect trees of other wooded areas. You recognise them as being particularly powerful representatives of their species. Their task consists in representing the woodland network. If one of these trees is felled, it is a major loss, as one or more other, less experienced trees must then take on the role. If the wood is reduced by clearances, the powers of the aspect trees will be attenuated likewise, as they draw a large part of their power from the wood.

And then there are, quite different kinds of 'pixies' who can take up lodging in any tree. Once I was very surprised at the quite unserious character of a yew, which emanated a cheery faith in life in the most gleeful and light-hearted tones, all the while pretending to be 'the yew'. Then I spotted the little coal tit just over my head, visibly enjoying himself hopping up and down the branches. But unfortunately, its individual consciousness just prevented it going so far as to alight on me.

Compared with this, the fourth and last kind of consciousness you may find indwelling in a tree is rather unpleasant – lost souls, after having departed this earthly life, may occasionally miss the 'exit into the light' and obstinately, or mistakenly, take up residence in a tree before their final departure. The trees allow this, and after a period of tranquillisation do go on to release these poor souls into the light eventually. But today this is a very rare occurrence.

If completely different beings like sylphs, pixies or gnomes make their presence felt – well then, dear reader, you can count yourself lucky, because it doesn't happen often. – And please be modest and polite! Because they may be in a good mood, or then again, they may become hopping mad. But in that case your own imagination is probably playing tricks.

Trees, religion and mysticism

From the Siberian shamans to the Maoris of New Zealand practically all religions and cultures are based on a kind of mystical World Tree as a model and for purification and self-recognition.

The Nordic, Celtic, Jewish and even some Ancient Greek mystics know the world tree under the names of Yggdrasil, Irminsul, Cabala or simply 'World Tree'. In generally apocryphal myths, it represents an orientation framework for the different realms of the inner and outer cosmos. So, by a strange irony of fate, a World Tree can be derived from the often misused Hagalaz rune just as it can be from the Cabalistic scheme of things.

What species of tree we are talking about is almost if not completely unimportant. In European culture much has been made in recent times of the ash, though in my view this is based on a mistake. The ash ('ask' or 'ashk') is a powerful aspect tree for the sedentary peasant farmer, as many tools and useful articles can be made from its wood. The 'golden fleece', however, along with the idea of ongoing faith even in the darkest night (as the 'red apples in winter'), are Kennings suggesting the yew. In Siberia it may well be the birch; in New Zealand no doubt it is the kauri, and in India of course the Bodhi tree or pipal.

If you ask the trees themselves, you will find the question which tree the World Tree is to be a matter of sublime indifference to them. As a grumpy old oak in a famous Irish valley observed, 'Everyone has to climb his own tree.'

The same wisdom has been preserved practically in pure form in the mysteries of the Elder Edda. The journey of humanity leads through the material World Tree, on which the human being, through his own attachment, practically sacrifices himself. This is beautifully expressed in the 'Hangatyr' or Hanged God Wuotan, who hangs himself on the World Tree and purges himself.

Only after acknowledging his errors, which ultimately led to the war between the Aesir and the Vanir and his subsequent rejection by Frigg, does he acquire a new form as the solitary wanderer 'Grimnir' and finally, through his passion on the World Tree, becomes able to let go, falls to the ground, learns the wisdom of the runes and the counsel of Mimir and Völva.

It is only by letting go of himself that he regains his own divinity, and so becomes capable of claiming his rightful place, which during his exile has been usurped by his cruel deputy 'Ullr/Loki', who rules not from the heart but based on cold justice and greed. Our true being cannot be replaced by an emotionless set of rules.

This passion of hanging on a tree – leading to the purification of the material and realisation of one's own divinity – is something also undergone by Jesus Christ on the cross, as well as by Gautama Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree.

In the Vedas, the key to self-understanding is stated to be the diving down to the roots of one's own lotus on the floor of the cosmic ocean. Only in this way does the creator become conscious of the power of his own thoughts.

The Greek Argonauts led by the hero Jason, as the legend relates, managed to reach the World Tree and steal the golden fleece from it. A clue might be the ancient oak sanctuary in Dodona, where oracular powers were ascribed to the sounding copper cauldrons suspended in the branches of the trees or the rustling of leaves. The wisdom of the oracle was attributed to the 'Magi' of the land of 'Barbar'.

Christianity too has its world tree, both in the Cross and in Jacob's Ladder. From the highest angelic spheres to the darkest regions at the root, the World Tree, in more or less complex cosmic schemes, penetrates and extends through all levels of being.

Celtic cognitive models based on trees

To convene their understanding of the omnipresent natural laws, the Druids created models, dictae and songs. The particularly gifted bard Amyrgin for example encrypted the most important essential features of different trees in his ballad ‘The Battle of Trees’.

A most important model is the Triskelia: Three primeval forces in movement on earth: air, water and fire. Along with the element of earth itself, that makes a total of four. This gives rise to the well-known Celtic cross, with the element of life or love as the central part connecting to all the others. All five elements can take on several different emphases and merge into one another in different ways. There are good grounds for comparing this with the five phases of transformation of the Chinese. The primeval source is the same in all cases.

In recognising the deep secrets of the fifth, binding force as love through which life is called into being the Culdaic Druid monks were not alone but foremost.

According to Celtic legend, Ogma Sun Face created his own Ogham alphabet on the principles of the Celtic cross and five concentric rings, as a basis not only for messages but also for the coding of various mnemonics. At some time not so very long ago, finally, a rather dabbling Neo-Druid tried to classify trees based on their different qualities mixed with zoroastric horoscopy and the ogham alphabets. The resulting circle of trees is very esoteric and that’s it.

Nordic mysticism, finally, gives us further attributes and keywords, so called kennings for different trees, which have been handed down from primeval times. Indeed according to the Edda, the first two human beings, Ask and Embla, have been created by Odin, Thor and Loki from two pieces of driftwood.

How to find suitable trees

Take your time and enjoy the journey. The value of a pilgrimage lies in the fact that even while travelling you can leave behind the ballast of everyday thoughts, become inwardly calm and attune yourself to what is to come. Even if you arrive at a specific place by train, car or aeroplane, it makes sense to cover the last few kilometres on your own feet, just to get acquainted with the genius of the location. This may involve aimless meandering around in a wood, or else the deliberate approach to a specific tree. To begin with I would advise you to visit large, healthy specimens.

Try to relax while you are walking - just hang loose. Simply attune to all things you may encounter. This is known as multipointed walking meditation. Be as relaxed and openminded as you can. If thoughts of everyday intrude, just let them surface, and then gently but firmly put them aside, like you hang a worn coat on a nail, as you continue on your path. This needs a lot of practice. The bigger the worries of everyday, the longer you should decide to journey. In all religions, this is the deeper meaning of pilgrimage.

When you arrive at your tree, you will know it at once. It just radiates a magical attraction for you. Take a good look at it! Observe it with all your senses, your entire being. What does it look like? In what sort of surroundings is it situated? Does it have animals living in it? Do you sense a slight change in wind, or temperature? Do you feel anything else? Often trees greet travellers with a gentle rustling of their leaves.

To get a complete impression, you would be well advised to circle the tree thoughtfully three times, at a certain distance. Ideally anticlockwise, as that means that your left, feeling-focused side will be turned to the tree.

As soon as you sense something like a warm attraction, retaining your relaxed state, calmly move into the zone between the root ball and the crown.

Sacrifice, puja, ritual: the loving gesture counts

If you feel inclined, you are welcome to 'sacrifice' some small token to the tree. While you are walking on your way to the tree you will often find something you can offer. White pebbles, fallen blossoms or leaves, whatever takes your fancy. Water poured over the roots will do as well. To this day, there are regions of Brittany, Ireland, Wales, India, Russia and Japan where coloured ribbons or paper strips are attached to low-hanging branches of trees.¹

You can work out your own ritual, making it as complex as you like, with drink offerings, the recitation of hymns or verses, presentation of gifts or dancing; or simply send the tree your sympathetic feelings in thought. Anything that is not going to damage the tree, and testifies to your sympathy, is permitted. In the last resort it is your sympathetic feelings that allow you to connect with a tree. It should come from the heart, or not at all.

You should avoid things made of metal or plastic. Money, tobacco, alcohol or other drugs are unlikely to be well received.

Often gifts are associated with the request for help with more or less everyday problems. This may work on occasion but does not entitle the giver to any kind of claim in the sense of a Nordic sacrifice. In an ancient text we read the sacrifice should spring 'from the red blood of the heart'. This means the heartfelt sacrifice of 'red' love not associated with demands.

It once and for all doesn't mean a bloody sacrifice! The sacrifice of living beings, or of gifts created through suffering or destruction like blood, animal sacrifice and any incitement of others to such acts, is under *geas*² of the Lord of the Forests and banned once and for all under pain of more than lethal punishment. You don't want that. Trust me!

¹ Use natural materials in short strips, tying the strips loosely, so as not to present a hazard to animals and to avoid constricting the branch.

² A *geas* is a Celtic form of taboo. Violating it always results in drastic to inhuman punishment. To be effective it has to be in accord with the great balance. All disharmony in it backfires!!