

Issue 1 Samhain 2009

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The Time of the Crone

Samhain is a time of deep magick within, a time of hard honesty, clear vision unclouded by sentiment, and truth.

It is the Time of the Crone.

In the pure, beloved honesty of Deep Dark, She is there, to lead us away from false or frivolous pretensions, into an exploration of the Center of who we are, to the place of stark honesty within that glimmers and pulses with Her righteous peace.

In the velvet warmth of Deep Dark, She is there to wrap us in the comfort of our profound vulnerability, so that we may awaken to the profound essence of our Spirit, as we release all that is false.

We shiver in Awe at Her clear, unsmiling love, and are enraptured by Her embrace, which echoes out into the Universe around us.

She reminds us of all that we have been, all that we are, and all that we CAN BE.....if we open to Her with passionate surrender.

Out of the Death of our insecurities and false fears, we are Reborn into our True Selves.

It is the Time of the Crone.

HP Kerritwyn offers OWM teachings to women in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and to male-to-female transgendered seekers in the [Order of the Rainbow Moon](#). She was elected by her sister HPs on July 23, 2009 to be the President of the Board of Directors and the Spiritual Head of the Order of the White Moon.

The Grand Shrine of Ise

Located in the city of Ise in Southern Honshu, Japan, the Temple Complex is the most important Shrine in the Shinto religion and is dedicated to the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. It consists of two major sanctuaries, the Geku (Outer Shrine) and the Naiku (Inner Shrine). Each shrine is composed of a number of buildings, including a main sanctuary, numerous smaller shrines, treasuries, workshops and storehouses. Visitors first come upon the Outer Shrine then follow the four mile long Pilgrim Road to the Inner Shrine. The proper protocol for worshipers is as follows:

Bow deeply twice

Clap hands twice at chest level

Worship with hands pressed together

Bow deeply twice

The Outer Shrine, known as Geku, was erected in the 5th century in order to provide offerings to Amaterasu. It houses Toyouke (Abundant Food Great Deity),

the Goddess of food, agriculture, industry, clothing and shelter. Toyouke oversees the offerings to Amaterasu which take place twice daily, in the morning and evening. The mood of this shrine is subdued and serene. Shaded by cedar trees, stillness reigns and devotees who do speak do so barely above a whisper. The surrounding forests are allowed to run free, making this an oasis of wilderness amidst the bustling city.

The Inner Shrine, the Naiku, is the home of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu (Heaven-Illuminating Great Deity) when She manifests on Earth. It was built in the 3rd century on the site of an ancient sanctuary sacred to the Goddess. The Shrine holds the Sacred Mirror which embodies the living Goddess. The Mirror, along with a Sword and a Jewel, comprise the Three Sacred Treasures of the regalia of Her descendants, the Imperial family. Amaterasu's Mirror is wrapped in cloth and kept in a closed cupboard in the innermost part of the sanctuary. Only Shinto clergy are allowed within the shrine.

The atmosphere of the Naiku is in stark contrast to the more subdued and reverent Geku shrine. The Naiku complex is a lively, boisterous place filled with shops, restaurants and galleries. A festive crowd gathers to watch performers dance, or to listen to taiko drummers. Well-fed strutting roosters, sacred to Amaterasu, can be seen wandering around the shrines. This cacophonous pandemonium must seem odd to the western visitors not used to the irreverent piety of Shinto religion.

The shrines are served by Shinto Priests and Priestesses. The head of the clergy are usually relatives of the imperial family. Japanese tradition states that the first Emperor was descended from Amaterasu and the Empress became Her High Priestess. At Ise, The Supreme Priestess, the Saishu, ranks above all other clergy and it is she who leads the most important religious ceremonies. She also

intercedes between the Goddess and Her worshipers and prays to Amaterasu for the health of the Emperor as well as for peace for Japan and the world.

Amaterasu is described as the goddess from whom all light emanates and is often referred to as the Sun Goddess because of her warmth and compassion for the people who worship her. Most of her myths revolve around an incident where the Goddess traps herself in a cave when Her brother, Susanoo-no-Mikoto, tramples Her rice fields and befouls Her shrines. Greatly angered, She shuts Herself up in a cave, sealing the entrance with a giant rock. As a result, the world is plunged into darkness.

Without Amaterasu, everything begins to wither and die. None of the Gods can persuade Her to come out until Ame-no-Uzume, the voluptuous Goddess of Merriment, begins to dance. She exposes Her breasts and lifts Her skirts creating great merriment among the deities. Curious, Amaterasu peeks out to see what the noise is about. She asks the nearest God what is going on and He replies that there is a new Goddess. When Amaterasu requests to see this new Goddess, the God points to a mirror. Seeing Her radiant reflection cheers Amaterasu and She emerges from Her cave. The Gods convince her to return to the Celestial Plain and all life begins to grow once more in Her radiant light. This myth describes the Winter Solstice and is linked to the annual rebirth of the Sun Goddess.

The site has long been sacred to the Japanese who worshiped the cypress trees, rocks and the waters of the area. Eventually, one tree was cut down to make a post (the manifestation of Amaterasu on Earth). A shrine building was constructed around the sacred post and became the place of worship known today. Shrines continue to be built of cypress trees harvested from the surrounding forests, working with ancient tools and techniques. No nails are used in the construction of

these temples. The master carpenter must remember and pass on his knowledge of the ancient techniques to apprentices in a tradition that is thousands of years old.

The two main shrine buildings are destroyed and rebuilt on an adjacent site every twenty years. This is in homage to the impermanence of all things. It takes about eight years to build the new shrine while slowly dismantling the old one. Each stage of construction is accompanied by a religious ceremony. Once the old shrine is completely destroyed, white pebbles are strewn across the site and a single post is erected in the center, surrounded by a small hut. This is symbolic of the ancient places of worship in Japan and is considered to be the Holy of Holies. In twenty years, the new shrine will be rebuilt around this structure. The next rebuilding will occur in 2013.

The Shrine is a major attraction for devotees and tourists alike. Over seven million visit the Shrine each year. For many Japanese, a pilgrimage to the Grand Shrine is something to be completed at least once in one's lifetime. Special Pilgrimages occur every sixty years in the Okage (Thanksgiving) Year. Amaterasu is celebrated July 17 with street processions and religious ceremonies, but the best time to visit the Shrines is in Autumn when the lush greens give way to a vibrant abundance of colours.

<http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/shrine-guide.shtml#isetypeshrines>

<http://web-japan.org/atlas/architecture/arc14.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaterasu_Omikami

<http://www.gonomad.com/alternatives/0509/ise.html>

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/japan/ise-shrine>

Ajna DreamsAwake is an Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#). She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.

OWM Happenings!

Blessings of the season to you all! There's much to share with you all in this issue of Season of the Moon.

I am thrilled to share our most recent initiations.

Ajna DreamsAwake and As't Nebthet of the [Sacred Three](#) school are now Adept practitioners in the OWM Tradition.

Lazy Zephyr and Moonwater Ashwood and Silver of Sisters in Celebration are now Priestesses in the OWM Tradition and are currently in candidacy for High Priestess, enrolled in Level 4.

I am also pleased to announce the 2009-2010 OWM Board of Directors of the [Order of the White Moon!](#)

President: Kerritwyn

President Emeritus: Diana

General VP/ Asst.Treasurer & VP of Membership & Web Coordinator: Kelly

Treasurer: Nessa

Secretary: Beth

VP of Ordination Council: Dana

Ordination Council Members: Etain, Heathwitch

VP of Events: Etain

VP of Outreach Programs & Advertising: Wahine

Non-Officer Board member: Artemisia

High Priestess Candidacy Announcement!

Recently the OWM Board of Directors had a Special Board Meeting to deliberate and vote on Level 4. Level 4 is now 16-week intensive course for HP Candidates, expanded 10 weeks beyond the former HP Level IV program. The OWM Board of Directors believes that completion will provide a solid foundation for new HPs. Here is an outline of what a HP Candidate can expect from Level IV in its new form:

Level 4 (16 weeks)

6 weeks traditional Level 4 core lessons

6 weeks of internship, include a spiritual mentoring text that student will give chapter by chapter responses to within the HP group.

4 week mini-course is due at the end of her internship, and that it will be offered to HPs, OWM Members, and students enrolled in OWM schools.

Nessa CrescentMoon is a High Priestess, an Ordained Minister and Co-Founder of Sisters in Celebration, a branch and affiliate of the [Order of the White Moon](#).

All the Goddess's Children

This column is devoted mainly, of course, to my garden, but one thing I really haven't mentioned before is the other gardeners. While technically we don't grow people in a garden, working in the community gardens has definitely helped to "grow" me as a person with regard to interacting with other people, especially those of different countries and/or belief systems.

I have traded English and Spanish words for various plant and color names with a small Mexican boy, who was eager to learn the ones he didn't remember from school so that he could help translate for his parents. We both had fun, and we both learned.

I have reassured a friendly woman from Nigeria that our tiny garden lizards aren't poisonous, but instead bring good luck. She told me that in Nigeria almost all lizards and snakes are poisonous, so they kill them whenever they find them. I wanted to make sure she wouldn't kill our harmless lizards out of fear; she now welcomes them into her garden.

I have identified several of my plants to gardeners from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Mexico who wish to learn more, and have given away samples to all who wanted them. There's now a nice patch of comfrey in the garden of a man from Nigeria just down the row from me. He knows it's good to use if you bleed from cutting yourself with a garden tool; since he has children who help him and also play in the garden, it's handy to have around. When I found a female black widow living in my strawberry pot, he insisted on carrying the pot to his own garden, and dumped out the dirt there before returning it to me, because he knew I was afraid of being bitten. Neither of us wanted to kill the spider.

I have enjoyed many conversations with a woman who used to be a Wiccan priestess but is now a Jehovah's Witness. She's never once tried to convert me or been self-righteous or judgmental, and neither have I. Instead, we've been able to expand the boundaries of friendship between the children of the Goddess and the children of the Book.

I have gardened with a smile on my face as I listened to the conversations around me in Spanish, in Arabic, in Nigerian, and probably many other languages as well, punctuated with laughter and the shouting of children, the noise of machetes, hoes, Rototillers, and the rustling of cornstalks in the back ground. These people are just as important to the gardens as the plants, the earth, and the animals, for they are also a part of Her bounty.

"Goddess, on the blessed Samhain, I celebrate with ALL of your children.
Thank you for sharing the bounty of humanity with me."

BellaDonna Oya lives in Hayward, CA, where she runs a small eclectic coven. She is a Level II Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and was made Editor-in-Chief of Seasons of the Moon in October 2009.

Death

*Cold, stark, stiff, shivering,
I lie down on the ice-frosted grass
Under Her Dark Moon,
Spreading myself out upon Her deep night,
Pulsing now with beginning Desire*

*My body starts to hum
As my energy flows out,
Deep and warm and dark as blood,
And my Spirit flows
Into finger and toes
And outward, below and above*

*Shining and Shimmering
and Enticing
I invite Her to fill me, to be
In Me and With Me
And to work Through Me,
As I approach Death*

*Death surges within,
And I feel Her burst of Clarity, Honest and Power
Surge through my Spirit
As I weave the strands of Forgiveness,
Healing and New Beginnings
Into Rebirth*

*Dazzled with Her terrible Beauty,
I merge with Her visions
And suspend all sense of Time
As I fuse with Her gifts and blessings
And then, after an unknown time,
Rise up from Death,
Reborn.*

© HP Kerritwyn

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and to male-to-female transgendered seekers in the [Order of the Rainbow Moon](#).
She was elected by her sister HPs on July 23, 2009 to be the President of the Board
of Directors and the Spiritual Head of the Order of the White Moon.*

The Comfort of Rain

*It's so much easier to hide
Than to put even my tippy toes
Back into the deep waters
Of hidden emotions.*

*Instead, I will wrap myself
In my thick robe and hood,
Like a baby bundled
Into a hooded blanket.*

*Sometimes I try to nurture myself
By hiding away in a dark den
Like a hibernating bear,
(But at least I have a shower).*

*Sometimes rain is like a cocoon
And I feel safe and warm indoors;
It's cleansing my home, a Circle
Where no one can harm me.*

*The grasses will be shooting up
From their drink of the rain,
And before they are mowed down
There will be little mushrooms;*

*Mushrooms for tiny fairies
To shelter under like umbrellas
As they hold hands and laugh,
Dancing in and out of the rain.*

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Beth Clare Johnson

(HP Mystic Amazon)

Mystic Amazon has completed Level 4 studies and is now a High Priestess of [OWM](#) and is currently teaching at [Sisters of the Rising Moon](#). Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and reading.

iPod Goddess

What's on YOUR playlist?!

When sitting around with my Gaia's (Goddess Sisters!) and the subject of music invariably arises. What is on our playlist? What inspirational, Goddess-praising tunes do I have collected? 79 songs, 10.9 hours of play, 425 megabytes! Ok, I admit... I have not moved over all of my music. But here's a peek at part of my playlist.... Enjoy!

23rd Psalm by Bobby McFerrin

The Moon is High by Spiral Rhythm

I Walk With the Goddess by Keliana

Libera by Libera

Hymn to Her by The Pretenders

Give Us Room to Roar by Ruth Mackenzie

These days we can subscribe to a lovely Goddess podcast or two or three, listen to Japanese fairy tales, learn about ethics. Connected, we are!

Those who have iPhones have a whole new world of applications available to access at a fingers touch. We can receive daily affirmations for my everyday Goddess-self, and browse Yoga poses. From Tarot to the I-Ching we mix the miraculous sweetly into our daily lives. Magickal, we are!!

This Autumn, even as I sit comfortable at my computer, I think that having this portable inspiration is but just one more way that serves to stir my spirit and connect me to Goddess and to myself. Blessed, we are!

Nessa CrescentMoon is a High Priestess, an Ordained Minister and Co-Founder of Sisters in Celebration, a branch and affiliate of the [Order of the White Moon](#).

Healing Magic: A Green Witch Guidebook

by Robin Rose Bennett

Forward by Susun Weed

Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 2004

184 pages

I found this book in a used book store over a year ago, and just recently got around to reading it. Now I wish I'd read it sooner! Well-written and full of information, stories, good ideas, and common sense, *Healing Magic* is a simple and practical handbook that will teach you about all kinds of healing practices: moon magic, herbal magic, medicine wheel magic, ritual magic, and spell magic.

This book can be used no matter where you live, in the middle of nowhere or in the heart of a city. Although geared toward both women and men, the book is written with a definite "goddess-y" caste, and some of the suggested practices are labeled 'women only' (or 'bleeding women only' when menstrual power is required). This is not an advanced book; it appears to be mainly intended for those just beginning to study healing magic. However, I think that even advanced practitioners will be able to find something of value here. The spells and items are simple, easy to assemble, and easy to do, although of course you can add to them and make them more complicated if you wish!

The only part I was a little disappointed with was the Herbal Magic chapter. Since Ms. Bennett served an apprenticeship with Susun Weed, I was expecting this chapter to be bigger and have a bit more information. However, perhaps she felt that her book was meant to be more of a general guide, and didn't want to emphasize one type of practice over the others. Also, there are a few 'technical' errors, such as the author crediting "The Charge of the Goddess" to Starhawk rather than Doreen Valiente, but these are rare and fairly minor overall.

This is a book I feel I can really USE, not just read and wish I had the time, ingredients, space, or whatever, to work with it.

Rating: 5 Goddesses out of 5!

BellaDonna Oya lives in Hayward, CA, where she runs a small eclectic coven. She is a Level II Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and was made Editor-in-Chief of Seasons of the Moon in October 2009