

Covening Podcast with Lady Setara Vernal Equinox 2025

Akitu: Vernal Equinox: "Feast of the Gods"

Preparations

Preparations for the ceremony include the coloring of eggs, with sigils and symbols drawings that designate things we want for ourselves this year.

The celebration starts with a procession to the ritual site.

Cast of Characters (minimum 7 people):

1. The Master (or Mistress) of Ceremonies
2. Green Man of Spring: dressed in the green of renewed vegetation
3. The Dragon: woman w/ dragon mask, red & black dragon-like garments.
4. First and Second Petitioner - minor speaking roles
5. The Cauldron Bearer - carries cauldron, lid, and stand
6. The Pinwheel Brigade - 4 people, one for each direction
7. The Drummer
8. The Musicians & Chanters
9. The Incense Bearer: Carries a bundle of herbal, floral incense sticks; and basket of eggs

Minimum of 7 participants, but preferably more: double up on minor roles if necessary.

Supplies and Props:

the written ritual

the dragon mask

Green Man Baal's weapons and horn crown

Metal cauldron with lid, the cauldron stand, oven mittens

Rubbing alcohol (or vodka) - something 70% or higher),

Epsom salts, flash powder (lycopodium), long handled

lighter or long stick matches.

instruments: siren whistles, drum.

pinwheels (at least 4, one for each direction)

incense stick bundle

basket of colored eggs

long belt for first petitioner

Costumes:

All participants except for the Dragon and Baal, shall wear either solid green or floral prints. Masks are optional.

Dragon costume: red and black. Dragon mask.

Green Man costume: All green - ideally fabric leaves.

General Outline of Ritual:

The participants parade to the site

The Circle is set up while the M.C. introduces the characters.

Battle enacted between the Green Man of Spring and the Dragon of Winter.

The Green Man's first weapon is cast aside by the Dragon

The Green Man calls the winds to help him.

The Dragon's fire is snuffed.

The Green Man slays the dragon.

The Green Man is cheered and crowned.

Eggs are handed out to the audience (if there is one) or hidden outside.

Pyrotechnics

The Flaming Cauldron should be practiced in advance so you know what to expect. Use equal portions of Epsom salt and alcohol. Put the Epsom salt into the cauldron first, pour the alcohol on top of it and then carefully light with a long stem lighter or long stick match.

Do not pour more alcohol into the cauldron after it is lit! Ensure that the person lighting the fire does not have alcohol on their hands or sleeves!

Practice this before you do it within ritual. Whatever amount of alcohol you use, it should not exceed one quarter of the depth of your cauldron. And that is a lot!

When I used 1/4 cup alcohol with 1/4 cup Epsom salt, the flame lasted 5 minutes. So you don't want to start the flame until the pageantry is imminent. Have both premeasured amounts and a backup supply in case something spills prematurely.

Alternatively you could use sterno. I have not tried that.

After you snuff the flame, the metal cauldron will remain extremely hot for 20 minutes or more! You will need to allow it to cool some before picking it up to take it away.

Use about 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of flash powder for each flash. The flash powder should be thrown into the flame from the side, not from the top. It would be extremely dangerous to throw the flash powder into the top of the cauldron unless everyone was several yards away from it.

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Ritual Performance Notes

The East which aligns with the Season of Spring corresponds to the Element of Air.

Spring Equinox begins with the Sun going into the Zodiac sign of Aries which is Cardinal Fire.

Anything that flies in the air or needs to be filled with air can be added to this celebration: kite flying, bubbles, balloons, pinwheels, standards w/ribbons.

How Akitu is performed depends upon where it is performed. If performed among Pagans only, the Green Man of Spring may be alternately called "Baal" or "Marduk" and the Dragon of Winter may be called "Tiamat".

Among only Pagans, the processional chant may be "Hoof and Horn", in public it will have to be something like "Kill the Beast" or "Down with Winter, up with Spring."

The chant "Bring us the Green Man of Spring (2 beats)" uses the same beat as "Lions and Tigers and Bears, oh my". The 2 silent beats at the end are the "oh my." But among only Pagans, "Eko eko Azarak" may be more appropriate.

Among Pagans, calling the four winds would be more appropriately the Powers of the East, South, West, and North.

AKITU/PURULLI 3/20:

Significance: God and Goddess return. Rebirth. The Greenman of Spring slays the Dragon of Winter

Mood: Celebration. Playfulness. Invigoration: mock battles, processions, feasting, music.

Symbolic Activities: Dawn rite, rattlesnake dance, wheel, circle, in & out dance, spiral, back to back dancing, balloons, pinwheels, standards w/ribbons, kites, coloring eggs, processions, dragon fight.

Seasonal tasks: Planting, weeding, preparing soil

Mythology: Marduk & Tiamat: Enuma Elish

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Reference: Myths of the World by Padraic Colum pg 17 to 19. The most concise summation, but others are available.

THE RITUAL

March 20: Akitu: Vernal Equinox: "Feast of the Gods"

The procession winds around for several minutes before arriving at the ritual site. The Dragon and Green Man lead the procession. The paraders chant, the musicians play, and the Green Man brandishes his weapons.

Upon arriving at the ritual site, the participants enter at the east (if possible) and pace the Circle deosil three times, still chanting.

Then the drummer makes a loud beat and the paraders halt.

The M.C. speaks loudly while the other participants set up the props: The cauldron is assembled and lit. The Dragon holds the flash powder and releases bits of it throughout the drama.

M.C.: "We have gathered here to observe Akitu, the ancient ceremony of the commencement of Spring. Here the Dragon of Winter shall be fought and conquered by the Green Man of Spring. I shall introduce our characters. First, the Green Man of Spring (points)."

G.M.: (Bows, brandishes weapons & makes heroic gestures)

All: Cheer

M.C.: "Young, and brave, strong and bold."

M.C.: "Next, the Dragon of Winter (points)."

D.W.: (releases first bit of flash powder over flaming cauldron)

All: Boo, Hiss

M.C.: "Cruel and cold, bringer of death, maker of sorrows."

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M.C.: "Surrounding them are we, who wish to see the spring."

All: Cheer

M.C.: "And finally, I introduce myself, Master of Ceremonies, your guide on this journey that takes us to a place that is not a place and a time that is not a time."

"By ancient legend, a time had come when there was cold and darkness upon the land. The grain wouldn't grow and the animals would not bear young. The Dragon of Winter ruled the earth."

"The people and the spirits of the land pleaded with the heavens 'Send us the Green Man of Spring; send us the one who can conquer the Dragon.' I can hear them as if it were yesterday:"

First Petitioner: "Something must be done about the Dragon of Winter. Look at me, (shows end of long belt) Winter has thinned me to the bone! How can I eat if the grain will not grow?"

Second Petitioner: "If Winter does not end, we will all surely die. We must find someone who can fight against Winter."

D.W.: "Your clamor is turning my belly! How dare you talk of destroying me? (flash) I shall kill you all and then I will have peace!"

All: (Circle deosil around Green Man chanting)
"Bring us the Green Man of Spring (2 beats)
Bring us the Green Man of Spring (2 beats)"

G.M.: "I answer your call. I will do battle with the Dragon of Winter."

All: Cheer

G.M.: "I will be your avenger and your warrior."

All: Cheer.

G.M.: "I will bring the green back to the land."

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All: Cheer. (and some stand behind Green Man as he faces the Dragon).

D.W.: (flash, angrily). "You take the place of those cowardly ones who fear to fight me!"

G.M.: "You have weakened them with your cold and darkness, you must be stopped!"

D.W. (flash). "It is not I who will be defeated, but you!"

G.M.: (Swings at the Dragon with his first weapon & she knocks it out of his hand).

D.W.: (knocks weapon out of G.M. hand, flash) "Ha! See how you weaken. If you fight me, you shall surely die."

G.M.: "The battle has just begun, Dragon of Winter. I see I cannot do this alone. But I have allies who will aid me in this fight."

G.M: (Faces East) "I call upon the Wind of the East!"

Eastern Pinwheel Bearer: (raises the Pinwheel) "I will help you!"

G.M: (Faces South) "I call upon the Wind of the South!"

Southern Pinwheel Bearer: (raises the Pinwheel) "I will help you!"

G.M: (Faces West) "I call upon the Wind of the West!"

Western Pinwheel Bearer: (raises the Pinwheel) "I will help you!"

G.M: (Faces North) "I call upon the Wind of the North!"

Northern Pinwheel Bearer: (raises the Pinwheel) "I will help you!"

G.M: "I call upon the four winds to come to my aid in battle against the Dragon of Winter!"

All Pinwheel Bearers: (Raise pinwheels and make whistling noises) "We will help you!"

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G.M.: (takes up second weapon and approaches Dragon). "Now I shall beat you!"

D.W.: (uses remaining flash powder)

First Petitioner: (puts lid on cauldron)

D.W.: "The wind has robbed me of my fire!"

G.M.: (Slays the dragon)

D.W.: (Falls)

G.M.: (Slips the mask off and holds it up in one hand and holds his weapon high in the other).

All: Cheer

First Petitioner: "You have saved us from the dark and cold, saved us from the sorrows of Winter. You shall rule the earth so long as the green things flourish and animals bear young."

(Tallest person Crowns the Green Man with his horns).

All: Cheer

M.C.: "And so it was that the Green Man of Spring slew the Dragon of Winter so that the earth would grow and be green again and the air filled with the smell of blossoms and the songs of little birds and young animals."

(Bring out basket of eggs).

"Now let us scatter our eggs and seeds that they may bring us a fruitful return."

All: (pick out personal eggs and hand them to the audience if there is one or scatter them among the trees).

M.C.: "Thank you for joining us." (or Merry meet & merry part).

When the eggs are all scattered, the participants go to the feast.

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Note: Do not move the cauldron until it has sufficiently cooled. It might take 20 minutes or so.