

Spiritual Ancestors

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Honoring the Mythic Dead

Who am I? I'm Kai!

- Practicing pagan for over 12 years, Studying Occult for 17 years
- Dedicated as a priest to The Mórrígan in 2020
- Student of Irish Tradition though Irish Pagan School
- Practice Fairy Witchcraft and Star Worship
- Spirit worker and diviner



What is Ancestor Worship?

From Merriam Webster:

ancestor worship noun

The custom of venerating deceased ancestors who are considered still a part of the family and whose spirits are believed to have the power to intervene in the affairs of the living.

Ancestor Worship cont.

- Using Worship vs Veneration
- Worship - the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity (Oxford)
Veneration - great respect; reverence (Oxford)
- Generally we can use these terms interchangeably, use the word that works best for you
- Most folks tend to have an ancestor shrine, where they leave offerings and have consistent time set aside for work with them

Ancestral Classifications

- Beloved Dead - Those that we knew closely and loved in life. For example - parents, grandparents, close friends, pets
- Known Dead - Those whose names we know but never grew close to in life, those that died before we knew them. Family trees are a good way to think about this
- Unknown Dead - Ancestors whose names have been forgotten, going back many generations
- Ancestral Guardians - Ancestors that act as guardians, gatekeepers, or go-betweens to keep descendants safe and communicate with Other Spirits easier
- Mythical Dead - This gets its own slide!

Who are the Mythical Dead?

- Generally people tend to think of Culture heroes - Heracles, Fionn mac Cumhail, Gilgamesh, King Arthur, etc.
- Sometimes they end up deified and worshiped as gods
- Catholic Saints or similar could also be considered Mythical Dead
- Modern heroes can be seen as part of this group as well
- Many spiritual ancestors can fall in this group

What are Spiritual Ancestors?

- Generally not related to us by blood
- Can be people in our communities, like teachers, leaders, or other people directly influential to our lives
- Also can be people you admire that deeply affected your development, or whose lives made a great impact on yours
- Keep in mind there can be overlap too - A close friend can be both a Beloved ancestor and a Spiritual ancestor

Any Questions so far?

What are the benefits of an Ancestor Veneration Practice?

- Ancestors generally understand human problems better than Gods do! Working with your ancestors is great for things like money, jobs, and anything especially close to home.
- Ancestors also tend to understand human timelines much better
- Ancestors are great intermediaries for communication with other spirits
- It can give you the chance to help heal generational trauma
- Honestly, sometimes it's just nice to know you've always got someone in your corner - Your ancestors want you to be happy and healthy!

Let's talk about Appropriation vs Appreciation

- Appropriation is the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission (Oxford)
- Cultural appropriation is generally when a dominant culture takes another culture's ideas and identity without permission or appropriate context for the practice
- Appreciation is shown by engaging with and giving back to these cultures, being respectful of their wishes and practices

Working within different worldviews

- What happens when your ancestor has a different religious practice or worldview to yours?
- First Step is always to treat them with respect and get their consent - if they don't want to be involved in your practice, you need to be ok with that.
- There are many, many different ways to venerate ancestors, they don't need to be directly involved in rituals or magical workings
- Some methods that don't involve directly involve your ancestors are things like using them as inspiration, doing research on them, remembering and telling their stories, even offering prayers or words of gratitude and appreciation
- Ultimately, work out what's best for the both of you!

Who can you venerate?

- WARNING: DO NOT HONOR LIVING PEOPLE AS ANCESTORS - This is generally considered taboo, as it is seen as a way of the ancestors 'reclaiming' people (a.k.a. Premature death)
- It is possible to have non-human ancestors that you venerate - Not only pets, can be beings found in folklore as well.
- Your house spirits are not necessarily your ancestors - check with them first!
- Generally, feel free to venerate who you want - as always, be respectful, use discernment, and get consent!
- Remember that consent goes both ways - if you have an ancestor you don't want to work with, you don't have to!

Questions?

Setting up Space for your Ancestors

- Do what works for you - Whether it be an expensive showcase, a dollar store shelf, or even a space in your mind, you can have a space that works for you
- Have representations of the people you are venerating if you can - Pictures, things they gave you, whatever makes you think of them
- Sacrifices and offerings can be as simple as a glass of clean water
- If you know what they liked in life, get them that!
- Build a consistent practice, again what works for you - do what you can within your ability
- Eventually you and your practice will grow and you'll get more comfortable in that space set aside for them, which makes it easier to communicate!

How to Communicate

Developing a method of communication is important. You can't always rely on words either - some ancestors may be non-verbal or don't speak your language. What can you do to get around that roadblock?

- Divination - Lots of methods
- You can always ask an expert!
- Ask for signs, omens, portents, etc.
- The more you practice, the easier it will be
- Over time, you'll develop your own consistent method of communication

Resources I Recommend

Books:

- [Calling to Our Ancestors by Sarenth Odinsson](#)
- [A Litany for the Many Dead by Rebecca Lynn Scott](#)
- [The Road to Hel: A Study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature by Hilda Roderick Ellis](#)
- [Honoring Your Ancestors: A Guide to Ancestral Veneration by Mallorie Vaudosie](#)

Blogs and Practitioners:

- [Sarenth Odinsson](#)
- [Mortellus](#)
- [Lady Storm](#)
- [Jim TwoSnakes](#)

Any Last Questions?

Thank you for coming!

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out!

Email: sanctuaryontheshore@gmail.com

Website: [Sanctuary on the Shore](#)

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