

**WALKING THE SACRED WHEEL**  
**A Year's Journey of Initiation**



**The East Gate: Way of the Visionary**

**BUDDING OF THE TREES MOON**  
**(March 21 – April 19)**

# **The East Gate: Way of the Visionary BUDDING OF THE TREES MOON (March 21 – April 19)**

## **Week 1: Discovering Cycles and Relationships**

### **Invocation Blessing Song**

Behold Great Mystery, Creative Force, Spirit That Moves Through All! We call to the Seven Directions of the Sacred Wheel!

We turn to the Keepers of the East, direction of the new beginnings, of inspirations, of illumination and creativity, of the dawn and spring, new births and childhood. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We call to the Keepers of the South, direction of vitality, of high noon and hot sun, of summer and vigorous growth, of youth and passion. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We invite the Keepers of the West, direction of introspection, of the evening, of autumn and maturity, deepening and ripening. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We respectfully summon the Keepers of the North, direction of the night, of winter, of wisdom and transformation, of dropping inessentials to reveal the core. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We look up to the sky and call to the beings of the sun, the moon, the clouds, the stars, and the endless blue, and we ask that you bring your spaciousness and mystery to this work. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We put our hands on the ground and ask that the great substance of the Earth give grounding to the work, and that the Earth's beauties give us beauty and that the entire world—the animals and plants and rocks, mountains and rivers and seas, the elemental forces of Earth and Air and Fire and Water, and all the human beings, all the elders, children, teachers, all the red, yellow, black, and white—join in this blessing. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We call to the Sweet Mystery that is the Sacred Center! Hold us and cradle us in your divine protection! Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We claim this work to serve, to bless, and to share knowledge for wisdom building and for bringing wholeness to our hearts and to our world. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

*(Note: The beginning prayer and final blessing of this lesson appear at the beginning and end of each lesson. These prayers mark the cycle of energy within that lesson and create a circle of connection.)*

# LESSON PLAN

## East Gate Introduction

Be sure to continue doing the daily practices you learned in the introductory lessons, smudging and meditating every day and journaling about your observations and experiences. Familiarize yourself with the correspondences of the East and the aspects of the East Gate, read the introduction to the East Gate, and read the section titled “The Path Through the East Gate.” A Note About Emotional Experience and Expression, Deeper Levels of Truth, Exploring Edges.

## Month one: Budding of the Trees Moon

**WEEK 1:** Read the material for Week 1, the Budding of the Trees Moon, which begins with “Discovering Cycles and Relationships” and includes “Vernal Equinox”; “Spiritual Duty”; “Right Speech, Right Thought, Right Action, Right Relationship”; and “Birth Scripts.” Do Exercise 1 from the study guide and answer the questions for the week. If you are studying for certification, remember to send your answers to the weekly questions, along with your entries in your growth journal, to the Institute via email or your private account. Hand-written journal pages can be scanned and sent as a PDF, and unless you have given your permission in advance, only Gent or Linda will read them. Also, if you are on a monthly contribution, be sure to submit contribution for the next Moon, Frogs Return Moon.

**WEEK 2:** Continue your daily devotions, and re-read the sections on the correspondences and aspects of the East Gate to make sure you know them well. Read “Discovering the Living Tree,” which includes “Regeneration and Creativity” and the section titled “Change and Choice: The Bowl of Your Creation.” Do Exercises 2 and 3 from the study guide, and answer the questions for the week.

**WEEK 3:** Continue your daily devotions, which includes daily journaling, and re-read the sections on the correspondences and aspects of the East Gate to make sure you know them. Also, if you have a tradition you follow, or something speaks to your own knowing, feel free to add your own aspects. Read “Quest for Vision,” do Exercise 4 from the study guide, and answer the questions for the week. Please make a note of any glossary terms you would like to see added, and send these to the Institute for review.

**WEEK 4:** Read “Questing Further into the Trees,” and do Exercise 5. Also, answer the questions for Week 4 of the Budding of the Trees Moon.

## VERNAL EQUINOX

As this month begins the lengthening of the time of light, we awake each morning to a new, longer day of clear, crisp, bright yellow sun's rays. The cold blue of the North is giving way to the new warmth as the days grow longer and the ground grows warmer so that the seeds of new growth will germinate and mature. Spring, or Vernal Equinox, is one of the two times of the year when day and night are of equal length, and this process occurs at a different time in every city. Check your smart phone or the Internet for the time Spring occurs in your area. The equinox times have always been sacred to people who practice the Old Ways, and people on an Earth-centered path celebrate such days with ceremony. A Mayan teacher, Hunbatz Men, offers the solar ceremony in Exercise 1 for this month to honor this day. He states that is best to perform the ceremony of the Equinox at dawn.

### Spiritual Duty

Spiritual duty is a common concept of primal peoples and followers of the ancient ways. Spiritual duty is the idea that all people have a purpose and spiritual duty that promotes right relationship with our entire environment, which includes our fellow humans, the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the mineral kingdom, and especially the spiritual realms. We have come to a time as evolutionary beings in which we can no longer afford the habits of "the spoiled child." Selfish misuse of natural resources and angry stubbornness for past wrongs have no place in these critical times. We simply must come to know how to create a Path of Beauty through choice of right action, good relationship, and clear intention.

The first step on this path is finding harmony in your own heart and then letting that harmony be the gift you share with all the Universe. You find this harmony by identifying repeated patterns of mind and action that creates disharmony, and then you choose not to participate in them anymore. This choice becomes a gift to the Universe. This is wisdom, and by your choice to participate in this course, you have signaled your Higher Self and the spiritual realms that you are ready for the Wisdom Path of Beauty.

Understanding the Beauty Path is to stand as a witness to the patterns, processes, and cycles of the continually unfolding present moment. As I stand as a witness to the Path of Beauty I accept the responsibility for what I have built with my mind and my thinking. Thoughts have energy, and they contribute creative vitality moment by moment. Our life situation and the circumstances of the world around us are the consequences of our collective thoughts, actions, and reactions to what we created in the first place. We create the cycles of renewal and health or cycles of destruction and despair—the choice is ours. We do create our own reality, and we do realize (make manifest or real) the Great Mystery on the Earth, and this is why wisdom energy is so important.

### Right Speech, Right Thought, Right Action, Right Relationship

Right speech, right thought, right action, and right relationship are the four directions of the Wheel of Spiritual Duty. Right thought is found in the direction of the East, right action is in the South, right relationship is in the West, and right speech is in the North. Through right thought we honor ancestors and create harmony unto the seventh generation.

This month is the beginning of planting season, and this energy is perfect for sowing good seeds of mind and thought. This is a perfect time to evaluate what seed thoughts we have

been sowing and what thoughts we desire to sow for our lives be the Give-away to the Universe that they are meant to be. Right thoughts activate wisdom to know right action, and through right action we create right relationship. Through right relationship we come to balance and resolution, and from this place, the voice of compassion arises (right speech). This completes the cycle of our sacred journeys back to the center, and from there the cycle continues—this is the Sacred Hoop. We grow as we embrace this deeper nature of true communication and compassionate mind so that we will one day all speak one language again. The elders teach that the language will be one with few words and that our communication will be full of vision. The seed of that language is lying dormant in our spirit bodies waiting for germination.

For the cycle to renew, each of us must make an offering of our ignorance upon the Sacred Fire of transformation found in the East. Throughout your time in the East, you will work with the element of fire. As you do so, be ever present to the possibility of the “offering of your ignorance,” and if you are willing to be wrong and to look like a fool, you will be undertaking a most sacred act.

## **Birth Scripts**

From the moment in life when we take our first breath, we are programmed and imprinted by our culture, our family’s customs, and all the aspects of our environment. I call this *tribal energy*. This concept is important to understand this isn’t a judgment: this tribal energy is how we survived as infants and children. As children, we learn by observance; like ducklings, we are beings of imitation. An awakening adult, we spend time in mindful spiritual awakening, examining which of the scripts, habits, and imprints we have picked up along the way to understand which ones serve us and the world and which ones do not. The good news about being such malleable creatures is that through intentionality and choice, we can release that which does not serve.

When we learn through spiritual practice to stay in the perennial moment of now, each day and each moment is a chance to make choices for the highest good. Many clan or tribal people have a practice that illustrates their understanding of this concept. They arise each day before dawn so that they can practice the rite of inhaling the first light of day. By this practice, they partake in a physical way, becoming new each day. By taking in through their breath this first light, they symbolically recreate the moment of their birth. The rest of the day then becomes their “first day,” and they can now choose from a wisdom stance how they will respond. They can use their personal and spiritual wisdom to remain in a positive relationship to the primal world force, the Maker or Great Spirit of all. In fact, maintaining harmony with this awesome power of creation is fundamental to their world view and forms the basis of their being in the world.

The fruits of this kind of concept were noted by George Catlin, an American painter, author, and traveler who specialized in portraits of Native Americans in the Old West. Traveling to the American West five times during the 1830s, Catlin was the first white man to depict Plains Indians in their native territory being programmed to react to life like the white man instead of being true to their way of life. Catlin wrote these words about the Indians he had come to know: “I love a people who are honest without laws, who have no jails and no poorhouses. I love a people who keep the commandments without ever having read them or heard them preached from the pulpit.” As spiritual beings, we can use the energy of this time of the year to begin

anew. We, too, can take in the first light of day each day and thus create our own unique Path of Beauty.

*We gratefully acknowledge the elders who have contributed to this material, especially Dhyani Ywahoo, from The Four-Fold Way.*

**Sweet Mystery that is at the Sacred Center, and all Divine Energies, thank you for holding us and cradling us in your protection as we bring wholeness to our hearts and to our world! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! It is good.**

# STUDY GUIDE: BUDDING OF THE TREES MOON

## Week 1: Exercise 1

### A Mayan Vernal Equinox Solar Ceremony

**What you will need:** Incense (preferably copal), an incense burner, matches, and a conch shell horn or some other horn or sound device to announce the arrival of the sun.

Note: Like all such processes presented in these materials, this exercise may be completed entirely in the imaginal, or mythic, realm. The richness of your imagination is used to provide you with another level of learning. You can simply sit or be still for a comfortable period and complete the ceremony (ritual, exercise) entirely in your mind. Your mind is a very private and sacred space, and completing this exercise there is every bit as holy as manifesting your ritual practice in the material world.

1. Arrive before dawn at a location out in nature that has an unobstructed “long” view of the rising sun on the horizon.
2. Smudge yourself and then wait in silence facing the direction of the rising sun. When the sun breaks the horizon, announce its arrival by blowing the shell horn, and then close your eyes and begin to meditate. With respect and humbleness, ask *Hunab Ku*, the Mayan Creator, for permission to enter the memory of Creation. Ask to be reawakened to the ancient wisdom of the Cosmos.
3. As the sun rises, if the brightness of the sun's orb shows through your eyelids, open your eyes for half an instant. PLEASE be careful. If the sun is shrouded by clouds, you can look at the sun for a longer time, and use discretion.
4. Grasp your Spirit in your hands by holding your hands out in front of your face as if you were holding a globe or sphere, and begin to chant the name of the Sun in the Mayan language, *K'in* (pronounced “Keen”). Draw the “e” out—*Keeeeeeeennnnnn*). If done properly, you will feel the sound of the Sun vibrating in your head and especially behind your third eye.
5. Chant *K'in* seven times for the awakening of your Spirit and for alignment with the seven solar systems of the Pleiades, a very sacred heavenly body to the Mayans and Amerindian people. You may now be able to feel the energy of your Spirit in your hands.
6. Fill that energy now with a message from your heart. Mentally or verbally state a dedication or an intention. This message could be your love for the planet, your dedication to your spiritual growth, your openness to remembering forgotten cosmic knowledge, or your joy; choose a dedication or intention that is meaningful to you.
7. Send this vibrational message of solar light mixed with your Spirit out into the Cosmos by raising your hands up in a gesture of offering. Sense the message being received by our cosmic relations and the Great Maker of All.

## QUESTIONS FOR BUDDING OF THE TREES MOON: WEEK 1

*NOTE: If you are seeking certification of any kind, you must submit your answers, along with your journal, to the Institute via your private account.*

1. What is spiritual duty and what are its four directions?
2. What blocks our ability to do our real work in the world, and how does this block relate to the idea of change blindness?
3. Describe each of the four requirements that must be met for us to cooperate with our soul's purpose.
4. What lies at the heart of spirituality?
5. Why is knowing our own motives so essential to this work?
6. What do we mean when we talk about the "diversity of truth"?
7. What causes us to suppress things from our conscious mind and leads us to attack others??
8. How can our wounds and so-called faults also be our greatest gifts?
9. What are "edges" and why must we pay such close attention to them?
10. Why would we want to embrace change rather than to surrender to change?