

## THE EARTH AND WATER LORDS

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A number of you responded to my short article on my visit to the natural spring and the local water-protector spirits (nagas) that watch over the place. I am working on a video on the earth and water lords for my cable show (Spirit Grooves), so this has been on my mind. I thought some of you might enjoy an earlier article I posted on this same spring, so bear with me if some of the material was mentioned before.

Back in the fall of 2012, I was helping a friend move and had a chance to visit their new home. It was located not in a city, but on the edge of about as much wilderness as you can imagine. The view from their home inset high upon a hillside was fabulous, forest as far as you could see below and then a large lake in the distance. I was told that even the occasional wolf, bear, and cougar were to be seen, and that you don't venture into the dense forest below the house without a companion and a compass. In fact, one person who has lived there for 38 years said he has never crossed the half-mile of forest-swamp from his home to the lake. It is impenetrable, but he has walked the distance in winter on snowshoes.

The house where my friends live is lovely too, perfect for their family. All of this was very nice, but there was something more important that caught my eye straight away. Fifty feet or so below the house was a crystal clear pool of water. I could see straight through it to the bottom, and banks of underwater plants, layer on layer, in shades of an almost teal-green stood out in the crystalline water. Trout swam in the shallows. Very unusual. Most Michigan ponds or pools are not clear like this.

This natural spring I just spotted was like a living being. Upon seeing it, in that first instant, I felt its presence. I knew that the pond was what made this place special, at least to me. Here was a living spirit that breathed life into the whole surrounding area. I found out later that this was a natural spring and that the pond refills itself every four hours with fresh water from deep in the ground. It is as cold as ice. One neighbor said that his two sons (grown up now) had dared each other to swim out in the icy waters to the center, but neither ever as able to do that. It was just too cold. That said, I would like to share something with you about such places.

Over the forty-five years or so that I have been studying astrology, I have been particularly interested in whatever relates to the space directly surrounding us, our local area (wherever we live). In the early 1970s I developed an astrological technique that is now used by astrologers all over the world called "Local Space." Local Space is primarily used today as a relocation technique, but I always used it for much more than that in counseling, invoking the power of places in more of a shamanic mode.

So it should come as no surprise that I am fascinated by the concept in Tibetan astrology of what are called the Sa-Dak, the spirits that surround and protect auspicious

places, literally, the lords of the land - Earth Lords. Particularly in these times, in which so much wide-scale destruction to nature and the land has taken place, one cannot but wonder about the consequences, not just physically, but spiritually. In general, modern society has adopted (as a world view) the very materialistic concept that land and sea are just dirt and water, so many atoms, and in themselves have no innate essence or "soul," in my opinion a big mistake. Native Americans know better than this.

The Tibetans and Chinese respect the spirit of the land itself and everything about it. This is why feng-shui is so popular in these countries and much consulted. Tibetan earth and water lords are similar to feng-shui, but they have to do not so much with where and how things are positioned in space, but with the very energy of a place and the respect shown to it - how the place is treated.

According to many Asians, every place, that is, every mountain, stream, and canyon is something more than just the sum of its physical parts and whatever beauty it may or may not possess. There is some kind of force or energy connected to the way things have come together in this or that spot to make it what it is. In other words, there is such a thing as an energy or indwelling nature-spirit - whatever you want to call it. From this point of view, locations are not just atoms of rock and water, but there is some subtle and perhaps indescribable energy that makes a particular valley or forest "beautiful," a reason why we can sense its power or presence, which can at times take our breath away, if only for a moment. This is how I felt when I first saw this crystal spring.

We intrinsically sense that some places are special, but how does that work? The Tibetans tell us that these special places are power spots, and that to wantonly destroy or deface them is not without consequences to humans. If we mess with these power points, the energy bound in them can be unleashed and perhaps react to harm us. Many places are governed and cared for by a variety of spirits who protect them. In other words, the Earth Lords protect the land against any form of disrespect or harm. For example, when a high-Tibetan lama, the Gyalwa Karmapa, visited the United States, he pointed out that all of America belongs to a powerful female earth lord. Of course, there are hundreds of lesser earth lords, as well,

The Earth Lords or Sa-Dak, as they are called in Tibetan (in Sanskrit: bhumiapati = Masters of the Land), are an important part of geomancy as practiced in Tibetan Buddhism. The earth lords are literally that, the lords and spirits of the local space, the soil and water surrounding any area, and they need to be consulted and kept in mind when planning anything to do with building, relocation, marriage, health, death, and the like in their area, that is: on their turf. From the Tibetan point of view, we humans don't "have" turf. We only exist on the land at the kindness of the earth lords, and they are anything but kind if provoked. In fact, earth lords are said to be fierce protectors, and we violate their sacred space at our peril.

There are many kinds of spirits, not only of the land, but also of the water and air. The earth lords are mostly connected with fields, agriculture, land, and houses. They are irritated when they are disturbed by our digging the ground, excavating, cutting down

forests, and so forth. In the same way, other similar spirits respond to air and water pollution. This is a complex subject, and I have barely touched upon it here. I wrote a short book ("Tibetan Earth Lords") on this some years ago that may interest some of you. It can be found at this link:

<http://dharmagrooves.com/pdf/e-books/Tibetan-Earth-Lords.pdf>

A brief takeaway from this topic is that when we respond to a place with awe because of its beauty, we are probably sensing the spirit of the place, the presence of the earth and water lords. We can make friends with these forces (align ourselves with them) or we can provoke them by harming or denigrating the space in which they dwell. A rule of thumb I use is that we don't break nature's laws; they break us. The same is true for the earth lords. They rule this land; we are just guests here and we may not be invited back.

I am reminded of the Tom Waits song and the lines:

"This world is not my home,  
I'm just a passin' through,  
Come on up to the house."

[Photo by me.]

