

February 2017

Skylands Report

The e-newsletter of the Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship



Skylands Celebrates Yule

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship held its Yule celebration on January 14, and it was a fantastic time. By all accounts, this was Skylands most well attended and best overall event to-date. Our animal guising rite, where Odin symbolically selected the Yule goat as the offering led into the blót to Thor. Members chanted while Joseph goði spoke powerful words to Asa-Thor.

Later, we feasted on a wonderful meal of roast pork. Special thanks to Lisa C. for preparing much of this meal for the tribe. Following the feast, we held sumbel, where many fine and worthy words were heard over the horn, thoughtful gifts were exchanged, and two new members, Erik G. and Karen B. were brought into the tribe. As the evening progressed there was a wide array of desserts and much merriment that went on into the night.

Thanks to all the members of Skylands, our friends, family, and guests who made Yule such a memorable occasion. Hail the gods, and hail the tribe!



Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship celebrate Yule with friends



The wonderful Yule feast



Joseph goði leads the Yule blót as snow falls

Meet and Greets

Winter tends to be a great time for our “Meet and Greets.” In January Skylands hosted such an event at a local Houlihan’s. In February we’ll be at Chili’s Grill and Bar (see the calendar below). Our Meet and Greets are a great place to come and get to know more about us and about Asatru in general. In a stress-free environment, you can grab a beer and something to eat and find out more about Ásatrú. Not sure you want to take a class? Not sure you want to become a member? Join us for a bite to eat and a beer. Meet and Greets are open to all – newcomers and old friends alike. We hope to see you soon!

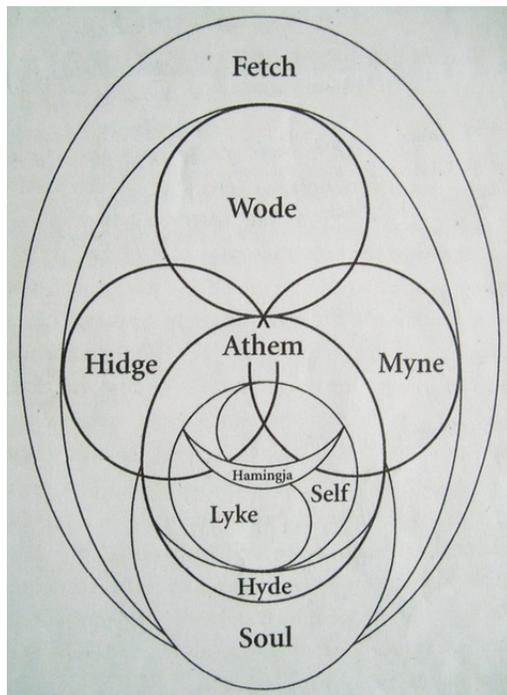
Ásatrú 101 examines Soul, Wyrd, and Ørlög

For December’s *Ásatrú 101* class Joseph goði taught students the basics about the Germanic concepts of the Soul, Wyrd, and Ørlög. The class reviewed several authors and their varied explanations of the German “soul complex.” We learned the multiple parts of the soul including the lyke, hyde, hugh, myne, athem, wode, fetch, and luck.

Students also learned about the concepts of Ørlög and Wyrð. Ørlög determines how all life is shaped from beginning to end, the wyrð of the individual. If one is without Ørlög, one literally does not exist as a conscious individual. The Wyrð is the Anglo-Saxon term for “fate.”

In essence, Ørlög is the pattern that is laid down for us at birth, but wyrð is the ultimate outcome based on our own actions within that pattern.

Remember *Ásatrú 101* classes are open to all and those who have missed a class are always encouraged to join us!



One depiction of the Germanic Soul-Complex

Learn the Magic of the North in Rûna Workshops

Rûna Workshops are designed to focus on aspects of Germanic magical practices, including runes, divination, seiðr, trolldomr, spá, and others. They are non-religious in nature, and are open to all.

The subject of our next class (Feb 26) will be Chapter 3 "Theory of Rune Magic" in Edred Thorsson's book *Futhark*.

In addition, we will be doing a practical rune-carving exercise; each participant will design and carve a bind-rune talisman. Because materials will be provided, we are asking a \$5 donation to cover expenses.

Please make sure you've done the reading so you can participate in the discussion. We will also be continuing our other exercises.

Don't worry if you missed some of the previous classes; as long as you're prepared for this one, you'll be fine. This class is explicitly open to all seekers.

Skylands February Calendar

Ásatrú 101 Class

Date: February 12, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Location: Stanhope, NJ

Meet and Greet

Date: Friday, February 17, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Location: Chili's Grill and Bar, 58 Route 23 North, Riverdale, NJ

Runa Workshop

Date: February 26, 2017

Time: 06:30 PM

Subject: Thorsson's *Futhark* pp. 71-88 (Theory of Rune Magic)

Location: Stanhope, NJ

Everyone is encouraged to make an offering to their local land-spirits. By making regular offerings, we increase our bonds of friendship with the spirits of the earth. Such offerings may be made on the Full Moon or the New Moon.

Full Moon Offering

Date: February 10, 2017

New Moon Offering

Date: February 26, 2017

What happens after we die?

The Ásatrú conception of the afterlife is complex. The existence of a soul that survives the death of the body is taken as a given, but what happens to that soul can take a few different paths.

The most well-known fate for the dead is Valhalla, Odin's hall in Asgard where the souls of those who have been chosen in battle fight all day, and those who fall are raised every day and feast all night, drinking mead and eating pork. But this destination is only for a very few, those warriors who fall in battle after being chosen by Odin and his Valkyries (literally, "choosers of the slain"). Odin gathers these best-of-all-warriors to him to have a force to fight against the giants, whom he knows will some day attack Valhalla during the last battle, Ragnarok. We are also told that half of those who are chosen to die in battle end up in the goddess Freya's hall, Fjolkgang.

The vast majority of people, though, find themselves in Hel (spelled with only one "L"). As opposed to the Christian place with a similar name, Hel is not a place of torment and fire, but rather is a place of peace, where we live out shadows of the lives we lived here on Earth. It is named after the goddess Hel, who rules over the place, and is the final destination of the vast majority of people, who die of old age, sickness, and the like. Significantly, after the world is destroyed, it is only those who were in Hel who will survive the devastation, and be able to remake the world from its ashes. If you lived a good life and demonstrated kindness to others, the journey will be easy. If not, the journey will be quite unpleasant, but you'll still get there.

Ásatrú does have a place of punishment in its afterlife, however, called Nastrond. It is a place of chill and torment, reserved for murderers and oath-breakers. Those are the worst crimes one can commit.

But the afterlife isn't always about some otherworldly experience. There is also a strong tradition that when we die and are buried, we simply continue living as we did in life, feasting with the other ancestors. Often this is centered around a holy mountain or hill, or burial mound. That's one reason ancestor-worship was and is so common; we know that those who have gone before us are still around, watching over us and helping bring us luck and plenty in life. While this may seem contradictory, one of the things that makes Ásatrú so strong is its lack of dogma. If you believe you will dwell in a holy mound when you die, and your family does as well, then dwell there you shall.



A 19th Century romanticized painting of the Valkyries carrying the fallen to Valhalla by William T. Maud

Help Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship runs both *Asatru 101* classes and *Runa Workshops*. We have celebrations of the major holidays in the heathen calendar. We run several on-line sites and produce this newsletter. All of this is possible through donations from members and friends. Please consider making a donation to Skylands Asatru Fellowship today!

Donate today! http://www.skylandsasatru.org/?page_id=183

Follow Skylands on-line!

For more information about our tribe and our events, please visit our website at www.skylandsasatru.org

Don't forget to *friend* us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/skylandsasatru/>

Remember to sign up for our events on our Meetup page: <http://www.meetup.com/NJ-Asatru/>

Skylands Ásatrú Fellowship is also on Twitter. Follow us at: https://twitter.com/Skylands_Asatru