**Beltane History** :1) I (.4,

**On the Wheel of Time, Beltane falls halfway between Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice. It is a springtime festival of Optimism, Fertility, and the Waxing of the Sun. Beltane is associated with the Celtic god Bel or Belenus, a god of light, fire, and the sun.**

**Bel means Shining One. It is a return of life and fruitfulness to the Earth. It is a reawakening, a renewal of life-force, creativity, rebirth, love and sexuality.**

**It is commonly celebrated by dancing, and the Maypole is a good example but before the Maypole dancing became widespread, dancing without the benefit of the giant pole was also common.**

**But Beltane is largely about fire. The lighting of a bonfire at Beltane was used for protection from harm, as well as purification. It was known to be a time when the fairy spirits roamed and The Veil between our world and the underworld is to be considered thin and the spirits of our ancestors can be contacted.**

**The bonfire was meant to mimic the Sun and to ensure plenty of sunshine for the people, plants and animals, it was meant to symbolically "burn up and destroy harmful influences."**

**Water, the other element in purification also played a strong role in Beltane. Wells were seen as holy places and flowers and other**

**adornment was given to the wells. Morning dew was a ritual of water, seen as sacred and magical, young women would rise at dawn and wash their face in the morning dew.**

**Another ritual of Beltane was hand fasting. A form of marriage, where a couple would say vows or promises to each other, their hands would be ritually tied together as in fastened in partnership, and then they would jump over the bel-fire.**

**In fact once the bel fire was lit, the children would be put to bed and the adult festivities began. Newlywed couples were expected to perform fertility rites around the bonfires, to take advantage of the potency and**

**purification of Beltane. Naturally enough unwed men and women would also participate in the spirit of Beltane and would wonder off into the fields or forests to perform their own fertility rites. It was a sacred night and such unions were seen as completely proper.**

**Ancient people believing in sympathetic magic: A practice of a small symbolic action that represents a larger one, they felt that by making love in the fields, they were helping make the earth more fertile, blessing it with their own activity of producing new life and abundance.**

**In Ceme Abbas, A giant is carved into the side of the hill and the May Day sun rises directly in alignment with the figure. He is obviously a fertility figure as he proudly shows his 8 foot penis. The maypole itself with the maidens dancing around it is symbolically phallic.**

**It is also thought that Beltane, May Day and the Roman festival of Floralia are related. This was a six day party in honor of Flora, the goddess of spring and Flowers; it was a time of feasting, singing and dancing. Everyone dressed in bright colors in imitation of spring flowers!**

**What would it be like for the garden of your soul to burst fully into bloom? For your soul to engulf you in flames? As we celebrate this special day, let the colors of nature inspire you to remember that love blooms and time stops, to make space for love/ and lovers to find each other again. May you find yourself; love yourself, your spirit, and your passion.**

**Happy Beltane!**