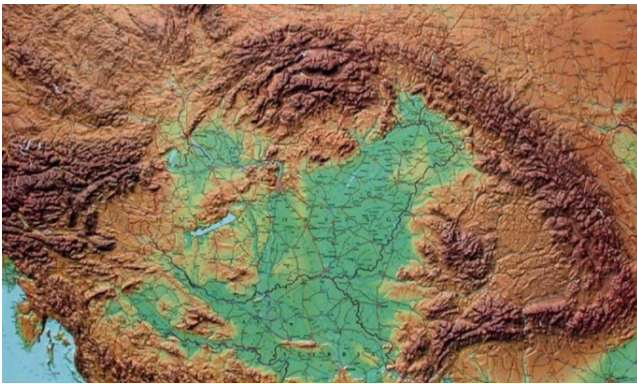


# The Place We Arrive At – SoulTuning for Our Journey

*Spiritual tourist guide for the members of the FG, coming to Hungary  
in preparation for the 2026 ASD Conference*

When we set off on a journey, we often remember airports, streets, and hotel rooms. Yet behind every journey lies the place in its wholeness: the physical, spiritual, and intellectual totality that truly receives us. Arriving in Hungary is not merely a tourist event: it is an entry into a center where land, history, and spirit weave together in a unique way.



The landscape speaks for itself: the Carpathian Basin, Europe's largest basin, is encircled by the Carpathians to the north, east, and southeast, the Alps to the west, and the Dinaric Alps to the southwest. The Carpathian arc surrounds the basin like a mountain crown, as if it were a womb: concealing, protecting, shaping, and

nourishing. The Danube, that great river flowing across Central Europe from west to east, from north to south, nourishes the inner life here like a winding umbilical cord. This land is at once enclosed and open: within, a space for ripening; outward, a network of bridges. The Carpathian Basin holds what is to be born, until it is ready to step into the world.

But history is written by human hands, and so it may deviate from spiritual reality and from physical givens. The breakup of the Monarchy, the amputation of Trianon, were not only matters of drawing borders, but a serious assaults upon the Middle. The counterforces struck at Christianity, aiming to erase Europe's center, to dig a chasm where bridges had stood. Those forces of disintegration have always sought the annihilation of the Middle.

*"If one day my life submerges for ever,  
who will care and scare away the vulture!  
And who'll take gently between his teeth preserved  
Love safely to the other bank of the river!" – László Nagy*

Hungarian destiny has been standing on this riverbank: how can we carry across what belongs together, when political and historical powers tear it apart?

And here, the unique face of the Hungarian folk spirit comes into view. In Rudolf Steiner's words: it does not act from feeling, nor from thought, but from the I – through will, responsibility, and deeds reaching into the future. The Hungarian soul therefore often searches with intensity: how can we not only understand the world, but turn understanding into action? This search is thirst – like the thirst of the Great Plain for water: not the possession of freedom, but the unceasing longing for it.

*In his autobiography, Steiner notes that for Hungarians, patriotism and the sense of "Hungarian life" are especially strong – as if for many, it were "a separate world": Extra Hungariam non est vita, si est vita, non est ita. He emphasizes that the internal logic and rhythm of the Hungarian language carry a distinctive spiritual quality that shapes thought and artistic expression. In lectures, he spoke of a special role for the Hungarian people in Europe's inner life – not as a privilege above others, but as a unique spiritual quality.*

*In his lectures given in Budapest and in remarks connected with the "etheric Christ" cycle, Steiner spoke of certain great Hungarians as embodiments of the Hungarian folk soul, seeing their spiritual images as having an important place within the larger spiritual process of Europe. On several occasions he indicated that Central Europe, with Hungary at its heart, could play a special mediating role between East and West – a role of cultural and social significance. He also observed that throughout Hungarian history there have been repeated moments of renewal and re-creation; this dynamic has left its mark on the Hungarian soul and may grant it a formative mission within the European sphere.*

*According to Steiner, the Hungarian people possess an inner capacity to preserve their communal identity even in times of great upheaval – an essential trait for understanding their life and role. He emphasized that Hungarian spiritual life – poetry, music, folk art – can serve as a source through which the nation's spiritual mission finds expression; the arts can carry the more subtle qualities of the folk spirit. Among Hungarians, both individual and collective will stand out strongly – this can become a constructive force, yet it also poses the challenge of how such will might be joined with service for the good of Europe. And while Steiner perceives and highlights the European significance of the Hungarian folk spirit in certain respects, he warns against any sweeping, romantic idealization of the nation – such generalizations are necessarily misleading.*

Perhaps it is no accident that Rudolf Steiner – the greatest initiate of modern life – was born in the Hungarian Kingdom, in Kraljevec (today Donji Kraljevec, Croatia). Nor perhaps is it accidental that in the very same geographical region we find the ancient site of the Gilgames initiation. Such a coincidence seems to suggest that Hungarian soil is not merely the home of a people, but an initiation landscape: a cradle for new epochs and new states of consciousness.

The Carpathian Basin is therefore both womb and crossroads, wound and promise.

*“I myself will perhaps stand in the middle.  
Perhaps it’s evening. Perhaps twilight.  
One thing is sure: it’s getting late.” – János Pilinszky*

Yet twilight is not only a time of closure, but also the darkness before birth, the end of Kali Yuga. The Hungarian landscape carries this duality: scattering and reunion, betrayal and fidelity, suffering and the search for solace. And when we enter here as guests, we step into the Middle itself: into that mysterious movement which cannot be possessed, yet may appear through us.

After looking at the geographical and political map, and we took into account some characteristics of the Hungarian folksoul, it is worth venturing a statement: the Center is not a place, but a movement. It is not a map on the wall, but a breath: sometimes it draws near, sometimes it recedes. When we open our attention, the Center does not await us as a finished state; rather, it arrives like a guest who only sits down when silence and space are created for it. And even then, at the crossroads there are always restless countercurrents. Those who work in Central Europe learn the craft of these crossings: how to remain open where forces collide, and how to guard the Center, which cannot be possessed.

The landscape of the Carpathian Basin gives a form to this movement... Here everything is about working inward: about maturation, preservation, hidden, slow, deliberate births. If we look at the wider map, we see a passage between East and West, North and South; if we look at the soul, we see a mediating place, where encounter is always a task, never a mere given.

Europe lives in a vast rhythm: West, Center, East – three distinct qualities of time. In the West, folksouls have long been at home in their nations; this is the hard-earned, mature experience of the past. In the East, the future is being prepared: expanding horizons, enormous promises, often apparent uncertainty. The Center is entrusted with the present: here and now, among us, we must harmonize what would otherwise fall apart. The Central European folk spirit is therefore not a permanent resident; it breathes. It comes close, electrifies, rejuvenates—then it withdraws, and

we suddenly find ourselves alone, noticing the aging forces and the foreign tones. History has had its epochs of this nearness and it has also known long, ascetic distances. We are now living in such an expansion: with greater responsibility and fewer secure footholds.

Hungary is unique in this rhythm because it stands alone in the Slavic ring surrounding Central Europe: it is neither German nor Slavic. The work entrusted to it therefore often comes from the Self: will, responsibility, decision. It does not simply ask, "What do I think about the world?", but rather, "What am I going to do with it?" This question also echoes from the landscape.

In the Hungarian landscape, five "geniuses" converge, as if separate seas were colliding in their waves: the cheerfulness and vitality of the South, the refinement and social balance of the West, the sensitivity and closeness to nature of the North, the longing for freedom and far-sightedness of the East, and the intricate, layered richness of Transylvania. To be Hungarian is to seek the delicate balance of these five qualities. It is not a heroic gesture, but an everyday practice. When we fall apart, betrayal and fraternal strife sprout; when we resonate together, great works come forth – a poem, a melody, a decent handshake, a rescued conversation.

The diary of modern history – bleeding from many wounds – can also be read here. The communal experiment of the Monarchy, the disruptive movement of Trianon, dictatorships and new beginnings: Rákóczi, '48, '56, '89. They all ask the same question: how can we avoid falling apart in the Middle, and instead become a community?

*"Hungary, Christ of nations." – Sándor Márai*

The Center also has its secret icons. Anyone who has walked among the stones of the Hermitage in Arlesheim knows that there are places where a horizontal cut and a vertical scratch are about to meet – and yet they do not. The Middle stands there untouched. This is not helplessness, but rather the concealment of the creative movement: the Middle does not allow itself to be pierced, but it does not close either. It leads the way.

*What is the task of a community preparing for a conference? Perhaps this: let us not only want to arrive, but also make room. Room for the bridge between East and West, room for will and attention, room for courageous speech and careful listening.*

*The Middle is not just a location, not just a decorative theater set, a backdrop –  
it is practice!*

*We could also say: we do not make ourselves at home in the Middle, but we stand in readiness for it. We take up the rhythm of “heart-work”: we open, we receive, we bring into harmony, and what is not ours, we let pass on.*

There are countless signs of this work in Hungarian culture. Jókai’s lighthearted travels in the lands of the “five geniuses”; Bartók’s relentlessly precise hearing, with which he transcribed even the deepest sounds of the earth into musical notation; Pilinszky’s black-and-white silences, where the unspeakable nevertheless takes shape. These are not decorations in the national showcase, but tools: they show how it is possible to be both faithful to the part and open to the center.

*Finally: the Middle is not an abstraction, but a human relationship. It does not only happen on the grand stage of peoples and eras, but between two people, at a given moment. If, here and now, we talk in such a way that we consider the other person’s being more important than our own truth; if we listen without preparing our response; if we decide not only for what is useful, but what is right – then the Middle does not merely arrive, but begins to work. And its working is not triumph, but grace – something that does not come from us, but becomes visible through us.*

*This is how we invite everyone to this place. Not just to Hungary, but to the work of the Middle that connects us to the Carpathian Basin and, through it, to the whole of Europe. Come as if you were stepping onto a bridge: the two banks remain, but as you step, something third is born – that certain movement that here we call the Middle.*

We look forward to seeing you soon!

The 2026 ASD HostGroup

Hungary, September 28, 2025



*Sources of translations of the poems quoted (full versions):*

[Nagy László: Who Will Take Love](#)

[Pilinszky János: Dénouement](#)