

The Four Cities Working With The Sacred Directions

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First published 1992, in Earth Light, Element Books edition. New USA edition Earth Light 1998. Registered copyright in the USA. Artwork copyright Miranda Gray, 1992.

Author's Note: I also recommend to you a very different and unique presentation of the Sacred Directions found in The Apple Branch, a Path to Celtic Ritual, Alexie Kondratiev, 1998, Collins Press, Cork, Ireland. (ISBN 1-898256-42-X). This remarkable book, of fine scholarship and integrity, should be read by everyone involved in spiritual work within Celtic tradition. R J Stewart

What follows is the original Four Cities guided vision first created and published by R J Stewart. Others have copied it since publication in 1992, but we offer this original freely for your meditations, visions, and delight.

THE FOUR CITIES is a unique original work by R J Stewart, inspired by the ancient Irish theme of the Four Cities of the Tuatha de Danann. This is not a traditional text or a historic translation: it is an inspired work of fiction designed and written for group and individual use in meditation, visualization, dream, and inner transformation.

The Four Cities was created in Britain, where many students and co-workers experienced the visualizations in workshops, classes, and private meetings between 1988 and 1996. The Element Books edition, in Earth Light was published worldwide in 1992 from a manuscript written in 1989. The book has also been translated into German.

The visionary cycle of The Four Cities has been shared by many people at workshops in the USA led by R J Stewart, between 1988 and the present day. The Four Cities forms an integral part of our ongoing Faery and UnderWorld work and of R J Stewart workshops and events. These workshops present a Land and Planet based spiritual vision, drawing on ancestral and Celtic sources, but uniquely developed for contemporary use. Do not let copyists mislead you, you can work with the original!

We encourage you to read and use this text, to meditate and visualize with it, to work together with the inspirations that it bring.

The Four Cities

There are four cities that no mortal eye has seen: Gorias, that is in the East, and Finias that is in the South, and Murias that is in the West, and Falias that is in the North. And the symbol of Falias is the stone of death, which is crowned with pale fire. And the symbol of Gorias is the dividing sword. And the symbol of Finias is a spear. And the symbol of Murias is a hollow that is filled with water and fading light.

From: The Little Book of the Great Enchantment by Fiona Macleod

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Sacred Space, the Seven Directions, is a Powerful key to working within the Underworld and the faery realm. The Directions and the Elements of Air, Fire, Water and Earth act as a relative pattern for our energies and consciousness when we explore other worlds and interact with their inhabitants. In working with the faery realm, the Four Directions of East, South, West and North carry a wealth of associations, particularly as the land is attuned to the energies of the Four Directions.

This directional pattern of energy, zoning and harmonizing the land, was a feature of ancient Celtic culture, and indeed of many cultures worldwide. It is still found inherent within our planetary directions today, and is not a theorized pattern but a practical one based upon the polarity of the Earth and the movement of the planet around the Sun. The associations of the Seasons and Elements with the Directions is, therefore, a holism within which a relative cycle of energy occurs. We may use this cycle of the Directions and its seasonal and elemental energies in our visualization of the faery realm.

When we do so, we attune to the sacred land, with its empowered Directions, and simultaneously relate and attune the Elements and phases of consciousness (the Seasons) within ourselves. In many wisdom traditions involving transpersonal development, the Elements and related cycles, often called the Wheel of Life, form the basis of all meditation, visualization, and ritual pattern making. When this holism is realized within the faery realm, we find that it takes on characteristics of that realm, and also enables the powers of the land to be realized and manifested for us, within us, and so through us towards the regeneration of our own world.

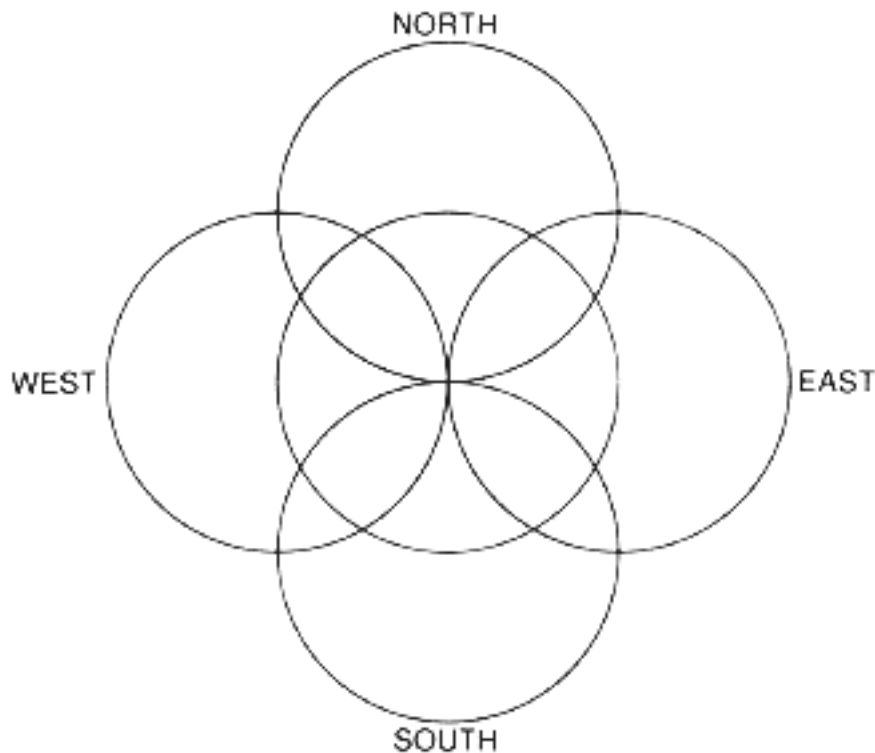


Figure (A) The Five Zones of Ancient Ireland. Many lands were modeled according to the Five Elements and Seven Directions in ancient cultures around the world.

Wind comes from the spring star in the East, fire from the summer star in the South; water from the autumn star in the West, wisdom, silence, and death from the winter star in the North.
The Divine Adventure Fiona Macleod.

Fiona Macleod (William Sharp, 1855-1905) used an obscure model of four cities in several poems. These are said to be the original dwellings of the Tuatha De Danann, and are listed in early Irish poetry. The concept is closely related to the ancient provinces of Ireland and the Four Implements or magical weapons of the Tuatha De Danann, the ancient Irish gods and goddesses who in later oral and written traditions became identified with the high faery race.

The implements or Hallows are the Sword, Spear, Cup or Cauldron, and Stone. We may use this directional pattern and the four Otherworldly cities in visualization, revealing the deeper mysteries of the faery realm. If we explore the four cities or convocations of the faery people, we enter the deepest levels of both faery and ancestral knowledge and energy, for they are at the foundation of mythic awareness of the relationship between human and faery realms.

Note: Four meditational objects may be arranged upon a central small stand for these visualizations. They are (North) a quartz-veined stone; (West) a bowl of water, (South) a straight branch (pulled in one swift motion or cut without steel or iron from the tree); and (East) a dagger or small sword of bronze or stone (not iron or steel). A meditational glyph for this visualization is shown in Figure (B) With practice this pattern can be used directly in meditation to invoke the contact of the Four Cities and Four Powers.

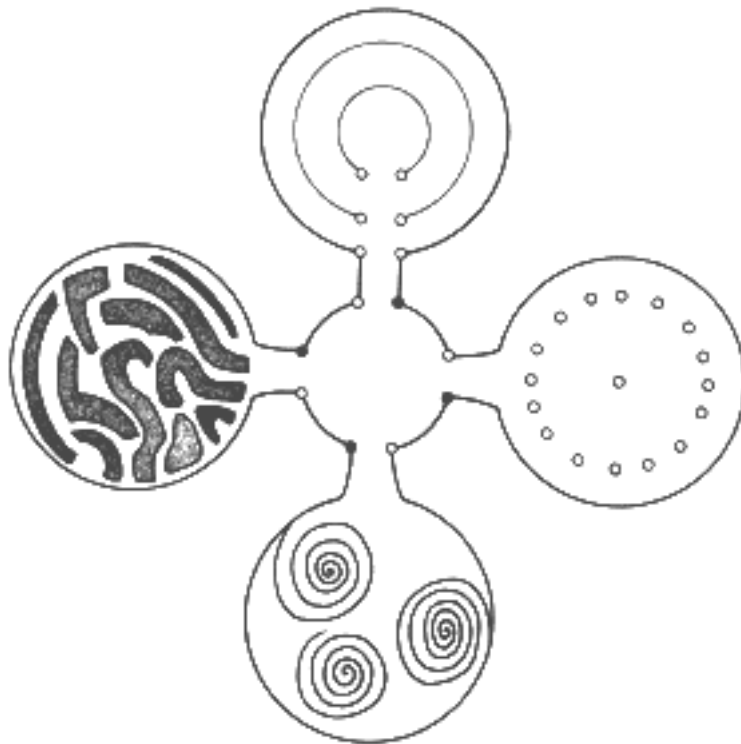


Figure (B) The Glyph of the Four Cities of Gorias, Finias, Murias and Falias. This glyph acts as a map for the empowered visualization and also works as a meditative and visualizing key pattern or mandala. Patterns of this sort have a long association with faery and Underworld contact.

The Four Cities Visualization

Sacred Space is opened, and silence is realized.

We begin by building strongly in our inner vision the Four Directions of North, East, South and West. In the North is night and winter, in the East is dawn and spring; in the South is noon and midsummer; in the West is autumn and evening. As we build our vision of the Directions, we see the room in which we sit change into a square chamber, with a door in the wall of each Quarter, and know that we must pass through each door in turn to reach the Four Cities of the faery realm: Gorias in the East, Finias in the South, Murias in the West, and Falias in the North.

EAST: First the door in the eastern wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the East: it is in the form of two standing stones, with a narrow gap between them. Through this gap we see a spring landscape, lit by pale blue and green light.

SOUTH: Next the door in the southern wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the South: it is in the form of two trees, one of green spreading branches and the other a tree of flame, constantly burning but never consumed. As we look upon these trees, they seem to exchange with one another, first one is of flame then of green branches, then the other. We look between them and see a brilliantly lit land, with a distant hill rising directly in the center of our line of sight.

WEST: Now the door in the western wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the West: it is in the form of two low hills tinged with the light of evening. Beyond the hills is the sea, with a path of light stretching across it.

NORTH: Lastly the door in the northern wall opens, revealing the gateway of the North. It is in the form of a low thorn hedge, with a narrow gap in it. Beyond the gap we see a cave within a great wall of rock. Deep within the shadows of the cave we see a faint glow of silver-white light, like starlight.

We will enter each of the four gates in turn, beginning with the gate of the East.

The Vision of Gorias in the East

From the East we feel a brisk wind and hear faintly the sound of horns blowing. We step up to the two stones, and pass directly between them. Now we find ourselves upon a rolling grassy plain. The wind blows strongly in our face, and all round us long grass waves and ripples in the pale dawn-light. Looking for the source of the light, in the East ahead of us we see a line of shapes silhouetted against the horizon, standing up out of the grass.

We feel drawn towards these shapes, and pause for a moment to dedicate our journey to the

task of seeking and finding the mysterious city of Gorias, where the sacred sword of the Underworld is held.

Now we begin to walk forwards to the East, and as we step through the long grass our sight of the shapes upon the horizon becomes clear: we realize that we are walking towards a collection of standing stones. As we approach, we see an avenue of stones, with its entrance directly upon our path. It leads into a triple stone circle of single upright stones.

As we enter the avenue of stones, we see that the long grass grows right up to them, and it seems that the way has not been walked before us, for there is no track, no trampled grass. But when we look behind, we see that we have left no trail in the grass ourselves. We look back once more and see far away to the West two tiny upright stones amid the vast plain, marking the gate through which we entered.

Now we walk down the avenue of stones, and hear the wind seethe and mutter around them. From the outermost ring of stone ahead of us a fluting sound rises and falls in long sliding tones. The wind plays its music upon the stones, and we wonder if this is the source of the sound of horns blowing that we heard before we entered the gateway of the East.

As we enter the outermost ring of stones, we realize that they are low, not much higher than the height of a man. Each stone is carved with spirals and shallow cup-marks, and we see that no stone is similar to any other. Each spiral, each hollow, conveys a wordless message to us, and we turn to the left and walk around the circle, between the first and second row of stones. As we walk we each feel drawn towards one stone of the middle circle, and pause at that stone, wherever it may be. This is your stone companion, your life-stone in the East, and you commune with it in silence.

[Silent pause here.]

Now we emerge from our communion with the stones, and hear again the fluting sliding sound of the wind blowing ... it seems now to come from the innermost circle of stones, and we look towards this. There are four huge rough stones with no carving upon them, and we step into the circle between the second and the innermost ring of stones. As we do so we feel a strong current flowing around the circle, as if we waded through deep water. The sound of the wind stops suddenly, and we enter the innermost circle in silence. It is empty.

As we look upon the circle of grass, in the silent light of perpetual dawn, we see the tip of a sword showing through the earth in the very center of the circle. It has a polished green blade, and only a short length is visible.

We stand around the circle, and feel the rough stones at our backs. It seems impossible to draw closer to the sword, as if the air resists us and the earth will not carry us. We long to know the mystery of the buried sword, rising up out of the earth, and meditate in silence upon it.

[Silent pause here.]

Over the sword we see now a shape forming, slowly, seeming to mold out of the air and light. It is the guardian of the mystery of Gorias, the city of the East. As this figure appears we are aware also of other presences in the stone circle, as if a great host has assembled invisibly while we have meditated upon the sword. One by one we approach the guardian, and seek the answer to a question.

[Silent pause here.]

Now we must return to the outer world, and leave the sacred sword, its guardian and the city of the East. We slowly step out of the innermost circle, and as we do so the presence of the guardian and the invisible host instantly ceases; they vanish suddenly as if they had never been present. One by one we find our stones in the second circle, and feel the carvings on each stone, trying to understand its story and why we were drawn to it when we entered.

Now we walk swiftly down the stone avenue, and out into the grassy plain. As we leave the outermost circle of stones, we hear the wind fluting and blowing behind us, in rising and falling sliding tones, like the blowing of unearthly horns. Once again we hear the sound of a great host gathering and murmuring in the stones, moving, whispering, crying sudden, wild, short cries. We know that we must not look back, but head resolutely for the gateway into the human world.

The two gate-stones are before us, and a huge wind rises at our backs and seems to blow us through. We pass between the stones and find ourselves in a chamber with four doors. Here we pause and slowly return to our starting place, a familiar room in the human world. Gradually the image of the chamber with four doors dissolves, and we open our eyes to return to our outer awareness.

Note: At this point there should be a break, and an opportunity to write notes. Writing the contents of the visualization out in a notebook often brings through material that might otherwise be forgotten. It is also useful for a group to discuss or share experiences after each of the four Visions, but discussions should not be interpretative or psychological, as this will lessen the impact of the experience through attempting to rationalize it. Simple acceptance and writing of notes gradually builds into a body of understanding symbols and regular patterns of experience within the faery realm. The experiences should always be accepted as themselves, not as analogies or allegories or something to be rationalized. After practice with each of the Four Cities, we may begin to experience the full cycle without a break. This is the most demanding and most potent and rewarding way of using the visualization. With silent pauses it can take more than one hour.

The Vision of Finias in the South

We begin by building strongly in our inner vision the Four Directions of North, East, South and West. In the North is night and winter, in the East is dawn and spring; in the South is noon and midsummer, in the West is autumn and evening.

As we build our vision of the Directions, we see once again the room in which we sit change into a square chamber, with a door in the wall of each Quarter, and know that we must pass through each door in turn to reach the Four Cities of the faery realm: Gorias in the East, Finias in the South, Murias in the West, and Falias in the North. We have already traveled to the city of Gorias in the East, and brought back with us keys to the power and meaning of that place. Now we will affirm each of the cities in turn, and travel to the South.

EAST: First the door in the eastern wall opens, revealing a familiar sight beyond. We look upon the gateway of the East: it is in the form of two standing stones, with a narrow gap between them. Through this gap we see a spring landscape, lit by pale blue and green light. This is the realm of the east where the city of Gorias stands in perpetual dawn.

SOUTH: Next the door in the southern wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the South: it is in the form of two trees, one of green spreading branches and the other a tree of flame, constantly burning but never consumed. As we look upon these trees, they seem to exchange with one another; first one is of flame then of green branches, then the other. We look between them and see a brilliantly lit land, with a distant hill rising directly in the center of our line of sight.

WEST: Now the door in the western wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the West: it is in the form of two low hills tinged with the light of evening. Beyond the hills is the sea, with a path of light stretching across it.

NORTH: Lastly the door in the northern wall opens, revealing the gateway of the North. It is in the form of a low thorn hedge, with a narrow gap in it. Beyond the gap we see a cave within a great wall of rock. Deep within the shadows of the cave we see a faint glow of silver-white light, like starlight.

Our intention is to travel to the city of Finias, the white city of perpetual summer in the South. We focus our attention upon the door of the South, and stepping through it find ourselves before two tall trees, one of green leaves and branches, the other of brilliant orange, white and red flames. As we look upon the trees, the image reverses, with the flames and green leaves interchanging. We feel a snap of energy pulsing through us as the image changes. To enter the summer land before us we must each step through the trees exactly as the pulse of energy changes from flames to green leaves.

We count the pulse of the transformations and discover that it exchanges every nine heartbeats. On the ninth beat we step through, one by one. As we step through and the polarity of the trees exchanges, we feel a powerful surge of energy coursing through our bodies, and emerge into a brilliantly lit warm, summer place.

The full light of a high summer noon fills this land, and the air is warm and rich with the scent of flowers. We hear the hum of bees, and feel the vibrancy of the plants around us. The landscape is rolling and filled with flowering plants, bushes and many aromatic herbs. Directly before us is a hill, and a faint trail wanders through the flowers toward it. The trail meanders and curves around small trees and clusters of flowering plants, and as we walk we feel the warmth of the land through our feet. The perfume of the plants is intoxicating. As we walk the meandering path we feel exhilarated, and begin to see flashes of color from the plants, as if a new level of sight, a new perception of light, has come to us.

Now the path divides into three, before a small flowering tree growing out of a cluster, a cairn of colored stones. The path to our left leads away through the rolling landscape towards a flat plain far in the distance. This side of the cairn is marked by green stones, and the road leads to Gorias by a way which we may not travel at this time.

The path to our right curves steeply way over the gentle hills and out of sight. This side of the cairn is made of blue stones, and the road leads to Murias by a way which we may not travel at this time. The path before us, just to the right of the flowering tree and cairn of colored stones, leads to the hill. This is the way to the city of Finias which we must travel. The stones of this side of the cairn are white where the path passes. As we step forward we see that the stones facing North, the direction that we have come from, are black.

Before us the hill rises and the path begins to spiral around it, gradually climbing to the top. The crown of the hill is wreathed in a white glowing cloud, through which we see tall dim shapes. As we slowly climb the hill, we see that there is a great circle of trees upon its summit, and the white glowing cloud resolves itself into silver leaves and white blooms, Yet even as we look the sight dissolves again into a glowing white cloud. Climbing higher we look upon the land below, and see in the distant West the light shining upon the sea. In the distant East we see a flat plain and upon the horizon, an impossible distance away, the faint sight of upright stones. It is as if our vision is enhanced by the light of this place, and we can see for great distances, and perceive subtle colors and the very life essence of the trees and plants.

Now we reach the top of the hill and find ourselves standing before a grove of tall slender trees. They are similar to poplar trees, but have silver-gray bark and white and pale green and silver leaves, with many white flowers. The trees sway back and forward gently, filling the air with a

rustling sound and a faint but potent perfume. Within the center of the grove the hilltop is flat, with closely cropped grass of a brilliant silvery green.

We pause here and affirm our intent to pass within and seek out the mystery of Finias, city of the South.

[Short silent pause here.]

Before we enter the grove we must walk around its perimeter, and as we do so we are each drawn to one of the trees. From the tree that you are drawn to, a being steps. This is your tree companion in the south, and you may only step into the sacred grove with your companion. The tree companion touches you on your shoulder, and you commune in silence with one another.

[Silent pause here.]

The great trees sway and hiss as if there is a wind, yet we feel no breeze. The brilliant light shines like the Sun at midsummer, hot and vital, yet there is no Sun in the sky. With our companion beings, we step through into the sacred grove. Immediately the hissing sound increases until it fills the air, and we hear faint whispers, voices, sounds of movement all round us. We slowly walk around the perimeter of the grove, each guided by a companion, and look towards the center. Where we had previously seen only grass, there now appears a white staff, set upright in the ground. We approach it slowly, and see that it has green buds as if it is about to break into leaf. Yet it is marked with a spiraling pattern, as if it is both crafted and living at the same time. As we move towards the center of the circle, the noise around us stills and there is a powerful feeling of expectancy, of being watched, of waiting for a wonder.

Now we stand before this living staff, and about it a cloudy shape appears. This is the guardian of the mystery of the staff, and we commune with this being in silence.

[Silent meditation here, music if possible.]

To each of us the guardian gives a gift, which we look upon and keep safe. Now our tree companions bid us leave the sacred grove and gently turn us around, each one guiding us towards the tree that has chosen us. As we reach the trees we hear a sound of murmuring conversation and the music of harps, high singing tones are uttered, and many voices merge in a strange harmony. Our companions make it clear that we must not turn and look back, but push us out of the tree circle towards the path that leads down the hill.

Upon the summit of the hill of the South, the white city of Finias, we look again to the East and the West, and now look for the first time to the North. The path spirals down the hill, and we see it leading away across the rolling countryside towards a gate of roaring flames, and beyond that gate we see blackness. This is the way that we must travel back to the human world.

Our descent of the hill is rapid, and we reach the dividing of the ways. From out of the little flowering tree a voice whispers one word to each of us, and we pause to remember what is said.

[Pause here.]

Now we make our way to the gateway, and the image of roaring flames resolves into two trees, each alternating flames and green leaves at great speed. As we approach we lose our exalted sight and sense of ecstasy that has filled us in the summer land, and the rate of interchange between the trees slows until it reaches one change every nine heartbeats. One by one we step through into the blackness beyond, and emerge into a plain chamber with four doors. The door behind us closes and we dissolve the vision of the chamber, returning to a familiar room, ready to emerge into the outer world of human life.

The Vision of Murias in the West

We begin by building strongly in our inner vision the Four Directions of North, East, South and West. In the North is night and winter, in the East is dawn and spring; in the South is noon and midsummer, in the West is autumn and evening.

As we build our vision of the Directions, we see once again the room in which we sit change into a square chamber, with a door in the wall of each Quarter, and know that we must pass through each door in turn to reach the Four Cities of the faery realm: Gorias in the East, Finias in the South, Murias in the West, and Falias in the North. We have already traveled to the cities of Gorias in the East and Finias in the South, and brought back with us keys to the power and meaning of those places. Now we will affirm each of the cities in turn, and travel to the West.

EAST: First the door in the eastern wall opens, revealing a familiar sight beyond. We look upon the gateway of the East: it is in the form of two standing stones, with a narrow gap between them. Through this gap we see a spring landscape, lit by pale blue and green light. This is the realm of the East where the city of Gorias stands in perpetual dawn.

SOUTH: Next the door in the southern wall opens, revealing a familiar landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the South: it is in the form of two trees, one of green spreading branches and the other a tree of flame, constantly burning but never consumed. As we look upon these trees, they seem to exchange with one another, first one is of flame then of green branches, then the other. We look between them and see a brilliantly lit land, with a distant hill rising directly in the center of our line of sight.

WEST: Now the door in the western wall opens, revealing a landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the West: it is in the form of two low hills tinged with the light of evening. Beyond the hills is the sea, with a path of light stretching across it.

NORTH: Lastly the door in the northern wall opens, revealing the gateway of the North. It is in the form of a low thorn hedge, with a narrow gap in it. Beyond the gap we see a cave within a great wall of rock. Deep within the shadows of the cave we see a faint glow of silver-white light, like starlight.

It is now our intention to travel to the West, to the city of Murias. We turn to look upon the western door, and the vision of a sea lit golden-red between two low hills. We pass through the door, and immediately find ourselves in a shallow valley between two low hills. We see the water glowing with a light like sunset, yet cannot see the Sun. A stream runs through the valley and we follow it towards the sea. As we walk we hear a faint music, the sound of harps playing by the sea. The air has a salt taste to it, and we can hear the quiet breaking of waves upon the beach. As we travel through the valley, we see that there are many white stones among the grass and, looking closely, realize that these are lumps of quartz. The grass is of a rich green-blue color, tough and springy, and there are spears of wild asparagus growing out of the sandy earth. It seems as if the sea sometimes rises and floods the valley, for the earth is mixed with sand and shells.

As we look at the valley floor, we realize that the stream is flowing towards us: it flows from the sea up into the valley. We pause to meditate on this flowing water, and as we pause we see a fish dart through the water, heading rapidly towards the sea.

[Silent pause here.]

One by one we bend to drink from the stream: the water is pure and clear, and has no taste of salt. We walk forward, and suddenly emerge onto the shore. The sea shines with golden light, but the waves breaking upon the shoreline are rich, dark green and blue. We feel the sea, sensing its power and its presence, and pause to affirm our intent to find the hidden city of Murias.

[Silent pause here.]

Once again the sound of music rises, as if coming out of the water, and we see two figures appear, one to our right, one to our left. They are tall with long flowing green and white hair: each plays a small, richly ornamented harp. Their fingers are long and they have golden nails. As the harpers play we follow the stream towards the sea, passing between the harpers.

Now we approach the water's edge, and as we do so the sea changes and we can look into it. The shore slopes away into the depths and we can still see the stream, now widening into a great river, flowing out of the depths of the sea towards us. As if the water has become our natural element, we walk out and it passes over our heads. We breathe water like air, and find that we are following a wide silver river over a rolling countryside. Great streams of green seaweed roll and surge about us, and we feel the currents of the invisible sea.

Far ahead we see the river emerging out of a complex towering set of pinnacles, falling in a silver cloud towards the sandy floor and gathering to flow up the land. We realize that this is the city of Murias, and pause in silence to focus our attention upon it: the towering pinnacles of glowing white and green rock, the falling silver waterfall. As we look we see shimmering movement in and out of the pinnacles, yet have no clear sight of who or what swims there.
[Short silent pause here.]

We find that as we have contemplated the city, we have floated rapidly towards it. The rock rises directly before us, a translucent white and green complex of spires, pinnacles, caverns fluted shapes sculpted by water. There is great movement all round us and we hear the faint sound of harps and voices.

A narrow stair in the green rock leads up to a cave mouth, and from this cave the silver river falls. One by one we climb the narrow steps, and pass in through the cave.

The cavern is filled with a huge bowl of green rock, a vast vessel with silver water bubbling up out of it, pouring over the rim and flowing away out of the cave mouth. This is the sacred vessel of the West, in the city of Murias. As we watch a presence hovers over the water, and we look upon the guardian of the cauldron of regeneration.

[Pause here for contemplation. Harp music if possible.]

To each of us a faery being comes, rising out of the great vessel of stone. They bring us each a small gift, and we in turn find something that we brought with us and give it to them. These gifts appear suddenly in our hands and we recognize them, even though we had not realized that we carried them with us. With the exchange of gifts, our companions take our hand and bring us to the edge of the vessel. The rising silver water floods over the lip of the vessel, and for a moment we are touched by the flying drops of spray. As soon as this touch has been received, we are led back to the cavern mouth. There, a tiny round boat is moored, tied by a strand of braided weed to a lump of rock. The companions laughingly sign that we must enter this boat, and as soon as we do so they cast off the mooring. The tiny coracle shoots forwards with great speed and over the edge of the waterfall.

But we do not fall: the boat rises gently over the silver river and floats towards the high horizon, which we realize is the shoreline. We feel many beings swimming with us, laughing, singing, and sometimes they flash for a moment into our vision and out again. Suddenly we rise through the rolling waves, and find that our boat is floating on the surface. It comes to the shore and we step out by the silver river. Where the green harpers appeared there are two low bushes of gray-green color. We pass between them and they rustle in the gentle wind. We cast long shadows before us, yet when we turn we see the golden path across the waters, but no Sun.

Now we pass rapidly up the valley and the river narrows into a tiny fast flowing stream, flowing impossibly up the slope. We see before us a small dolmen, upright stones with a capstone over them. Much of it is covered by sandy earth, but there is a large opening into which the stream flows. We step into this chamber, and find ourselves passing through a door into a square

chamber. We return to our outer world and the chamber dissolves, changing into the familiar place where we began our journey.

The Vision of Falias in the North

We begin by building strongly in our inner vision the Four Directions of North, East, South and West. In the North is night and winter; in the East is dawn and spring; in the South is noon and midsummer, in the West is autumn and evening.

As we build our vision of the Directions, we see the room in which we sit change into a square chamber, with a door in the wall of each Quarter, and know that we must pass through each door in turn to reach the Four Cities of the faery realm: Gorias in the East, Finias in the South, Murias in the West and Falias in the North. We have already traveled to the cities of Gorias in the East, Finias in the South and Murias in the West, and brought back with us keys to the power and meaning of those places. Now we will affirm each of the cities in turn, and travel to the North.

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SOUTH: Next the door in the southern wall opens, revealing a familiar landscape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the South: it is in the form of two trees, one of green spreading branches and the other a tree of flame, constantly burning but never consumed. As we look upon these trees, they seem to exchange with one another, first one is of flame then of green branches, then the other. We look between them and see a brilliantly lit land, with a distant hill rising directly in the center of our line of sight.

WEST: Now the door in the western wall opens, revealing a familiar land and seascape beyond. We look upon the gateway of the West: it is in the form of two low hills tinged with the light of evening. Beyond the hills is the sea, with a path of light stretching across it.

NORTH: Lastly the door in the northern wall opens, revealing the gateway of the North. It is in the form of a low thorn hedge, with a narrow gap in it. Beyond the gap we see a cave within a great wall of rock. Deep within the shadows of the cave we see a faint glow of silver-white light, like starlight. It is our intention to pass through the northern gate, to the city of Falias. We build the vision of the place beyond the door, and step through the doorway to stand before a low thorn hedge. It is of aged, thick thorn bushes, wild and uncut. The branches are black and tangled and we see only a narrow gap, with branches interlaced over it. Through this gap there is a wall of pale rock, with a narrow cave mouth, like a jagged crack. A faint silver light glows and fades from this cave. As we bend to squeeze through the thorn gap, a sense of presence meets us and someone steps out from behind the hedge, barring our way with crossed hands, palms outwards. One by one we step up to this warden and state that we have been in Gorias, in Finias, and in Murias, and that now we seek the city of Falias and the sacred stone within it. One by one he lets us enter, but should he turn anyone back, they must await a further journey and seek admission again.

We come through the narrow gap in the hedge, and find that we are in a midnight land. The air is cold and our breath steams. Before us is a high wall of pale rock, rising up to a towering cliff far above. We see a thick band of stars in the sky, unlike any sky or constellation that we have ever

seen. The gate-warden points to the jagged cave entrance, which now seems totally dark. If we seek the city of Falias and the sacred faery stone, we must enter this shadowy gate.

Now we step through into the cave, and as we do so we feel hands pull at us and turn us around several times, until we lose our sense of direction. There is no entrance to be seen, and in the dark of the cave we hear soft laughter and the sound of footfalls echoing away into the depths. We pause in the blackness, and realize that it is filled with peace, with stillness, with perfect poise.

[Silent meditation here.]

We affirm that our intent is to travel North, seeking Falias, and even as we do so a faint light appears which we immediately follow. We feel that the floor of the cavern slopes downwards, yet it is easy to walk and we have no sense of unease.

Following the faint glowing light, we walk down and down until we feel the massive presence of the Earth, of the aged rock, all around us. Now the way narrows until we have to squeeze through, with the smooth rocks touching us on either side. The walls close in until they meet one another, and we stand before a dimly lit niche in which a small clay lamp bums before a round, polished stone mirror. The faint reflected glow flickers and fades as the lamp flame moves with the air that we have disturbed. There seems no

way forward. One by one we look into the small stone mirror, and see reflected there a truth about ourselves.

[Pause for silent contemplation here.]

Having looked within the mirror of the North, we now see the passageway with new vision. The walls leading to the niche have a fine gap, a hairline seam, and we realize that the lamp and mirror are set in a doorway. Even as we realize this, the stone door, with its lamp and tiny mirror, swings silently aside and we step through into a vast cavern.

We feel a great open space, so immense that we cannot see the far walls or the roof. The floor is of smooth polished stone, with a complex interlaced pattern set into it in faintly glowing white lines. Like a huge maze, this pattern leads us further into the cavern, and we follow it forward.

Now we see another light source, first faint, then more clearly. It radiates from a cluster of rocks rising up from the floor of the cavern. They are of white with flashes of crystalline colour, and the centre of this cluster is a tall white stone, resting upon the natural rock outgrowths. As we approach this central place, we hear the sound of stone beating upon stone, in a deep muted resonance, rising up from all about us. A figure takes shape slowly, forming like a cloud over the smooth white stone. As we reach the rocky growths, we look fully upon the face of the guardian of the North, keeper of the sacred stone.

[Pause for communion here.]

To each of us comes a stone being, who looks deep into our eyes, seeming to read our entire nature. Each stone being holds a fragment or shaped piece of different colored stone, and we accept these gifts. They signal that we must place them at the foot of the white central stone, and there we see a pile of offerings: tiny coloured stones, fragments of hair, feathers, rings, ancient jewels, dried leaves. As we look the precious objects turn to leaves and feathers, while the feathers and leaves turn to silver and gold. The guardian of the sacred stone laughs at our perceptions, and we feel a deep wisdom and joy in that laugh.

As we look upon the tall white stone, resting in the centre of the rocky crystalline cluster, we see a faint shape within it. It seems to be a sleeping figure, and we look closely at this wonder.

[Silent pause here.]

Now the guardian of the North bids us leave, and the stone beings usher us away, not in the direction by which we came but to the other side of the sacred place. They march us towards a

flight of steps rising up over a rocky outcrop, lit by tiny glowing lights that seem to bum without flame or smoke, illumination coming directly out of the stone. High above us, we see a gap in the wall of the cavern. We climb the stairs and as we rise, we see three tiny images far away, high in the walls of the cavern. One is a window onto the East, the second is a window onto the South, the third is a window onto the East. We are climbing towards the window of the North. As we climb we see the sacred stone far below emit waves of white light, and hear again the pulsing sound of stone rubbing on stone, overlaid with flowing tones and resonances. As we reach the top of the stair, we hear a great procession passing by far below, yet see nothing. Our stone companions have left us and we stand before a simple wooden shutter. One of us opens this, and it reveals a familiar room with four doors. We pass through, and the wooden door closes behind us.

Now our journey to the city of Falias in the North is complete, and we pass out of the fourfold chamber, back into the room where we began our Vision. We return slowly to outer consciousness, bringing with us the power of the Light within the Earth.

END NOTE: For detailed explanation of techniques and ways of working with the Faery and UnderWorld tradition see *Earth Light (for the Four Cities) Power Within the Land* (for advanced work) *The UnderWorld Initiation*, *The Living World of Faery*, all published by Mercury Publishing.