

So much for the fourfold pattern. There is also the powerful symbol of the sacred mountain, which is a major concern of Evans-Wentz's last book, and this has its parallel in the Mount Meru schema of oriental tradition, and in the hollow hills of the lordly ones in Celtic fairy lore—to say nothing of the alchemical tower of Rosicrucian symbolism.

Evans-Wentz discovered Cuchama to have been an initiation site for young men of the local tribes who were approaching manhood. There the young man made his pilgrimage, after preparation by the tribal elders, in search of a mystic dream, on the heights under the stars. Guided by the “shining beings” he came to a realization of his future lot and function in adult life.

This initiation, Evans-Wentz went so far as to say, was equivalent, and even superior, to a university graduation in modern society: “. . . the Red Man had good reason to maintain, as did the most illustrious of the Greeks and as do the sages of modern India and Tibet, that all real knowledge lies hidden within man, and that real education consists in the awakening of this hidden knowledge.”

Any sacred hill, whether it be mighty mountain or humble tump or tumulus, is also reckoned to be hollow. In some cases this is a physical actuality, either through burial chambers, mine working, or underground watercourses, but beyond any physical actuality is the meaning that another level or plane of existence lies within, and the actual physical location happens to be a place where the veil between the two worlds is thin. For this reason any such contact is also frequently associated with wisdom and prophecy.

THE FAERY QUEEN

As a typical example, and one that has particular relevance to our theme of the Goddess, we may cite the ballad of the late thirteenth century figure Thomas Learmont of Erceldoun, or Thomas the Rhymer, who is reckoned to have received the gift of prophecy from the Faery Queen, deep in the Eildon Hills on the Scottish borders. In reference to these prophetic powers he was called True Thomas.

In various sets of verses he is said to have foretold the Battle of Bannockburn that occurred shortly after his death. And also the union of the thrones of England and Scotland that occurred some three hundred years later: