

early 1996

First Degree Inner Work

supersedes 10/46

FIRST DEGREE INNER WORK

1. Outer Opening

A. The Sign of Silence

When this is given, all Companions visualize a barrier of darkness surrounding the lodge space, separating it from the outside world.

2. First Degree Opening

A. The Sign of Entering

When this is given, all Companions visualize four angelic figures with outspread wings, one at the middle of each wall of the lodge. From them, a protective barrier of light spreads around the hall, just within the barrier of darkness.

B. Purification and Consecration

The cup and censer are each visualized as being at the center of a sphere of light of the appropriate color (blue for water, red for fire), and each traces a circle of this color around the lodge as they are taken to the four stations.

C. The Circumambulation

During the circumambulation, those who are circumambulating visualize themselves moving upwards, as though climbing a spiral stair. As they do this, a sphere of golden-white light comes into being above the altar: the Hidden Sun. The invocation to the Lord of the Universe is directed toward this.

D. The Awakening of the Thrones

Chief, Warden and Guide all have special patterns of energy to set up in the First Degree lodge. This is done as each of these officers takes his or her staff and throne; the Chief does this near the beginning, the others after the circumambulation. Other members should visualize a sphere of light - red for Chief, black for Warden, white for Guide - forming around the officer as the staff is taken up.

E. The Establishing of the Lodge

The lodge on the Inner in the First Degree will be the subject of an extended paper and a lecture. At this time members should again visualize the four angelic figures at the sides of the lodge room, the spheres of light for water and fire at the appropriate stations, and the Hidden Sun over the altar. This visualization should be maintained until the Chief seats the lodge at the end of the Opening.

3. The Equinox

A. The Formulation of the Quarters

The interchanges among the officers at the four quarters of the lodge at the beginning of the rite complete the dispersal of the energies of the past term, a process which begins with the abrogation of the Password. At each knock by the Guide, the Hidden Sun is seen to expand but also to fade, until by the third knock it can no longer be seen. All this should be visualized by the Companions.

B. The Invocation of Light

As the Herald (or Guide) goes to the four quarters, and the officer at each quarter invokes the Lord of the Universe, the Companions visualize the presence of the element in that quarter. Air is seen as an open plain at dawn, with wind blowing through the grass and billowing clouds above; Fire is seen as a shimmering desert scene at noon; Water is seen as a beach at sunset, with waves rolling in from the distance; Earth is seen as a forest at midnight, with snow on the ground and the stars of the Great Bear visible above. When the Guide invokes the element of Spirit in the center, Companions visualize light coming from all four directions to reestablish the Hidden Sun; this is crystallized by the Chief's knock and proclamation of the new password.

4. First Degree Closing

A. Purification and Consecration

This is done as in the Opening.

B. The Circumambulation

This is the reverse of the Opening circumambulation.

Members visualize themselves spiralling downwards, as though descending a spiral stair, while the Hidden Sun fades but does not disappear.

B. The Veiling of the Thrones

The Warden and Guide take down their special energy patterns before the circumambulation, while the Purification and Consecration is being finished. Chief does the same thing as the altar is retired from the center of the lodge. Other members visualize the spheres of colored light disappearing from around each officer at these times.

C. The Closing of the Lodge

When the Summoner proclaims that "the Sun has set but its light remains," members visualize the faded Hidden Sun expanding outward into infinite space and dissipating. The remaining structures of the inner lodge disappear in this process as well, the barrier of darkness alone remaining.

5. Outer Closing

A. The Sign of Silence

When this is given, all Companions visualize the barrier of darkness unraveling and fading out into nothingness.