



Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite

Taipei Bodies News

Orient of Taiwan, on which the sun never sets

Newsletter #13, December 2014

A word from the Venerable Master



Dear brethren, Dear brethren,

It is time for the year end greetings. I wish you and your love ones a joyful and peaceful holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Time flies and we have achieved another fruitful year. We have had successful reunions in Spring and Fall and brought in many promising new bloods to our fraternity. We maintain our education at the monthly stated meetings and through the newsletters. We have gradually tailored the standard rituals presented by the Supreme Council to suit our temple room and other constraints. Certainly there remains room for improvement in many aspects, but I am confident that we are moving towards the right direction – the betterment of individuals and of our organization. Let's keep doing the little changes we have been doing and make a difference.

Have a prosperous Year 2015!

Fraternally yours,
Dennis Liao, 32°KCCH
Venerable Master

2015 Spring Reunion announcement

The 2014 Spring Reunion for the Conferral of the Scottish Rite degrees will take place in Chiangmai on Friday May 1st and Saturday May 2nd. A Welcome party will be held on April 30th evening, and the closing banquet will take place on Saturday evening.

Our Thailand brethren are preparing the necessary hotel arrangements, and we will come back to you as soon as possible for practical details. If you have candidate to introduce, please send us their application. The degree fee remains at 400 US\$ or 12,000 NT\$.

News from the Grand Lodge of China

The Annual Grand Communication of the Grand Lodge of China was held on October 25th, in presence of dignitaries of Grand Lodge of Japan and Grand Lodge of Philippines. Were elected:

MWBRO Henry Lee: Grand Master, RWBRO Dennis Liao: Deputy Grand Master, RWBRO Philip Liang: Senior Grand Warden, RWBRO Pi-Song Tsai: Junior Grand Warden, VWBRO Chun-Chi Hsu: Grand Treasurer, VWBRO Charles Hong: Grand Secretary.



First row: Norman Pin, Jim Hsu, Dennis Liao, Henry Lee, Philip Liang, Charles Hong, Pi Song Tsai

Second row: Dominique Lévy, Jackson Cheng, Arthur Chen, Gregory Tsao, Bernard Siu, Claude Soucaille, Wilson Wu, David Tseng, Chang Tzung Yee, Samuel Lo, Dupree Chia

The Elus of the Nine, a contribution of Brother Elio de Carolis

The Ninth Degree, or Degree of the Elu¹ of the Nine, used to be the sixth degree of the old Lodges of Perfection, which were probably operative before 1650 both in France and in Germany, but were coherently organized only in 1756 with seven degrees. Its tradition and its rituals convey the values of Enlightenment.

¹ Elu originates from the French *élu* and means elected member or chosen people.



Like usually happens, we have different version of a legend, and therefore also of the legend of the Ninth. One of these legends can be found in the *Francken Manuscript* dated 1786 (an earlier version is dated 1771); another one – described in *The Book of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*² – was published in 1884. After a while, many other versions started to proliferate, some of them sensibly diverting from the original.

We will take into consideration the legend as it is described in Francken Manuscript.

The Legend

The legend of Ninth Degree is the continuation of the legend of the Third Degree and tells that when Hiram Abiff didn't appear, King Solomon sent everyone to look for the Master. One of them, Stolkin, eventually found his body buried under an acacia and informed King Solomon who promised a reward to whom could help in finding the assassins of Hiram. One day, while Solomon was giving audience to more than ninety Masters, he was informed that a stranger, an unknown herdsman, asked to talk with Solomon and told him he knew where was hiding the assassins of Hiram.

King Solomon commanded the assassins to be brought before him in order to give them a quick and exemplary punishment, and asked the Masters who wanted volunteer for the revenge party. All of them volunteered and therefore Solomon drawn nine Masters for the party. Among them the youngest was Yehu-Aber

During the march Yehu-Aber, impatient to face the killer of Hiram, forged ahead and arrived alone at the cavern where, according to the instruction of Pharos the stranger, the ruffians were hiding. Inside the cavern he saw one of the ruffians (Jubelum or Abairam) asleep. Then, realising he was in presence of one of the Hiram's assassins, was taken by an uncontrollable rage and killed him striking him three times on the head. The assassin had only the time to say *Necum* (vengeance is taken). Then Yehu-Aber drank water at a spring which was flowing inside the cave and fell asleep. When the rest of the party arrived, Yehu-Aber address them saying "I killed Hiram's assassin". But King Solomon saw in his action zealotry and pride and sentenced him to death. However, the others of the party interceded for him and begged King Solomon to spare his life. King Solomon at that point forgave Yehu-Aber, established the Knighthood of the Ninth and, along with the other eight, made him Knight of the Ninth.

²Published by Phoenixmasonry Masonic Museum and Library

A Zen story

The central topic of the legend is evidently the interaction between vengeance and justice. Clearly Yehu-Aber, displaying rage and despair, was showing human reactions. But from an Initiated we should expect a different self-control, as shown in the following Zen story.

In feudal Japan, an assassin was terrorising a peaceful village. The local Lord, the Daymio, designated his best samurai to find and execute the assassin. As expected, the samurai found the assassin and engaged him in a mortal duel during which the assassin lost his sword; moving back he found himself powerless against a wall. He knew he was going to die and, as a last provocation, he spat to the face of the samurai who, carefully wiping out the spit, sheathed his sword and went away.

The Zen story ends here, unexplained, but a real Master perfectly understands that the samurai went away because killing the assassin in that moment, after having been spat in the face, would have meant to kill him by rage and not executing him because of the command of his Daymio. That is why the samurai, on the contrary of Yehu-Aber, knowing very well the difference between killing and applying justice, and being in full control of his actions, postponed the elimination of the assassin.

The Esoteric Point of View

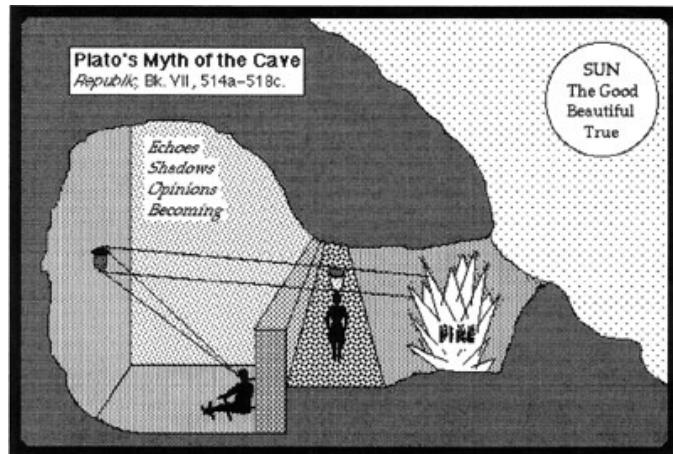
We should now take into account the esoteric approach. After all we are Freemasons and Freemasonry is also based on esotericism and symbols. Obviously, it is not possible to explain the meaning of a symbol. Tobias Churton, one of the leading Masonic authorities, says: *Symbols and rituals [symbolic actions] are the bridge between idea and experience.* And again: *Symbols enclose deeper meaning in images, where mere words might be misleading.*

Another famous author, Joseph Campbell, says: *the way to find your path is to find these mythological symbols that speak to you, to use them as a basis for meditation, let them work on you.*

Let's then examine some aspect of the legend of Ninth degree from an esoteric point of view.

The Cave

According to Pike, the cave represents the darkness in which ignorance resides. Evidently Pike's explanation is indebted to Plato's cave – in which men can only see a shadow of the real world – and perfectly fits a moral vision.



But a cave can be seen in a different way. For example, according to modern psychology a cave represents something connected with the depth of human psyche. In fact, in Jung's psychology the cave is the archetype of maternal uterus.

The Paleolithic Temple-Cave

Since the beginning of the humanity women were considered quite special. They had in fact the power of creating life.

We have evidence of some spiritual activity in the Old Stone Age – about 30,000 to 10,000 BCE – by paintings inside caves and figurines of goddesses.

Females, as we can see from the numerous figurines called Venus, are always naked



Goddesses – or Venuses as they are called nowadays – were naked for a simple reason; the magic of creating life was in their very body and there was absolutely nothing to add and nothing to cover.

Men, instead, are usually depicted on the walls of the caves while they are doing something, generally hunting as it was their main activity



Despite masculine energy is not less important than feminine one – the duality woman/man has been described as a sort of being/doing – men cannot have the same immediate, evident kind of magic the women have. But they can re-create in caves the maternal womb, the Womb of the Great Mother and therefore the origin of creation, the very principle of the generation of life and once men are in the center of creation they can establish a relationship with the eternal powers, a sort of primeval masonic temple in which occur changes of state and spiritual transformations.

In the next picture is a tunnel leading to the heart of the caves of Lascaux (France). As we can see, the entrance to the caves really appears as a big uterus.



Caves, considered to be high spiritual places, continued to be used as venue where to approach the mystery of transcendence by many different religions and cults and it is not by chance that for their initiatory journey, both Jonah and Pinocchio – significantly the author of Pinocchio, Collodi, was a freemason – ended in a whale before being spat out spiritually reborn. After all the belly of the beast is nothing more than another cave-uterus.



Jonah in the whale's belly

Pinocchio in the whale's belly

In other words a cavern represents a uterus from which something comes to life. In our case, as we will see later, it will be a new state of consciousness in Yehu-Aber.

Water

Yehu-Aber, after killing the Assassin, drank the water of a spring flowing inside the cave and fell asleep.

The link between water and life is so intuitive that is well known also among the large, non-specialized audience. Water is the element in which the fetus is forming before his birth. Water is what the soil needs in order to germinate new plants. Also in many Masonic rituals, water is usually seen as revitalizing nourishment and plays an important role in death (to material life) and rebirth (to spiritual one).

The Stranger

King Solomon was receiving the Masters of the Order when the Captain of Guards, Zerbal (sometimes also called Banacas) tells him that a stranger, being in possession of a very important secret, wants to meet him. Solomon let the stranger approach. The Masters were alarmed for the stranger could have been a danger, but Solomon reassured them. Then the stranger reveals the hiding place of the assassins of Hiram and Solomon places him at the head of the vengeance party.

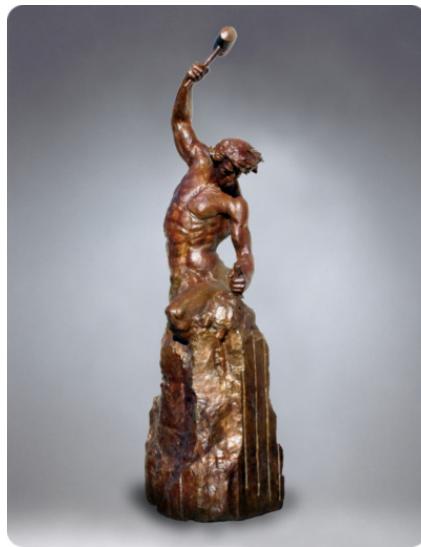
Who is the Stranger? Why does King Solomon let him approach him? The most common explanation is that he personifies one of the invisible threads which interconnect the whole universe. And this is correct. But we also know that the Stranger pointed Yehu-Aber and the rest of the party to the right direction, and this is extremely important. In fact, who, if not a real Master can show you the right direction? In other words the stranger is the Master that let his gifted disciple, Yehu-Aber, discover (the cave of) the inner self.

In fact, even though the realisation of one's proper nature is a work that must be done alone, it will be extremely difficult to achieve without a Master showing the target to reach.

Bushes

Representing the bushes ignorance, egoism and earthly passions, they are the 'metal' that must be removed from the rough ashlar in order to access to the "cave" of the inner self.

Therefore Yehu-Aber – as any other who wants to polish his ashlar – had to remove the bushes on his own. In fact, if to reach the inner self is necessary the assistance of a real master, entering it, as we said above, is a job that must be done alone.



The Assassin

Now we have all the elements to understand who the assassin of Hiram really is.

When Yehu-Aber crossed the threshold of the cave he was in possession of his human, terrestrial feelings of passion and vengeance. But after the killing he drank the purifying water and fell asleep in the cave-womb. The combined actions of drinking purifying water, sleeping – which is loosening his ties with rationality – and being in the cave – the place where something new comes to life, symbolically determines his re-birth to a spiritual life.

In other words, Yehu-Aber and Abiram the Assassin are the same person; the latter in possession of his ego and his earthly passions, the first as a true initiated who is able, as the samurai of the Zen story, to enforce justice instead of seeking vengeance.

King Solomon

The legend of the Ninth teaches us many lessons of high moral law. The death of the assassin teaches us that crime is never without punishment. The mortal danger of Yehu-Aber teaches us that you must always obey the command received. The interceding of the Masters teaches us the strength of the Brotherhood. The forgiveness of Solomon is the perfect example of an act of mercy of a truly great king.

But in this legend there is also a very puzzling aspect that opens the possibility of a different – and for some aspects, opposite – interpretation. In fact, how is possible that an act of mercy induces King Solomon to confer a high honour, as the knighthood is?

This is the puzzling point of the legend and cannot be explained satisfactory unless we bring up the esoteric interpretation and recognise that inside the cave Yehu-Aber had his real initiation by killing definitively his earthly passions and his ego and becoming a true Master.

This is the change that King Solomon recognised in Yehu-Aber and that is why he awarded him making him a Knight of the Ninth Degree.

Conclusion

The esoteric interpretation is certainly divergent from the moral one, but the two are absolutely not in contrast.

As a consequence we can read the legend of the Ninth Degree morally or esoterically or, as it should be done, in both ways.

Taipei Bodies Officers for 2015 and 2016

The election of the officers for the coming 2 years was held during the December Stated Meeting. Were elected:

Lodge of Perfection

Venerable Master	Dennis Liao
Senior Warden	Hsu Guang Dah
Junior Warden	Dupree Chia

Chapter Rose Croix

Wise Master	Zeus Chen
Senior Warden	Bruce Yang
Junior Warden	Mao Kang Wang

Council of Kadosh

Commander	Pi-Song Tsai
1st Lieutenant Commander	Mike Wang
2nd Lieutenant Commander	Joel Ciceron

Consistory

Master of Kadosh	Tzung-Yee Chang
Prior	Karl Liu
Preceptor	Peter Huang
Chancellor	Jack Wang
Minister of State	Bill Rua

The Treasurer is still Johnny Li, and the Secretary Claude Soucaille.

Dues

We are reaching the dead line for 2015 Dues payment, and so far the collection is below 50%. If you did not pay yet, note that your 2015 dues will be registered as unpaid and we remind you that 2 years Unpaid Dues may involve Suspension.

Payment can be made

- in cash
- online in US\$ on <http://scottishrite.org/> (the best way),
- by check in US\$ worded to Taipei Bodies A&ASRSJ,
- by TT in convertible currency to the Secretary account (the most expensive for every party):

Mega International Commercial Bank
Account holder: Claude Robert Soucaille
Account number: 021-10-42184-9
Swift code: ICBCTWTP0201

As several Dues Cards have been lost, please don't forget to mention when you move your new address. You can also do it by yourself on the website of the Supreme Council.

Plastic card replacement costs 5 US\$.

Contribute to our letter

Contribute to the life of our Valley, send your contribution to
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