



Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite

Taipei Bodies News

Orient of Taiwan, on which the sun never sets

Newsletter #16, August 2015

A word from the Venerable Master



Dear Brethren,
Happy summer!

While we are still lingering with the fond memories of our successful Spring Reunion in Chiangmai, in no time the Fall Reunion is only a month away! **The dates are Friday, 25 and Saturday, 26 September, 2015 in Taipei.** I am sure all brethren are glad to see the continuous improvement of our reunions over the years. To keep up the good work, we need as many helping hands as possible. Let's gear up again!

Here is what we can do to help bring about another great reunion:

1. Join the reunion.
2. Help recruit candidates from your blue lodges.
3. Take part in the rituals or organizing the event.

Remember, true learning comes from direct involvement. It will be especially rewarding and memorable if you involve yourself. Please contact Brother Secretary Sir Knight Claude for registration and participation of the ritual teams.

Looking forward to greeting many of you again in Taipei!

Best regards to you and your love ones.

Fraternally yours,

Dennis Liao, 32° KCCH
Venerable Master

THE 2016 FALL REUNION

The Fall Reunion is coming soon, on September 25 and 26, in Taipei. We hope to have many visitors and candidates for this important gathering.

The program will start on Friday 25 by the Investiture and Coronation of the newly nominated KCCH and IGH, at 08:00 h, and will continue at 10:00 h by the Conferral of the 4th to 32nd degrees.

We intend to perform in long form the 4th, 14th, 18th, 2th, 30th and 32nd, the other degrees being communicated

All the ceremonies will take place at the China Masonic Temple # 10, Lane 201, Chang An East Road, Section 2.

Do not forget to send us as soon as possible the registration form which has been already sent to you.

LOST SYMBOLISM (Lamentations of a grieving brother)

By Bro C. Prasanna Venkatesh

A brother claimed that there are no more secrets left in masonry and that the cat is out of the basket. He even quoted a few highly ranked "chained" masons who went about propagating that there is nothing secretive about masonry and there are no secrets in masonry either. They also were strongly basing their arguments on the fact that the entire rituals of the three degrees were available on the Internet, which Google was able to fetch at a touch of a button in 0.23 seconds. The deliberations, in the festive board lead to spirited discussions that resulted in disgruntled faces.

Having witnessed the discussion I was prompted to seriously ponder as to why Masonry has watered down from an esoteric mystery school to a social organisation that tries to rope in more members indiscriminately. I am using the word "indiscriminately" after due consideration but with a heavy heart in a sincere effort not to get into the denial mode that all is well with our society. We have to admit that like most other mystery schools our order too has waned due to the inaction of that portion of our membership who has tasted the essence of masonry at least a bit. We have to admit that the numbers of those who are ready to take the plunge inside in search of truth is dwindling and so is the number of persons who are capable and willing to assist such seekers. Why is the phenomenon occurring is the question.

We are not in the days were our masonic forefathers were persecuted and harmed physically. No doubt we do face persecution from the profane misguided sections of the press and society motivated by body corporates that operate under the garb of religion and pseudo morality for their personal gains. But that does not require us from deviating from our time tested principles and rituals nor should we succumb to the external pressures to justify our "dos and don'ts" in acceptable terms of and to please the profane world.

The main cause for this scenario in our order according to my understanding is that we have somewhere down the line lost the art of reading or understanding symbols. We have forgotten that all our teachings are in the form of symbolism and we have to necessarily be equipped in the art of deciphering the symbols used by the masters. If we

open our eyes in the manner the craft wants us to do so, we can really be able to see the splendour of the mystical truths hidden in our rituals.

Throughout the ages all the masters have used symbolism to convey the inner meanings of life to the adepts. They spoke in parables which the profane understood in a particular way and the properly prepared adept was able to decipher the inner meaning of the message. The sad part is that the ones who have not understood or misunderstood are in a majority and sometimes in the helm of affairs too. Let us get to the early days of our mystery school. They were individual lodges which had their own traditions and time tested means to instruct the adepts in proper methods. Though there were hundreds or even thousands of lodges across the face of the earth all unconnected to each other, the masons having been instructed were able to identify each other in old ways and maintained the lovely bondage we shared. We remained truly connected.

The deterioration of the craft started with the formation of the Grand lodges which I personally consider as unnecessary and was done by people who have missed the point. The practical usage of any "Grand (I still fail to understand what's so grand about it) lodge", is just at the most a Post Office to connect lodges, but see what has happened. It has usurped the powers of the craft lodges and crippled its wings. It has become a heaven for people who long for ranks and power, which I believe is the quality of persons who have not been properly initiated even in the very first degree where we were taught about raising "above the external advantages of rank and fortune"

The moment we let go of the principles of the craft which were supposed to be imbibed in us Adepts, then all is lost for the craft and all craft is lost for us. Earlier I used to feel that these Grand lodges were probably devices created by the masters as a toy for the profanes who have risen up the so called ranks, to play with, so that the inner circle of true adepts can carry on with their daily advancement, but now the inner circle is reduced to such a minority that I fear that the true teachings of the order might get truly lost.

I am not making accusations in the air, I am saying this with so much of anguish and pain in my heart seeing the deterioration of the craft. When we were independent lodges we were united as masons across the globe, but after the unification under banners of different grand lodges, see the divide, the so called constitutional divides. Another divide called Accepted and non-accepted grand lodges to add to the fun. Then there is the concept called "Amity" between grand lodges. I feel the very idea is nauseating. Every made brother in the globe is linked and bound to the other brethren wherever they may be. Isn't that the basic fabric of our brotherhood? Then where is the requirement of amity between brethren. Are we nations at war seeking amity? These are deteriorations of the craft because we have truly truly stopped deciphering symbols in masonry.

The true knowledge which our craft offers to its adepts about oneself is unparalleled. The unique ways it imparts the transitory nature of wealth

and life as we consider, and ways to handle it, is immeasurable. The unique way it thunders the immortality of the spirit within is beautiful. In the garb of "opening up" freemasonry and demystifying the craft we have started to remove the ancient symbols like the emblems of mortality, used to impart the true knowledge in the lodge without knowing its implications and the harm it is going to do to the craft. The Masonic progress, in an all-time low is now equated to, rising in the "imaginary" ranks which the so called grand lodges have to offer. Some talk of ranks as fruits of labour. They have completely misunderstood the symbolism as to what is Masonic labour and what are its real fruits.

I think before senility sets in, once again we should sincerely go through from the first degree ceremony which may stop the rat race and let the blindfold be truly removed and that we may be restored to the true light of freemasonry.

Profound Peace to All

THE DIONYSIAN ARTIFICERS

The year of the goat is a good opportunity to speak about Dionysus, as goat is one of his avatars.

Dionysus, or Bacchus, is one of the most popular gods in Greek and roman empires. He is traditionally known as the god of wine and vine, but his personality is however a little bit more complex.

There are two versions of his birth.

In the first one, the classic, he is the son of Zeus and Semele, a human. Hera, the jealous wife of Zeus, conspired to cause the death of Semele when she was 6 months pregnant. However Zeus recovered the fetus, hid in his thigh and Dionysus was finally delivered at nine months. Then Zeus changed him into a goat to protect him against Hera¹.

In the second version, he is the son of Zeus and Persephone, the queen of the underworld. The jealous Hera made Dionysus killed by the Titans, cut into pieces, boiled, then roasted and eaten by the Titans, except for the heart which was saved and then used by the gods to revive Dionysus. As revenge, the Titans were then burned by the thunderbolt of Zeus, and from their ashes the human race was created. So every human being contains a portion of Dionysus.



¹ It may be interesting to note that the word "tragedy" derives from Classical Greek Τραγῳδία, "goat song". Writing in 335 BCE (long after the tragedy was born), Aristotle argues that tragedy developed from the choral dithyrambs, the hymns sung and danced in praise of Dionysus.

From that point derives the fact that man does not know the gods by logic but rather by realizing the presence of gods within him, and also derives the warning against suicide as it involves destroying a part of the gods. In both cases Dionysus is twice-born (like Osiris for instance).

Dionysus travelled in Asia Minor, Egypt and even India, where he got acquainted with local philosophies. He was particularly revered in Thrace, where he was born, like Orpheus. His cult flourished also in Ionia, the other side of the Bosphorus Strait. Besides the popular religion, Dionysus developed its own Mysteries for elitist adepts, able to receive a mystical message. Like in other famous Mysteries of Demeter and Apollo, the candidates were going through dramatic initiation ceremonies, each one exhibiting in a series of scenic representations the adventures of some god or hero, the attacks upon him by his enemies, his death at their hands, his descent into Hades or the grave, and his final resurrection to renewed life. All these Mysteries prefigured, in their principle and in their form, the future Masonic rituals. The Dionysus Mysteries, the Bacchanals, developed extensively into Greece, then into the Roman Empire where they continued to be performed quite a long time. The success of the Bacchanals is maybe due to their orgiastic characters (don't forget that Dionysus was the God of the wine), but in fact the rite was intended to achieve a mystical rebirth by a communion with the God.

Another important part of the Dionysus myth is his marriage with Ariadne, the princess of Crete, who helped Theseus with a thread to find his way through the labyrinth (another Masonic symbol) after killing the Minotaur (symbol of the human passions). Ariane was a mortal princess, but Dionysus gave her immortality. By this union they confirmed their role as vegetation gods.

Coming back to Ionia, according to the legend, Greek migrants settled in the area around 1,000 BC, bringing with them their technologies, in particular for construction. Builders united there into association patronized by the local most famous god, and were accordingly called the Dionysian Artificers. This association was organized in the same way as all secret societies, with lodges, passwords, token... The legend continues stating that King Hiram may have imported the Dionysian Artificers to Tyre, and that Hiram may have been a member of the association. When he became chief engineer for Solomon Temple construction, he organized his staff in the same way, bringing in particular the theme of resurrection.

Administration

* We are now sending the Dues Notices for the year 2016, reminding you that these dues have to be paid before December 31st this year. The Dues Notices include 2016 dues (2,000 NT\$ for Taiwan members, and 50 US\$

for Overseas members), plus, as the case may be, outstanding dues for past years.

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.

It can be also made by TT in convertible currency to the Secretary account but this is the most expensive way for both parties:

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

We remind you that according to the Supreme Council rules, 2 years unpaid dues may involve suspension.

* Several Dues Cards have been lost, so please don't forget to inform us of any change in your address. You can also modify directly your data on the website of the Supreme Council.

Plastic card replacement costs 5 US\$.

* All new initiated brethren should have received the Packet from the Supreme council, containing, in particular, the Dues Card. If not received, please let us know.

Contribute to our letter

Contribute to the life of our Valley, send your contribution to
taipei.bodies@gmail.com

Taipei Bodies, China Masonic Temple
#10 Lane 201, Chang An East Rd Sec. 2, Taipei
Or PO Box 34-154, Taipei 10499
Phone +886227713310, taipei.bodies@gmail.com