



Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite

Taipei Bodies News

Orient of Taiwan, on which the sun never sets

Newsletter #18 January 2016

A word from the Venerable Master



Dear Brethren,

I extend my best wishes to you and your families for a healthy and wealthy 2016 Year of the Monkey!

The Monkey is seen by the Chinese as an intelligent and inventive animal. They are problem solvers, working with their group while simultaneously demonstrating independence associated with achievers. The Monkey represents the unfettered mind which will not hesitate to test his theories, experiment and think the unthinkable. As we enter a more challenging world, let us keep the Monkey spirit to code with all difficulties and make impossible possible.

In Year 2015 we continued the education of degrees by performing each degree in long form. The result has been very inspiring and entertaining. It is amazing to learn that we can find in our ancient degrees all the wisdom we need to deal with this chaotic world. Freemasonry is a progressive science, taught by degrees only. I invite all of you to read the synopsis of degrees again and study further at your own pace.

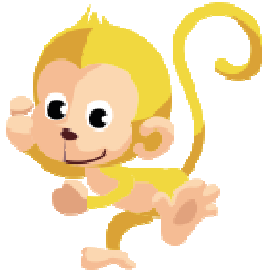
For the fun learning experience, the Spring Reunion in Bangkok is only a few months away! Please make your best effort to attend. I look forward to greeting many of you there again!

Have a prosperous Year 2016!

Fraternally yours,
Dennis Liao, 33°
Venerable Master

The Year of the Monkey

The ninth animal who arrived was the nimble Monkey



The monkey is a clever animal. It is usually compared to a smart person. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476 BC), the dignified Chinese official title of marquis was pronounced 'Hou', the same as the pronunciation of 'monkey' in Chinese. The animal was thereby bestowed with an auspicious meaning.

The general image of people in this zodiac sign is of always being smart, clever and intelligent, especially in their career and wealth. They are lively, flexible, quick-witted and versatile. In addition, their gentleness and honesty bring them an everlasting love life. Although they were born with enviable skills, they still have several shortcomings, such as an impetuous temper and a tendency to look down upon others.

The Strengths

Brilliant, independent, honest, cordial, positive

People born in the Year of the Monkey according to the Chinese zodiac always have enviable abilities and wisdom. Their skills and smart ideas can be seen by others when they are very young. A sharp foresight and a unique perspective promote their development in every aspect. Other people are always amazed at their acute intuition and predictive powers. If there is an established goal, they apply strong actions to achieve it. A strong curiosity causes them to want to bravely try everything interesting. 'All bark and no bite' is not their lifestyle. They win a high popularity among others because of their amicability and kindness. They always try their best to help others in daily life. An upbeat attitude always influences them and everyone around them.

The Weaknesses

Irritable, impetuous, easily frustrated

Monkeys are lively and sprightly, which tends to lead to their impatience. When things develop in unexpected ways, they appear to be irascible, fussy and upset. Sometimes they are not willing to listen to others' advice or ideas. A stubborn personality influence their original judgments and decisions. They lack enough prudence when something fails. When having some small successes, they are always satisfied with current conditions. Being short of long-range plans, they often get into trouble on their way to success.

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2016 Spring Conferral

The venue for the next Spring Reunion has been settled in Bangkok on April 30th and May 1st.

A ceremony for the investiture of new KCCH and coronation of new IGH will take place on the 29th afternoon.

Same as in previous years, the ceremonies will take place in the British Club, and bulk reservation has been made by our Thailand brothers in Narai Hotel just next door.

You will receive in due time more detailed information.

Should you have in mind future candidates, ask us the Application form.

We remind you that the degree fee is 500 US\$, including regalia, documents and the 2016 dues.

Taipei Bodies Finances

We received some comments about what were the Taipei Bodies doing with money they receive. For your information, the Taipei Bodies hold monthly a Council Meeting, where the Financial Status prepared by the Treasurer is reviewed and accepted, until final approval by the next Stated Meeting of the Lodge of Perfection.

You will find here attached the Financial Statement for the Year 2015. We should be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The 25th degree, Knight of the Brazen Serpent, or Sufi Master

In order to improve the education in the Scottish Rite, Taipei Bodies have initiated the performance of degree work in long form during its Stated Meetings. In October, the 5th degree, Secret Master was presented during the Lodge of Perfection Stated Meeting. In November, at the Council of Kadosh Stated Meeting, the 25th degree was performed.

Although very short this degree is rather complex by its name and its history.

The first name is related to the Bible, referring to the brazen serpent built by Moses to protect the Hebrews from the poisonous snakes (Numbers, 21). This was the title of the degree in the original rituals of Albert Pike (The Magnum Opus, 1857). The Hebrew were in great despair with their wandering in the desert, with no other food than the manna sent by God and murmured against him. As punishment, God sent them a lot of poisonous snakes, causing the death of many Hebrews. The ritual

features a repenting Hebrew asking Moses to pray God to end the malediction.

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived

The teaching of the ritual was to satisfy yourself with what you receive from God.

At the end of the XIXth Century, western world discovered the wisdom and philosophy of Islam. This may be the reason why Albert Pike switches totally the ritual for a Muslim reference, by referring to the Druses¹. Druse is an Islamic esoteric and initiatic sect which still exists in the mountains of Lebanon. It is very secretive and do not accept conversions. The ritual is the one described in A Bridge to Light as the Older Pike Ritual².

However, the Supreme Council switched to reference to Sufism in the Revised Standard Pike Ritual in 2000.

Sufism is the esoteric and initiatic philosophy of Islam. The Sufi Moslems are seeking for interiorization, love of God, contemplation, wisdom. Muhammad allegedly received at the same time as the Koran, esoteric revelations that he would have shared only with some of his followers, in particular Ali his son in law. Sufism advocates the existence of hidden knowledge (*ilm al batin*) and an ideal of non-attachment to the things of this world and inner struggle against vice.

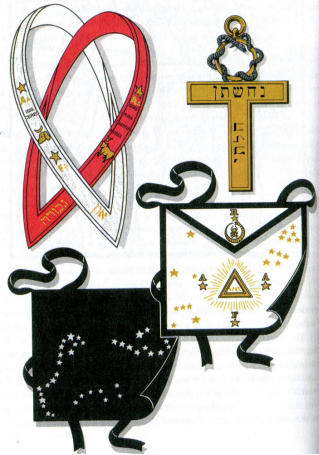
The Sufism is as important for Islam, as the Kabala is for Judaism.

The origin of Sufism is almost the same as the origin of Islam, with Ali, the son in law of Muhammad, being very instrumental in the development of the doctrine, common to the two branches of Islam, Sunnis and Shiites.

Like Freemasonry, Sufism is constituted of brotherhoods with a Master Sufi within an Order, with a double objective to improve oneself, and to aid and assist ones neighbor.

¹ Among references, "The Druses of Syria and their relation with Freemasonry" 1891, by Rev. Haskett Smith, for AQC, also Albert Mackey in his "History of Freemasonry", 1898.

² This modification put aside the symbolism of the snake which would deserve a more important development.



As the 25th degree is among the Chivalric degrees, we can note that these development were taking place at the time of the Crusades, and that there were communication between these brotherhoods and the Templars in particular, involving cross influences between the two. Note that in the trial of the Templars several accusations were related to such influence (the secret order, the Baphomet,...)

One point in common between these three successive rituals is that they all take place in the desert, where the sky is pure and most of stars visible. This appears on the regalia of the degree, and the reading of the 25th section of Morals and

Dogma introduces many instructive references to cosmography, astronomy and astrology.

Administration

You have received now 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.

At this date, 99 members out of 287 (34 %) have paid their 2016 dues.

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.

New arrival, kiss, and good bye

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