

EQUINOX CEREMONY
of the
COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

(For the use of subordinate lodges with five officiants)

Initiate Companion text

NOTE

In the following text, (material between parentheses) gives instructions for movement, while **material between doubled asterisks** gives the inner work of this ritual appropriate to Initiate Companions of the Stone.

OPENING OF THE FIRST DEGREE

(Officers enter in procession and circle with sun to their places. All officers with staves carry them throughout the Opening.)

Chief: ! (one knock) Procul, procul esti profani! Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, assist me to open this lodge in the First Degree. Companion Warden, see that the lodge is properly guarded.

Warden: (goes to door) Chief of the Rite, the lodge is properly guarded.

Chief: Companion Warden, confirm that all who are present have sought and seen the Light of the Stone. !!! (knocks; all rise)

Warden: Companions, give the signs of the First Degree. (All give the Sign of Entering; Warden responds with Sign of Silence.) Chief of the Rite, all have sought and seen it. (Warden gives Sign of Entering.)

During this process the Companions visualize themselves as sending beams of energy through the Sign of Entering to a point above the head of the Warden, where they form a sphere of light. The Warden then sends this to the Chief.

Chief: Let the officers and stations of this Degree be proclaimed, that the Powers whose images they are may be awakened in the Spheres of those present and in the Sphere of our Order --- for by Names and Images all powers are awakened and reawakened. (Gives Sign of Silence.) Companion Warden, how many officers preside in this Degree?

Warden: Three officers preside in this Degree: the Chief, the Guide, and the Warden.

Chief: Companion Guide, what stations constitute the Lodge?

Guide: Seven stations constitute the Lodge:

The place of the Chief in the East, the place of the Guide East of the Altar, the place of the Warden in the West: these are the visible thrones.

These are visualized by the Companions as mighty thrones. respectively red, white, and black.

The place of Water in the North, the place of Fire in the South, the place of the Gateway to the Outer World: these are the visible bounds.

These are visualized as a pillar of cloud in the south and a pillar of fire in the north, and an arch of black stone in the place of the door.

The place of the Altar in the midst of the Lodge: this is the visible center.

This is visualized as black, but with a shaft of light rising from the top upwards.

Chief: Whose charge is the Gateway?

Warden: I govern the Gateway, admit the Companions, and appoint Sentinels to keep out intruders and prepare the candidates.

Chief: Whose charge is the Lodge?

Guide: I govern the Lodge, prepare the furnishings and regalia, and appoint Assistants to work within the Lodge and guide the candidate.

Chief: And the number of Assistants in the Lodge?

Guide: There are two: the Keeper of Water and the Keeper of Fire.

Chief: Companion Keeper of Water, your station and work?

K of W: My station is in the North, by the place of Water, and my work is to purify the Lodge and the candidate with water.

Chief: Companion Keeper of Fire, your station and work?

K of F: My station is in the South, by the place of Fire, and my work is to consecrate the Lodge and the candidate with fire.

Chief: Companion Guide, your station and work?

Guide: My station is to the East of the Altar, facing toward the Altar and the West. My work is to watch over the sanctuary of the Ancient Wisdom, for I am the reconciler between Light and Darkness. I guide the candidates and assist in their reception among us. My emblems are the emblems of the higher aspirations of the soul which should govern its actions.

Chief: Companion Warden, your station and work?

Warden: My station is the Throne of the West. My work is to govern the increase of Darkness and decrease of Light, for I am the Master of Darkness. I keep the Gateway to the Outer World and watch over the Companions in their work. My emblems are the emblems of darkness and Judgement. I bear the Banner of the West, which is the Banner of the Evening Twilight, and I am called Fortitude by the unhappy.

Chief: My station is the Throne of the East, in the place where the Sun rises, and I am the Master of Light. My work is to govern the Companions of this Lodge in accordance with the rites and laws of our Order, as That Which I represent governs all who seek the Ancient Wisdom. My emblems are the emblems of uncreated fire and of created fire. I bear the Banner of the East, which is the Banner of the Morning Light. I am called Power and Mercy and Light and Abundance, and I am the Revealer of the Mysteries. ! (knocks) Let the lodge be purified with water and consecrated with fire.

(Keepers take their implements and move sunwise about the lodge, stopping at each quarter. They remain at all times opposite one another, as if at the ends of a bar pivoting on the altar. Beginning at the east, they asperge and cense each quarter in turn, and say the following lines as they return to East.)

K of W: (purifies) I purify with Water.

K of F: (consecrates) I consecrate with Fire.

During this, the Companions visualize the Cup and Thurible as being radiant with (respectively) blue and red light.

Chief: Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Chief rises, staff in one hand. Guide goes to NE with sun and faces E. Warden, Keeper of Water, and Keeper of Fire go with Sun to line up behind her in that order. The procession then circles clockwise around the hall. The Warden falls out as soon as he reaches his throne; the Guide falls out after passing the Chief twice; all others pass the Chief thrice, and then fall out as they reach their stations. When passing the East, each officer makes the Sign of Entering.)

During the Circumambulation, the Companions visualize themselves climbing a spiral stair, turn by turn, and the lodge rising with them. As they do so a light from above becomes stronger and stronger, and finally becomes the Hidden Sun, a blazing sunlike sphere of light above the altar.

Chief: The Circumambulation, symbolizing the rise of Light, is accomplished. Let us invoke the Lord of the Universe.

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed.
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One,
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness.

This is done, all the Companions making the Sign of Entering three times toward the point above the altar, and sending energy to strengthen the Hidden Sun there.

Chief: Companion Guide, proclaim this Lodge open.

Guide: In the Name of the Lord of the Universe, Who works in silence and Whom nothing but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun now rises and the Shadows flee away.

Chief: ! (knocks)

Warden: ! (knocks)

Guide: ! (knocks)

Guide: ! (knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (knocks) Let there be Light.

All three together: And there is Light.

(Chief knocks once, and all officers sit.)

CEREMONY OF THE EQUINOX

Chief: ! (knocks) Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, let us celebrate the coming of the (Spring/Fall) Equinox. Companion Guide, proclaim the Equinox and announce the abrogation of the Password.

Guide: (rises) In the Name of the Lord of the Universe, Who works in silence and Whom nothing but silence can express, I proclaim that the (Spring/Fall) Equinox has arrived and that the previous Password is abrogated.

Chief: !!! (knocks; all rise) Let us consecrate, according to our ancient traditions, the return of the Equinox.

Chief: LIGHT

Warden: DARKNESS

Chief: EAST

Warden: WEST

Chief: AIR

Warden: WATER

Guide: ! (knocks) I am the reconciler between them. (All make the Signs of the First Degree toward the Altar.)

K of F: HEAT

K of W: COLD

K of F: SOUTH

K of W: NORTH

K of F: FIRE

K of W: EARTH

Guide: ! (knocks) I am the reconciler between them. (All make Signs toward the Altar.)

Chief: ONE CREATOR

K of F: ONE PRESERVER

Warden: ONE DESTROYER

K of W: ONE REDEEMER

Guide: ! (knocks) One Reconciler between them. (All make Signs toward the Altar.)

Chief: (Returns his staff to its place, goes to the West of the lodge, with the Sun, and thence to the Altar.) The Word is departed from among us. I will seek it among the winds of Heaven. (Taking Rose from Altar, he goes to the West and returns to his place with the Sun, standing before his altar.)

Warden: (Returns his staff to its place and advances to the Altar.) The Word is departed from among us. I will seek it among the waves of the Sea. (Taking Cup from Altar, he returns to his place directly and stands before his altar.)

K of W: (Goes with the Sun to the West of the lodge, and advances to the Altar.) The Word is departed from among us. I

will seek it among the stones of the Earth. (Taking Bread and Salt from the Altar, she goes back to the West and returns to her place with the Sun, standing before her altar.)

K of F: (Goes with the Sun to the West of the Lodge, and advances to the Altar.) The Word is departed from among us. I will seek it among the flames of the Fire. (Taking the red Lamp from the Altar, she goes back to the West and returns to her place with the Sun, standing before her altar.)

Guide: (Returns her staff to its place and advances directly to the East of the Altar.) The Word is departed from among us. I will seek it in the heart of the Light, and in the heart of the Darkness. (Guide returns to her place, taking Lantern with her.)

(Guide now goes from her place to East, and stands before Chief.)

Chief: (faces East, holds Rose high) Let us adore the Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, Lord of the Air, Who hast created the Firmament.
(Chief makes a cross in the air with the Rose; all give the Signs toward the East.)

Here the Companions visualize wide skies above a grassy plain, scattered with clouds and luminous with dawn, reaching off to the East.

(Guide goes to South, and stands before K of F.)

K of F: (faces South, holds Lamp high) Let us adore the Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, Lord of the Fire, wherein Thou hast shown forth the throne of Thy glory. (K of F makes a cross in the air with the Lamp; all give the Signs toward the South.)

Here the Companions visualize a golden desert shimmering beneath the noonday sun, reaching away to the south.

(Guide goes to West, and stands before Warden.)

Warden: (faces West, holds Cup high) Let us adore the Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, Lord of the Waters, whereon Thy spirit moved in the beginning. (Warden makes a cross in the air with the Cup; all give the Signs toward the West.)

Here the Companions visualize an ocean reaching away toward a sunset in the west.

(Guide goes to North, and stands before K of W.)

K of W: (Faces North, holds Bread and Salt high) Let us adore the Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, Lord of the Earth, which Thou hast made for Thy

footstool. (K of W makes a cross in the air with the Bread and Salt; all give the Signs toward the North.)

****Here the Companions visualize a forest at midnight, beneath frosty stars, reaching away to the north.****

(Guide returns to her place directly. All face the Altar.)

Guide: (stands East of the Altar, facing West, and holds the lantern high) Let us adore the Lord of the Universe. Holy art Thou, who art in all things -- in whom are all things. If I climb up to heaven, Thou art there, and if I go down to Hell Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand hold me. If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me, evn the night shall be turned light unto Thee.

****The Companions turn their attention to the Hidden Sun.****

Thine is the Air with its movement. Thine is the Fire with its flashing flame. Thine is the Water with its ebb and flow. Thine is the Earth with its enduring stability. (Guide makes a cross in the air with the Lantern; all give the Signs toward the Altar. Guide returns to her place.)

Chief: (goes to his place, takes his staff, and knocks) ! In the name of the Lord of the Universe, Who works in silence and Whom nothing but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I confer the new Password. It is

The officers duly elected to perform the work of the Temple during the next six months are (gives name and office of each).

! (knocks) The Initiate Companions present with us will now retire for a time.

(Guide gathers up and leads out in procession to the anteroom all who have not been exalted to the Third Degree.)

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Chief: The Initiate Companions will now resume their places in the lodge. (They are brought back in by the Warden, in procession, and take their seats.) Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, behold your Dirigent, our Companion, who has been duly installed in the presence of the Guardian Companions of the Stone. I proclaim him the Preserver of Mysteries among you for the following six months. Companion Dirigent, in the presence of the members of your lodge, I call upon you to make your confession.

New Dirigent: Companions of our Order, the whole intention of our Mysteries, and of the outer Initiations they enshrine, is to purify and consecrate the soul through symbol, ceremony and sacrament so that it may be withdrawn from the domination of outer things, and, once withdrawn, to assist it to know its true direction that it may take on its their proper place and power in the universe, in harmony with the Will of the Infinite. This therefore I do confess and testify, from my throne in this Lodge of the Companions of the Stone, and I pledge myself, to the best of my ability, to so guide and direct the work of this Lodge that each of you may be made ready for the greater Mysteries and the supreme and inward Initiation.

New Dirigent: In virtue of the power committed to me, I proceed to invest the officers of this lodge. Let the Adept Adjuvant come to the East. (Adjuvant advances to the throne of the Dirigent.) By the power committed to me, I ordain you Adept Adjuvant of this lodge for the ensuing six months, and empower you to act in my stead, and with my full power, when circumstances require me to be absent from any meeting of this lodge.

New Adjuvant: I accept this responsibility. (Goes to east of the altar.) The Word is restored to us. (he goes to his place.)

New Dirigent: Let the Secretary come to the East. (Secretary advances to the throne of the Dirigent.) By the power committed to me, I ordain you Secretary of this lodge for the ensuing six months, and empower you to have custody of all records and resources of the lodge.

New Secretary: I accept this responsibility. (Goes to east of the altar.) The Word is restored to us. (she goes to her place.)

New Dirigent: Let the Summoner come to the East. (Summoner advances to the throne of the Dirigent.) By the power committed to me, I ordain you Summoner of this lodge for the ensuing six months, and empower you to proclaim and execute the laws of our Order.

New Summoner: I accept this responsibility. (Goes to east of the altar.) The Word is restored to us. (he goes to his place.)

New Dirigent: Let the Sentinel come to the East. (Sentinel advances to the throne of the Dirigent.) By the power committed to me, I ordain you Sentinel of this lodge for the ensuing six months, and empower you to guard this lodge and to test all who enter with the words and signs of our Order.

New Sentinel: I accept this responsibility. (Goes to east of the altar.) The Word is restored to us. (he goes to his place.)

(Chief then comes forward and replaces the Elements in their proper places on the altar. Dirigent then rises from his throne, relinquishing it to the Chief of the Rite, and returns to his place. The Chief may address the lodge. When he has finished, he begins the Closing.)

CLOSING OF THE FIRST DEGREE

(At this point officers with staves take them from their places.)

Chief: ! (One knock) Companions of Emerald Lodge #3 of the Companions of the Stone, assist me to close this lodge in the First Degree. Companion Warden, see that the lodge is properly guarded.

Warden: (goes to door) Chief of the Rite, the lodge is properly guarded.

Chief: Companion Warden, confirm that all who are present have sought and seen the Light of the Stone. !!! (knocks; all rise)

Warden: Companions, give the Signs of the First Degree. (All give the Sign of Entering toward the Warden, who gives that of Silence.) Chief of the Rite, all have sought and seen it. (Warden gives Sign of Entering to Chief.)

****The inner work of this is done as in the Opening.****

Chief: ! (Knocks) Let the lodge be purified with water and consecrated with fire.

(Keepers take their implements and move sunwise about the lodge, stopping at each quarter. They remain at all times opposite one another, as if at the ends of a bar pivoting on the altar. Beginning at the east, they asperge and cense each quarter in turn, and say the following lines as they return to East.)

K of W: I purify with water.

K of F: I consecrate with fire.

****This is done as in the Opening.****

Chief: Let the reverse circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Chief rises, staff in one hand. Guide goes to SW and faces W. Warden, K of W and K of F go against sun to line up behind her, in that order. The procession then circles counterclockwise around the hall. The Warden falls out as soon as he reaches his throne; the Guide passes the Chief twice, and then falls out; the others pass the Chief thrice, and then fall out as they reach their stations. When passing the East, each officer makes the Sign of Silence.)

****During this process the Companions visualize themselves descending the spiral stair, and the lodge descending with them. The Hidden Sun does not rise out of sight, however; it seems to**

change, becoming more golden than bright, and descends with the lodge.**

Chief: The reverse circumambulation, symbolizing the fading of Light, is accomplished. Let us invoke the Lord of the Universe.

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe.
Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed.
Holy art Thou, the Vast and the Mighty One,
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness.

Here the salutations do not give energy to the Hidden Sun but receive energy from it, streams of light like golden sunlight. At the end of this process the Hidden Sun has vanished.

(At this point staves are returned to their places.)

Chief: Nothing now remains to us but to partake together in silence of the Communion of the Four Elements, and to remember the mysteries we have witnessed and the obligations we keep.
(Goes to W of altar.)

I invite all beings present, therefore, to breathe with me the perfume of this Rose as a symbol of Air; to feel with me the warmth of this sacred Fire; to eat with me this Bread and Salt as types of Earth; and finally to drink with me from this cup of Wine, emblematic of Water.

(Communion of the Elements is performed:

(Warden advances to W of altar as Chief moves to E. In silence, Chief presents each of the elements of the Communion to Warden in silence. When Warden has partaken, Chief returns to his throne, Warden moves to E of altar, and K of W, K of F, and all members present follow, each in turn receiving and then offering Communion. Guide is last of all.)

Guide (Finishing the water): It is finished! (Returns to her place.)

Chief: Companion Guide, proclaim this lodge closed.

Guide: In the Name of the Lord of the Universe Who works in silence and Whom naught but silence can express, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun now sets but its Light remains.

Chief: ! (Knocks)

Warden: ! (Knocks)

Guide: ! (Knocks)

Guide: ! (Knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (Knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (Knocks) Let there be Light. (All three together) And there is Light.

Chief: May that which we have received maintain and strengthen us in our quest for the Stone. Companion Warden, you will permit the Companions to depart. ! (One knock)

(The officers file out in procession, against sun; those officers who have staves carry them out.)