

FIRST DEGREE INITIATION

<The Lodge is opened in the First Degree. Herald goes to Altar, and distributes the elements of the Communion to the four quarters.>

Chief: Companions of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge #\_\_ of the Companions of the Stone, I have received a dispensation from the Council to admit Companion N. to the First Degree of our Order. Companion Guide, you will prepare the Candidate. Companion Herald, secure the door.

<Guide removes her chair from between the Pillars and goes to the anteroom, taking hoodwink and rope. Herald moves cup and censer to the west, then closes the door behind Guide and stands by it. Guide binds and hoodwinks Candidate. When the candidate is prepared, Guide knocks once on the door.>

Herald ! (knocks once on door, in answer) Chief of the Rite, the Candidate seeks to enter.

Chief: I give permission to admit our Companion N.

<Candidate enters the Hall, and is brought to the Warden's station, facing east. Officers stand as in diagram.>

| W |

Guide      Cand.      Ward.

Herald

Guide: Inheritor of a dying world, arise and enter the Darkness.

Warden: The Mother of Darkness has blinded him/her with her hair.

Herald: The Father of Darkness has hidden him/her under his wings.

Chief: His/her limbs are still weary from the wars which were in Heaven.

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated, you cannot enter this place.

Warden: (makes cross with water on Candidate's brow, and sprinkles thrice) I purify you with water.

Guide: (makes cross with censer, and censes Candidate thrice) I consecrate you with fire.

Chief: Bring the candidate to the foot of the altar.

<This is done by Guide and Warden. Herald returns with Sun to his place.>

Chief: Child of Earth, the Companions of the Stone are companions on a quest. We will accept none among us who are not willing to take part in that quest. The road before us is long, and there are guardians who bar the way. Knowing this, are you willing to proceed?

Candidate: (answers)

Chief: We ask those who would journey with us to bind themselves with a solemn obligation of fidelity, friendship and secrecy. Companion N., as a Companion of the Stone, you have accepted those obligations. Now, in the name of the Lord of the Universe, and in the presence of the Guardian Companions of the Stone, I ask you to confirm your obligations by giving the Sign of Silence.

<Candidate does so.>

Chief: In that Name and that presence, I call you to leave the darkness of the world and seek the light of the Stone. In token of which, you will bow your head.

<As Candidate does so, Warden places the flat of his sword against the nape of Candidate's neck briefly, and removes it.>

Chief: Companion Guide, you will place the Candidate in the northern quarter of the lodge -- the place of forgetfulness, silence and necessity, the door of the Realms of Night. It is there that he/she must begin his/her quest.

<Guide takes Candidate to North and faces him/her East. Herald advances from his station directly, turns, and stands before Candidate to lead procession.>

Chief: The voice of my undying and secret soul said to me: let me enter the path of Darkness, for it may be that there I shall find the Light. I am the only being in an abyss of Darkness; from an abyss of Darkness I came forth before my birth, from the silence of a primal sleep. And the Voice of Ages answered to my soul: "I am He that formulates in Darkness -- the Light that shines in Darkness, yet the Darkness comprehends it not."

Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Knowledge that leads to the Light, with the lamp of the Ancient Wisdom to guide us.

<Herald leads circumambulation sunwise one full circuit. Chief and Warden each knock once when passed by the Candidate; Warden then goes to South, taking cup and censer. Herald then leads procession to South and stops, barring the way with his staff.

Officers stand as in diagram.>

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Guide

Cand. Herald

Ward.

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated, you cannot enter the path of the West!

Warden: (purifies as before) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates as before) I consecrate with fire.

Herald: Child of Earth, twice purified, twice consecrated, you may approach the Gate of the West.

<Warden returns to station as soon as possible, and stands threatening with sword. Procession continues to West. Hoodwink is raised. Officers stand as shown.>

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Guide

Cand. Ward.

Herald

Warden: You cannot pass by me, says the guardian of the West, unless you can tell me my name.

Guide: Darkness is your name, Great One of the paths of the shadows.

Warden: Cowardice is failure, and the beginning of failure. Therefore master your fear. For courage is the beginning of all virtue, and in the heart of the coward virtue abides not; and he that trembles at the flame and the flood and the shadows of the air has no part in God. You have known me; therefore pass on. (Warden lowers sword and steps from path. Hoodwink is lowered.)

<Herald leads procession around one full circuit. As before, Chief and Warden each knock once as Candidate passes. Warden then moves cup and censer to North and waits in North. Herald leads procession around to North and stops, again barring the way with his staff. Officers stand as before.>

Herald: Unpurified and unconsecrated you cannot enter the path of the East!



<Major officers now join their staffs above the head of Candidate.>

Guide: Inheritor of a dying world, we call you to the living beauty.

Warden: Wanderer in the wild darkness, we call you to the gentle light.

Chief: Long have you dwelt in darkness -- quit the night, and seek the day.

<At the words "seek the day" the hoodwink is removed.>

All: We receive you and welcome you among the Companions of the Stone.

<Officers lower their staffs one at a time, knocking as follows.>

Chief: ! (one knock)

Warden: ! (one knock)

Guide: ! (one knock)

Guide: ! (knocks) Yehi Aur.

Warden: ! (knocks) Fiat Lux.

Chief: ! (knocks) Let There Be Light.

All: And there is Light.

<Herald moves to Northeast of Altar and raises his lamp. Chief points it out.>

Chief: In all your wanderings in darkness, the lamp of the Herald went before you, though you saw it not. It is the symbol of the Light of the Ancient Wisdom.

<Chief and Herald return to their stations.>

Chief: Let our new Companion be brought to the East of the altar.

<Guide takes Candidate around altar to South, places him/her before but not between the two pillars, and stands by the white pillar. Warden goes to the black pillar, so that they and the Chief form a triangle. See diagram:>

Ward. ●      O Guide

Cand.

Chief: Companion Warden, you will now instruct our new Companion in the Signs and Word of the First Degree.

Warden: (comes around to East) Companion N., this Degree has two Signs and a Word, which are used in the magical work of the Order. The first Sign is the Sign of Opening, or the Inner Sign of the Order, and is made thus. (He demonstrates, and has Candidate copy.) The second Sign is the Sign of Silence, or the Outer Sign of the Order, and is made thus. (The same.)

The Word of this Degree is EBEN, the Hebrew word for "stone." It is spelled Aleph, Beth, Nun. When used for working purposes, the word will be spelled out by turns, one Companion speaking the first letter, the other the second, the first finishing.

Chief: Let our new Companion be placed between the pillars. Companion Warden, you will superintend his/her final consecration. Companion Guide, you will then remove the threefold cord, the last symbol of the Path of Darkness.

<Candidate is moved between Pillars; Warden and Guide stand just East of the Pillars.>

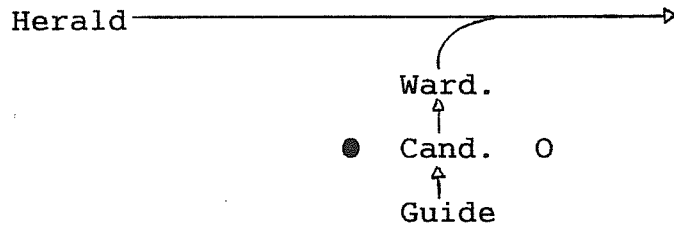
Warden: (purifies) I purify with water.

Guide: (consecrates) I consecrate with fire.

<Guide goes behind Candidate and removes rope. At the same time Warden moves in front of Candidate; see circumambulation diagram.>

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

<Warden turns to face East. Herald leaves station, goes South, and takes his place at the head of the procession; the others file out and to the right after him, saluting with the Sign of Entering as soon as they have turned. See diagram:>



<Circumambulation is then performed. As usual, Warden drops out as soon as he reaches his station; Guide passes East twice, and then drops out; Herald and Candidate pass East thrice. Candidate follows Warden in procession; he/she is prompted by Guide to salute with the Sign of Entering when passing East, and told to follow Herald when Warden drops out. Herald leads Candidate to a

seat on the northern side of the lodge. Guide then replaces her chair between the pillars; Herald takes cup and censer back to their places and then replaces the elements of the Communion on the Altar.>

Chief: ! (seats the lodge) The threefold cord about your waist was an image of the threefold bondage of mortality, which has bound the once far-wandering soul into this narrow place. The hoodwink upon your eyes was an image of the ignorance and darkness which has blinded the inner eye of the soul's wisdom.

Every part of a lodge of Companions of the Stone open in this Degree is symbolic, either of that darkness and bondage, or of the path leading beyond it to light and freedom. The lodge is fashioned in the image of the universe, and also in the image of humanity -- for these two mirror one another. As above, so below.

My throne in the East is the Place of the Guardian of the Light; it is also the Place of spirit and of the Sun. The throne of the Warden in the West is the Place of the Guardian against the Hosts of Shadow; it is also the Place of the body and of the secret Fire. The throne of the Guide between the Pillars is the Place of Balanced Power between Light and Darkness; it is also the Place of the soul and of the Moon, which reflects the Sun's light upon the Earth.

I call your attention especially to the two pillars east of the altar. They symbolize day and night, love and strife, work and rest, all the polarities of being. The lamps which burn on their summits show that the Path of the Ancient Wisdom is to be found in the place of balance between them.

It was because of this that I passed between them, when you came to the Light, and it was because of this that you were placed between them to receive the final consecration.

There are two contending forces and One always uniting them. Two basal angles of the triangle and one which forms the apex. Such is the origin of creation -- it is the triad of life. And these three have their image in the threefold flame of our being and the threefold wave of the sensual world.

<Chief stands in the form of a cross, and says:>

Chief: Glory be to Thee, Fount of the Undying! For Thy glory flows out rejoicing to the ends of the Earth.

<He lowers his arms.>

Chief: Companion Herald, you will announce that our new Companion has been duly admitted to the First Degree.

Herald: (Stands) 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 our Companion N. has been duly admitted to the First Degree.

Chief: Companion Warden, you will give our new Companion the Charge of this Degree.

Warden: Companion N., it is my duty to deliver to you this Charge. Remember your obligation to secrecy and discretion, for strength is in silence, and the seed of Wisdom is sown in silence and grows in hidden places alone. Remember that there is truth in every religion, for each path which has been traced by the human spirit in its journeyings leads in the end to the Light we seek. Remember that the secret of Wisdom can be discerned only from the place of balanced powers.

If you pride yourself in what you have received this day -- if you imagine that the mere fact of initiation, or of membership in this Order, has conferred on you the gifts of Wisdom -- then remember this also: no mortal power can do more than bring you to the first step of the pathway to that Wisdom, which the Lord of the Universe could place, if it so pleased him, in the heart of a child. We can but show you the path; it is yours to walk; it is His to give the Light at its end.

Therefore we invoke Him. Therefore even the Banner of the East falls in adoration before Him.

Chief: Above the First Degree of our Order are four Elemental Grades, which belong to the First Degree but form a bridge to the higher phases of Initiation. Beyond them lies the Second Degree, the highest Degree which may be given in a subordinate Lodge of Companions of the Stone. To be advanced to these higher Grades and Degrees, you must master certain portions of our Ancient Wisdom, and you must take part in the work of your lodge and the Order. A syllabus of the work required will be provided to you.

As you pursue the studies of your Degree, you will find increasingly that the work before you is work upon yourself. I therefore give you another symbol -- the Un-carved Stone. (Points to stone.) This is a symbol of the prima materia or First Material of alchemy, and of your own original nature; it is also the rough mass from which the Cubic Stone of the living temple of yourself must be carved. Work diligently upon it, and seek the counsel and knowledge of others to guide the growth of your own skill.

I also present you with the working tool of this Degree,



which is the Staff. The support and defense of the wayfarer, the sign of the pilgrim of old, the Staff also symbolizes that unity of will with which the powers of the ancient wisdom must be controlled. Seek that unity as you continue your quest for the Stone.

Companion N., as a member of our Order, you have become a recipient of our trust. I ask that you remain true to that trust, and remember your obligation; and I commend you to the friendship and protection of your fellow Companions. ! (one knock)

<Closing of the First Degree>