

COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

Autumn Retreat Ceremonies
1997 Draft

Officers:

Master - red tabard and staff
Warder - black tabard and sword
Lector - yellow sash and bell
Keeper of Fire - red sash and censer
Keeper of Water - blue sash and cup

Space:

A rectangular room with an altar to the East. Master and Keeper of Fire sit in South, and Warder and Keeper of Water sit in North (Master and Warder to East); other Companions sit in West (in more than one row if the number of Companions requires it). There is room to circumambulate around the outside edge of the space. At opening, the altar is draped in black and bears two white candles in candlesticks, and the cup and censer.

Diagram 1 - Retreat Hall

Altar

Warder

Master

K of W

K of F

Companions - Lector - Companions

CEREMONY OF OPENING

(At the beginning, all present sit in west, and the officers' chairs are empty. Master rises, goes to center, faces west and strikes once with staff.)

Retreat Ceremonies

Master: Companions, the hour has arrived for the doors of the secret places to be opened. May all things of the outer world be set aside. May our hearts and spirits turn to the Inner, to accomplish the work before us. (Pause.) Let the officers appointed for this Autumn Retreat take their stations.

(All officers, including Master, do so.)

Master: Companion Warder, confirm that all who are present have received the Word.

(Warder goes by the square clockwise around the hall, receiving the word and grip from each Companion, receiving it from Master last of all. Warder then goes by the square to stand in front of the altar, facing west, and says:)

Warder: Companion Master, all have received it.

Master: !!! (All rise.) Then let the Light of the Stone be revealed among us.

Warder: Companions, give the Sign of Silence. (All present except Master make the Sign to Warder, who responds with the same Sign and then returns to station.) Companion Master, the Light is revealed. (Warder makes the Sign to Master, who responds with the same Sign.)

Master: Companions, you will assist me to open the Autumn Retreat of our Order in the First Degree. Companion Warder, you will proclaim it so.

Warder: Procul, Procul esti profani!

Master: Companion Warder, confirm that all present have witnessed the Light of the Stone.

Warder: (goes by square to stand in front of altar, facing west) Companions, give the Sign of Entering. (All give Sign to Warder, who responds with the Sign of Silence and returns to his place.) Companion Master, all have witnessed it. (Warder then gives Sign of Entering to Master, who answers with the Sign of Silence.)

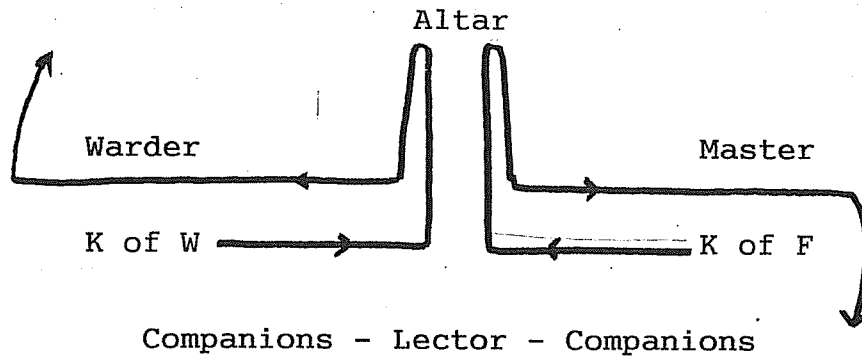
Master: ! (All are seated.) Companions N. and N., you will purify and consecrate the hall with water and fire.

(The Keepers of Fire and Water rise, go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, and take up their implements, then go in the same way to south and north respectively. They then circle sunwise, remaining at opposite points of the hall, and purify and consecrate in east, south, west, and north in the usual way. Each then continues around to east and says:)

Water: I purify with Water.

Fire: I consecrate with Fire.

Diagram 2 - Purification & Consecration



(They then continue around until they are again in south and north respectively, then go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, replace cup and censer and return to their stations in the same way.)

Master: !!! (All rise.) Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Master and Keeper of Fire form head of line, Keeper of Water and Warder the tail, and the rest of the Companions the body. All move together to east, making Sign of Entering as they pass behind the altar, and continue around the outside of the space. All Companions pass the East three times and then return via north to their places in the hall. All remain standing, facing the altar.)

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

(The following Signs are directed toward the altar.)

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

Master: Companions, I ask you to join with me in establishing this hall in the First Degree. (Pause while the hall is built up on the Inner.) And so it is established.

All: So be it.

Master: Companion Warder, you will proclaim the Autumn Retreat of our Order open in the First Degree.

Warder: 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 has risen and the Shadows flee away.

Master: ! (All are seated.)

Master: In the work before us, the teachings of the tradition we follow are as a lamp upon the Path. Companion Lector, you will proclaim the wisdom that guides us.

Lector: These are the words of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes the Thrice-Great:

True, without error, certain and most true: that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, to perform the miracles of the One Thing. And as all things were from One, by the meditation of One, so from this One Thing come all things by adaptation.

Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, the wind carried it in its belly, the nurse thereof is the Earth. It is the father of all perfection and the consummation of the whole world. Its power is integral if it be turned to Earth.

Thou shalt separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the coarse, gently and with much ingenuity. It ascends from Earth to heaven and descends again to Earth, and receives the power of the superiors and the inferiors. Thus thou hast the glory of the whole world; therefore let all obscurity flee before thee.

This is the strong fortitude of all fortitude, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing. Thus the world was created. Hence are all wonderful adaptations, of which this is the manner. Therefore am I called Hermes the Thrice Great, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

That is finished which I have to say concerning the Operation of the Sun.

Master: In the work before us, the obligations we have taken, one to another, are as a staff to support us. Companion Warder, you will present the Admonition to the Companions.

Warder: Companions, each of us is pledged to seek, alone as well as in the company of our fellow seekers, that mystery which is symbolized in the language of alchemy by the Stone of the Philosophers -- the Stone of the Wise. It is in and by that mystery, and in and by its symbols, that we gather together in

the lodges of our Order for ritual and instruction, and in this hall of practice for our Order's autumn retreat. Our present work is to perform the rites and disciplines of that retreat, and thus to make progress in our quest, individually and collectively. Let each Companion thus remember that his or her own efforts are part of a collective working -- that each labors not for his or her own good alone, but for the good of all. Let each Companion act accordingly.

Master: Guided by this wisdom, governed by this admonition, let our work be accomplished. Let the subtle Mercury, the first matter of the art, begin its journey through the fire to become the living Monad. Let each of us dedicate the time before us to the attainment of insight and to progress along the Path.

Warder: What is this Path?

Master: It is the Path that leads to the Stone.

Warder: Where does it begin?

Master: Within each of us.

Warder: How many steps from its beginning to its end?

Master: Three -- the Black, the White and the Red.

Warder: And what comes before these?

Master: The Prima Materia, the first material of the Art, which is found everywhere and in all things.

Warder: And its symbol among the planets?

Master: Mercury.

Warder: What are the mysteries of the Black Stage?

Master: Death, dissolution, putrefaction -- the breaking down of form to reveal the seed of light at the center.

Warder: And the planet ruling it?

Master: Saturn.

Warder: What are the mysteries of the White Stage?

Master: Ascension, purification, reintegration -- the cleansing of the seed of light so that it may renew itself in its vigor.

Warder: And the planets ruling it?

Master: Jupiter and the Moon.

Warder: What are the mysteries of the Red Stage?

Master: Rebirth, projection, transmutation -- the descent of the seed of light into the matrix of form so that it may clothe itself anew in the manifestations of its power.

Warder: And the planets ruling it?

Master: Mars, Venus and the Sun.

Warder: What are the symbols of these stages in the macrocosm?

Master: The Secret Fire, the Moon and the Sun.

Warder: What are the symbols of these stages in the microcosm?

Master: The body, the soul and the spirit.

Warder: And what is the union of these three?

Master: The Stone of the Wise.

OPENING OF THE BLACK PHASE

(Lector rings bell once.)

Master: The first stage in our work is the black stage, called by our ancient brothers and sisters the Nigredo. It is the stage of putrefaction and dissolution, and it is under the rulership of the planet Saturn, ruler of limitation, time and form. Its symbols are the symbols of death. Its energies are the energies of disintegration.

In the magical working we call life upon Earth, the time of the Nigredo comes to all, and it may not be turned aside. Those who take up the quest of the Companions of the Stone, however, do so freely, and we do not force anyone to confront the powers and symbols of this phase. If there are any among us who would prefer to leave the working at this time, therefore, the door is still open. If you wish to leave, do so. Know, however, that without passing through the black stage, the white and red cannot be reached, and the Stone of the Wise remains hidden.

(Master pauses to allow any to leave who wish to do so).

Master: Since all of you who remain are resolved to go through with the working, let the hall be prepared for the opening of the black phase.

(Warder rises, turns down lights, closes curtains, puts emblems of mortality on altar and returns to place. When he or she sits down again, Lector rings bell once.)

Master: Companion Warder, you will proclaim the coming of the black phase.

Warder: In the name of the Lord of the Universe, who works in silence and whom nothing but silence can express, and with the help of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun has passed into the realms of darkness.

Master: Companion Lector, what are the words that first greet each Companion of the Stone on entering the lodge for the first time?

Lector: Inheritor of a dying world, arise and enter the darkness.

Master: Even so. It is that darkness we must now enter -- the darkness before birth and after death, of womb and tomb alike -- the darkness of the Unmanifest, imaged forth to our minds in the form of the space between the stars. Companion Lector, what are the words that guide the Companion at the beginning of the Path of Darkness?

Lector: 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 will 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, but the darkness comprehends it not."

Master: Even so. (rises) !!! Let the Companions be purified with water and consecrated with fire, and let them take on the lamens of the black phase.

(Master takes lamens and goes to center of hall, facing west; Keepers of Fire and Water go by the square to altar, get censer and cup, and return to stand on either side of Master, also facing west. Lector leads, indicating that the other Companions should follow, and goes east to stand before officers. Lector, and then other Companions, are purified with water, consecrated with fire, and then receive the lamen of the Black Phase from Master, who then steps aside and gestures to the east, allowing Lector to advance to altar and stand before it, facing west. The next Companion passes through the same process and advances to Lector, who places one finger across the Companion's lips and says, "Keep silence." Lector then gestures for the Companion to return to his or her seat. All the Companions pass through this and return to their places, Warder bringing up the end of the line. (If any Companion is unable to pass through line, Master and Keepers go to him or her, followed by Lector; all then return to places in center of hall.) Master then purifies and consecrates Keepers of Water and Fire, in that order, and gives them lamens; they purify and consecrate him, go to altar, put down cup and censer and are similarly bound to silence. Master

then dons lamen; Lector goes to center of hall; Master binds Lector to silence, and then the two of them together return to station.)

Master: The emblems upon the altar are the emblems of mortality; they represent the reality of death, the door through which we each must pass. Meditate upon these things, in this time of silence and of darkness; consider the approaching death of your physical body, and the other deaths which, it may be, you have died before; seek the meaning, the purpose and the power of death, and consider that which survives. Until the twelfth chime of the bell, do not move, or speak, or interrupt this meditation.

(Master then presses a finger to his own lips, silently binding himself or herself. There follows a silence of some forty-five minutes, during which the meditation of the Black Phase is performed. At the end of this time, the Master raps once with his staff. Lector then rings the bell twelve times.)

Warder: Except the seed fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Lector: The ancient philosophers relate a vision of a man whose body was dead and yet beautiful, and white like salt. The head appeared to be of gold, but it was cut off from the trunk, and so were all the limbs. Next to him stood an ugly man of dark and cruel countenance, with a bloodstained double-edged sword in his right hand, and he was the good man's murderer. In his left hand was a scroll on which was written, "I have killed you that you may receive a superabundant life, but your head I will carefully conceal, so that the worldly may not find you and destroy the earth, and the body I will bury, that it may putrefy and grow, and bear abundant fruit."

Master: Except the black ore pass through the refiner's fire and there be purified, the dross is not burned away and the radiance of gold is not revealed.

Lector: The ancient philosophers have declared that they saw a fog rise, and pass over the whole face of the earth; they saw also the impetuosity of the Sea, and the streams over the face of the earth, and how the latter became foul and stinking in the darkness. They further saw the King of the Earth sink, and heard him cry out with eager voice: "Whoever saves me shall live and reign with me for ever in brightness on my royal throne;" but night covered all things. The day after they saw over the King a morning star, and the light of day clear up the darkness, the bright sunlight pierce through the clouds, with many colored rays of brilliant brightness, and a sweet perfume from the earth, and the sun shining clear. Herewith was completed the time when the King of the Earth was released and renewed.

Warder: It is written, the destruction of one thing is the birth of another.

Retreat Ceremonies

Master: !!! (All rise; Master stands before altar, facing west.) The work of the black phase is not yet complete, but that part which now awaits us leads beyond this hall of our mysteries. Let each Companion make the Sign of Entering, depart in form, and take on the garments of the outer world, but wearing also the lamen of the black phase. We will assemble in the kitchen above in five minutes.

(Starting with Lector, and going one at a time, each Companion makes the Sign of Entering to Master, who responds with the Sign of Silence. Each Companion then goes by the square to the door and leaves the hall.)

OPENING OF THE WHITE PHASE

(All Companions return to the hall and take their places. The emblems of mortality have been removed from the altar, but the curtains are still closed. After a short pause, Master raps once with staff.)

Master: The hour has arrived to pass from the black phase of our work to the white. Companion Warder, confirm that all present have witnessed the Light of the Stone. !!! (All rise.)

Warder: (goes by square to stand in front of altar, facing west) Companions, give the Sign of Entering. (All give Sign to Warder, who responds with the Sign of Silence and returns to his place.) Companion Master, all have witnessed it. (Warder then gives Sign of Entering to Master, who answers with the Sign of Silence.)

Master: ! (All are seated.) Companions N. and N., you will purify and consecrate the hall with water and fire.

(The Keepers of Fire and Water rise, go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, and take up their implements, then go in the same way to south and north respectively. They then circle sunwise, remaining at opposite points of the hall, and purify and consecrate in east, south, west, and north in the usual way. Each then continues around to east and says:)

Water: I purify with Water.

Fire: I consecrate with Fire.

(They then continue around until they are again in south and north respectively, then go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, replace cup and censer and return to their stations in the same way.)

Master: !!! (All rise.) Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Master and Keeper of Fire form head of line, Keeper of Water and Warder the tail, and the rest of the Companions the body. All move together to east, making Sign of Entering as they pass behind the altar, and continue around the outside of the space. All Companions pass the East three times and then return via north to their places in the hall. All remain standing, facing the altar.)

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

(The following Signs are directed toward the altar.)

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

Master: ! (All are seated.)

(Lector rings bell once.)

Master: The second stage in our work is the white phase, called by our ancient brothers and sisters the Albedo. This is the stage of purification and ascension, and it is under the rulership of the planets Jupiter and Luna. It is from this stage that the White Stone is born. Being transmuted by the Secret Fire, the macrocosmic work ascends to the sphere of the Moon; being transmuted by and through the physical body, the microcosmic work ascends to the sphere of the soul. Let the hall be prepared for the coming of the white phase.

(Warder rises, opens curtains, and places flowers and mirror on the altar between the candles. When he or she sits down again, Lector rings bell once.)

Master: Companion Warder, you will proclaim the coming of the white phase.

Warder: In the name of the Lord of the Universe, who works in silence and whom nothing but silence can express, and with the help of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun has passed into the realms of light.

Master: Having passed through the rigors of the black phase, we now stand at the threshold of the white. Let the wisdom of our ancient brothers and sisters be our guide.

Lector: Hermes, the first master of our Art, has said -- "The moisture of the air which is between heaven and earth is the life of everything, for by means of its moisture and warmth it is the medium of the two opposites, Fire and Water, and therefore it rains water on earth. Heaven has opened itself, and sent its dew on earth, making it as sweet as honey, and moist. Therefore the earth flowers and bears blossoms and fruits, and in her interior grows a great tree with a silver stem, stretching itself out to the earth's surface. On its branches many kinds of birds have been sitting, but all departed at daybreak, when the head of the raven became white. This tree is the end of the whole Art." Of it it is said: "The three moistures are the most precious words of the whole mastery."

Master: Even so. (rises) !!! Let the Companions be purified with water and consecrated with fire, and let them surrender the lamens of the black phase and take on those of the white phase.

(Master takes white lamens and goes to center of hall, facing

west; Keepers of Fire and Water go by the square to altar, get censer and cup, and return to stand on either side of Master, also facing west. Lector leads, indicating that the other Companions should follow, and goes east to stand before officers. Lector, and then other Companions, are purified with water, consecrated with fire, and then receive the lamen of the white phase from Master, who then steps aside and gestures to the east, allowing Lector to advance to altar and stand before it, facing west. The next Companion passes through the same process and advances to Lector, who touches the Companion's forehead with one finger and says, "Have courage." Lector then gestures for the Companion to return to his or her seat. All the Companions pass through this and return to their places, Warder bringing up the end of the line. [If any Companion is unable to leave his or her place due to physical debilities, Master and Keepers go to that Companion's place at this point, and Lector follows; they then return to their places in the center of the hall.] Master then purifies and consecrates Keepers of Water and Fire, in that order, and gives them lamens; they purify and consecrate him, go to altar, lay down cup and censer and are similarly charged to have courage, then return to stations. Master then dons lamen; Lector goes to center of hall; Master charges Lector to have courage, and is charged by Lector, and the two of them together return to stations.)

Master: Where the meditation of the black phase was accomplished in silence and darkness, and each Companion sought for wisdom alone, the meditation of the white phase is a work that is both individual and collective. Each of us will enter by a slightly different gate, and follow an individual path with our own guides - but we will be following a general pattern in which we will seek out what is needed for this phase of the work, and will bring it back and add it to the reaction vessel with which we are preparing the Medicine of Metals -- the Stone of the Wise. In one sense, that reaction vessel is each of us individually; in another, it is our Order; in a third, it is this place; and in yet another, it shadows forth things not yet revealed.

Let each Companion therefore enter into a state of relaxed attention in the usual way, and prepare for the work.

(pause)

Lector: My Companions, having entered into a state of relaxed attention, let us close our eyes and become aware of the darkness that lies between and beneath whatever flashes of color we see against our eyelids. Let all colors drop away, and attend to the darkness itself, until the darkness fills the field of vision, and we enter into it, becoming suspended in a space of darkness around and within.

(brief pause)

We are suspended in darkness, but gradually become aware that

below us, in all directions, is a great sea, moving only gently, without turbulence, in great swells that hardly ever break into waves. We seem to have become aware of this sea gradually, due to a slight glimmering that has formed within it or upon it, a silver glimmering that seems to become stronger, and more focused, until we realize that we are seeing a huge circle of silver light forming in or on the dark water, as though in a mirror. As it becomes more and more defined, the impression of a reflection in a dark mirroring surface becomes stronger, until finally we look up, to see above us the sphere of the moon - a moon that has left its place and come closer to us, filling the sky above us, coming closer and closer until it seems that we could reach out to touch it, impossibly silver sphere that it is, less and less like the material moon, and more and more like its emblematic essence.

(brief pause)

Round trap-doors or portholes appear on its surface and open outward, one for each of us, and from them unfold ladder-like stairs, hanging before us. Looking up, we see faces above us, and hands beckoning us to climb, so way take hold of the ladders and climb into the vestibules of the moon. The ladders are pulled up behind us, and the doors are closed. We are within the lunar sphere, each of us in our own place.

But not alone. Around you are lunar beings of various sorts, some shy, some vivacious, some withdrawing, some more forward. Vibrate briefly and inwardly the Great Name of the lunar sphere, Shaddai El Chai, and call upon Gabriel, the archangel of that sphere, to send a suitable guide. Test any that offers to guide you by asking in what name it comes -- it must answer with the Great Name -- and choose one that seems congenial.

(pause)

You find your First Degree staff in your hand. Lift it, and say that you are a Companion of the Stone, under the guidance of the Guardian Companions, in search of that which is needed for the accomplishment of the White Phase of the Work, and that you wish to be guided to that which is yours to bring back to the work, but that you first must find the Portal of the Star.

(pause)

Follow your guide up and into the lunar sphere until you reach its other side, the side away from the earth.

(pause)

When the door opens to the surface, you find a kind of balcony onto which you can step (while your guide awaits within), and from which you can look upward into deep space. Somewhere far above the planetary spheres is the star with which you are

linked. Let your mind and heart rise to it, and feel its response, the channel between you opening and strengthening. As a beam of light descends from that distant star, raise your staff and let it catch that light at its tip.

(pause)

Salute the star, then turn and re-enter the lunar sphere, closing the portal behind you, and speak to your guide, saying that now you are ready to continue.

Your guide then leads you by paths that cannot be predicted to a chamber that is yours alone to find. Within it, the light carried in your staff will show you that which you should bring back for the success of the White phase, and your guide may have things to tell you about it.

(relatively long pause)

When you are done, ask your guide to bring you back to the gate by which you entered, and, when you reach it, signal by saying "Here" aloud, on the physical level.

(pause until all have done so)

When all are ready, our guides open the portals and lower the ladders. Salute and thank your guide, and descend the ladder, keeping careful hold of your staff and of that which you have brought back to contribute to this phase of the work. Below us we see, not the great, dark sea where we first entered the lunar orb, but the room in which we have met to work, where our bodies are still seated in meditation. The wandering moon has brought us back to our own place, and continues to loom over us after we descend. In our midst, too, we see that there is an alchemical reaction-vessel of glass, filled with a dark mass, set into a water-bath in which it is being gently heated. The reaction vessel has several inlet channels, each stopped with a cork and equipped with a valve or spigot that can be turned to allow what has been placed within it to enter into the main vessel. One such intake tube exists for each of us. Approach the intake nearest you, remove the stopper, and place within it that which you have brought back from the sphere of the moon. Replace the stopper, then turn the valve and allow it to enter the main reaction vessel; then close the valve again.

(pause)

The light from the lunar sphere beams down onto the reaction vessel; our individual contributions merge with the dark mass within it - and there is a lightening, slight at first, but then swifter, until suddenly the reaction vessel is filled with a brilliant, silvery mass that gives off a soft white light. When this has happened, the lunar orb begins to rise and retreat, and in a short time it is gone; we are left alone in our working

space. Return, then, to your place, and merge with your body, and become aware of the room from that viewpoint. When you are ready, return your focus completely to the physical world, and close as usual, ending this phase of the work.

(Pause while all return; Lector then rings the bell seven times.)

Master: Know that the sages make use of a living and indestructible water, and that nothing can be done in our art without this water, for the sages have described its power and efficacy as being that of spiritual blood. Transmute this water into body and spirit, and then you will have the spirit fixed in the body.

Warder: The sages have used different names for this substance, and have told us to make the indestructible water white and red. Know that they have called our stone sometimes earth, and sometimes water. Our stone is a stone, and not a stone. It has neither the appearance nor the qualities of a stone, and yet it is truly called a stone. It is found everywhere and in all things, and is called Rebis, the Twofold Thing.

Lector: Our stone is found in all mountains, all trees, all herbs, all animals, and with all men. It wears many different colors, contains the four elements, and has been called a microcosm. Can you not see that our Stone is one earth, and that it grows in abundance before your very eyes? I will tell you where you may find it. The first place is on the summit of two mountains; the second, in all mountains; the third, among the refuse in the street; the fourth, in the trees and metals. There is but one vessel, one method, and one consummation.

Master: !!! (All rise; Master stands before altar, facing west.) The work of the white phase is not yet complete, for that awaits the coming of the redness of dawn. For now, we may go forth to other matters. Let each Companion make the Sign of Entering and depart in form.

(Starting with Lector, and going one at a time, each Companion makes the Sign of Entering to Master, who responds with the Sign of Silence. Each Companion then goes by the square to the door and leaves the hall.)

OPENING OF THE RED PHASE

(All Companions return to the hall and take their places. Master has apple cider, Warder cinnamon, Lector orange cut in half and stuck full of cloves, Keeper of Fire ginger, and Keeper of Water nutmeg. After a short pause, Master raps once with staff.)

Master: The hour has arrived to pass from the white phase of our work to the red. Companion Warder, confirm that all present have witnessed the Light of the Stone. !!! (All rise.)

Warder: (goes by square to stand in front of altar, facing west) Companions, give the Sign of Entering. (All give Sign to Warder, who responds with the Sign of Silence and returns to his place.) Companion Master, all have witnessed it. (Warder then gives Sign of Entering to Master, who answers with the Sign of Silence.)

Master: ! (All are seated.) Companions N. and N., you will purify and consecrate the hall with water and fire.

(The Keepers of Fire and Water rise, go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, and take up their implements, then go in the same way to south and north respectively. They then circle sunwise, remaining at opposite points of the hall, and purify and consecrate in east, south, west, and north in the usual way. Each then continues around to east and says:)

Water: I purify with Water.

Fire: I consecrate with Fire.

(They then continue around until they are again in south and north respectively, then go to the center of the hall and then to the altar, replace cup and censer and return to their stations in the same way.)

Master: !!! (All rise.) Let the Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Circumambulation is performed:

(Master and Keeper of Fire form head of line, Keeper of Water and Warder the tail, and the rest of the Companions the body. All move together to east, making Sign of Entering as they pass behind the altar, and continue around the outside of the space. All Companions pass the East three times and then return via north to their places in the hall. All remain standing, facing the altar.)

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

(The following Signs are directed toward the altar.)

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

Master: ! (All are seated.) The third stage in our work is the red phase, called by our ancient brothers and sisters the Rubedo. This is the stage of transmutation and projection, and it is under the rulership of the planets Mars, Venus and the Sun. It is from this stage that the work is complete and the Red Stone, the transmuting tincture, is born. In our work, the black phase gives way to the white -- darkness must give way to light -- but thereafter darkness and light must be reconciled and made one, and the accomplishment of their union is made manifest in the red hue of life and of power.

Being transformed by the Secret Fire and purified in the sphere of the Moon, the macrocosmic work is completed in the sphere of the Sun; being transformed by the physical body and purified in the sphere of the soul, the microcosmic work is completed in the sphere of the spirit.

Let the hall be prepared for the opening of the red phase.

(Warder rises, places the vessel of the Elixir on the altar, and returns to place. When he or she sits down again, Lector rings bell once.)

Master: Companion Warder, you will proclaim the coming of the red phase.

Warder: In the name of the Lord of the Universe, who works in silence and whom nothing but silence can express, and with the help of the Guardian Companions of our Order, I proclaim that the Sun has passed into the realms of power.

Master: Having passed through the purifications of the white phase, we now stand at the threshold of the red. Let the wisdom of our ancient brothers and sisters be our guide.

Lector: Behold, I have declared that which has been concealed, since the work is both in you and about you; taking that which is within and fixed, you can attain it either in the earth or in the sea. Know that the vulture standing on the mountain cries out with a loud voice, "I am the white of the black, and the red of the white, and the gold of the red, and I speak the very truth." And know that the chief principle of this art is the crow, which in the blackness of night and the clearness of day flies without wings.

Understand, therefore, and accept this gift. In the caverns of the metals there is hidden the venerable stone, splendid in color, a mind sublime and an open sea. This is the stone of many colors which is born in one color. Know this and conceal it.

You who hear my words, therefore, search into them; I have revealed all things that were before hidden concerning this knowledge, and revealed the greatest of all secrets.

Master: Even so. In the work of alchemy there are three grades of heat. When the sun is in Aries, it indicates the first heat, or grade of the fire, which is gentle because the heat is under the rule of the water. When the Sun is in Leo, it indicates the second grade, which is hotter, because the great coldness of the water is under the rule of air. In the sign of Sagittarius is the third grade, this being not of a burning heat, and under the rule or order of rest or pause. (rises) !!! Let the Companions be purified with water and consecrated with fire, and let them take off the lamens of the white phase and take on those of the red phase.

(Master takes red lamens and goes to center of hall, facing west; Keepers of Fire and Water go by the square to altar, get censer and cup, and return to stand on either side of Master, also facing west. Lector leads, indicating that the other Companions should follow, and goes east to stand before officers. Lector, and then other Companions, are purified with water, consecrated with fire, surrender the lamens of the white phase, and then receive the lamens of the red phase from Master, who then steps aside and gestures to the east, allowing Lector to advance to altar and stand before it, facing west. The next Companion passes through the same process and advances to Lector, who takes the Companion's hands in his or her own and says, "Awaken will." Lector then gestures for the Companion to return to his or her seat. All the Companions pass through this and return to their places, Warder bringing up the end of the line. (If any Companion is unable to go through line, Master and Keepers go to him or her at this point, and Lector follows; all then return to places in the center of hall.) Master then purifies and consecrates Keepers of Water and Fire, in that order, and gives them lamens; they purify and consecrate him, go to altar, put down cup and censer and are similarly charged to awaken will, then return to stations. Master then dons lamens; Lector goes to center of hall; Master charges Lector to awaken will, and is charged by Lector, and the two of them together return to station.)

Master: The vessel upon the altar is symbolically the vessel of our alchemical work. Companion Lector, what do you bring to the work?

Lector: I bring an orange, symbol of solar light, divided by iron and pierced with the bitter clove in sign of sacrifice. (Lector goes to altar, puts orange into vessel, and returns to place.)

Master: Companion Warder, what do you bring to the work?

Warder: I bring sweet cinnamon, symbolic of the gentle fire of the first grade of heat. (Warder goes to altar, puts cinnamon sticks into vessel, and returns to place.)

Master: Companion Keeper of Fire, what do you bring to the work?

Keeper of Fire: I bring burning ginger, symbolic of the strong fire of the second grade of heat. (Keeper goes to altar, puts ginger into the vessel, and returns to place.)

Master: Companion Keeper of Water, what do you bring to the work?

Keeper of Water: I bring mercurial nutmeg, symbolic of the banked fire of the third grade of heat. (Keeper goes to altar, puts nutmeg into the vessel, and returns to place.)

Master: All these things shall be dissolved and transmuted in the juice of the apple. Divide an apple in half across its axis, and the pattern of its seeds reveals the image of the pentagram, symbol of the perfected and balanced will. With this, our prima materia is complete.

(Master goes to altar and pours apple cider into the vessel, then returns to place.)

Master: The work of the red stage is the transmutation of the matter and its projection into the world of our experience. That projection and transmutation are accomplished under the sign of the Sun. Let us therefore formulate, above the altar, the image of the Hidden Sun.

(Pause for the image to be formulated)

Master: In the black and white stages we have journeyed forth to bring back gifts for the attainment of this work. In this red stage, the gift that must be given is one of power. Let us therefore perform together the Qabalistic Cross, followed by the Exercise of the Middle Pillar. !!! (All rise.)

(This is done, all Companions vibrating the Names in unison. No pentagram ritual is performed.)

Master: Let the light that is above each of us shine a ray into the center of the heart. (pause) Let that ray gather together all the power of will and imagination. (pause) In the Sign of Entering, in the presence of the Hidden Sun, let that power stream forth as a ray of light onto the material of our working: now.

(All make Sign of Enterer toward altar, projecting energy into the vessel, and finishing with the Sign of Silence.)

Master: In that Sign and that presence, let the image of the

Hidden Sun descend into the vessel to consecrate the material of our working, and let that image be held in each mind so that the consecration may be complete.

(pause)

Master: Come in the Power of the Light.
Come in the Light of Wisdom.
Come in the Mercy of the Light.
The Light has healing in its wings.

(All visualize the Sun descending into the vessel and flooding its contents with light. This visualization is held for some minutes with as much intensity as possible.)

Master: It is done. Let the Cabalistic Cross be performed to signal the completion.

(This is done, all the Companions vibrating the Names in unison. Lector then rings bell three times.)

Master: (Goes to center of hall, facing west) Keepers of Water and Fire, you will advance and make the Sign of Entering, then bear the vessel from this hall to the fire. The rest of the Companions will then depart in form.

(This is done, each Companion making the Sign of Entering to Master, who responds with the Sign of Silence. The vessel is taken to the kitchen and set on a low heat to simmer.)

CEREMONY OF CLOSING

(All Companions return to the hall and take their places. The vessel of the Elixir is on the altar, and there are enough cups for all Companions present. After a short pause, Master raps once with staff.)

Master: Companions, the hour has arrived for the doors of the secret places to be closed, and for our quest to lead us from the Inner back to the Outer, that our work may be made complete. Companion Warder, confirm that all present have witnessed the Light of the Stone. !!! (All rise.)

Warder: (goes by square to stand in front of altar, facing west) Companions, give the Sign of Entering. (All give Sign to Warder, who responds with the Sign of Silence and returns to his place.) Companion Master, all have witnessed it. (Warder then gives Sign of Entering to Master, who answers with the Sign of Silence.)

Master: ! (All are seated.) Companions N. and N., you will purify and consecrate the hall with water and fire.

(The Keepers of Fire and Water rise, go by the square to the

altar, and take up their implements. Standing side by side, they purify and consecrate in the east, and then go together to south, west, north and back to the east. Each traces a cross in the air with the implement and then sprinkles or censes thrice to the quarter, doing this at each of the four stations. When they have returned to the East, they speak:)

Water: I purify with Water.

Fire: I consecrate with Fire.

(They then replace cup and censer and return to their stations.)

Master: !!! (All rise.) Let the Reverse Circumambulation take place in the Path of Light.

(Reverse Circumambulation is performed:

(Warder and Keeper of Water form head of line, Keeper of Fire and Master the tail, and the rest of the Companions the body. All move together against sun to east, making Sign of Silence as they pass behind the altar, and continue around the outside of the space. All Companions pass the East three times and then return via north to their places in the hall. All remain standing, facing the altar.)

Master: The Reverse Circumambulation, symbolizing the fading of Light, is accomplished. Let us invoke the Lord of the Universe.

(The following Signs are directed toward the altar.)

All: Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe. (Sign of Entering)
Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed. (Sign of E.)
Holy art Thou, the vast and the mighty One, (Sign of E.)
Lord of the Light and of the Darkness. (Sign of Silence)

Master: Let the Companions be purified with water and consecrated with fire, and let them surrender the lamens of the red phase and receive the elixir.

(Master goes to center of hall, facing west; Keepers of Fire and Water go by the square to altar, get censer and cup, and return to stand on either side of Master, also facing west. Lector leads, indicating that the other Companions should follow, and goes east to stand before officers. Lector, and then other Companions, are purified with water, consecrated with fire, and surrender lamens to Master, who then steps aside and gestures to the east, allowing Lector to advance to altar, pour a cup of the elixir and face west. The next Companion passes through the same process and advances to Lector, who gives a cup to the Companion and says, "Seek knowledge." Lector then gestures for the Companion to return to his or her seat. All the Companions pass through this and return to their places, Warder bringing up the end of the line. (If any Companion is unable to go through line,

Master and Keepers go to him or her at this point, and Lector follows; all then return to places in the center of hall.) Master then purifies and consecrates Keepers of Water and Fire, in that order, and receives their lamens; they purify and consecrate him, and go to altar, where they put down cup and censer, receive the elixir and are charged to seek knowledge, then return to stations. Master then removes lamen; Lector goes to center of hall with two cups; Master charges Lector to seek knowledge, is charged by Lector, and they return to their stations.)

Warder: Let us partake of the fruits of our accomplishment, and remember the charges given to us: to know, to will, to dare, and to be silent: the four virtues of the magical art.

(All drink the elixir.)

Master: Our work is done; Mercury has passed through the flame to become the living Monad. Nothing now remains to us but to recall the wisdom that has guided us. Companion Lector, you will begin the recitation.

Lector: True, without error, certain and most true: that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, to perform the miracles of the One Thing. And as all things were from One, by the meditation of One, so from this One Thing come all things by adaptation.

(At this point, Master and Warder join in.)

Lector, Master and Warder: Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, the wind carried it in its belly, the nurse thereof is the Earth. It is the father of all perfection and the consummation of the whole world. Its power is integral if it be turned to Earth.

(At this point the Keepers of Water and Fire join in.)

Officers: Thou shalt separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the coarse, gently and with much ingenuity. It ascends from Earth to heaven and descends again to Earth, and receives the power of the superiors and the inferiors. Thus thou hast the glory of the whole world; therefore let all obscurity flee before thee.

(At this point all present join in.)

All: This is the strong fortitude of all fortitude, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing. Thus the world was created. Hence are all wonderful adaptations, of which this is the manner. Therefore am I called Hermes the Thrice Great, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

(At this point all but Lector are silent.)

Lector: That is finished which I have to say concerning the Operation of the Sun.

Master: Companion Warder, you will proclaim the Autumn Retreat of our Order closed in the First Degree.

Warder: 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 has set but its Light remains.

Master: Companion Warder, let the Light of the Stone be concealed. !!! (All rise.)

Warder: (goes to center of hall, facing west) Companions, give the Sign of Silence. (All present except Master do so, and Warder responds with the same sign, then returns to station.) Companion Master, the light is concealed. (Warder makes Sign to Master, who responds with same Sign.)

Master: I therefore declare this Autumn Retreat closed. !

Props and Materials List

Red and black tabards
Yellow, red and blue sashes
Staff
Sword
Bell
Censer and incense
Cup
Lamens of the three stages
Emblems of mortality
Flowers
Vessel for elixir
Cups for elixir
Apple cider
Orange
Cloves, cinnamon, ginger root, nutmeg