

COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

GENERAL LETTER #2

On Lodge Procedure

One of the factors which helped our Order survive the sometimes awkward transition from a circle of friends with esoteric interests to a working magical Order was a general familiarity with the traditions of lodge procedure and etiquette. All the founding Companions were members of at least one fraternal lodge, and their experiences -- good and bad -- of lodges at work gave our Order a framework of common habits and approaches which stood us in good stead through the first year of our corporate existence.

As we now open the doors of the Order to new members, some of whom will not have the benefit of this background, the Council has felt it advisable to set out the essentials of traditional lodge work as a guide to this sometimes perplexing field of lore.

The following points should be used as guidelines for behavior in all meetings of subordinate lodges of Companions of the Stone open in the Outer:

Basic Principles

1. Everything done in an open lodge is, in a real sense, a ritual action. Companions should pay attention to the business of their lodge as they would to the performance of an initiation, and should act and speak accordingly. While a grimly serious attitude is rarely appropriate in a lodge, a flippant or overly casual approach to lodge business is a hindrance as well.
2. The work of a lodge open in the Outer is the basic training for lodge ritual work in the Inner. Attention to the principles of ritual taught in the Initiate Companion curriculum will help in lodge business meetings, and teach habits of work which will make the ceremonial work of the Order more powerful for Order and initiate alike.

Speaking In Lodge

3. Companions who wish to speak in an open lodge should stand, address the Adept Dirigent, and be recognized by that officer before speaking. If a Companion wishes to speak directly to another Companion, he or she should still address the Adept Dirigent first and receive permission. This may seem excessively formal, but it allows the Adept Dirigent to limit talk in the lodge to one Companion at a time -- thus permitting the rest of the Companions to hear what is being said.
4. For the same reason, cross-talking (that is, talk between Companions who do not have the floor) and interrupting a

Companion who is speaking are not appropriate actions in lodge.

5. Companions may be addressed by their lodge names or their titles of office while the lodge is open. The one exception to this is the Adept Dirigent, who is always addressed as "Companion Dirigent." The title "Companion" should be used in all cases, as a recognition of our mutual obligation.

#### Movement In Lodge

6. All movement in a lodge open in the Outer is "by the square" -- in other words, it follows straight lines and 90-degree angles. Companions who leave or enter an open lodge go by the square to the center of the lodge, where they face the Adept Adjuvant, give and receive the Outer Signs, and continue by the square to the door or their seat. Under most other circumstances, the Summoner alone moves in an open lodge; if a Companion wishes, for instance, to pass out a document in an open lodge, he or she should address the Dirigent, who will instruct the Summoner to receive and distribute the document.

7. To prevent disruption, no one may enter or leave a lodge during the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony, or while voting of any sort is taking place. During the ceremonies of admission or Protection of the Order, Companions may only enter or leave as provided in the ritual.

8. Except as specifically provided in the ritual, no Companion should cross the line between the Adept Dirigent's station and the center of the lodge. This line is central to the energetics of a lodge -- and, even in the Outer, energetics are central to lodge work.

#### Courtesy

9. Courtesy should be an unfailing rule between Companions in the lodge -- as it should be equally outside it. Public displays of anger and the like are out of place when a lodge is open; so are less blatant violations of the friendship which should unite us all. If two Companions have a problem between themselves, they must be prepared to leave it outside the lodge door and behave in a civil fashion during the meeting.

10. In any case in which the rule of courtesy has been violated, the Adepts Dirigent and Adjuvant have the right to reprimand the offending Companion and, if the violation is continued, to expel him or her from the meeting. A Companion expelled from a meeting for violating the rule of courtesy shall apologize to the lodge before he or she shall be readmitted.

#### Business Procedure

11. In their business meetings, lodges use a simplified form of parliamentary procedure. A Companion who wishes the lodge to act

in some matter makes a motion, which he or she should be prepared to phrase in a single sentence. The motion must be seconded by another Companion before it can be acted on by the lodge. Once seconded, the Adept Dirigent will call for discussion; when the discussion is finished, the members of the lodge will vote, and the question is decided. Once the vote has taken place, the topic may not be raised again in the same meeting unless two Companions who voted with the majority move that it be reconsidered.

12. There are two ways to limit discussion. The first is a Call for the Question, which calls for the vote to take place immediately. When two-thirds of the members present have called for the question, the Adept Dirigent cuts off further discussion and the vote is taken at once. The second is a Motion to Table, which calls for the discussion to stop and be resumed at the next meeting. Once a motion to table is made and seconded, it must be voted on at once, and if it passes the motion is tabled and may not be brought up again at that meeting. Both of these are ways to keep an unproductive argument from going on indefinitely.

13. A motion which is under discussion may also be amended by a Motion to Amend, which must be made and seconded like any other motion. Once this is done, the Companion who made the original motion is asked by the Dirigent if he or she accepts the amendment; if so, it becomes a "friendly amendment," and the amended motion becomes the motion under discussion. If the Companion who originally moved does not accept the amendment, the motion to amend must be discussed and voted on. If it passes, the motion as amended is considered to have passed, and the original motion is not brought up again. If the amendment fails, the original motion returns to the floor.

14. At any point, the Adept Dirigent may "put the lodge at ease." This suspends the procedure given above, and permits Companions to discuss the matter at hand freely without formally addressing the Dirigent. When the lodge is at ease, Companions should still refrain from cross-talking and interrupting, and should speak one at a time. At any time after the lodge has been put at ease, the Dirigent may "return the lodge to order," which restores the full procedure given above. The lodge must be returned to order before any new item of business can be brought before the lodge.

15. In all questions of procedure, the Adept Dirigent's decision shall govern unless it is overruled by a two-thirds vote of the lodge.

In working with these guidelines, ordinary friendliness and common sense will be found to go a long way toward keeping lodge meetings from becoming cumbersome or unreasonably long. Further questions should be forwarded to the Adept Dirigent of your lodge or to the Secretary of the Grand Assembly.