

The Cabletow

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Rites making up the Initiation

Walkabout the Lodge



The Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey F. & A.M., MW William Morris, Jr. PGM, looks over the GLP Centennial memento presented to him by MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. during the latter's visit in August.

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The Cabletow

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The Cabletow

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Grand Master



Living up to expectations

By taking an inward look into our affairs, lodge and self gives more meaning to the practice of the Craft.

We members of the Craft, particularly the officers and leaders of our Lodges and Districts, as well as those of our M.W. Grand Lodge, are enjoined to be “examples of discretion and propriety; for it is only by a due regard to our laws and regulations, as shown in your own conduct, that you can expect obedience to them from others.”

In this light, we incumbent Grand Lodge officers expect all of you, dear brethren of Lodges and Masonic Districts under the jurisdiction of our M.W. Grand Lodge, to give due meaning and substance to the theme for the months of September and October in particular, namely, “**Masonry: Inward-Bound or Inward-Looking.**” This theme signifies, at least in part, that we focus our attention on the affairs or concerns of our re-

spective Mother Lodges, which are our homes in the Craft and the honor, reputation, and usefulness of which we should enhance by working together in close harmony as a great team of players, who are all intent to win the game—the game of taking our respective Lodges to greater heights of achievement. It is actually an invitation for us to engage in introspective deliberation, to search into ourselves, and to make measures on what we have missed, ignored, or failed to do.

It also suggests that we look around and see who among the true and worthy members of our respective Lodges and Districts are in dire need of fraternal assistance and then extend to them our sympathetic succor. Temperance and fortitude, as well as amor proprio, keep our distressed brethren silent about their misfortune; it is our

duty, however, to render to them every kind office which justice or mercy may require, as well as to relieve their distresses and soothe their afflictions.

Concededly, Masonic charity or benevolence embraces all mankind. But I firmly believe that we should start exercising it within our Masonic Fraternity or Family; for, after all, we have been charged to be the keepers of our brethren and members of their families. We must not lose sight of the fact that we swore, on our honor, to extend kind care, love, and protection to fellow Master Masons throughout the world, as well as to members of their families, just as other Master Masons wheresoever dispersed pledged, also upon their honor, to exhibit kind care, love, and protection to us and to members of our families.

That is why we, the incumbent officers of our M.W. Grand Lodge, have directed every Masonic District in this sovereign jurisdiction to devote the first two “embers” of this year to (1) giving due recognition and honor to deserving senior members of Lodges in its area of responsibility; (2) extending benevolence and kindness to sick brethren and to our deceased brethren’s widows and orphans therein; and (3) holding rejuvenation activities, including bloodletting, for the brethren’s benefit, as well as carrying out medical/den-

tal missions that are specially directed to members of our Masonic family in the District rather than to non-Masons.

We are pretty confident that you, the leaders of our Masonic Districts, faithfully and conscientiously comply with this directive, and that you prove your compliance with it by expeditiously sending in to the Grand Lodge reports (cum photos) on the aforementioned activities. Your reports, we assure you, will be printed in this Masonic publication.

Besides, we expect all of you, our brethren in every Masonic District, to strictly obey Edict No. 162, which was issued by MW Rizal Aportadera during his year in the Grand East (1993). You are required by this ordinance to observe the last Sunday of October as “Widows and Orphans Day” and to work in close coordination with members of the Orders of the Amaranth and Eastern Star, if such Orders are in existence in your District, toward meaningfully holding a Lodge of Remembrance and a fitting program designed to give due honor and recognition to our deceased brethren’s widows and orphans. It is our duty and obligation to reach out to the widows and orphans of our brethren who have gone before us to “that blissful Lodge which no time can close and which, to those worthy of admission, remains open during the

boundless ages of eternity,” and thereby make them feel that they still belong to our Masonic Family!

But, of course, we should not do this only once a year. To look after the welfare and happiness of those whom our deceased brethren have left behind is our continuing commitment as Lodges and as Districts.

Again, we expect you, the Grand Master's Deputies for the different Masonic Districts, to send in to the Grand Lodge reports (cum photos) of your respective Lodges of Remembrance and programs designed to give due honor to our deceased brethren's widows and orphans, which are also to be printed in this magazine. We entertain no doubt that you live up to this expectation of ours.

We expect all of you, moreover, to help us establish stronger partnerships between and among the Craft and the other segments of the Masonic Fraternity or Family in your respective areas of responsibility. We expect you to get members of the brethren's families, as well as those of the Orders of the Amaranth, Eastern Star, Job's Daughter, Rainbow for Girls, and DeMolay in your respective Districts, actively involved in your Masonic endeavors, as well as to get the brethren actively involved likewise in the projects and activities of these Orders allied to the Craft.

Moreover, we expect you, the Worshipful Masters and other officers of the different Lodges in our sovereign jurisdiction, to give heed to our directive that you keep yourselves duly posted on our theme for this Masonic year, our Grand Lodge's 7-Point Program of Administration, circulars and edicts, and other pertinent Grand Lodge matters by habitually logging on to the GLP website. We rest assured that you have already printed our theme for this Masonic year and our Grand Lodge's 7-Point Program on tarpaulins and that you have posted or hanged these tarpaulins before the entrances of your respective Masonic Lodges or Temples.

We expect you, furthermore, to comply with our directive that, through the Secretaries of your respective Lodges, you order Past Master's Certificates, Aprons, and Jewels from our Grand Lodge Supply Store as early as possible, and not only during the short period when the date of the installation of the officers of the Lodge draws near, so that the store will be able to immediately process your orders and ensure the timely delivery of the ordered items to your respective Lodges.

In addition, we expect all of you, dear brethren of Lodges in this sovereign Jurisdiction, to strictly obey with all our heart or faithfully and conscientiously implement the

prohibitions issued by our M.W. Grand Lodge against hazing and/or performance of acts that humiliate and/or cause injury in conferring the degrees of Masonry or in admitting members in Masonic clubs, societies and similar associations of Masons. These issuances include Edict Nos. 131 (Choa), 131-A (Galvez), 45 (Lim Lo Suy), and 259 (Gabionza Jr.), as well as Circular No. 21 (Lim Lo Suy), through which our M.W. Grand Lodge acceded to the rightful request of the M.W. Grand Lodge of California to prohibit Masons belonging to Subordinate Lodges under our Grand Jurisdiction who are residing in the State of California from conferring, receiving, or attending the

degrees of the Grand and Glorious Order of the Knights of the Creeping Serpent (GGOCKS), or attending meetings of the same.

This prohibition was again stressed in the discussion which other Grand Lodge officers and I had with our counterparts in the M.W. Grand Lodge of California during our recent official visit of that sovereign jurisdiction. That is why I issued Circular No. 10, in which I underscored our resolve to stamp out the odious malpractice and to demonstrate our solidarity and strengthen our fraternal ties with our Mother Grand Lodge and other Grand Lodges.

Brethren, let us all strictly adhere to the rules and regulations

It is an inexcusable blunder to treat the Drama of Hiram Abif as a mock tragedy or as a tragi-comedy because it is different from the initiation ceremonies of savage peoples. These employ initiation ceremonies as an ordeal to test the nerve and courage of their young men. But Freemasonry is not juvenile. The exemplification of our ritualistic drama should be as sincere, as solemn, as earnest as a prayer before the Altar. He who takes it trivially or with perverted humor betrays a shallowness of soul which shows him unfit to be a Mason.

which I reiterated in my Circular No. 10, particularly the following:

1. All forms of maltreatment, including but not limited to wounding, beating or assaulting of candidates; humiliation; embarrassment; or infliction of physical or psychological suffering on the occasion of processing or making a candidate a mason are prohibited within or without the Lodge
2. All Master Masons under our Grand Jurisdiction are forbidden from becoming members I any organization or society which makes use of Masonic emblems, insignia, or rituals without due authority from the Grand Lodge, or performs acts that embarrass, humiliate and/or cause injury, or violate the Anti-Hazing Law, in the conferral or admission of members.
3. Master Masons under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California and those under our own are prohibited from receiving the degrees of GGOCKS or from attending the meetings of the same.

I stressed in my circular that any violation of the above prohibitions shall constitute and be punished as unmasonic conduct, without prejudice to the arrest or forfeiture of the Lodge's charter when appropriate, and criminal prosecution of the offending Master Masons as may be warranted

by the Anti-Hazing Law and the Revised Penal Code.

Brethren, how important it is for us to live up to the Craft's expectation that we conduct ourselves amiably, discreetly, and virtuously at all times and in all places; for by doing so, we convince our non-Mason countrymen that Masonry has transformed us into men of honor, virtue, and charitable feelings, to whom others might look for example and inspiration, precisely because we consistently give due obedience to its mild and gentle precepts, as well strictly adhere to its useful laws, rules and regulations. Every one of us is obliged to abide by the laws, regulations, and edict of his Grand Lodge, the by-laws of the particular lodge of which he is a member, and to maintain and support the Landmarks and "ancient usages and customs of the Fraternity."

In sum, we should, each of us, continuously live "inward-looking" or "inward-bound" Masonry!


JUANITO G. ESPINO, JR.
Grand Master



From the Table of the Grand Sec

By MW Danilo Angeles, PGM
Grand Secretary



To become a Mason is a moral choice

How will you explain “what is it to be a Mason” in one sitting? By touching on the oft-ignored but crucial aspects of Masonry, our Grand Secretary has come up with a different but revealing picture of the Craft.

In all my Masonic years, no question so tough and perplexing has confronted me as this oddly so basic an inquiry, “What is it to be a Mason?”

Sometimes, I amused myself by turning this question in my mind. Getting no satisfactory answer, I set it aside and waited for another day blessed with lucid thought when I would convince myself that I have finally struck it right.

My amusement extended to the sight of Regular Masons trailed by submissive Petitioners. Even to the Grand Lines that come and go every year. For all the advancements they have achieved, I can only imagine how in the world will they reply to the question “What is it to be a Ma-

son?” in one sitting.

To answer “a good man becoming better” is a slogan. It is not thought. Slogans, like catechisms, are ready answers intended for rookies and dimwits. They are meant to be memorized, not pondered; parroted, not evaluated. Somebody had thought it out, wrote it, and publicized it. It is like someone else’s spit that we lick off the ground and gulp it down as if our own.

A Mason of certain years in the Craft must certainly have his own idea. Not having one means a Masonic life not well pondered. Or a Mason deficient in mental faculty—who ought not to be in the Craft in the first place.

A Mason's idea of his Masonness needs not to be permanent. It changes through the years. In other words, the idea of becoming a Mason changes side by side with his increasing maturity in and about the Craft. And by all means, it is better to have one than none.

So, with much reluctance, I took the challenge of writing my idea of "what is it to be Mason." Being the Grand Secretary, my idea ought to serve the "establishment" I am subordinated to, the Grand Lodge. But in all cases, I imagine myself talking to a fellow Mason who must be informed of the oft-ignored aspects of the Craft in one sitting. Once revealed, he will likely receive my talk with wide-eyed disbelief—but will certainly add to the enrichment of his view and practice of the Craft.

Here it goes.

As a Mason, you are a member of a skilled, ancient, and by all means symbolic, profession.

We look up to the stonemasons of Medieval Europe who have constructed magnificent cathedrals that survived even today. They were practitioners of arts and sciences which had been

considered far advanced even in their time. They labored in a free and equal environment which preceded the democratic system of governance today. They delved into mystical studies that went into the make and design of the cathedrals and other edifices they had constructed.

To be a Mason is to be a leader of men.

So, there is a pioneering tradition in Masonry. But we trace the provenance of this tradition back to even more distant time in 6th century B.C.

Pythagoras, one of the earliest and eminent mathematicians of Ancient Greece, established a cult that combined science and mysticism. From the Pythagorean cult, we not only get the mystical art of numerology but moreover, the Pythagorean theorem of triangles and the tonal harmony of music. Pythagoras also significantly influenced Socrates, one of the great founders of Western philosophy.

That's why we occasionally acknowledge Pythagoras in Masonry.

This tradition is not lost to the succeeding Freemasons in the modern period. Some of them whom we call "Illustrious

Masons” have become shapers and movers of history, bringing man ever closer to a brighter future.

So, you see, to be a Mason is to be a leader of men. You willingly take your place in an ancient and noble calling of improving the human lot—from yourself, to your family, and to society at large. You are obligated equally with the brethren and fellows who have gone this way before, with your contemporary brethren that you labor with today, and with the future generation of Masons who will pick up the working tools that will someday drop from your nerveless grasp.

You accept responsibility over your charges, and an accountability that runs up to the TGAOU Himself. And until and unless you have sworn by the Almighty, only then will you be able to carry out your symbolic profession in a seamless union with the past, present and future; even with all the brethren widely dispersed in every country and every clime. Masonry is a symbolic profession that is practiced universally. You must therefore get your license from the powers that rule transcendently.

Now, you see the vast responsibility that goes with your being a Mason. You must similarly realize by now the weight of

the basic qualifications of being a Mason.

First of these basic qualifications is the quality of the mind. Our predecessors have not become leaders if they were men of low or faulty intelligence. Memorizing the Catechisms, Lectures and Rituals demonstrates proficiency but not intelligence. Memorization is for beginners. But evaluation is for professionals. And by all accounts, the Catechisms, Lectures and Rituals are only superficial. It’s what they mean that counts importantly.

Grasping the meaning of Masonry beyond the doctrines is accomplished by evaluation. But the appraisal of things requires intelligence. Without intelligence, how can a Mason explore and discover the rich and surprising theoretical foundations of the Craft? For it was Socrates who first propounded that Virtues can make good men better by instructions. It was this same snub-nosed philosopher who called the cosmos “Geometry”—and the state of the soul, “Geometry” again. Plato talked about the parable of a cave where its dwellers came out “from darkness into light.” Aristotle upheld the correctness of the transcendentals of “the Good, the True and the Beautiful” which we now call Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Philosophy basically makes up the theoretical foundations of the Craft. Without it, it is impossible for a Mason to construct his moral and Masonic edifice. The study and comprehension of philosophy, therefore, must become the preoccupation of a Mason. Otherwise, it is doubtful if he is a Mason at all.

The study and comprehension of philosophy, therefore, must become the preoccupation of a Mason.

Philosophy—this olden “queen of the sciences”—is the “royal art” that an Apprentice must attain to mastery from the time he has walked his first Perambulation, culminating to his arrival at the East crowned by a Master’s hat.

The study of philosophy instills a deliberative and reflective habit that cultivates refinement in man. Gradually, it chisels the superfluities off the rough ashlar that we abhor in the First Degree. This is what the First Degree actually demands.

Filipino Masons get it wrong. In shaping a newly-initiated, they bring their culture into the lodge which must not be the case. They demand him to walk

and act Masonically just like the Spanish friars of old commanding an *Indio* to walk and act tyrannically. Never. Yes, we value humility and good deeds but hardly knowing why. Like in our religion, we pay devotion to the *santos* and *retablos* without caring to open and look into the Bible. We emphasize the form while we forget the word.

Restoring this forgotten study of philosophy will greatly rectify the wrong habit prevailing in the Craft today. It will introduce the balance between the form and word—because Masonry is both form and word. It will supply the instructive materials to Filipino Masons who teach virtues to new initiates albeit in aphasic manner.

If philosophy is the “royal art,” daily life is the “royal road.” What we learn, we apply. And our learning appears in the choices we make. But choices, Aristotle said, reveal the character we have. This brings us to the second major qualification: character.

All the Lectures, Rituals and Charges instill in us the ethics of our symbolic profession. Ethics set the distinction between those who labor honorably and those who don’t; regulate the acceptable practices; and define the approved relations between members and with society

at large. Without ethics, we become ruffians. Ethics is aimed at shaping our character that fits a Mason.

Character grows not from cash, class, creed or country—rather, from heart and home. We are born as unique individuals—each endowed with his own mix of genes and hormones that makes us into the person that we are. Nature provided it. But it is nurture—all the raising and caring at home—that tempers or sharpens our individuality.

An excellent character is sustained by virtues. Virtues, like Truth, exist only for themselves. We cannot contest or alter them. Either we ignore or follow them. The most basic are the “cardinal virtues” of temperance, prudence, fortitude and justice. We need not become perfect in virtues. All we need is a good grip of the cardinal virtues to allow other virtues to come out. So, a strong sense of justice plus temperance, for instance, can result to “honor.” A combination of fortitude, temperance and justice can yield to unfailing devotion called “loyalty”—with a little ounce of faith.

So, Masons who banner the slogan of “making good men better” must be proficient in the practical combination of virtues. Just as intelligence is to the Second Degree, virtues are to the First Degree. Freemasonry

requires the brethren to make virtues a second nature. Consistent to its long tradition of leadership, the Craft gives premium to the internal—and not the external—qualities if Masons were to become natural leaders. It must be built in, not dressed up like power, fame or wealth,

For what are natural leaders but men with unshakable temperament, a mind ahead of the herd, a big heart that dares, and a will to stand pat on its ground amid adversities? It therefore becomes obvious that arrogance, deceit, bigotry, envy, greed and violence are flaws in behavior that weaken the character—and are totally opposed to Masonry.

The Craft allows its members to develop their characters diligently and passionately so long as they injure no one—or remedy fast any hurt or violation preferably, of unintentional causes. A unique freedom, distinct pride and wide privileges come with a man’s admission to the Craft. One must therefore guard against temptations of entitlements and privileges which can be overwhelming at times, stoking abuses, sparking controversies, and fracturing unity within the lodges.

The nobility of character doesn’t always bring renown or easy rewards. Sometimes,

strength of character involves making unpopular choices that can provoke conflict among the brethren. But in all cases, in all projects and debates, never lose sight of the ideals that Masons must achieve—the True, the Good and the Beautiful. Or Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, respectively.

Strength, which the law deems good and just, keeps the stability between Heaven and Earth; consequently, affording harmony to prevail in all. For there will be no Harmony if there is no Justice.

Beauty, which appears pleasing to the sight of both God and men, brings everyone to agreement in taste and judgment; hence, affording us to enjoy little pleasures, making life bearable, in this vale of tears.

And Wisdom, which approximates closest to the Truth, is a spark that brightens clouded and darkened minds. It even sharpens already lucid thoughts. For God is Truth—and any words of enlightenment that dispel fear and ignorance is a spark of the divine.

Not for nothing why becoming a Mason is a moral choice. We embraced a lifelong commitment. We carried on with words and actions of no less our own doing. We are accountable to no one except to the Supreme

Being of the Universe. Whether we make light or false of our Oath, an All-Seeing Eye will account for our every word and deed to which we will receive a just judgment in the end.

Masons who banner the slogan of “making good men better” must be proficient in the practical combination of virtues

It is one thing to fear no man. But it is another to fear the Lord. For the toughest job that a leader of men can face is to improve himself which cannot be accomplished without first invoking the help of God. It is only correct that he subordinates himself to God if he were to practice his symbolic profession in a tiny corner of God's own field.

Never strive so assumingly to increase God's glory with your every project. You can never guess just how glorious God is for any mortal enterprise to matter. It is enough to stay humble, please the Lord—and practice your symbolic profession sincerely and correctly.

Otherwise, quit the Fraternity before you commit a so grievous blasphemy. ❧

MW Espino rushed aid over

2 Msc districts hit by calamity, crisis

Two Masonic districts in Southern Philippines were hit by calamity and crisis over the past month.

No sooner had MW Juanito Espino sent aid to the affected brethren as on-site reports came in.

On September 9, Zamboanga City in Zamboanga del Sur in Western Mindanao, came under siege when government forces battled with rogue Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) units that had attempted to take over the city.

The 21-day siege resulted in 104 deaths at the least, sending more than 120,000 residents fleeing to the city's stadium for safety and shelter.

A month later, on October 15, the island of Bohol in Central Visayas was rocked by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake that killed at least 222 people. Bohol sustained heavy infrastructure damages. Century-old churches, particularly in Loboc and Baclay-

on, crumbled into ruins. Many were rendered homeless.

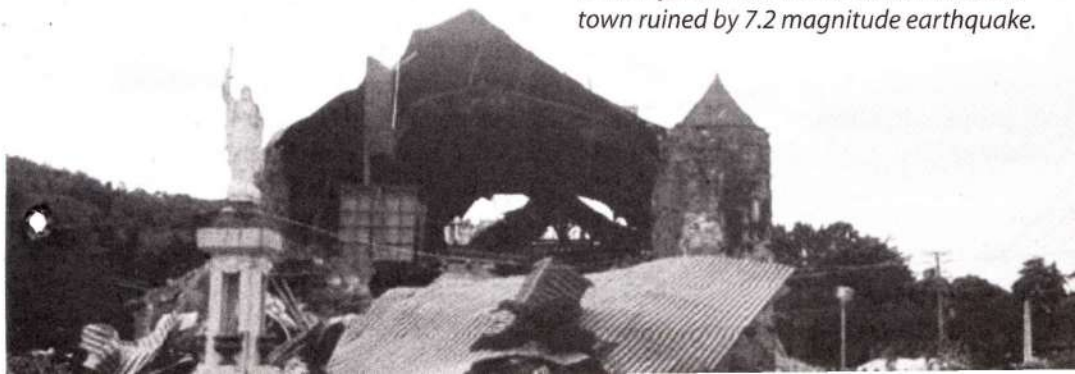
Similarly, the Basilica Mi-nore del Santo Niño in Cebu also sustained damages. But casualties and damages in this "Queen City of the South" were far lower than in Bohol.

Classified under District Region IX & ARMM-C, Zamboanga City hosts two lodges, the Samboangan No. 310 and Mt. Apo No. 45—the last located right in Sta. Catalina village, the "ground zero" of Zamboanga siege.

Bohol, grouped under District Region VII-A along with Cebu, hosts only one lodge, Dagohoy No. 84 in Tagbilaran City.

Cebu hosts 4 lodges—Mt. Moriah No. 252, Datu Lapu-Lapu No. 347, Cebu No. 128, and Maktan No. 30, all in Cebu City.

Bohol quake: San Pedro Church in Loboc town ruined by 7.2 magnitude earthquake.





Zamboanga siege:
Government troops assault
MNLF positions on
September 12, 2013.

BROS IN THE NEWS

MW Puno called for people's initiative to end pork barrel

Mounting public outrage against the pork barrel scam took a firmer and more focused direction this month when former Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno called for a people's initiative to quash the anomaly-ridden appropriations that have been a bane to the nation.

Never a publicity seeker, yet this Past Grand Master (in 1983) of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Ma-

sons of the Philippines (or GLP) came out with his first public statement in an ABC TV 5 interview on October 8 calling for the abolition of the "pork barrel" or the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).

PDAF is a discretionary annual fund of Php P200 million and Php 70 million given out respectively to each of the country's 24 Senators and 289 Congressmen to pay for local

infrastructure and development projects.

“You cannot expect (Congress) to pass legislation that would be contrary to their selfish interest. *Nawala na 'yung moral authority nila to enact this kind of law,*” MW Puno said.

With moral authority gone, Congress loses its credibility to stand as guardian for the people’s money anymore. Worse, lawmakers are not wont to cut the slush fund that keeps constituencies in political patronage and their re-elections secured.

Malacañang also wanted to keep the PDAF but with more transparent measures built into it.

Noteworthy, scam mastermind Janet Lim Napoles, head of the dubious JLN Group of Companies, surrendered to Pres. Benigno Simeon Aquino III on the night of August 28 with her lawyer Lorna Kapunan.

A high-profile fugitive turning herself in at the presidential palace had only stoked wide suspicions of conspiracy to high levels.

But a half-measure by all means is still a “pork.” Taxpayers, furious with the opulent lifestyle of the Napoleses, wanted it all scrapped. The public was dead set to thrash all the budgetary entitlements politicians enjoy which had served as the backdoor for plunder of public money and a host of corruption.

R.A. 6735

Hence, MW Puno suggested to the convenors of the Million People March to go for Republic Act 6735 or the “Initiative and Referendum Law.”

Passed in 1998, R.A. 6735 gives the public the reserve power to enact a law, not exclusive to Congress, on the doctrine that “the people are the sovereign people.”

It allows the public to draft and propose a bill provided that 10 percent of the nation’s registered voters—about 6 million—have signed it with 3 percent at least of the voters of each legislative district.

There are some 50 million registered voters in the Philippines today.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) will check next on the signatures for a month. Then, it will publish the proposed law for public discussions. After about 45 days, the Comelec will put the bill up for a national referendum.

A simple majority of the votes cast is enough to pass the law.

“The people should unsheathe and use this power to make laws whenever their elected representatives default in the performance of their sacred duty to enact laws to promote the general interest, or worse, whenever they betray the public trust,” MW Puno said.

Calling for a people’s initiative to junk the pork barrel was a complete turnaround for MW Puno. In 1994, he was one of the Supreme Court justices who had voted for the PDAF’s legality in *Philconsa vs. Enriquez* case.

Again, he upheld the PDAF in 2001 in *Sarmiento vs. Treasurer of the Philippines*.

Until the pork barrel scam stunned the public too trustful of their politicians who, in turn, ought to keep inviolate what the courts and the legislation have sanctified.



MW Puno: *"The people should unsheathe and use this power (Initiative) to make laws whenever their elected representatives default."*

Politicking

Speaking in mid-October before the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands (CCPI), the oldest business chamber in the Philippines dating back to 1886, MW Puno said that the scam had amounted to "the worst violation of human rights" leading to the "failure of democratic institutions and to a large degree destroyed our democracy, principle of separation of powers, and doctrine of checks and balances."

"The PDAF is destroying our democracy. You look at how the money was spent. Congress does not act on the basis of law but based on its own

interests," he said.

A couple of observers raised caution on MW Puno's proposal.

Comelec chairman Sixto Brilantes Jr. asked the people to wait for the Supreme Court's decision on the petitions to abolish the PDAF and the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), a fund where Pres. Aquino occasionally draws to back up infrastructure and other projects.

Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago said that the people's initiative is "too ideal" given the political realities obtaining in the country.

Sen. Santiago actually had good reasons—and MW Puno was aware of these.

"You need to organize," he said. "Your opposition are the tradi-

tional politicians, the vested interests, everyone who wants to preserve the stinking status quo, those are all your enemies.”

No sooner had MW Puno proven himself correct than when rumors flew about—that he was using the people’s initiative as his platform for his 2016 presidential bid.

It all took Senate President Franklin Drilon, a staunch Malacañang supporter, at the end of October to gather these rumors together and throw them all at MW Puno on accusation of “politicking.”

“It’s unfortunate to hear about such statements, especially coming from a former chief justice,” commented Sen. Drilon about MW Puno’s warnings of an ensuing public disorder, and military intervention even, should the government not take heed of the people’s outrage over pork.

Noteworthy, Sen. Drilon issued an extra P50 million appropriation to each of the 24 senators during the senate’s impeachment trial of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona.

Safety valve

But anti-pork groups were quick to pick up MW Puno’s people’s initiative suggestion.

Over 70 groups comprising the Cebu Coalition Against Pork Barrel backed MW Puno’s legislative response against the scam.

The CCPI committed itself to host people’s initiative meetings for MW Puno and help gather signatures.

Religious groups, particularly

the Philippine Methodist churches, threw support behind the people’s initiative.

Lawyers groups were filling in the ranks of the growing movement.

A number of bros were just waiting for a clear signal to start organizing the grassroots.

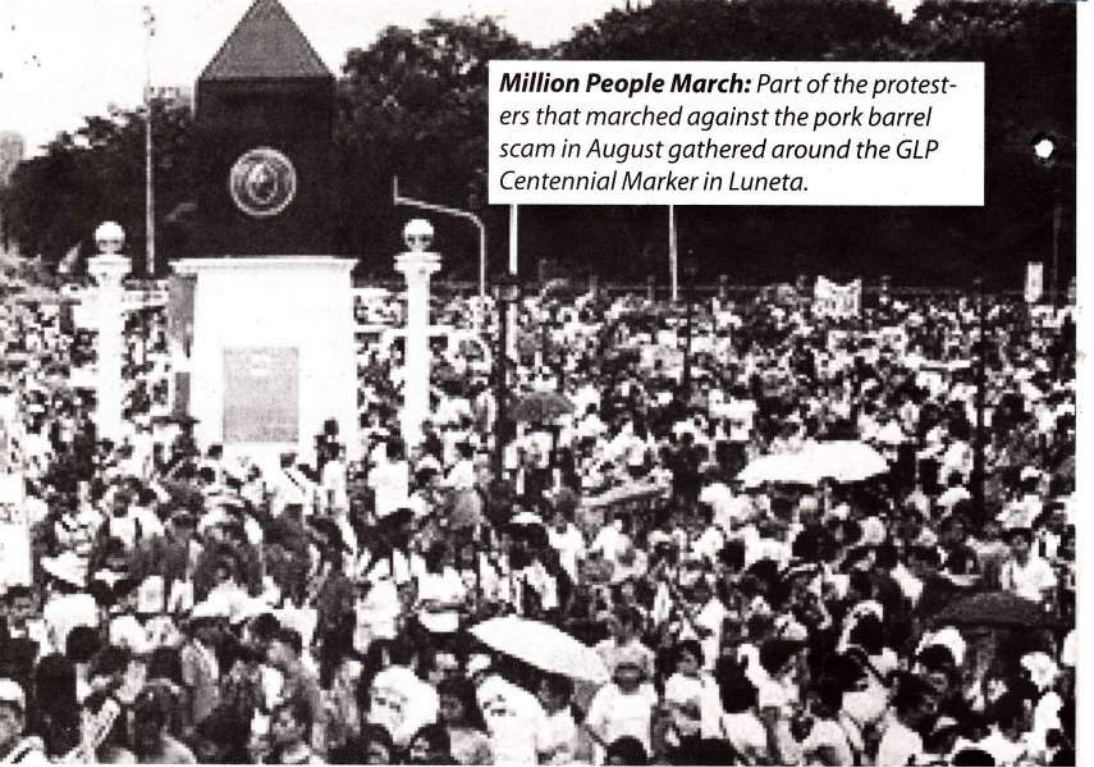
Support was all over. Even before MW Puno had called for a people’s initiative, the Million People March petition on Change.org to scrap all pork had already gathered close to 90,000 signatures on-site and 15,000 online even.

Politicians, therefore, had all the reasons to demolish MW Puno. Not politic or even a firebrand, yet the mild-mannered Past Grand Master had mustered an aimless public into a potentially powerful movement.

In just a couple of weeks, his statements ripped through the naivete of a slumbering citizenry—even right through the images conjured by deft media spins. His causal comment, for instance, on the possibility of bribery of senator-judges which had his Supreme Court successor Corona possibly impeached, was enough to send a wide-eyed public thinking—and the lawmakers and legal frauds denying.

So far, black-robed charlatans had never dared to put up battle with MW Puno’s legal stature—not yet. Attacking the 22nd Chief Justice, who turned the Supreme Court into an activist high court and currently a resident scholar of the U.P. College of Law, is like clashing with the legal profession itself.

Yet, a MW Puno on the loose posed as a pestering migraine for the country’s politicians. The mudslinging

A black and white photograph showing a massive crowd of people gathered for a protest. In the background, a prominent monument with a circular emblem on top is visible. The crowd is dense and extends far into the distance.

Million People March: Part of the protesters that marched against the pork barrel scam in August gathered around the GLP Centennial Marker in Luneta.

campaign was just a message from the people he had once called the “lowlifes among our legislators.”

And low and dirty will their tactics come next to bully this scholarly ex-chief justice. MW Puno is now drafting the documents which the people’s initiative movement will use for its nationwide signature campaign in January.

The documents were set for issuance in November.

A pressing but high-minded purpose kept MW Puno tenaciously driving on. “If the politicians oppose the people’s initiative campaign and they again use money, force and fraud, we don’t know what will happen next. This people’s initiative is the last safety valve for the people not to go to the streets,” he said during his CCPI talk.

Unchecked, a talking MW

Puno will be unraveling tricks and scams that politicians have installed in many places. Worse, many Filipinos will start thinking beyond the tunnel visions regularly dished up by the Social Weather Station surveys and the daily news.

Unabated, a successful people’s initiative movement will very likely emasculate Congress. The country’s 10 percent voters will shoot down every administration pet bill, dig up shelved controversial bills, and pass laws over the legislators’ head.

Worse, it will bring up ghosts of People Powers past.

So far, the people’s reserve power to write their own laws remained unsheathed. But it was enough that the blades had been sharpened and polished. ❖

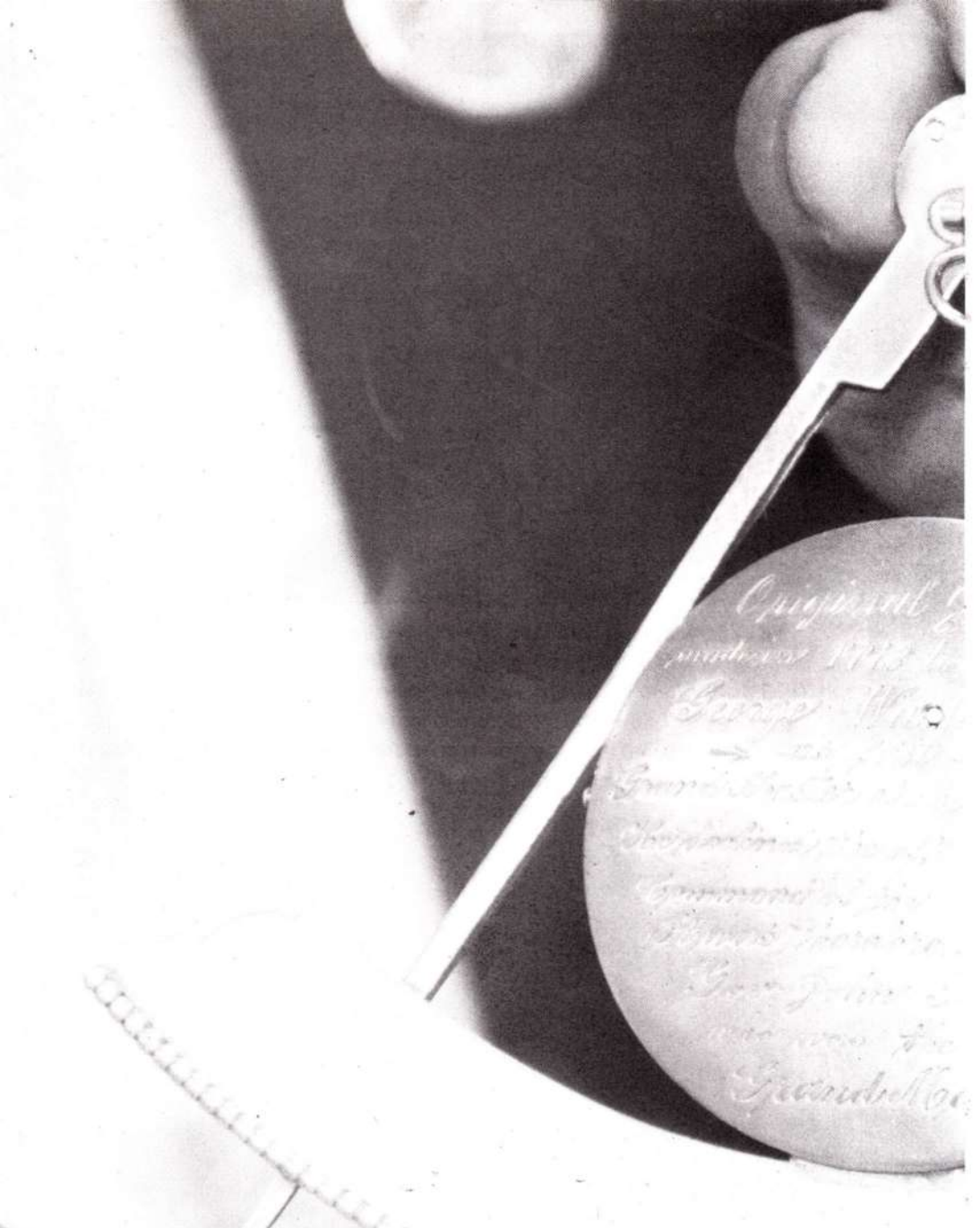
PHOTO NEWS



MW Espino poses with the officers of the Grand Lodge of Alberta AF & AM in Canada on Oct. 14, 2013 (**above**). From left: VW Rox Malabanan; RW Allan Dickson, DDGM; MW John Cameron, GM; MW Espino; an unidentified GL officer; VW Victorio Vallejo, DGL R3-F; and RW Gerard Villar pf the Alberta GL.

MW Espino and his party was received next in a lodge meeting. (**below**)





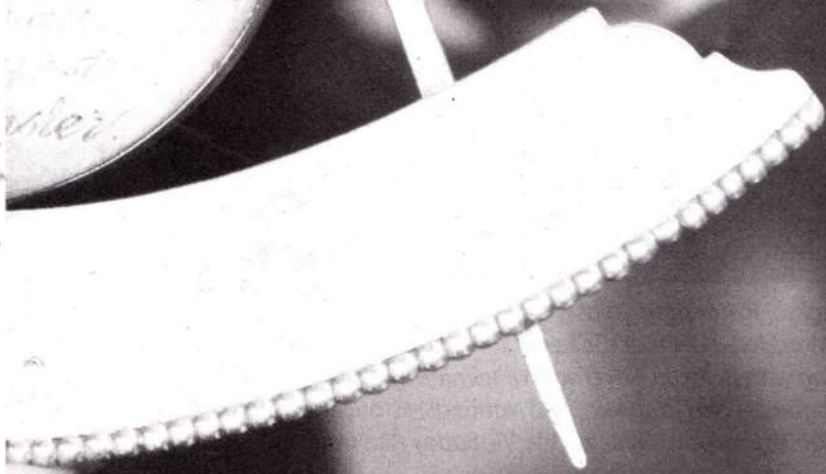
Inscription behind the medal reads:

"Original Jewel made in 1778 to be worn by George Washington as first Grand Master of Masons in Virginia: He declined the office being in Command of the Army. It was therefore first worn by Gov. John Blair who was the first Grand Master."



The Grand Secretary of the GL of Virginia AF & AM presented MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., along with MW Danilo Angeles, PGM, GLP Grand Secretary, with a replica of the historic Grand Master's Jewel on October 7, 2013.

Handwritten text on a circular object, likely a plaque or medal, including the words "Council", "Grand Master", and "1812".



MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. (3rd from left), standing next to Quezon City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte, commemorates the Birth Anniversary of Illus. Bro. Manuel Luis Quezon on August 19 in the Quezon City Memorial Circle Mausoleum, with Sen. Edgardo Angara leading the rites. DDGMs behind were VW Orlando Mabutas, VW Jun Logronio, VW Beda Quiambao and VW Luthmyr Tiongson.



MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. (far right) joins the 163rd Birth Anniversary commemoration of Illus. Bro. Marcelo Del Pilar at the hero's shrine in Cupang, Bulacan, Bulacan on August 30 along with Bulacan Governor Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado (3rd from left), Sen. Teofisto Guingona III (4th from left), and National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) Executive Director, VW Vic Badoy (6th from left).

MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. presides over the Institution of Fairway Lodge UD on July 5 in Zamboanga City, with VW Joseph Dy at the East.

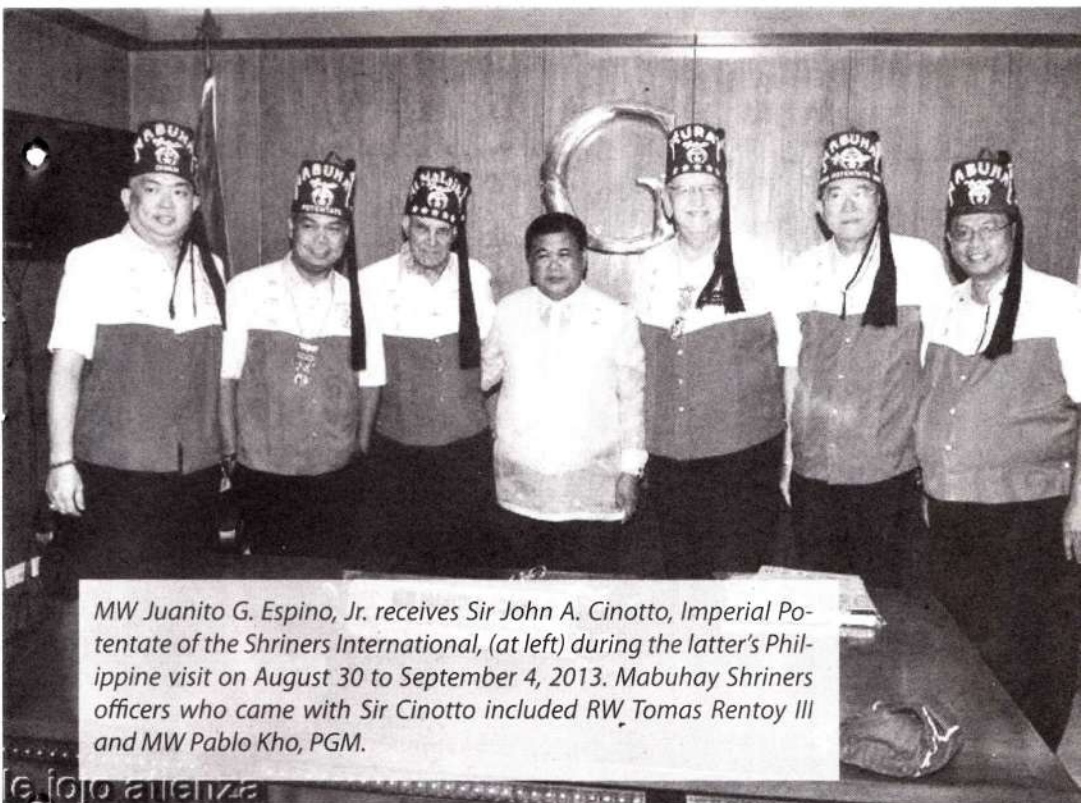


MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. joins the brethren of Alfonso Lee Sin Memorial Lodge No. 158 in Dagupan City, Pangasinan during the inauguration of their new temple on July 3, 2014.



MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. comes as Guest Speaker to— with VW Cesar Marcos, DDGM, presiding over—the 3rd District Convention of RII-E (Northern Nueva Vizcaya and Ifugao) held at CAP Building in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya on September 7, 2013. (above) Ladies of RII-E also attended the convention. (below)





MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. receives Sir John A. Cinotto, Imperial Potentate of the Shriners International, (at left) during the latter's Philippine visit on August 30 to September 4, 2013. Mabuhay Shriners officers who came with Sir Cinotto included RW Tomas Rentoy III and MW Pablo Kho, PGM.



MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. speaks before the members and officers of the BIR Travelers' Haven, Inc. (BIRTH), a Masonic club largely composed of BIR examiners, during their 154th Fellowship Meeting on August 30, 2013 at the Twilight Videoke Bar in Subic Bay Freeport in Olongapo, Zambales.



The Ancient Apprentice Mason



Editor's note:

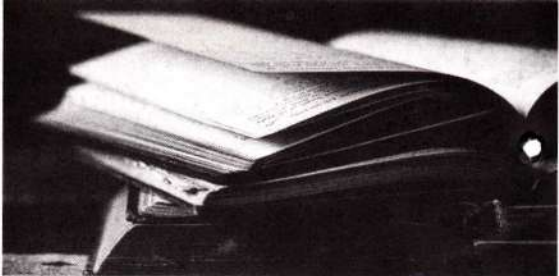
The text above is lifted from the Pollard Notes which constitute the basic material of Candidate instructions of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Maine in the U.S. Its author, the late MW Ralph J. Pollard, Honorary Past Grand Master, was Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education and Lodge Service from 1954 to 1970.

The degree of the Entered Apprentice Mason, like the other two degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, dates from the Middle Ages, where the Masonic Fraternity was actually an operative guild of architects and builders. The Medieval Entered Apprentice was a young man or boy actually engaged in learning the trade of an operative stone-mason. Such apprentices were carefully selected, only free-born youths of good character, respectable parentage, and sound physique being accepted. Those chosen were apprenticed to a Master for a term of several years, during which time they were given thorough instruction,

not only in both the practical and theoretical phases of operative masonry but also in moral deportment, in good manner, and in their religious duties. They received particularly careful instruction in geometry, for the geometrical principles underlying Gothic architecture constituted the real secret or “mystery” of the medieval Craft, whereby the Masonic guild enjoyed a tight monopoly in the construction of such major buildings as castles and cathedrals.

“These apprentices were under a rigid discipline. Their moral conduct were strictly supervised. They were forbidden to play at cards or dice, and were not allowed even to enter a tavern or public house unless sent there on business by their Master. When off duty, they always traveled in pairs, so that each could have a witness that he had indulged in no forbidden conduct.

“When his seven years of apprenticeship was completed, the young Mason was required to pass a strict examination. If successful, he was then declared “free of the trade” and was admitted as Fellow of the Craft, a fully qualified and skilled workman, and a member of the local operative lodge.” ❖



Must-not-miss Masonic reads

Study, and never-ending study, becomes the habit of a Mason. It comes with the Speculative Masonry package.

So, start an Entered Apprentice on the road to study with an EAM Monitor. The lodge must issue him with one right after his Initiation. It comes with his degree fee.

The Monitor is just what the Apprentice needs. No study material can be as handy like it. Besides, owning one is a strong motivation for an Apprentice to make it good in the exam and in the Craft.

Lodge mentors, coaches, conferral team members, officers—in effect, all Regular Masons—can occasionally brush up their Masonic stock knowledge by returning to the basics.

A couple of indispensable manuals that Masons must never go without are as follows:

- Allen Roberts, *The Craft and Its Symbols*. McCoy Publishing, 1974 at Php 150.
- *Tried and Proven: A Lodge System of Masonic Instruction*. Masonic Service Association of the United States, 1980 at Php 175.
- *Pocket Encyclopedia of Masonic Symbols*. Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines, Manila at Php 75.

All these are available at the Masonic Supply Center in the GLP.

The Initiation Ritual

Ancient rites making up the Initiation

Knowing the rites which have been built into the Initiation will wake the bros up, not only to the meaning of, but also to the antiquity and the gravity of the basic—but oft-ignored—First Degree.

If only Masons will learn the antiquity of the Initiation, they will be undoubtedly struck by the gravity and the magnificence that go with the First Degree.

Every ritual—be it the Catholic holy mass or the Igorot *cañao* harvest festival—runs on a certain plot. Every ritual is a story.

Masonic rituals are not exempted. But more than that, every Ancient Craft ritual is actually made up of a number of rites—certain prescribed form or manner in accomplishing the words and actions of a particular ceremony.

The plot changes as the story changes in every degree, of course. A rite is retained here; another, omitted there. But when these rites come together, they come down with a force so sublime that leaves a man speechless but transformed.

It pays well for both Candidates and Masons alike to know

these rites. Knowing it will make them think twice of the commitments they have embraced. But moreover, it clearly shows why the Craft can never be in the same class as the civic clubs and other contemporary organizations.

1. Rite of Preparation

This is actually a rite which has been dropped from Anglo-Saxon Masonry over time.

Anglo-Saxon Masonry is the kind of Masonry we practice in the GLP today—originating from the American bros who first ran the GLPI (Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands) in 1912.

Custom has it that the Marshall propounds the interrogation to the Candidate outside the lodge doors. The Candidate affirms the qualifications required of him, of course. The Stewards lead him next to the Preparation Room.



Skulls and bones used to decorate the table in the Preparation Room to psych Candidates up into writing a "Last Will and Testament."

But in the Old English Masonry, the Candidate's preparation doesn't stop there. Inside the room, the Stewards bring the Candidate before a table. They ask him next to sit down and write a "Last Will and Testament" for about an hour.

Normally, a 6-inch sperm taper burns out in an hour. Once it is lighted, the writing is on. When out, the Candidate stops.

That's why Preparation Rooms are kept like, well, like your teenage son's room—dark, cluttered, and life-threatening. A molding skull rests on the table dripping with molten candle wax. An anaconda slithers between the carton boxes and broken furniture in a dusty corner. There is thrash

and ruin everywhere resembling, say, a school gym after a rock concert.

Masons today keep the Preparation Room untidy by neglect. But Masons before have maintained it so for a reason. All the props and ambience must bear down and psych the Candidate out into quivering about death—and writing a very moving final will.

When done, the Master, or any Lodge mentor, read and ponder on the testament. Finally, they walk in and sit down with the Candidate. They counsel him with wise—and well-rehearsed—words, all in preview to the Initiation.

There is no tough-talking

here. Friendship and compassion must go with the demands for a voluntary death—the death of the Candidate's old self.

If well done, the Candidate will no doubt answer the challenge with pride and sincerity, “Whr wr u fs pppd t b a M?”

Hence, the writing of the will gives function to the “Preparation Room.” It is not just a dressing room. The rituals have made it clear early in the First Degree—that it is the “heart” that gives the room its meaning.

Moreover, it is the first precinct in the lodge where a Candidate steps into when entering Freemasonry. Thus, a “good heart” must be a Candidate's first impression of the Craft.

Sadly, the practice of the last will and testament is gone—and a couple of, but very important, connections has been snapped.

Actually, the will is the bridge to every Candidate's Petition. A number of Masons get it all wrong when reading Question No. 7-b in the GL Form No. 779 “Petition for Degrees of Masonry”—*“Have you made adequate provision for your family in case of your death?”*

It is easy to mistake the Craft for a money-raking club. But never forget: the Candidate will symbolically *pass away* somewhere in our rituals.

“A Candidate is leaving the world of the profane and vicious for the world of the illuminated.”

Hence, nothing prepares the Candidate better for a symbolic death than a sense of death itself—the writing of his final will.

Besides the heart, the Preparation Room also serves the function of the will—the reasoned-out volition or disposition. In certain grand lodges carrying on with the ancient tradition—particularly in Europe and Latin America—Candidates are required to sit down again and write a “masterpiece” before going through the Raising.

Before, Operative Masons had to pass a “masterpiece”—a painting, sculpture, etc.—to become a Fellow of the Craft. Modern Masons, being speculative, substituted the writing of an essay, or “testimony,” for the olden masterpiece. The candidate's manuscript must show “heart” (First Degree) and “mind” (Second Degree), both combining into “will” (Third Degree) to qualify him for the Raising.

Had the will and masterpiece traditions survived, garbage will not make its entry to our Preparation Rooms today. The

“body contacts” certain moronic Masons commit before the cowardly Stewards are totally odious to the Craft. It ruins Freemasonry not only for the Candidate, but for the entire lodge and Craft as well.

Every Lodge Master must therefore take heed of his Installation Charge. No man, or any body of men, has the power to introduce their emotional insecurities, immaturities, even psychological defects, to the Craft by picking on the Candidates.

“A Candidate must travel through night and darkness, until he arrives before the splendor of the Orient, and deservingly stand among the Sons of Light.”

By all means, restoring the practice of the will and masterpiece shall similarly restore the lost connections in our rituals. Quality control of Candidates entering the Craft will become real. Rarely swayed by expedient reasons or vested interests, Masons before cared not whether to drop a Candidate five minutes before the ritual or not should a mental incompetency or character flaw pop up in his will or masterpiece. After all, how can you probe into a person’s mind and heart but in his

writings?

If restored, the Craft will edge closer to the olden and more original form of Masonry. All our Masonic endeavors and studies will regain balance.

Nothing prevents us from restoring them, so far—except our will to become better.

2. Rite of Divestment

Ancient mysteries—Masonry included—stripped their initiates for the ritual. To take the clothes off means to remove the extraneous or superficial matters dressing a person up—from flashy clothes to officious titles, from glittering accessories to the privileges of power and wealth.

Nakedness levels all. It symbolically reduces an individual to primordial existence. Once upon a time, men ran and romped over the earth naked with their silver bells swinging between their limbs. It was a time of pure innocence and total peace. After all, when all men and women were naked, who would ever think of committing rape in the first place?

Besides innocence, the Rite of Divestment also stands for rebirth. No infant is born in this world already dressed up in a Masonic attire. Or any other attire. Every newborn comes naked and without labels—like “rich” or “poor,” “aristocrat” or “commoner.”



A dressed-down Entered Apprentice Masons as it appears in the "Masonic Ritual and Monitor" by Malcom C. Duncan (1866).

Nakedness proclaims that there is a "new" man in the house. The ministration of the rituals is the key to his rebirth.

But a First Degree Candidate is not actually naked. He is

actually "n nkd n cl, n bft n shd." He is simply dressed down in his pajama wear.

Compared to childbirth, the initiate is not yet delivered. His exposed body parts resemble a baby way past the crowning but still stuck halfway in his mother's introitus. The head is out but not the whole body yet. All the clothes he wear are like the placenta that still cling-wraps around him.

Delivery comes only in the Raising.

Technically a fetus, an initiate is still a *balot*. He only becomes a duckling in the Raising.

3. Rite of Discalceation

"Plucking off the shoe" was the ancient custom of the Hebrews when sealing a contract. It was a display of sincerity. It meant that the contracting party had no intention of running away from his obligation. A felon running 5'6" on one side, and 5"5" on the other, in the hot and rocky Palestinian desert would be easily caught by cops.

Hence, the First Degree acknowledges Boaz—the great great grandfather of King Solomon—when he sealed a marriage contract with the family of Ruth (Ruth 4: 7-8).

Besides sincerity, the Rite of Discalceation also stands for reverence. The first



The Rite of Discalceation looks back to Boaz's taking Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4: 7-8) who later became the progenitors of King Solomon.

practice is attributed to Moses when he climbed up Mount Sinai lured by dazzling strobe lights. Suddenly, the Burning Bush exclaimed, "Jesus Christ! Moses, take off your shoes! You're standing on a holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)

Going barefoot about a holy place is not a monopoly of the Hebrews alone. Pythagoras instructed his cult members, "Offer sacrifice and worship with thy shoes off." Even the ancient Peruvians, who cheered at human sacrifices, left their footwear at the door when walking into the temple consecrated to sun worship.

Muslims today keeps up with this olden practice by leaving shoes outside the door of the mosque.

In Masonry, the lodge is the holy ground.

So, in the First Degree, the Candidate limps on one shoe in keeping up with the ancient Hebrew practice of entering into a contract.

In the Third Degree, the Candidate goes barefoot in commemoration of the ancient reverential practice.

4. Rite of Entrance

The affair at the West Gate is accomplished in two ways. First,

the initiate knocks on the door as proof of his intention. Next, the Senior Deacon tests the initiate if he is up to qualifications to join the Brotherhood.

The West Gate entry has come down from ancient practices. Pike-wielding guards up at the castle walls hollered “Wh cms hr” down at the people on the ground standing before the gates. Guests must satisfy the interrogation to the detail; hence, a long reply of “A pr bl cdt...”

Passwords and cryptic devices—like the number of “Wh cms hr” inquiries—had to be devised especially for personalities with high security clearances. Only then would the guards lower the drawbridge and open the gates wide.

The olden challenge sounded something like this...

Who comes here? Who comes here?

His Majesty, the King of the Saxons.

Who is the King of the Saxons?

Derby, the Mighty King of the Saxons.

Derby who?

Derby ... Derby no sunshine in my life/ Until you say you're mine, you're mine/ Derby no summer, spring or fall/ Each day is like a passing time... [Boy Mondragon,

“Rain,” 1970; Donna Cruz revival, 1990]

5. Rite of Reception

At the West Gate, the initiate is warned of the new world he is stepping into. But eager for admission, he is bound next to an agreement of fidelity. As the lodge takes the trouble of initiating him, so must he keep up his part of the deal.

“The Candidate embodies the history of humanity, ever struggling onward and upward, from gloom and darkness of the savage state to the far better plateau of light, intelligence, and civilized life.”

For any breach of contract, the Senior Deacon deeply reminds the initiate of the symbolic penalty—so deep that it is to become his Due Guard in the entire degree—with “m shrp inst prc a nk brst.”

Combined, the Rite of Entrance above and this Rite of Reception make up the “Rite of Induction.” A Candidate stepping into a Masonic lodge for the first time is crossing over into a new world. He is leaving the world of the profane and vicious for the world of the illuminated.



Illustration of Moses laying his hand on Joshua for the movie "The Ten Commandments" by artist Arnold Friberg.

founded on virtue and purity. The Rite of Induction, therefore, prepares him, by prayer and meditation, for a mystic pilgrimage, where he must travel through night and darkness, until he arrives before the splendor of the Orient, and deservingly stand among the Sons of Light.

Clad in a very modest garb, a Candidate represents man in primitive state of ignorance, helplessness and moral blindness. Sightless and nervous, he knocks at the western portal of the lodge seeking admission, instruction and light. But his will to internally improve himself is unmistakable. Thus, he is let in, leaving all his past and his station in life behind so that he has been hoodwinked—never to look back again.

Stepping into a Masonic lodge, the Candidate is leaving the material world behind for a life

6. Rite of Invocation

A great number of Masons often missed this very important rite. The Master of the Lodge meets the initiate, prays over him—with a hand laying on the former's head.

The laying on of the hand—or *semikhah* in Jewish—has come down from a great and ancient tradition.

Jacob, the Biblical patriarch who had wrestled with an angel, instituted the practice. He laid his hand over Isaac's head as

a sign of election—to become the leader of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses upped the meaning by touching Joshua, a spy for the Israelite army, on the head. It filled Joshua “with the spirit of wisdom.” Then, he succeeded Moses in the leadership of the Israelite nation.

Moses also laid his hand on 70 other Hebrew elders who became the first batch of priests. They passed the practice onto their successors.

Aaron and the High Priests introduced another meaning to the semikah. They laid their hands on a sacrificial goat to symbolically transfer the sins of the Children of Israel on the poor animal and run it off the cliff.

By all indications, laying the hand on means, first, invoking the Lord to infuse the initiate with wisdom—by the Master who represents “wisdom.”

Second, it also suggests of leadership

and priest-like ordination by the “philosopher-king” (who arrived at the East by way of the now-forgotten “Royal Art”).

Third, it starts the initiate’s long travel to the East—as every Mason must aspire for arrival at the East.

7. Rite of Circumambulation (also the Rite of the Wanderer, or the Symbolic Pilgrimage)

Going around the lodge is not just a final check on the initiate’s preparedness by the members—where the sloppy Stewards have missed. This is one rite teeming with meaning.

But distinction has to be set

first. “Perambulation” is to walk over or through on foot. “Circumambulation” means the same thing but gives emphasis on the circular motion or direction.

The Rite of Circumambulation dates back to the Antiqui-



The 19th century Flammarion engraving shows a traveler emerging from darkness of the night into the lightness of the day.

ty. A long long time ago, men have imagined the Great Father God riding on the sun daily from East (dawn) to West (dusk). Soon, they came to imagine the daily pattern into a full circle with fire—representing the sun—at the center.

Not for nothing why extinct and primitive cultures—from hooded temple priests to g-stringed aborigines—conducted ceremonies by drawing or moving in circles. The Stonehenge was constructed on a circular floor plan. The American Indians, high on peyote, hopped and danced in a circle—sometimes uneven circle—around a fire blazing under a big boiling pot.

Hence, the Blazing Star—topped by the Altar—is central to every Masonic lodge. The initiate, led by the Senior Deacon, walks around it, justifying the “oblóng” shape of the Masonic world.

Motion along the pavement goes in a clockwise direction—from East (dawn) to West (dusk). One complete turn makes a “day,” or “year,” or any unit of time.

A completion of time means “life.” But a time comes when a Mason never gets to see the light of day. He passes away when the circular motion is reversed. Where? In the Raising,

In the First Section, the Master of the Lodge breaks the routine by asking “Whc cm u @

whtr r u trvlg?”

This declaration alone makes death certain in the Second Section.

**“By faith and perseverance,
the Candidate will successfully
arrive at his destination
despite all trials and
tribulations.”**

So, until a man has walked the Circumambulation, he can never answer the Masonic question, “Are you a traveler?”

The Rite of Circumambulation, by all accounts, is a symbolic journey emblematic of the pilgrimage of life. A man in search of truth takes on himself the task of traveling life’s road in its varied conditions. His travel “ma b ovr rgh @ rgd rd, on bst wth rfs”—so warns the Worshipful Master—but he must yet persevere despite obstructions and delays. He works his way through uncertain course, amid struggle and toil, advancing each step with courage and hope. Until night turns into day, and darkness into light, shall he arrive at virtue and knowledge where he can take a view of life from a lofty perch, and squarely stand before the many questions, even secrets, of the universe.

The Symbolic Pilgrimage

also stands for the toilsome progress of Humanity. The Candidate represents the typical man who strives for uplift—from his primitive condition of ignorance and barbarism, to a state of civilization and mental enlightenment. He embodies the history of humanity, ever struggling onward and upward, from gloom and darkness of the savage state to the far better plateau of light, intelligence, and civilized life.

8. Rite of Approaching the East

Called to stand before the Master of the Lodge, the initiate is led to face the East. Dawn comes from the East to dispel the night's darkness. Similarly, new knowledges and awareness that dispel cruelty and ignorance in man come from the Master of the Lodge.

So, just as the Master privileges initiates with Masonic light, Masons properly become “sons of light.”

Built into the First Degree, the Rite of Approaching the East is also a rehearsal—in miniature—“when your trembling soul shall stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne.”

9. Rite of Oath

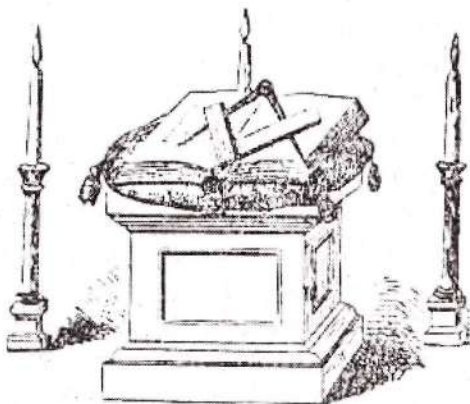
Much are still needed to clear up our affairs at the Altar.

By saying “Of my own free will etcetera etcetera,” an initiate is reciting a “pledge.”

A pledge is a binding promise or agreement to do or forbear an enterprise. Details of what and how—the things he ought to take or accomplish—comprised the “obligations.” To make the deal stronger, he throws himself in as a guaranty should he fail to live up to the terms and conditions.

He ends his pledge with “So help me God” which is the “oath.” He calls on God to stand as witness to the inviolability of his promise, the truth of his words, and his sincerity in carrying out his part of the deal.

His sincerity is doubly supported by his posture before the Altar. With both arms stretched over the Altar table, his heart



The Altar, the most sacred object in the Lodge, demands Truth from every Candidate taking his oath.

comes to the level of the Good Book while reciting the pledge

Rising up, his manhood comes next to the level of the Volume of Sacred Law (VSL). It tells of his word of honor as a man to live up to his being a Mason.

Now, a word about the Pledge of Secrecy.

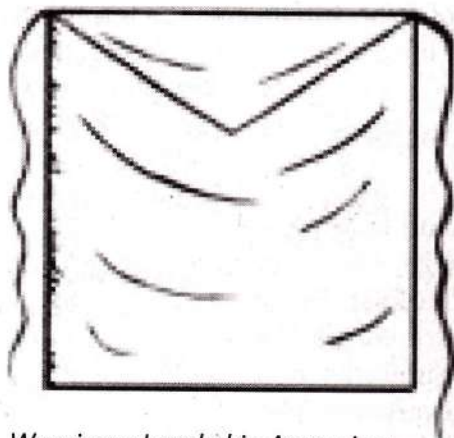
Ancient mysteries counted silence and secrecy as virtues of the highest order. The Ancient Egyptian priests, for instance, raised altars and put premium on the worship of Harpocrates, the god of secrecy. But Masonic bashers screwed themselves up painting the Craft as

one sinister, even diabolical, organization for its policy of secrecy. Mystery holds its charms over men throughout the ages. Psychologists are correct to say that secrecy, whether driven by elitism or paranoia, builds up group cohesion. But modern men missed the very reason undergirding the secrecy of the ancient mysteries. We Asians must know better. A blabbering mouth is an empty head—while silent rivers run deep.

Silence and secrecy are disciplines essential to any serious learning. What is Masonry, after all, but a school—a school of progressive moral science? Prep and day care teachers know better than the intellectual muckrakers and one-day internet geniuses. If you want the kids to learn, keep them in a room and shut all the mummies and nannies out.

A Mystic Wanderer setting out on a long and uncertain journey certainly needs no distraction. Meddlers and smart-alecks can ruin it all. Learning the olden esoterica built into the Craft is tough. But where most

Masons know little—or none at all—of the liberal arts today, silence and secrecy are no longer enough to keep Masons educated.



Wearing a Lambskin Apron is a public statement of being a Mason so that good conduct goes with it.

10. Rite of Illumination

This is the part where the initiate is jolted to see the light. An effective delivery of “In the beginning...”—in a booming voice like God in the old Ten Commandments movie—must go in synch with the thunderclap and the si-

multaneous lightning flash.

Seeing the light must come with a properly electrifying effect. After all, this is the most memorable moment in a Mason's life—more unforgettable than the Raising itself.

So, out from darkness, the initiate comes to see the Great Lights of Masonry—the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses; and also the Lesser Lights—the Sun, Moon and Master of the Lodge. The Great Lights comprised the universal symbols of Freemasonry. Without them, no lodge can rise or be opened.

The Lesser Lights, or the “Burning Triangle,” are minor Masonic symbols. But without them, no lodge can work and last.

The Ancient Craft working tools are used either for measurement (24-inch gauge), modification (common gavel), testing (plumb and level) and finishing (trowel).

The 24-inch gauge measures only linear (or one-dimensional) geometry; the plumb and level, plane (or two-dimensional) geometry.

The common gavel and trowel are employed at the start and the end of the work. And only after the measurement and testing are done; and still, if only tracer lines have been marked out.

But of all the ancient craft tools, it is the square that marks out the corners, angles and curves, on one hand. The compasses are



The Rite of Illumination must be an epiphanic moment just like when Rev. Cleophus James (James Brown) pointed to Jake Blues (John Belushi) the revelation of the light in the 1980 film “The Blues Brothers.”

But why, of all the working tools in Masonic symbology, have the Square and Compasses acquired a so high importance in the Craft?

instrumental in making perfect circles, on the other. Together, both working tools enable the measurement and marking of three-dimensional forms like the

cube, sphere and pyramid, and other complex polygonal shapes.

Hence, the square and compasses were the most handy implements in the Operative Master Mason's tool kit.

Speculative Masons will find inspiration in the versatility of these implements even in complex life-situations, especially when executing a plan or design set by the Good Book.

But Masons must never forget. Illumination comes in two: intellectually (Square and Compasses) and morally (VSL).

The Rite of Illumination never commemorates the Creation as a material or historical fact. The Master can only amount to a "hmb1 cmrtn % tt ag evt." The brethren can only imitate pitifully the thunderclap and the lightning flash. Human imagination is too limited to give words to this ineffable glory that has given the world its life and form.

If anything, the Rite of Illumination symbolically culminates the Rite of Circumambulation. "Symbolically" because life's journey cannot be consummated in an hour of ritual. It only serves as a preview to what awaits the Mystic Wanderer at the end. By faith and perseverance, he will successfully arrive at his destination despite all trials and tribulations. He will find what he seeks—the moral and intellectual Light that gives dig-

nity to his humanity, clarity to his life, freedom to his spirit, repose to his mind, and hope for his soul. There is no prize like it that compensates even beyond all the combats and troubles of the journey.

11. Rite of Investiture

An initiate is not yet in to the Craft unless he has acquired the grip and word. These are modes of recognition by which Masons test and prove one another.

But no proof of admission can be so clear than the Lambskin Apron itself. It is called a "lambskin" because this is what the apron has been originally made of—a leather from a young sheep. And Masons wear it beyond the kitchen.

Passing the grip and word are discreetly accomplished. But wearing an apron is a public statement of Masonic membership. How a Mason must sport this important piece of habiliment always comes with instructions.

A lecture goes with every handover—one short, one long. Regardless, both forms deal with the innocence, antiquity and distinction that it stands for.

It explicitly tells how the Lambskin has beaten the other players in the honor ratings system. It even specifically named them so. Therefore, Masons ought to know who and what they are.

The lecture says that it is “More ancient than the Gold Fleece or the Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter.”

The Roman Eagle or “*aquila*” was the *signa militaria* (military insignia) of the Roman legion—an eagle, often with wide-spread wings, perched on top of a staff. Sometimes, a banner or board inscribed with “SPQR” or *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (“The Senate and People of Rome”) was nailed below it.

Roman legionaries invested high value on the eagle standard—taking the best of care to keep it from falling into enemy hands. When three standards were lost at the Teutoburg Forest after a battle in 9 A.D., legionaries had searched for them unceasingly until they were recovered decades later.

The eagle standard had come into use a hundred years before Christ as Rome was then

gunning for the title of a world empire. It was first made of straw, shaped into an eagle, and fixed to the end of a pole or spear.

But metallic standards were already in wide use by the time Russell Crowe led the Roman army to a decisive victory against the Germans in Vindobona Forest.



The Roman eagle standard is often at the head of the legion on march like this scene from the 2011 film “The Eagle.”

Next, the Most Noble Order of the Garter was a chivalric group founded in 1348 by King Edward III to gather the English knights together.

One account has it that, when the Countess of Salisbury was dancing at a court ball, her garter slipped down her leg. The underwear laid on the dance floor.

The courtiers snickered at the lady’s bloop. But King Edward calmly picked it up, handed it back to the countess, and gravely exclaimed, “*Honi soit qui mal y pense,*” (“Shamed be the person who thinks evil of it.”)

The courtiers actually thought it was funny, not evil. But

then again, another plausible account traced King Edward's naming of the order after his predecessor's clever ruse, King Richard I, in the 12th century. He tied women's garters around the legs of his knights before a battle—and won.

Expectedly, the enemy mocked and laughed at the English knights. But the funnier the enemy had called them names, the angrier the English got and the harder they fought.

**“By faith and perseverance,
the Candidate will success-
fully arrive at his destination
despite all trials and
tribulations.”**

The Order of the Star was another chivalric order founded on November 6, 1351 by John II of France. Three years behind the Garter, the Star was actually France's military countermeasure to her continental rival, the English.

The order's insignia was a white star on a red field called *Monstrant regibus astra viam* (“the star[s] show the way to kings”)—referring to the Three Kings who had been led by the star to Bethlehem.

To beat the English, the Star upped the standard and ad-

mitted only knights who had won battles.

The Order of the Golden Fleece—named after the hide of the golden ram captured by Jason and his band of Argonauts—was established in Belgium on January 10, 1430 by Philip III, Duke of Burgundy.

He drew all the knights in his realm together, from Flanders to Switzerland—along with the knights of Portugal which was his wife's domain. Philip III, also known as “Philip the Good,” made the Golden Fleece a central administrative body for all the knights. In return, they served him as advisors in matters of state and war.

Noteworthy, all the groups the lecture has cited are military orders. Seemingly, it is leading the bro's onto something.

What the lecture has not mentioned is the order of the Templar knights, the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon.

A powerful and wealthy order, yet Templar knights wore lambskin aprons in their quarters, at religious services, and in penitence. By all indications, they took the practice after the Israelite priests who also wore ministerial aprons. After all, they built their headquarters on the site of King Solomon's Temple.

The Israelite priests held

no monopoly over apron-wearing. Mithraic priests of Persia also garbed themselves with aprons. So did the ancient Egyptian priests who had brought the world the first and oldest civilization.

The Israelites, while living as slaves in Egypt, had no doubt watched and learned religion from their taskmasters before building their own temple centuries later.

12. Rite of Salutation

Initiated, the new Entered Apprentice salutes the Three Lights to profess his subordination to the lodge. By doing so, he expresses his conformity to all the terms and conditions of membership which have been laid down during the ritual.

13. Rite of Destitution

There is a reason why a grinning Lodge Secretary eagerly holds up a basket or a box before the Candidate when demanded for a souvenir of his Initiation.

Long ago, men believed that metals held influence over the moods and affairs of men. So, ancient mysteries stripped all initiates of metallic accessories before putting them in a ritual.

Before, magic was real in ini-

tiatic rituals—like fire coming down from the sky. But any piece of metal could catch a flash of lightning, redirect the current, and fry all the sages dead in the circle of brotherhood—and there goes a very solemn ceremony.

The practice yet survived today among men who wear metallic bracelets that decrease, say, diabetic sugar on one hand in the hope of increasing vitality in other body parts. Brainless men trust on guns and knives which, by all means, must never cast a shadow inside a Masonic lodge.

But the Rite of Destitution also serves another important and subtle purpose. Asking a Candidate “Have you made adequate provision for your family in case of your death?” and other like money-questions paint Masons like materialistic weasels in many outsiders’ minds.

The rite breaks this misimpression. Not for nothing why the shock and awe slam on the Candidate hard. He will certainly carry it throughout his Masonic life. So, it is imperative for the Master to clearly deliver the part “bt t tch u an im ls...”

The rite is an intellectually challenging—and unforgettable—test. But responses are predictable, so far. We have yet to see a lodge equally challenged. What if a hard-pressed Candidate pulls out a gold filling from his teeth? Will the Senior Deacon take it? • EC

Lodge EAM activity

Walkabout the Lodge

Teaching a new Entered Apprentice the organization and workings of a lodge can warm fraternal bonds by way of a casual, entertaining, but by all means effective, activity.



ENTERED
APPRENTICE

Once a Petitioner is initiated, he becomes a member of the lodge—and like any newcomer, he goes through an “orientation” process.

To orient a newcomer is to acquaint him with the situation or environment he has signed up for, get his bearings right—and set him off to a good start. With too much mental data to process too soon, an Entered Apprentice needs time and care—one bite at a time—to digest all the heady information that has come with his initiation; lest, he barfs it all in one unsteady move.

Going slow is the usual course. But the grand lodge of Canada, and certain grand lodges in the U.S., has been practicing for a time a halfway measure that yields effective results: the “walkabout the lodge.” A new

member—an Entered Apprentice or a Master Mason—is called to the East. Passed to a lecturing guide, he is escorted and introduced to every lodge officer, shakes hand, and gets a brief description of each function.

It is simple—and conducted in a light, even humorous, tone.

It works well in the West. Why not do it in the Philippines? A walkabout works in three levels. First, it gives the new member a view of the organization and workings of a lodge. Consequently, he will learn how to fit in and take part.

The old handy *Tried and Proven* manual actually set “Lodge Organization” as one of the first topics that a Petitioner must learn. But a number of Filipino Masons agree that it is a

topic too early to give—not until he has been initiated, at the least. Second, a walkabout is a refresher for all Regular Masons. Holding it can remind lodges going astray to stay back in line. Also, it can be counted as a Masonic education activity.

Third, a walkabout can stoke friendship not only between the EAM and the lodge officers; moreover, with the whole lodge itself. How effective depends on the skills of the guides to turn up amusing, even funny, lines. It is a chance to warm the fraternal bonds.

It's a win-win situation for all. Hence, a "walkabout" piece—fitted for Philippine conditions—has been written below. But lodges must ponder first on the guidelines before holding it, as follows:

- The Master of the Lodge assigns a member, or members, to conduct the walkabout. The piece below has been split into 3 parts (as numbered) to allow for more lodge participants. They take turns in tag-team succession in delivering the piece.

- The Walkabout starts at the Southeast corner and ends up at the Northeast corner of the lodge.

- The piece can be delivered in straight English or in combination with the vernacular. Greater impact and comprehension im-

portantly counts for the EAM; lodge members included.

- When introduced by the guide, the EAM shakes hand with the lodge officer in the spirit of friendship.

- Preferably, the introduction must come with a brief personal detail or description like "Bro. N. who owns the pharmacy store at the plaza." Or "Bro. N. who is the most good-looking Mason in this lodge."

Besides instruction, keep in mind that the walkabout is aimed at establishing friendly relations between new and regular members. It is okay to be casual.

- It is not necessary to memorize the piece to the letter. Improvisations and additions are encouraged as required by the character of, or condition obtaining, in, the lodge. But the walkabout guides must hit on the key points of each office and deliver the message intended by the piece.

In all, the walkabout must be delivered light, even with humor. But keep the fun and jokes wholesome without insult or injury to a brother. It is okay to be casual. The walkabout kindles the light of knowledge in the EAM's mind. But it also kindles the warmth of fraternal bond among lodge members.

Walkabout standard piece

1.

Lodge Mentor, or any appointed lodge member, stand with the EAM at the SE corner.

Bro. _____, your Initiation on [date] has made you the youngest member of our lodge. Now that you are an Entered Apprentice Mason, allow us to treat you to a "Walkabout the Lodge." Since you will come here more often from now on, it will serve you well to know the history of our lodge, how it is organized, and how it works.

As you very well know, the name of our lodge is [N.] No. [XXX] Free & Accepted Maçons under the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines with its office in Ermita, Manila. It has been so named in honor of ... [OR to commemorate the ...]

We are what you call a "local Masonic chapter." But in Masonry, a chapter or local lodge is called a "blue lodge," or more precisely, an "ancient craft lodge." It is called "ancient" because we work according to the ancient customs and traditions of Masonry that have come down

from time immemorial.

Local ancient craft lodges are grouped together under a district. Our district is classified under Masonic District R_____. A lodge meeting is called a "communication." There are two kinds of lodge communications: the stated and special.

Our "stated communication," like today, is regularly held every [*order of the day*] of the month at [*hour*] p.m.

A "special communication" is called on the day other than the stated communication for purposes beside the usual lodge transactions.

Every Masonic lodge is ran by five elected officers annually chosen by ballot. The rest are appointed officers. You will notice that there are five Masons in this lodge who have been privileged with special seats, tables and the best view in the house—while the rest of us sit in plastic chairs and cheap wooden benches. They are the five elected officers of the lodge, each with a sidekick or assistant of his own.

All officers of the lodge wear a jewel about their necks. Trust me. You can never sell these jewels. But these jewels hold meaning that are valuable to Masons than to any pawnshop. Let us get to know each of them.



We now stand before the East next to the WORSHIPFUL MASTER who is the chief executive officer of this lodge.

If you will recall your Lecture, the Lights of the lodge are three, each representing Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Each corresponds to the stations of the three principal officers of the lodge—the Master, the Senior and Junior Wardens, respectively.

Of course, you already know Worshipful [N. *with brief personal description*] He governs the lodge with absolute powers—judicial, legislative and executive powers all rolled into one. Thank God he holds office for only one year.

Our Worshipful Master represents Wisdom. But since he accepted you to this lodge, do you think he has made a wise decision?

The brethren who sit with the Worshipful Master up in the East wear purple parapher-

naliam. Now, please take notice of the color coding: blue for the lodges, purple for the province-/city-wide officers. We are the ordinary Regular Masons. They are the “children of God.”

They are the officers of our Masonic district. This is our District Deputy Grand Master, Very Worshipful [N.] He is the Masonic authority in our District.

He is assisted by the Grand Lodge Inspector, Worshipful Inspector [N.] He sees to it that Masonic laws are observed and enforced in our lodge.

This is our District Grand Lecturer, Very Worshipful [N.] He provides the lodge with help or timely education.

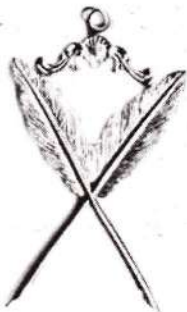
Maybe, you will wonder why we address them as “worshipful.” We do not worship them, of course. Jesus Christ! They do not even look adorable!

You see, Freemasonry uses archaic or the olden kind of English. A long time ago in England, “worshipful” simply meant “respectable” or “honorable” during the ancient days of King Arthur, Boy George, Elton John and the Beatles.

2.

Now, close to the East, you see the Treasurer to the right, and the Secretary to the

left, of our Worshipful Master respectively. They are right next to the Worshipful Master. Why? It's because they hold positions of trust.



Our LODGE SECRETARY is Bro. [N. with brief personal description] His jewel is the crossed quills. It means that he keeps all lodge records and documents in confidence. His job is to keep the minutes, observe the proceedings, and record all things proper to be written; receive all money due to the lodge and pay them to the Treasurer. He prepares all reports and returns to the Grand Lodge. He signs all the certificates and correspondences and also keeps the lodge seal.

The Secretary knows your standing financial obligations to the lodge. Come November, he will pester you to pay up your lodge arrears.

The officer next to the Secretary is NOT a "*Baranggay Tanod*." Yes, he holds a "*batuta*" or nightstick. But it is not a nightstick. This is a baton.



He is our MARSHALL, Bro. [N. with brief personal description] His job is to escort guests and VIPs in and out of the lodge. But he is also our coach and supervisor in lodge rituals and official ceremonies. Yes, he was the floor director during your Initiation.

This gives him another title: CUSTODIAN OF THE WORKS. He is our instructor in lodge rituals and floor works. His jewel is the crossed batons. A long time ago, monarchs used to award the baton on-the-spot to a courageous warrior who had survived a fierce and bloody battle. That's why our Bro. Marshal holds the baton. He already survived a number of embarrassing bloopers and situations in his younger days before he has mastered our rituals and ceremonies.

[Mentor and EAM walk to the South.]

We now come to the South and the station of the JUNIOR WARDEN, Bro. [N. with brief personal description] He is the No. 3 Mason in the lodge. The South represents Beauty. So,



“moral beauty” comes within the territory of the Junior Warden—the kind of beauty that is pleasing to both God and men. You see, the Junior Warden ought to be the best Mason of all the regular Masons. That’s why he is elected from the floor to this position. Now, the moral beauty that goes with his office has made him the exemplar, and the enforcer of gentlemanly speech and conduct, in the lodge. He is the most gentleman of all the gentlemen Masons in the lodge.

His duty is “to call the craft from labor to refreshment and from refreshment to labor again.” So, between meetings, he reminds the lodge of its birthday celebrants of the month. He organizes and supervises the lodge’s commemorative events and activities. This makes him the maitre d’ and mayor domo of the lodge. He is in charge of the food, liquor, entertainment and pleasure of the brethren. You must make him your friend.

Our Junior Warden is ably assisted by the STEWARDS. The Senior Steward is Bro. [N. with brief personal detail/description] and Junior Steward Bro. [N. with brief personal detail/description] They wear the emblem of the cornucopia or horns of plenty, symbolizing abundance graciously bestowed by the gods. In Masonry, the nourishment of the body must always go with the nourishment of the soul. For this, the Stewards see through the observance of table manners, pleasant toasts, meaningful speeches and wholesome fun.

[Mentor and EAM go to SW corner.]



Next, we come to the TYLER, Worshipful Bro. [N. with brief personal description] A tiler is a mason who installs ceramic roof tiles to keep out the wind, sunlight or rain. He seals and covers the house against intrusion by the elements. So, a lodge tyler keeps cowans and eavesdroppers out of the lodge.

A “cowan” is an unskilled mason who laid bricks but without knowledge of how to mix and use mortar or cement that make the walls strong. An “eavesdrop-

per" is an intruder who secretly spied on people by climbing over the roofs like Spiderman, and listened to conversations by hanging from the eaves of houses.

In other words, a Tyler keeps the fake Masons and usurers out of the lodge—except himself. His station is actually outside the door. But he keeps on coming in and listening to our proceedings. The Tyler position often goes to Masons who love to smoke cigarettes.



Now, opposite the East is the West, of course. This is the station of the SENIOR WARDEN, Bro. [*N. with brief personal description*] He is the No. 2 Mason in the lodge—the deputy to the Master. They sit across one another because they are sending secret codes and signals across the lodge.

Besides assisting the Master, his duty is “to pay the craft their wages if any be due, so that none may go away dissatisfied.” What he means is this—to pay the scalawag Masons their just desserts if any be due so that no Mason will go away dissatisfied,

demoralized or oppressed.

The West station represents Strength. You have heard him say “harmony being the strength and support of all societies especially of ours.” But if you will recall your Lecture, you have learned that Justice is “the very cement and support of all civil society.” Justice, therefore, is the foundation of harmony. If there is no justice, there is no harmony.

The Senior Warden, therefore, also stands for Justice, and Fidelity is his territory. More than any Mason in the lodge, he is the most faithful to the Worshipful Master, who is his immediate superior. But more than that, he is faithful above all to Masonic laws. That’s why the Volume of Sacred Law is conveniently placed right across the lodge officer assigned to the Law. Yes, the Master passes instructions consistent to the Volume of Sacred Law. But it is the Senior Warden who implements the Law.

With this set up, the Senior Warden can always take a quick guidance from the Good Book while monitoring the whole lodge, settling problems ahead even before they reach the Master and distract him from his governance and instructions of the lodge.

This makes the Senior

Warden the law enforcer of the lodge: And by his knowledge of the law, and his practice of both moral and Masonic laws, he earns the respect of the brethren and therefore, the right to be elected to the East.

Don't worry. You can tickle him if you want to. He was a Junior Warden before. So, he was trained as a gentleman before becoming a law enforcer.

Now, beside the Senior Warden is the JUNIOR DEACON. Bro. [N. with brief personal detail/description] He is the sidekick of the Senior Warden. But he works hand in hand with the Tyler in keeping watch over the lodge door.

3.

[Mentor and EAM proceed to the North.]

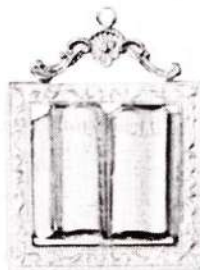
We now come to the North.

In your First Degree Lecture, you will recall that "King Solomon's Temple, of which every lodge is a representation, is situated so far north of the Ecliptic that neither the Sun nor Moon, at meridian height, could dart its rays into the north part of the building. The North, therefore, among Masons, has always been termed a place of darkness."

Situated opposite to the

South, the North is occupied by the past officers and senior members of the lodge. The South is occupied by the youngest aspirant to the East. Why? The North is so situated to constantly remind the Junior Warden, "*Tatanda karin!*"

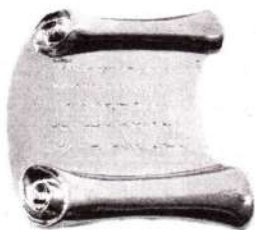
But there is another reason. King Solomon is associated with wisdom. So, senior lodge members, who have already acquired Masonic wisdom, go to this part of the lodge. Similarly, a number of Appointed Officers occupy the North.



First among our wise men is our Brother CHAPLAIN. He is Bro. [N. with brief personal description]. He leads the lodge in the invocations to the Almighty. A wise and matured brother must occupy this position. Besides the ceremonials, the Chaplain also gives wise and good counsels. But if you want crazy advices, go to Bro. [the lodge clown].



Next is our ORATOR, Bro. [N. with brief personal description]. An occasion comes to the lodge when a brother must stand up to deliver high-minded thoughts about life, Masonry, and the goings-on in the world with all the verve and flourish. That occasion can be as joyful as a lodge anniversary, or as solemn as a Masonic funeral ceremony. He is a brother who doesn't nose-bleed when he speaks in English.



This is our HISTORIAN, Bro. [N. with brief personal description]. You see, a lodge is like a book. Once it is instituted, so its story begins. So, our Lodge Historians keep and update our Lodge History Book year after year, continuously writing the narrative of our labors in the building of the symbolic temple of light in this part of [province/city] for reference of contemporary Masons, and for the benefit of future generations.



This is our ORGANIST, Bro. [N. brief personal description] The duty of the Organist is to play his organ. (pause) But since musical organs are no longer in use in lodges today, he plays electronic devices instead to apply music to our rituals and ceremonies.



This is our ALMONER, Bro. [N. with brief personal description] His job is to collect charity contributions at the end of every meeting. When the total contributions are in open figure, he closes the sum from his own pocket, of course.



And of course, this is our **TREASURER**, Bro. [N. with brief personal description] As you can see, he sits at the right hand of the Lord, the only begotten son—because he holds the money of the lodge. He wears a jewel of crossed keys. He keeps a just and true account of our fund and pays it out only on two conditions—first, by the order of the lodge; and second, by warrants certified by the Master and the Secretary. He locks away all money fast and tight. So, if you will pay up, pay in exact amount—or you will never get your change.



Last but not the least is the **SENIOR DEACON**, Bro. [N. with brief personal detail/description] He is the aide and messenger of the Worshipful Master about the lodge. You were thus placed on the first step of a Mason, near the Worshipful Master, to receive

instructions—but under the custody of the Senior Deacon. He is the point guard in our rituals. Because an intelligent and strong-willed Senior Deacon can make rituals solemn and orderly. He is the lodge's protection against un-masonic ruffians.

I suggest that you make him your friend.
[pause]

Now that we have shown you around the lodge, we hope that you learned how a Masonic lodge is organized. But then again, I advise you to return to the 3rd part of your Lecture—the Form, Supports, Covering, Furniture, Ornaments, Lights, and Jewels of a Lodge; how it is situated and to whom these are dedicated. By matching the organization and the elements constituting a lodge, only then will you get a clearer picture of the workings of an ancient craft lodge.

But still, all you have heard and seen are only preliminaries. For the lodge, with all its manifold symbols, is a world unto itself and cannot be grasped in a single instruction. By freedom, fervency and zeal, you will soon attain to the privilege of stepping into this world—and only a strong educational foundation will reward you a place in it for a rich Masonic life ahead.

This concludes our Walk-about the Lodge. • EC

VW Joselito P. Tamaray
presents his book "A
Glimpse of the Past" to
MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr.



Milestone

Kalilayan Lodge No. 37: 100 years and beyond

By VW Joselito P. Tamaray, PDDGM; PJGL



The centennial of Kalilayan Lodge on July 13, 2013 is an indelible milestone in its long history. It has survived the ravages of time and the inclemencies of nature. It has lived up to its true masonic calling—A Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God!

Masons of different color and creed have passed through its corridors and enlivened its masonic pavement during all the years when aspiring initiates knocked at its door for enlightenment.

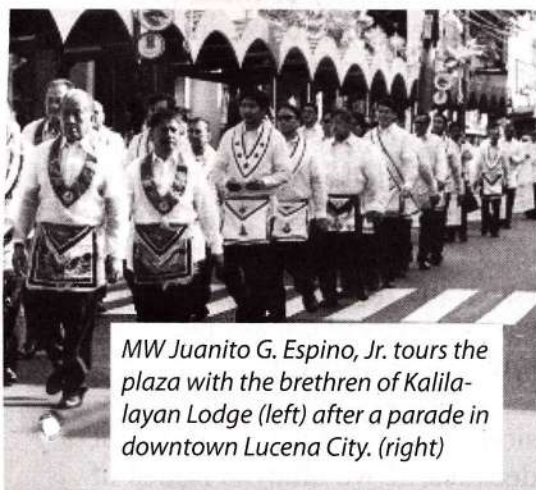
Those who nurtured and planted the seeds of Masonry, where this Temple now proudly stands, only exemplify their vision that not even the adversities and lapse of time could erase the spirit of Masonry in their hearts, and that this generation of Masons could readily enjoy the fruits of their labor.

MW Juanito P. Espino, Jr., with his Grand Line Officers namely: VW Samuel Esquivias, VW Jose Conjares, VW Edilberto De Luna, VW Armando Cazzola, VW Baltazar Tarracina and other visiting brethren, graced the celebration in Lucena City with a Grand Masonic Parade around the city and thereafter held a Floral Offering at the monument of MW Manuel L. Quezon at the Perez Park, Capitol Compound.

The Grand Master together with the brethren, after the floral offering, proceeded to the Don Felimon Perez Masonic Temple for the day's transaction of business. MW Espino, Jr., in his message exhorted the brethren to practice in and out the lodge the true masonic virtues of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

The Centennial Edition of the Book, A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST, was officially launched after a brief message delivered by its author, VW Joselito P. Tamaray.

Masonry will forever remain a beacon of light in Quezon Province as long as there are masons who are willing to spread the masonic light for **TODAYS MASONRY IS TOMORROWS CONTINUITY.** ☒



MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. tours the plaza with the brethren of Kalilayan Lodge (left) after a parade in downtown Lucena City. (right)

Education as shield against further political disempowerment

By VW Rodolfo Asel Tor, PDDGM, Ph. D.

With its quality dipping to an all-time low, education yet remains as the best and most effective tool in lifting up a politically-cursed Philippines.

One of the more glaring manifestations that showcase our retrogressing political development or political immaturity is the growing number of political dynasties in all branches of government. This is a perennial obstacle to meeting the requirements of full political development despite the fact that the Philippines has been a full-blown republican state for more than half a century.

Clearly, the 1987 Constitution frowns upon—nay, expressly abhors—political dynasties in all branches of the government. Since the assumption of the 8th Congress in 1987, maverick solons have filed and refiled bills providing for “anti-political dynasty.” But if we examine the long rosters of members of both

the House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as the much longer lists of elected officials of the Local Government Units (LGUs), we readily see that there is a wide replication of very familiar names of politicians lording over our political landscape for several scores now. A great majority of these names have been enthroned in political power for more than three generations. Except for a motley few, many of these families have presided over the pathetic preservation of the Philippines under the Third World state category and have effectively kept a vast majority of our people living under abject poverty.

This politics of repression has worsened in the past decades. If we analyze issues of

contemporary history during the same period, we discover that a similar trend is prevalent and obviously happening in another key sphere of development. Surprisingly, much akin to the downward spiral in political development is the parallel plunge in the quality of education in the Philippines.



In a nutshell, the quality of education even in private schools has dropped significantly, and the general curricula in both public and private institutions of learning have become weak and irrelevant to the job market realities. Besides, the competence of mentors has been challenged, and the ability of state universities, colleges, and schools to meet the studentry's infrastructural, functional, and even moral requirements has been put to the test.

Starting in the mid-1970s, there has been a diaspora of professionals, including teachers, and this situation has led many a concerned Filipino citizen to

infer that if the skilled and able mentors continue to go and work overseas, only the mediocre ones would be left behind to attend to our student populace.

Nay, more than that! There has been a breakdown in moral education, too.

In the 1980s, senators were alarmed to find out that most of the young graduates from colleges and universities throughout the archipelago were weak in character, deficient in both knowledge and skills needed to do the world's work, and irregular in conduct or deportment. Hence, they conceptualized the Moral Recovery Program, which was endorsed by no less than the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

In the early 1990s, the De-

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While Quezon City police chief, he conceptualized and implemented project Oyster, a recognized police-oriented emergency program for the city's out-of-school youth.

He has also taught Political Science and Governance at the De La Salle University undergraduate and graduate school programs.

mentary and secondary students but the contents of which were plagiarized from doubtful sources and filled with errors. At the same time there was a very great shortage of classrooms.

To top it all, education officials contrived the strange policy of allowing every elementary and secondary student to pass all subjects and be promoted to the next level every year. They rationalized that this policy would enable the agency to admit massive numbers of elementary students at the entry level and therefore to save resources. But the adoption of such a policy actually resulted in the retention in the educational system of morons, misfits, and bullies, whose numbers grew until they reached fourth year high school.

As a consequence of the "no fail" policy, teachers were no longer challenged to improve themselves professionally, and they got bored with their assigned chores. Add to this the awful fact that ill-equipped teachers used defective and erroneous books for teaching the students, who in turn got misinformed and remained perversely ignorant.

Hardest hit among the subjects was English. In the first half of the 20th century, Filipino students were reputed to be proficient in their use of the Eng-

partment of Education became one of the most corrupt agencies in government. It was accused of many transgressions, particularly in the printing of textbooks which were to be used by ele-

ish language. Today, however, a great number of students in Philippine high schools cannot communicate their thoughts and feelings effectively in both oral and written English.

Back in the 1980s, large companies or business corporations complained that college graduates applying for jobs were mediocre in the use of English.

Later, in the 1990s, business executives pointed out that even graduates of Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, and the University of the Philippines were no longer as articulate as their older counterparts.

Evidently, there was a great breakdown in the Philippine educational system. And the heavy losers were the students belonging to the lower middle class and the poor sectors, who could only avail of public education of the poorest kind.

All this has been happening against a backdrop of a growing number of unemployed or

underemployed, undereducated, or ill-educated citizens, who go to the polls every three years.

Politicians have always played to the gallery. Philippine politics, which the late Blas Ople characterized as “populist, personalist, and parochial,” has never been issue-driven. Opportunistic politicians lusting for power have made the most of the

cultural bent of uninformed voters. Charlatans and demagogues have gained seats in the Philippine Congress because uninformed voters allow themselves to be manipulated by those unscrupulous politicians. Election after election, uninformed voters, who are



Children in Rizal province take the raft to school daily./ Photo: Daily Mail Online UK

unaware of the “anti-dynasty” provision in the Philippine Constitution, sell their suffrages for a measly sum of money and thereby put to power members of old or new dynasties, who are totally indifferent to the welfare and happiness of the Filipino nation. This has been the trend for many decades now.



*Children in Rizal province daily cross the stream to get to school.
/ Photo: Daily Mail Online UK*

To shield the nation from further political disempowerment, we need to initiate legislation that aims at assessing, reviewing, and evaluating policies on the teachers and other personnel of our public educational system in terms of performance, compensation and competence. There is a dire need for a re-assessment and re-evaluation of the curricular offerings of our universities, colleges, and schools so as to make them meet the needs of the job market tempered by the skill requirements of industrialization and modernization.

To achieve a roadmap towards political maturity, we need to include in the school curricula political education, which will help

students become aware of the real state of our nation and see what they can do to help improve the Philippine condition.

We modestly propose that in view of the current environmental conditions, public safety and disaster management courses be taught to the young in view of current environmental conditions, and we humbly submit that the teaching of languages should not be confined to English but should include major Asian languages like Chinese and Indonesian.

We can shield the long-suffering masses of our people from the ravages of powerful political predators only through the initiation and implementation of sound education policies!

By WB Jonathan R. Amoroso

A traveler's wage

The atmosphere of hostility that I unfairly implanted in my naïve and unsuspecting mind became the climate of local warmth and brotherly love.

(From the author's compilation of his Masonic essays entitled A Distinct Knock, 2013, pp. 63-65).

Since I am a lawyer, the toils of my labor sometimes take me to strange and unfamiliar places. Oftentimes, I find myself in a cold and strange hotel room hundreds of kilometers away from the comforts of my own bed and pillows. Like a traveler in search of the lost word, I, too, in the deep of the night, and somewhere between the cryptic line of getting high due to inevitable anxiety over the next day's hearing and getting low due to sheer exhaustion, thought whether the judge hearing my case speaks the same language as my opposing counsel. Unavoidably, for an outlander like me, a hometown camaraderie, with all due respect to the integrity of all the magistrates, can always be a potential threat lurking in the dark.

The first trip to Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya last Sep-



tember to attend an annulment and custody case was no exception. Still dazed and dizzy from the nauseating effects of the winding Dalton Pass, I arrived at Saber Inn located near the provincial capitol of Nueva Vizcaya at about 9:00 p.m. After dinner, my driver, Philip, and I emptied 2 bottles of beer, feasted on the native tapang usa and dinakdak as pulutan, and belted some of those Rivermayas.

When we went to our respective rooms, I realized that our nocturnal activities were not even enough to tame my unfounded uneasiness. And so, with the intermittent sound of a tricycle passing the ordinarily quiet provincial highway, I had the entire night to entertain all such gratuitous jitters. The hearing was set at 2 p.m. the following day after all, I thought.

The sun was unusually prompt in Nueva Vizcaya. It was only 6 a.m., but it was already surprisingly bright and relatively hot. I ate my breakfast, a sump-

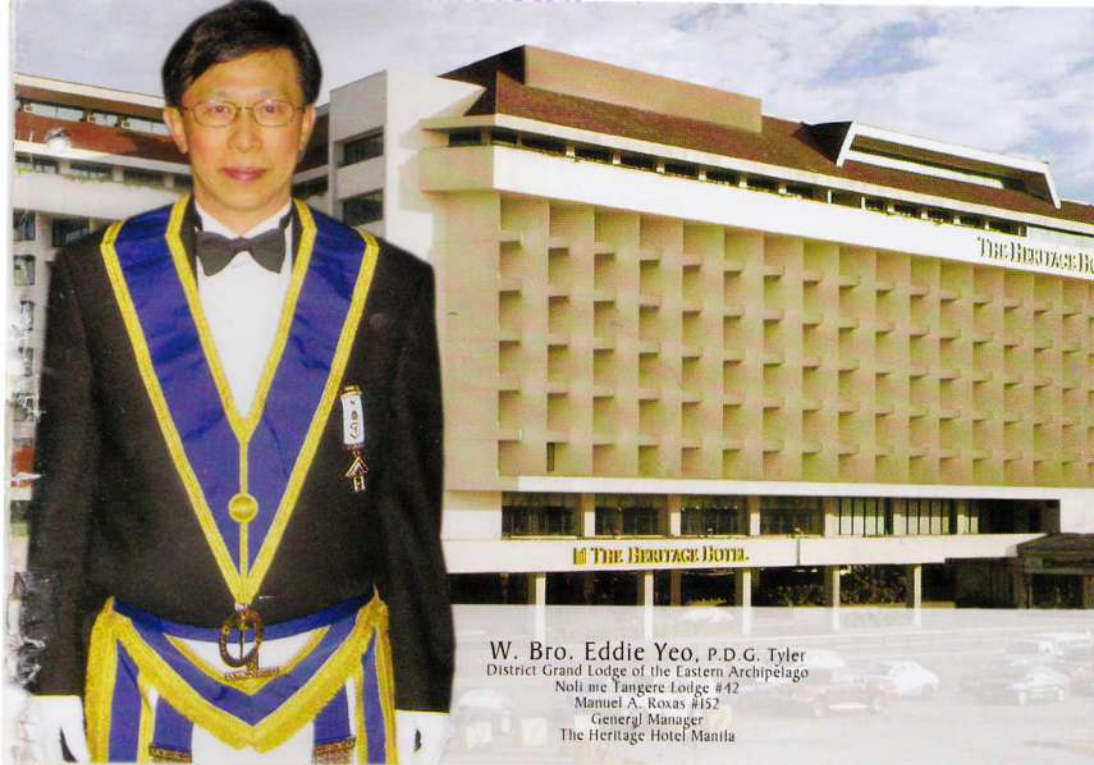
tuous longsilog and hot chocolate, but only after reminding the waiter once more not to speak in the native dialect as I could not understand the same. Thereupon, I went to the hotel's coffee table placed outside the inn, almost on the sidewalk. Preparing myself for the hearing, I read the case folder and the textbook that I brought with me as my working tool.

Moments later, two cars drove by. When the car behind thrice blew its horn, the other car stopped. Both drivers alighted, shook hands, and talked for a while. When the driver of the other car left, I approached the owner of the remaining car. I jokingly said, "Bro, nasilaw ako sa sticker mo. Traveler ka?" He replied, "Yes, I am." The moment I uttered "Kuya," he excitedly shook my hand. We introduced each other, exchanged cellphone numbers, and mentioned some names. He said that he was rushing for an appointment and that he would attend to me after his meeting. His name is Rodel C. Abellana of the Guillermo Memorial Lodge No. 330.

After Kuya Rodel left, I noticed another car with the same decal parked in front of the hotel. Seconds later, the owner came. I likewise approached him. He is Reynaldo Sagana of the Nueva Vizcaya Lodge No.

144. He invited me for a joy ride around the place, preferably to visit his lodge at Solana and to meet some of the brethren there. Much as I wanted to tour, I had to politely decline his kind offer as my hearing was just several minutes away and I still had to study my case. Momentarily, Kuya Rodel called and asked me how I was, and reminded me that he would take me to his lodge and to those nice places in Nueva Vizcaya when he was done with his meeting.

In a wink of an eye, the place that seemed so foreign turned out to be a familiar land to behold. The atmosphere of hostility that I unfairly implanted in my naïve and suspecting mind became the climate of local warmth and brotherly love. Needless to say, my two-day trip to Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya went by without a hitch. And whether my adversary spoke the same language as the judge was another story. What was important was that, apart from securing a joint custody for my client on that particular hearing, I received my priceless wage. A surplus to the rice, corn, and oil that I, as a Mason, rightfully deserve, it is the reward of transforming a strange and alien province, 400 kilometers, more or less, away from my bedroom, my own foster and comforting home. ❖



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Harmony

Harmony is not the unanimity of voices. No song begins, plays and ends with a single note.

Robots, not lodges, do that.

Harmony is not the absence of conflict. Dead silence is not music.

Zombies, not Masons, are the Walking Dead.

On the contrary, harmony is the skillful arrangement of conflict—sound and silence, light and heavy, pause and continuity, fast and slow, high and low.

Conflict defines the world—black and white, yin and yang, darkness and light. But it is harmony that shapes the form and puts order.

Because conflict is antithesis; harmony, the synthesis. The first stalls life. The second advances life. After all, both make up the stages of life.

Only a true master can assemble chords and pitches into harmony, setting them all into a rapturous melody.

But harmony only achieves great quality if it measures up to wisdom, strength and beauty.

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