

---

# The Lyceum

---



---

A publication of the Illinois  
Committee on Masonic Education

---



# Contents

<b>From the Editor-In-Chief.....</b>	<b>3</b>
RW:. R.H. Johnson	
<b>From the Chairman.....</b>	<b>4</b>
WB:. Michael Overturf, Chairman Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Illinois Lodge of Research.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>IMSAP.....</b>	<b>6</b>
IMSAP Staff	
<b>What Happens During Initiation? The Head, Heart and Hara.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Darin A. Lahners, PM, Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Masonic Con Kansas.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Grand Lodge Annual Communication.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Leaving Gold in the Mine.....</b>	<b>12</b>
RWB:. Chad Lacek, 33°, Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>The Three Degrees of Chi Kung.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski	
<b>The Masonic Magic of Dr. Strange.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Darin A. Lahners, PM, Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Masonic Membership: Visibility and Pride.....</b>	<b>22</b>
R.W.B. Wayne Spooner, Membership Committee Chairman	
<b>Colorado Lodge of Research.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Reader's Corner.....</b>	<b>24</b>
WB:. Kevin A. Wheeler	
<b>Grand Lodge Important Dates &amp; Conferences.....</b>	<b>26</b>
Grand Lodge Staff	

Find us online @  
[ilmason.org/masonic-education](http://ilmason.org/masonic-education)



Your Publication Staff  
Robert H. Johnson - Editor-In-Chief  
Darin A. Lahners - Editor  
Paul Cameron - Communications  
Your Committee on Masonic Education  
Michael Overturf - Chairman, RJ Budler, Paul Cameron,  
Chad Lacek, R. H. Johnson, Andrew Oxford, Darin A.  
Lahners, Jim DuBridge, Jordan Kelly, & Erik Solomon

# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

---



Brothers all,

We're starting to round out the summer. For many Lodges across the state, that means getting back to work--yes, many lodges don't meet in the summertime. They take that Grand Lodge Bylaw allowing a Lodge to go dark for two months a year and apply it to these months. On the other hand, many continue to work, as usual, creating year-round Masonic commitments.

This month we've curated articles intended to make you think and reflect in different ways that you're used to. The Chairman expresses his awe in Masonic youth and continues, charging us to make our minutes come alive. With school coming back in session, check out the information we've compiled for you on IMSAP (Illinois Student Assistant Program). Freemasonry has a significant attachment to education, particularly to the public education system--not to be confused with private or charter schools. IMSAP exists to help our young people become successful by aiding and assisting where we can.

In a feature article we've reproduced for you, we look at the biology and psychology of what happens when we go through the initiatory process. We've also got news on educational conferences happening around the country and the most current information about the upcoming Grand Lodge of Illinois Annual Communications. Ill. Bro. Chad Lacek once again delivers in a piece he calls "Leaving Gold in the Mine." I cannot stress the importance of this article. Not only does he paint a picture for you, but he also connects the picture with real action that we all can appreciate right now.

Often in Freemasonry, we find similarities with other schools of wisdom. In a thought-provoking piece by Ken Stuczynski or the Grand Lodge of NY, he runs down the three degrees of Chi Kung. If you love pop culture, grab a snack, popcorn, and saddle up for "The Masonic Magic of Dr. Strange!" Spoiler Alert--this article runs through the first Dr. Strange movie, and if you haven't seen it--this is your fair warning to turn back now. Finally, we'll round out the issue with another excellent book review by WB:. Kevin Wheeler. This month he returns to "The Master Builders - A History of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania," focussing on Vol III, a collection of biographies on the Past Grand Masters.

I hope you all enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you!

Yours in Brotherhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. H. Johnson".

R. H. Johnson



# From the Chairman

WB: MICHAEL OVERTURF,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE MASONIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

---



My Brothers, it is hard to believe that we are in the middle of August and preparing for our Grand Session in a little over a month. As you may have noticed, I was absent last month, busy with a home improvement project and work. This last week, our Lodge hosted a group of Lithuania-American young adults who volunteered for a week to work at one of the two cemeteries my home Lodge are the caretakers of. They do it to learn about their history and heritage while helping families find relatives. They cleared brush, leveled, and reset stones and gave me a new insight I hadn't had before.

As caretakers of a cemetery, much like being the Secretary of the Lodge--, there's more than just going through the motions. You are charged to be the historian of the Lodge in many cases. Our Cemetery not only has the founders of our Lodge but men and their wives who built our town, our churches, and communities. These young adults also inspired me to answer the question, "Whence Came you?" and "What came you here to do?" I was able to sit down on Ancestry.com and trace my wife's family to France, Ireland, Wales, and mine to Austria, Germany, Scotland, and England. I encourage you to sit down with the old minute books and see the history unfold.

Fraternally,

*Michael Overturf,*

Michael Overturf,  
Chairman - Committee on Masonic Education

---

# CONGRATULATIONS to ILoR!

Illinois Lodge of Research  
is proud to announce that  
the annual Transactions for  
2022 is almost 100 pages!

Join us for our annual meeting  
in October at Grand Lodge  
Annual Communications!  
Details will be forthcoming.



JOIN NOW!  
\$10 PER YEAR

**YEARLY**  
**PUBLICATION**  
PREMIER RESEARCH



[WWW.ILLINOISLODGEOFRESEARCH.ORG](http://WWW.ILLINOISLODGEOFRESEARCH.ORG)



# IMSAP



## MISSION & VISION

**Our Mission is to SAVE LIVES** by partnering with schools and providing training and support to teachers and educators to prevent bullying, drug and alcohol abuse amongst children and young adults.

**Our Vision is** to grow this successful program and to continue to change the narrative of students who are at-risk of compromising their futures.

## BE PART OF THE CHANGE!

We are always welcome and encouraging of any assistance provided to us. Whether through your monetary contributions or by reaching out to your district to bring IMSAP to your local schools, you can be a part of the change we work to instill on the lives of our youth. You can be impactful and be a part of the incredible impact we have on our students, our future.

## DONATE

You can save lives! Every dollar you donate is applied to our programs and your money literally save lives. We are a 501C 3 Entity, therefore your contribution is deductible.

## MASONIC STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Through a school-based early intervention approach, we work to enhance educators' skills at identifying at-risk students. We work with administrators to develop an intervention team--or Core Team--to develop a plan to guide students towards school and community resources for support.

FIND OUT MORE!

[www.IMSAP.org](http://www.IMSAP.org)

*...But the greatest of these is charity.*

# Featured Article

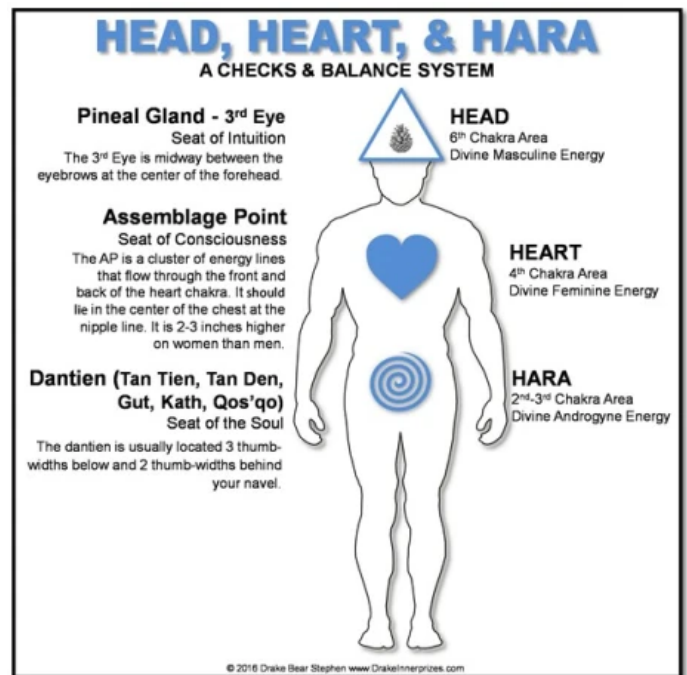
Reprinted with permission from the Midnight Freemasons blog [www.midnightfreemasons.org](http://www.midnightfreemasons.org)

## What Happens During Initiation? The Head, Heart and Hara

by *Darin A. Lahners, PM, Eastern AEO*

One of my nightly rituals of late has been purposeful meditation upon trying to “listen” to the Universe. I try to do this before falling asleep. I relax and attempt to let the distractions of the world, whether they be the noise of the interstate that sits a few hundred feet from my home or my girlfriend surfing Tik Tok, fade away into obscurity. I focus on my mind on just being still and “listening” to what the Universe decides to tell me. While doing this the other evening, I had a most profound realization. This is where this gets a little deep. The realization was that we (as a reality) exist within the all-seeing eye of God. Imagine that the all-seeing eye of God is God learning, experiencing, viewing, and being through each and every one of us, and we are by proxy then connected not only to God but to each other because of this.

Consider that matter is made of atoms, each of which vibrates at a specific frequency, and each of us is made up of atoms that vibrate and resonate at certain frequencies. Our individual consciousness is then made up of these vibrations, which resonate at certain frequencies together, which are then being received by God and translated by God. Imagine then that God is connecting to each of us, and we to him. God is constantly emanating reality, and we are experiencing it both through him and with him. Sacred Geometry, or the patterns of creation, are visual representations of this emanation. In the Royal Arch, we hear repeated John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Remember that words are not merely spoken, they are intoned or vibrated, and in doing so, form harmonic resonance with everything around us. In fact, the verse above says nothing about the word being spoken. Instead, maybe we need to replace Word with the term vibration instead. Doesn't the verse make more sense if you say: “In the beginning was the vibration, and the vibration was with God, and the vibration was God”?



Have I lost you? Maybe the below article will help:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/the-hippies-were-right-its-all-about-vibrations-man/>

It says: “Resonance is a type of motion, characterized by oscillation between two states. And ultimately, all matter is just vibrations of various underlying fields. An interesting phenomenon occurs when different vibrating things/processes come into proximity: they will often start, after a little time, to vibrate together at the same frequency.” It goes on to mention this phenomenon is called syncing... or “spontaneous self-organization.” Many examples of which can be observed in nature, although the article gives these examples:

Fireflies of certain species start flashing their little fires in sync in large gatherings of fireflies in ways that can be difficult to explain under traditional approaches.

Large-scale neuron firing can occur in human brains

at specific frequencies, with mammalian consciousness thought to be commonly associated with various kinds of neuronal synchrony.

Lasers are produced when photons of the same power and frequency are emitted together.

The moon's rotation is exactly synced with its orbit around the Earth such that we always see the same face.

The article continues to describe that a German Neurophysiologist, Pascal Fries, has been working "over last two decades the ways in which various electrical patterns, specifically, gamma, theta and beta waves, work together in the brain to produce the various types of human consciousness." Furthermore: "These names refer to the speed of electrical oscillations in the various brain regions, as measured by electrodes placed on the outside of the skull. Gamma waves are typically defined as about 30 to 90 cycles per second (hertz), theta as a 4- to 7-Hz rhythm, and beta as 12.5 to 30 Hz." Fries has concluded that "the three work together to produce, or at least facilitate (the exact relationship between electrical brain patterns and consciousness is still very much up for debate), various types of human consciousness."

The article then goes on to debate whether all matter, such as a pile of sand which they use as an example, is conscious. The article ends with the below:

"Boulders and piles of sand are "mere aggregates" or just collections of more rudimentary conscious entities (probably at the atomic or molecular level only), rather than combinations of micro-conscious entities that combine into a higher level macro-conscious entity, which is the hallmark of biological life.

Accordingly, the type of communication between resonating structures is key for consciousness to expand beyond the rudimentary type of consciousness that we expect to occur in more basic physical structures. The central thesis of our approach is this: the particular linkages that allow for macro-consciousness to occur result from a shared resonance among many micro-conscious constituents. The speed of the resonant waves that are present is the limiting factor that determines the size of each conscious entity.

As a shared resonance expands to more and more constituents, the particular conscious entity grows larger and more complex. So, the shared resonance

in a human brain that achieves gamma synchrony, for example, includes a far larger number of neurons and neuronal connections than is the case for beta or theta rhythms alone.

It's resonating structures all the way down—and up. Our resonance theory of consciousness attempts to provide a unified framework that includes neuroscience and the study of human consciousness but also more fundamental questions of neurobiology and biophysics. It gets to the heart of the differences that matter when it comes to consciousness and the evolution of physical systems.

It is all about vibrations, but it's also about the type of vibrations and, most importantly, about shared vibrations."

What does this have to do with Freemasonry? Think about what happens during the initiatory process. Is not initiation a series of rituals that has as its goal an alchemical transformation of the initiate from a base state to a higher state? What I believe most Freemasons fail to examine when we look at a candidate for Freemasonry, is if they are capable of receiving the transmission of the esoteric knowledge given in the degrees and applying it to their own lives. For the answer to the question above, the goal of initiation is to get the initiate to ask himself: "How do I develop a process by which I can become more self-aware and accelerate the process of my own development?"

When the initiate is receptive, then the initiation will activate three primary consciousness or soul centers, which are called many names in many spiritual systems. The Gnostics called them: Hyle, Psyche, and Gnosis, The Sufis: Head, Heart, and Hand, The Qabalists: Assiah, Yetzirah, and Briah, Buddhists call them: thought, speech, and action, Those that study the system of Reiki call them: The Head, Heart, and Hara. Regardless of what you call these, the purpose of the initiation is to activate all three of these centers.

Initiation activates the Head by making the thinking process illuminated. This illumination is the knowledge of spiritual realities and understanding of the spiritual depths of oneself. Through this illumination, you begin to ask questions like: who I am, why I am here, where do I come from, and what is my purpose? You also become aware of your connection with the divine and then perhaps reach an understanding that everything is a thoughtform or vibration from the mind of God. Is it an accident that the Master asks



the Senior Warden: “Whence Came You?”, “What came you here to do?”, and various other interrogatories during the opening in the First Degree? I don’t think so.

Initiation activates the Heart by cultivating a feeling of unconditional love. We are first made a Mason in our hearts. Why? Because it is by unconditional love, or “Brotherly Love” as we call it, that we honor not only our interconnectedness but also our interconnectedness with God. When we fail to treat each other with Charity: which is not just our relief of those who are less fortunate than we, but which is the action of Brotherly Love of each other, we see the evil of man personify itself. However, when we Love and Respect one another as equal parts of the whole, which is God, we see the ignition of a spiritual spark within our hearts. From this spark, an etheric light rises from us into what is called our Third Eye, or that place above our heads which in esoteric Christianity is represented by the flame above the heads or the halo surrounding the heads of those who receive the Holy Spirit.

Initiation activates the Hara, which is a Japanese word that means “Sea of Energy.” It is the cultivation of action or will. It is normally represented as being near the navel, but it is essentially that will which we use to travel Jacob’s Ladder or the will that is behind our ascent of the Winding Staircase to the Middle Chamber. It is the will to take action esoterically in order to use spiritual realities to change things on the physical plane. It is the willpower that is created by changing our consciousness to a higher level. It is the will that allows the transformation of the physical body into the idea of the spiritual body. It is the development and cultivation of our self-awareness and our interconnectedness to the divine, which is allegorically represented by our movement from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

It is the goal of Freemasonry through its initiation to awaken these areas within the initiate. Does it succeed? Maybe it does for a few out of the many. There are many brothers that I know who I feel are understanding of this purpose. That they are taking this journey, although it is one that might take a lifetime. They understand that it is a marathon and not a sprint, which is allegorically explained by the concepts of the rough and perfect ashlar. We must work to become perfect, to reach that frequency where we might resonate with God. I use meditation as one of many concepts or tools to attempt to work on my

rough ashlar or to continue the process started by my initiation, even if it took me some years to finally understand and recognize the process. It is never too late to change or to grow, to love one another and make a positive impact on the world. The change begins within, and once you have mastered that change within, then you will be able to change the world without.



[WWW.MASONICCONKANSAS.COM](http://WWW.MASONICCONKANSAS.COM)



MARSHALL

MARTINEZ

JOHNSON

CARR

EIGHT LECTURERS - TWO PANELS

2022  
**MASONIC CON**  
KANSAS



AUGUST 27TH, 2022

VENDORS-FESTIVE BOARD-SWAG



L A I N E

S I M M O N S

J A R Z A B E K

G O L D





**183rd ANNUAL COMMUNICATION**  
**The MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE of A.F. & A.M.**  
**STATE OF ILLINOIS**

BoS Center 8<sup>th</sup> & Adams Streets  
Springfield, Illinois

Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup> & Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

---

Dear Brethren:

As required by Code 100, this year's Grand Lodge Communication will be held in the BoS Center (Bank of Springfield Center), Springfield on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Lodge representation at the Grand Lodge session each year is mandatory. An absence of two successive years could result in the loss of the Lodge Charter. Representatives must be present and remain during each session in order for the Lodge to receive mileage and per diem.

Registration will begin an hour and a half prior to the opening gavel each day. Lodge representatives with credential/proxy cards should report to the Credentials Committee at the appropriate table in the BoS Center Lobby. Please allow time to be registered and in your seats prior to the session's opening.

Coffee and rolls will be available for a \$5.00 donation to the Illinois Masonic Youth Organizations at the BoS Center prior to the opening each morning.

Enclosed please find a Meal Ticket Order Form and Hotel Room Reservation information. You may make copies of these forms as needed.

There are several special activities planned for the ladies who accompany their men to the Grand Lodge Session. Please ensure your ladies have the opportunity to review this information. Aside from the planned programs, Illinois' Capital city was home to Abraham Lincoln and all the Lincoln attractions are available to visit during the sessions. You and your ladies are also encouraged to join us for the Grand Banquet.

Reminder: All Meal Order Forms must be received in the Grand Lodge office no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> and the Hotel room block will also expire on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Please make your reservations as soon as possible.

We look forward to greeting you at this, the 183<sup>rd</sup> Annual Communication.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Michael E. Jackson  
Grand Master

Franklin E. Cline  
Grand Secretary

**Enclosures:**

Hotel reservation information  
Meal ticket order form

*Code 199 – This communication must be read in full at the first Stated Meeting after it is received.  
(Please ensure all information is shared with the Lodge's Official Representatives to this year's session.)*

# Leaving Gold in the Mine

by RWB: Chad Lacek, 33°, Committee on Masonic Education



Let's imagine for a moment that you are a miner, hunting for gold with pick and shovel. You sweat and toil, clawing at the hard earth until the hole you have made extends deep below the surface.

Looking upward, the sky is but a small blue circle far above you. Then, at last, glinting from the wall of your tunnel, you find a large vein of precious gold! In a moment, you are loaded up with all you can carry, but there is so much more that remains. Your spirits are lifted ever higher as you yourself climb up from the depths, a much richer man now than when you woke this morning.

Would you go back to remove another load of gold or leave it down there, satisfied with what you already have? Of course, you would go back! Anyone with the least bit of sense would take as many trips as was required until every ounce of glittering gold was safely in their hands. You would do so, not least of all, because you've already completed the hardest part of the work. You bought the tools, you researched the location, and you exhausted yourself, tunneling deep down to where the treasure lies. It would be crazy to leave the gold in the mine. Yet, that's what many Freemasons do all the time.

Gold comes in many shapes, sizes, and forms. There are golden opportunities, hearts of gold, and the golden rule to name a few. Some of the treasures found in a Masonic Lodge lay within each Mason. I know of no other place where there is such free access to the life experiences and wisdom of so many men. I have asked questions about homesteading, and the Brothers are not only willing, but happy to share such intimate details of what they did, how much it cost (down to the penny), and what I should expect. Likewise, with questions about starting a business, planning for a funeral, making investments, or any other topic under the sun. Who else would be so open about how much they earn, how much they spend, and how much they save so that you can make your own plans accordingly? Who else would be so eager to help you be successful? That information is worth its weight in gold.

I am ashamed to admit how many times I discover

a Brother Mason with a hobby or a profession that I am keenly interested in, but I never knew despite knowing them for ages. I should have been asking for their advice years ago! Yet, when I am among these men at a Masonic event or a Lodge meeting, I find myself filling the silence with useless chatter about the weather or the results of a sporting event. I keep leaving the gold in the mine. Have you ever been guilty of the same?

We have already done the hardest part of the work. We petitioned a Lodge, worked our way through the degrees and invested the time to attend Masonic events. We are surrounded by the gold within each Brother Mason. All we have to do is collect it by showing the slightest interest and asking a few thoughtful questions. I've decided to create a list to help me break this bad habit. Here are ten questions I came up with:

What excites you right now?

What are you looking forward to?

What's the best thing that's happened to you this year?

What's the most important thing I should know about you?

What's your story?

What is one of your defining moments?

Why did you choose your profession?

What are you currently reading?

What are the three biggest problems/ annoyances you're dealing with?

How can I be most helpful to you right now?

It is not intended that these questions are posed one after another as if conducting an interview. They are meant to be alternatives to mind-numbing topics like the weather and are likely to stimulate interesting conversation. It's a well-known fact that people



like to, and are most comfortable, talking about themselves. Having a genuine interest in others is the best way to discover the wealth of experience and knowledge they have collected during their lifetime. Consider these types of questions like the pick and the shovel of the gold miner. They serve the same purpose.

Do you have a list of your own? I would be very grateful if you share it with me. I need all the help I can get. My personal email address is [chadlacek@yahoo.com](mailto:chadlacek@yahoo.com). I am going to try to be more intentional in my interactions with my Brothers, even if breaking the ice feels uncomfortable sometimes. I hope you will too. There's plenty of gold left in the mine, Brothers. Let's bring it out together.





# The Three Degrees of Chi Kung

by Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski

In the West, we tend to boldly demark the concepts of body and mind from one another -- the physical from the psychical (mental and/or spiritual). The traditional Chinese perspective looks at the body (or one's being) being a composite, with the physical body as a component of one's self. It's not merely a shell, and certainly not sinful or oppositional by nature as in Western traditions.

Mind you, there's nothing wrong with a simple Body-Mind duality. The Square is about actions and is used to measure relationships in a three-dimensional existence; the Compasses are a drafting tool for discernment and willful boundaries.

But perhaps a more pertinent model for our various Degrees is the trinity of body, mind, and spirit. According to George Harold Steinmetz, in "The Royal Arch, its Hidden Meaning", as well as other Masonic authors in various works, the Degrees show a progression of growth through those parts of our being. It isn't hard to see how the Entered Apprentice Degree deals with the physical, the Fellowcraft with the mental, and Master Mason Degree with the Spiritual. We go from the quarries of measuring and manipulating the objects of the physical world, to the arts and sciences, to the transformation of our mortal, yet immortal existence.

It is no wonder the Square takes precedence in the configuration we first behold at the Altar, the Compasses at last, and a partial transcendence of the physical into the spiritual when we are Passed. The ritual describes our progression in our Moral Science as being -- by necessity -- by degrees.

So why bring up an Eastern model of human existence? Because there are aspects of the model that grant us other insights. Any framework of understanding can yield results unique to it, and Traditional Chinese Medicine is one of them, particularly in its Taoist roots.

The ancient Taoist physiology focuses on the "Triple Burner" system -- three energy fields in the body called dan tiens. These are NOT point-like chakras and are often poorly equated with them or other Indi-



an concepts. And most martial arts don't even mention there are three of them, as only the lower one is used in martial training.

The lower dan tien, just below the navel, could be described as the home of jing, physical essence. I teach my students that it is the geographic center of the physical body, and if it were stiff, dead weight, that's where you could place a fulcrum to balance it like a see-saw. (Don't try this at home.)

The middle dan tien, around the diaphragm, is the home of chi, literally meaning breath. Of course, the concept of breath is hardly limited to moving oxygen but is an energetic, whole body (or even body-and-beyond) experience. (I've written on this subject before, but won't get into its metaphysical nature or theological implications here, as it would detract from the point of this article.)

The upper dan tien could be thought of as the "third eye", or seat of spirit. This completes a trinity of places to focus the physical (body), the non-physical (spiritual), and the bridge between them (chi).

So, where am I going with this? The ancient Taoist text, "Cultivating Stillness"\*, expounds a regimen of chi kung (roughly meaning "breath training") for the purpose of immortality. Let's not argue over how literal or possible its goal is intended to be. The important thing is that this is a journey for the whole person. Every aspect of one's being affects the others. The progression described is an effort to use the jing to "purify" the chi, and then the chi to purify shen.

Like the deep lessons of our degrees, you can't jump ahead. It would devastate the impact of the Third Degree by not having experienced the first two. The power of the Royal Arch Degrees would be wasted if endowed upon the profane -- there's a reason you have to be a Master Mason to receive them (and be a Past Master, but let's not bog ourselves down here explaining that).

Each Degree builds on the former. The First sets the foundation for the Second, which in turn prepares you for the Third. We can't move on until we have purified the baser part of ourselves. We must use simple tools to circumscribe and divest our physical actions and passions to be ready to cultivate intellect. Then we must use our learning to cultivate our faith.

But do we have truly suitable proficiency before moving on? If we appreciate any of this, we must admit a Progressive Moral Science that can only be taught and experienced by Degrees. How could one-day classes even be considered acceptable? (Although some Brothers have succeeded in spite of them.)

We give little or no thought to why we do the Degrees in their order, They are simply dates on a Trestle Board, a train with three stops. Saying the journey is important isn't a cliché. The process is the work, and the work is the whole point.

But it's never too late. Each time we see the Degrees, we have a chance to revisit where we are and know better where we need to be. Just like an advanced practitioner of chi kung or martial arts can always deepen their practice through the simplest exercises, we can allow ourselves to be an Apprentice or Fellowcraft again.

\*First translated into English by Eva Wong, who incidentally is local to my area and a student of Master Moy of the Taoist Tai Chi Society. His art is the first of many styles of Tai Chi that I have studied over the years.



# Masonic Magic of Dr. Strange

by Darin A. Lahners, AEO

Editor's note: This article deals with the Dr. Strange motion picture of 2016. The recently released motion picture Dr. Strange and the Multiverse of Madness will be broken down in another future article.

Dr. Strange begins with a character who you later discover is Master Kaecilius (Mads Mikkelsen), whose name in Sanskrit means "God," while the Romanized spelling Caecilius means "Blind," breaking into a library. He and his disciples behead the librarian, and Kaecilius rips some pages out of an ancient Tomb. He is interrupted by a woman we find out later is called The Ancient One (Tilda Swinton). She warns her former student: "That ritual brings you only sorrow." A chase begins, and we see a magical battle play out outside the laws of Newtonian physics, with the characters on-screen running up buildings, buildings moving outward and inward as if they are living entities themselves, until finally, Kaecilius escapes.

We next find ourselves watching Dr. Steven Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), a brilliant but arrogant neurosurgeon. After a car accident leaves him with severe nerve damage in his hands and having exhausted all efforts to heal himself through Western Medicine, is desperate for a miracle. He alienates everyone he is close to, including his girlfriend, Christine Palmer (Rachel McAdams). He is led to a Mr. Jonathan Pangborn (Benjamin Bratt), who had a C7-C8 Spinal Cord injury yet is discovered by Strange to be playing basketball.

Pangborn tells him of Kamar-Taj, a mystical place where he elevated his mind and his spirit deepened, healing his body. This leads Strange to Kathmandu, Nepal, to search for this mystical Kamar-Taj. Strange is beset by three ruffians who attack him to steal his watch. Much like the ruffians of the third degree, who are trying to steal an invaluable secret from Hiram Abiff in the form of the Master's word, these ruffians are foreshadowing what Kaecilius and his other two main disciples are attempting to steal, that which is time. Strange's watch is broken in the attack, which predicts what occurs during the movie's final act.

Strange is rescued by Baron Mordo (Chiwetel Ejio-

for). Mordo brings him to Kamar-Taj but warns him to forget everything he knows prior to entering. He is here introduced to the Ancient



One, the leader of Kamar-Taj, their de-facto Worshipful Master. Strange believes she is practicing cutting-edge experimental medicine, although she tells him she knows how to reorient the spirit to heal the body better. Dr. Strange is still arrogant, unable to subdue his ego, and unable to believe that he can be healed through belief in something higher. The Ancient One reminds him that he is a man looking at the world through a keyhole, and he's spent his whole life trying to widen that keyhole, to see more to know more, and now upon hearing that it can be widened in ways that he can't imagine, he rejects the possibility. He replies that he rejects it because he does not believe in fairy tales about Chakras or Energy or the power of belief and that there is no such thing as spirit--that we are made of matter and nothing more, and that the ancient one is just a tiny momentary speck within an indifferent universe. The Ancient one replies that he thinks too little of himself, and upon Strange telling her that she sees through him, she grabs his hand and forces his astral form out of his physical form. He questions her about psychedelics being in the tea, as he still cannot believe that he, for a moment, entered the astral dimension, a place where the soul exists apart from the body.

He questions her about why she is doing that to him, to which she answers that she wants to show him how much he doesn't know. She then pushes her thumb against his forehead and tells him, "To Open Your Eye!" This activates Strange's third eye and sends Strange in astral form into various other dimensions, where he immediately tells himself that what is happening to him isn't real and doubts his

experience. He is seen above the earth reaching out to a monarch butterfly (symbolic of the metamorphosis he is undergoing), and then through various multicolored tunnels, to outer space, and through different technicolor planes filled with sacred geometric patterns, all while the Ancient One lectures him about how little he knows. She asks Strange: "You think you know how the world works? You think this material universe is all there is? What is Real? What mysteries lie beyond the reach of your senses? At the root of existence...mind and matter meet, thoughts shape reality. This universe is only one of an infinite number, worlds without end, some benevolent and life-giving, others filled with malice and hunger, dark places where powers older than time lie ravenous and waiting. Who are you in this vast Multiverse, Mr. Strange?"

Upon his return, Strange begs the Ancient One to teach him, but she refuses, and Strange is thrown out of Kamar-Taj back into the streets of Kathmandu. Mordo then talks with the Ancient One about Strange as he sits at the doorstep to try to get back into the sacred space, which like our lodge rooms, is a place of instruction for secret arts. Mordo tells her that she helped him defeat his demons... to which she replies: "We never lose our demons, Mordo; we only learn to live above them." Mordo believes that the Ancient One fears creating another student like Kaecilius. After their discussion, Strange is shown pounding on the entrance door to Kamar-Taj three times, begging not to be shut out, and crying out that he has nowhere else to go. Strange knocking three times is significant, as we are taught in our Entered Apprentice degree that the candidate is caused to give three distinct knocks to alarm the lodge and inform the Worshipful Master that they are prepared for their initiation, which alludes to a text in scripture (Matthew 7:7-8). The scripture reads: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The door opens to Strange, and Mordo tells him to bathe, rest and meditate if he can, adding that the ancient one will send for him. Strange then looks at the back of the broken watch and reads the inscription there: "Time will tell how much I love you – Christine." Divesting himself of all metals by putting the watch away, Strange is shown sitting with the Ancient One. She tells him that the language of the Mystic Arts is as old as civilization, that the sorcerers

of antiquity called the use of this language spells, but if that word offends his modern sensibilities, that he can call it a program or the source code that shapes reality. She explains that they harness energy drawn from other dimensions of the multi-verse to cast spells, conjure shields and weapons, to make magic. After which, Dr. Strange asks: "Even if my fingers could do that, my hands would just be waving in the air; how do I get from here to there?" To which the Ancient One answers: "How did you get to reattach severed nerves...and put a human spine back together bone by bone?" Strange answers: "Study and practice...years of it." With that, the Ancient One nods at him in agreement.

Again, looking at the ritual of the Entered Apprentice degree, we find the Worshipful Master asking the Senior Warden: "What came you here to do?", to which the Senior Warden replies: "To learn to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry." Masonry, like any other mystical art, requires practice, as only through practice does one improve themselves.

The next scene shows Strange returning books to the Library of Kamar-Taj, where he meets Wong (Benedict Wong). Wong reads off the titles as he checks them back in: "The Book of the Invisible Sun, Astronomia Nova, Codex Imperium, and the Key of Solomon. You finished all of these?" To which Strange answers: "Yup." Of the above, the Key of Solomon should be familiar to Freemasons. The Key of Solomon is a grimoire or book of Spells attributed to King Solomon, spells which Solomon used to contain and control otherworld intelligence (demons) to build King Solomon's temple. Ginzberg's "Legends of the Jews," published in 1909, has this to say about Solomon:

"The demons were of greatest service to Solomon during the erection of the Temple. It came about in this wise: When Solomon began the building of the Temple, it once happened that a malicious spirit snatched away the money and the food of one of the king's favorite pages. This occurred several times, and Solomon was not able to lay hold on the malefactor. The king besought God fervently to deliver the wicked spirit into his hands. His prayer was granted. The archangel Michael appeared to him, and gave him a small ring having a seal consisting of an engraved stone, and he said to him: "Take, O Solomon, king, son of David, the gift which the Lord God, the highest Zebaot, hath sent unto thee.



With it thou shalt lock up all the demons of the earth, male and female; and with their help thou shalt build up Jerusalem. But thou must wear this seal of God; and this engraving of the seal of the ring sent thee is a Pentalpha.” Armed with it, Solomon called up all the demons before him, and he asked of each in turn his or her name, as well as the name of the star or constellation or zodiacal sign and of the particular angel to the influence of which each is subject. One after another, the spirits were vanquished and compelled by Solomon to aid in the construction of the Temple.”

Wong then brings him to the section for master’s only but tells him at his discretion, others may use it. He advises him to start with Maxim’s Primer, asking him how his Sanskrit is. Strange replies he’s fluent in Google Translate. He then asks about a section of books that Wong tells him is the Ancient One’s private collection. Strange finds the book Kaecilius had torn pages out of, telling Wong that this one has missing pages. Wong informs him that it is the book of Cagliostro, which is a study of time, saying that one of the rituals was stolen by a former master, the zealot Kaecilius. The name Cagliostro should also be familiar to Freemasons. Count Alessandro di Cagliostro. Cagliostro was famed in 18th Century Europe due to his reputation as a healer, alchemist, and the founder of Egyptian Freemasonry. Egyptian Freemasonry was Cagliostro’s attempt to combine Hermitic and Masonic Philosophy as an introduction to higher Alchemical teachings (<https://www.thesquaremagazine.com/mag/article/202004-count-alessandro-cagliostro/>). He is rumored to have been able to create the alchemical Elixir of Life, which was a by-product of the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone, and rumored to grant immortality to the drinker of it.

As Strange learns about the Mystic Arts, he is still unable to use them because he is unwilling to kill his ego. The Ancient One tells Strange that he must surrender to the power of the universe to be able to control it by saying: “Silence your ego and your power shall rise.” She adds that while his intellect has taken him far in life, it will take him no further. She then takes Strange to the summit of Mount Everest and leaves him there. She is proverbially the parent trying to teach his child to swim by pushing them into the deep end of the pool, Strange can either kill his ego and learn to create a magic portal to escape, or he can die. Strange then is seen opening a portal and collapsing at the feet of the Ancient One and Mordo, frozen almost to death. We then see the Ancient One showing Strange how to use the Mirror Dimension, telling him that the real world isn’t affected by what happens there and is used for training, surveillance, and

sometimes to contain threats. He is then shown sparring against Mordo, who teaches him about Magical Relics, such as the Staff of the Living Tribunal, the Wand of Watoomb, and the Vaulting Boots of Valtoor. He is taught that relics are imbued with powerful magic as they can take the magical strain that is too powerful for humans. We next see Strange back in the library. Finding it empty, he opens the book of Cagliostro. The book tells him first to open the Eye of Agamotto, a powerful magical relic that contains the Time Stone, one of the most powerful gems in the universe called an Infinity Stone. The Time Stone can manipulate time, allowing the user of it to move forward and backward in time. The Eye of Agamotto immediately evokes the All-Seeing Eye symbol, which we are told, the sun, moon, and stars obey and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions. Strange experiments with the Eye by focusing it on an apple, and he is able to advance time to show the apple eaten to its core rotting and then reversing time to show it whole and uneaten. Again, we should pay attention to the Apple, as it evokes the knowledge of Good of Evil from the tree of life from the Garden of Eden.

Strange uses the Eye to go back in time to be able to read the missing pages of the Book of Cagliostro and finds out about the Dark Dimension and its inhabitant, Dormammu, as well as the ability to draw on its power to prolong one’s life. He is then interrupted by Mordo and Wong. They warn him that Temporal Manipulations can create branches in time, unstable dimensional openings, spatial paradoxes, and time loops. They ask him if he wants to get stuck living the same moment over and over, or never having existed at all, telling him that he wasn’t just manipulating the space-time continuum but that he was breaking it and that they do not tamper with Natural Law... that they defend it. Mordo then asks him how he performed the litany of spells required to understand the book. Strange





answers him by confessing that he has an eidetic memory, and that's how he simultaneously got his Ph.D. and MD. Wong tells him that he was destined for the Mystic Arts, to which Strange replies, "yet my hands still shake." Wong tells him not forever, and Mordo states that they are not prophets, to which Strange replies: "When are you going to start telling me what we are?"

Wong informs him: "While heroes like the Avengers protect the world from Physical Dangers, they safeguard it against more mystical threats. That the Ancient One is another in a long line of Sorcerers Supreme going back thousands of years to the father of the mystic arts, the mighty Agamotto. The same sorcerer that created the eye you so recklessly borrowed. Agamotto built three Sanctums in places of power where great cities now stand. Hong Kong, London, and New York. The Sanctums together generate a protective shield around the world." The idea of these places being Sanctums should evoke the idea of the place within the Temple of Solomon where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, which was known as the Sanctum Sanctorum.

Mordo adds that the Sanctums protect the world, and the Sorcerers protect the Sanctums from other dimensional beings that threaten our universe. Strange then asks about Dormammu, and he is told that he dwells in the Dark Dimension beyond time. He is the Cosmic Conquerer, the destroyer of Worlds, a being of infinite power and endless hunger on a quest to conquer all universes and bring all worlds into his Dark Dimension, and he hungers for Earth most of all. With that, alarms begin to sound, and Strange is transported to the New York Sanctum, where he is forced into battle with Kaecilius and his zealots. Strange is able to overcome the zealots, temporarily stranding them in other places, and he is, with the help of the magical relic, the Cloak of Levitation, able to trap Kaecilius.

Kaecilius tells him that he is seeking external life and that people think in terms of good and evil while time is the true enemy of us all and that Time kills everything. Strange asks him about the people that Kaecilius has killed, to which he replies that they were tiny momentary specks within an indifferent universe. He says that Humanity longs for the eternal for a world beyond time because time is what enslaves us. He states that time and death are insults. They don't seek to rule the world but rather to hand it over to Dormammu, who is the intent of all evolution, the why

of all existence. He then questions what brought Dr. Strange to Kamar-Taj, asking if it was enlightenment, or power, saying that he came to be healed as everyone has and that Kamar-Taj is a place that collects broken things. That they come with the intention of being healed and that the Ancient One gives them parlor tricks, and that she keeps the real magic for herself.

Strange remarks that he saw the rituals in the Book of Cagliostro, and then Kaecilius tells him what the Ancient One hoards, Dormammu gives freely, which is Life Everlasting. Then Strange remarks at Kaecilius's face being twisted and marked by Dormammu, and Kaecilius laughs. Strange asks him if he thinks it's funny, and Kaecilius says he's laughing because Strange has lost his sling ring. Strange then turns and is hit with a projectile from one of Kaecilius's disciples that portals in. Strange limps along, and his cape fights with the disciple, freeing the sling ring from him. Strange uses the sling ring to portal himself to the hospital, where he finds his ex, Dr. Christine Palmer. Palmer gets him on an operating table, where he presents his astral form startling her. He guides her to where his wound is and then notices the astral form of the disciple that stabbed him. He fights him, and when he goes into Cardiac arrest, Christine hits him with the paddles, which impacts Stephen's astral form and is channeled into the disciple.

Strange appears in astral form to Christine again, telling her to up the amps on the paddle and shock him again. Holding onto the disciple, the next jolt of electricity fries the disciple. Strange then explains what he's been doing and shows her the portal in the mop closet, which he returns to the Sanctum. He returns to find that Kaecilius has escaped. He finds Mordo and the Ancient One, who remarked at the cloak of Levitation choosing him. Dr. Strange tells the Ancient One that Kaecilius can fold matter in the real world. The Ancient One tells Strange that the New York sanctum needs a new Master. Strange is upset about having to kill the disciple and that he became a doctor to save lives and not take them.

After which, the Ancient One tells him that he became a doctor to save one life above all others his own. Strange then asks her: "Still seeing through me, are you?" She replies: "I see what I've always seen: Your overinflated ego. You want to go back to the delusion that you can control anything..even death, which no one can control, not even the great Dr. Steven Strange." Strange then remarks: "Not even Dor-

mammu? He offers immortality.” She replies: “It is our fear of death that gives Dormammu life. He feeds off it.” To which Strange replies: “Like you feed off him? You talk to me about controlling death; oh, I know how you do it; I’ve seen the missing rituals from The Book of Cagliostro.” She then replies: “Measure your next words very carefully, Doctor.” Strange replies: “Because you might not like them?” She replies: “Because you may not know of what you speak.” Mordo then asks what she is talking about. Strange tells him that he’s talking about her long life, the source of her immortality, that she draws power from the Dark Dimension to stay alive. Mordo scoffs, telling him that isn’t true.

Strange replies that he’s seen the rituals and worked them out and knows how she does it. The Ancient One then warns them: “Once they regroup, the zealots will be back. You’ll need reinforcements.” She departs, and Strange tells Mordo that the Ancient One is not who he thinks she is. Mordo tells him that he doesn’t have to right to say that and that he has no idea of the responsibility that rests upon her shoulders. Strange says no, and that he doesn’t want to know. Mordo calls him a coward, to which Strange replies: “Because I’m not a killer?” Mordo tells him that the zealots will snuff all of us out and that he can’t muster the strength to snuff them first. Strange then yells: “What do you think I just did?” Mordo replies: “You save your own life and then whined about it like a wounded dog.” Strange then responds: “And you have done it so easily?” Mordo answers him, telling him that he has no idea of the things he’s done and that the answer to his question is yes and without hesitation. Strange then asks: “Even if there’s another way?” Mordo replies that there is no other way. Strange tells him that he lacks imagination, and Mordo tells Steven that he lacks a spine.

At this point, Kaecilius and his disciples attack again; Steven, however, can contain all of them within the mirror dimension. Mordo and Steven flee, and Mordo remarks that as the mirror dimension is closer to the dark dimension that his plan isn’t clever, but that it is suicide. Mordo and Steven attempt to escape, but Kaecilius’s mastery of controlling that dimension overwhelms them. All seems lost as Kaecilius takes Strange’s slingring and prepares a shard of glass to finish Strange off. At this point, the Ancient One appears. Strange and Mordo are shown from above, standing on a platform with the sacred geometric design of the flower of life as its design. Mordo then sees the mark of Dormammu on the forehead of the

Ancient One and realizes that what Strange told him was true and that she does draw power from the Dark Dimension. She and Kaecilius face-off, and the Ancient One warns her former student about Dormammu’s deceptions, saying that his eternal life is not paradise but rather torment. He calls her a liar, and he and his disciples attack her.

She is defeated, but she is able to open a portal out of the mirror dimension through which she, Strange, and Mordo escape. While Mordo and Strange are able to control their descent, she falls several stories to the pavement. Strange brings her to a hospital, but it is too late. As she flatlines, Strange forces his Astral form out of his body to see that she has already left hers. He catches a glimpse of her Astral form and follows her, and they have a discussion. She tells Strange that she has seen this moment as she spent many years scanning the future, but that she can’t see past it. She then asks Strange if he wants to know about his future, to which she tells him: “I’ve never seen your future, only its possibilities.” She tells him that he has such a capacity for goodness, that he’s always excelled but not because he craved success but because of his fear of failure. He says that’s what made him a great doctor, to which she replies that is precisely what kept him from greatness. She tells him that arrogance and fear still keep him from learning the simplest and most significant lesson of all. He asks: “Which is?” To which she answers: “It’s not about you.” She then says that when he first came to her, he asked how she was able to heal Jonathan Pangborn; she tells him that she didn’t and that he channels dimensional energy directly into his own body. Strange then realizes that he uses magic to walk.

She tells Strange that Pangborn had a choice to serve something greater than himself, or return to his own life. Strange then realizes he could have his hands back again and return to his old life. To which the Ancient One says: “You could, and the world would be lesser for it.” She then confesses that she’s hated drawing power from the dark dimension,



but as Strange knows, sometimes one must break the rules to serve the greater good. Strange remarks that Mordo won't see it that way. She replies that Mordo is rigid and unmovable, forged by the fires of his youth and that he needs Strange's flexibility, just as Strange needs Mordo's strength. She then tells him that only together do they stand a chance of stopping Dormammu. Strange then confesses that he's not ready. The Ancient One then replies that no one ever is and that we don't get to choose our time. She then grabs his hand and tells him that death is what gives life meaning, to know your days are numbered and that your time is short. She then says that you'd think after all this time that she'd be ready, but she's stretching one moment out into a thousand just so that she can watch the snow. With that, she disappears, and Strange returns his astral form back into his body. What we see play out between The Ancient One and Strange is effectively one of the same lessons taught in the Third Degree, a Memento Mori, which calls for us to remember that we all must die.

Strange then shares a tender moment with Christine and goes to talk to Mordo. They debate the merits of the Ancient One drawing power from the dark dimension, as Strange understands why she did it. Still, Mordo believes that her hypocrisy led to the creation of Kaecilius and his zealots. Strange convinces Mordo to help him fight Kaecilius, and they portal to Hong Kong to find the Sanctum has already fallen and that the dark dimension is bleeding into our reality. Strange then uses the Eye of Agamotto to turn back time to before the fall of the Sanctum. While time runs backward, Strange and Mordo battle Kaecilius and his disciples. They find Wong, who has been buried under a pile of rubble, as time reversal hits the point where he was buried by it, and he is revived. The three rush towards the Sanctum to defend it, but Kaecilius is able to alter reality to cause the pavement to buckle and force Strange's spell to dissipate so that time is a stuck moment for an instant.

Strange is lying on the ground, and Mordo tells him to get up. Kaecilius then tells them that they can't fight the inevitable. Kaecilius marvels at how beautiful the dark dimension is as it is a "World beyond time and beyond death." Strange then repeats the phrase "Beyond Time" to himself and flies upwards into the dark dimension. Kaecilius then remarks that Strange has left Mordo and surrendered to the power of Dormammu. Strange is then shown in the dark dimension, using the time-controlling power of the Eye again to create what we find out is a Time Loop. He

finds Dormammu, telling him he's come to bargain. Dormammu then tells Strange that he's come to die and that our world is now his world, like all worlds. Dormammu then proceeds to attack Strange, disintegrating him. Strange reappears again to bargain, and Dormammu slays him. The time loop continues, with Strange continuing to reappear to bargain, telling Dormammu that like he's given Kaecilius power from the dark dimension, Strange brought some from his own... time. Endless looped time. Dormammu then crushes Strange with his fist. Strange reappears, and Dormammu tells him that he cannot do this forever. Strange replies that he can, and that is how things are now, with both trapped in the same moment for eternity. Dormammu tells him that he will spend eternity dying, to which Strange replies, yes, but everyone on Earth will live. Dormammu then tells Strange that he will suffer, to which Strange tells him: "Pain's an old friend." The time loop continues with Dormammu continuing to kill Strange in a myriad of ways. Dormammu tells Strange that he will never win, to which Strange replies, No, but he can lose again and again forever, and that makes Dormammu his prisoner.

This is where the foreshadowing of the broken watch is realized. The Watch representing time is broken, much like Strange breaks the flow of time by entrapping himself and Dormammu into a literal Groundhogs Day moment, where they continue to live the same moment over and over, regardless of the outcome.

Eventually, Dormammu realizes he is in a no-win scenario and agrees to bargain with Strange. Strange tells him to take Kaecilius and his disciples into the dark dimension and that he is to leave the Earth and never return. Strange then returns to our reality. Right after Mordo tells him to get up, he informs Kaecilius that he struck a bargain with Dormammu and that he doesn't think he will like it. Kaecilius and his zealots are shown being ripped apart and taken into the Dark Dimension. Time is then repaired, the Hong Kong Sanctum is restored, and Strange has saved the day. Mordo then departs, telling Wong and Strange that they won by also violating the natural law and that the bill comes due. Strange returns the Eye of Agamotto to Kamar-Taj, and Wong tells him that it's good and that in time he will master it, but that it's probably best that he doesn't wear an infinity stone in the streets of Hong Kong.



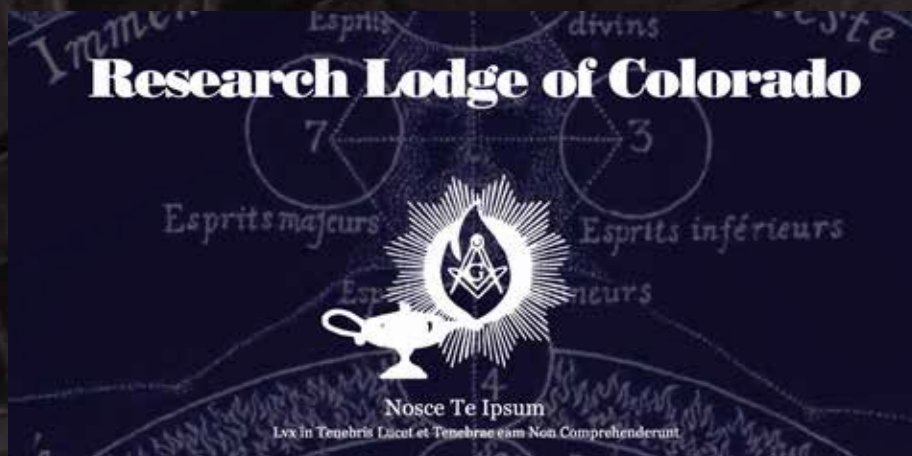
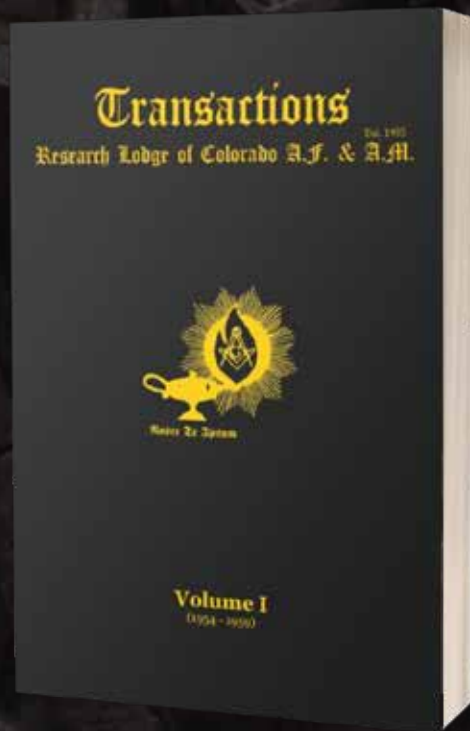


# FREEMASONS ARE PROUD BUILDERS OF...



**Masonic Membership  
Visibility and Pride Day  
Saturday, August 20, 2022**





**Since 1953, the Research Lodge of Colorado has been producing quality Masonic Education papers. Over the last three years, the Lodge has worked tirelessly to compile the transactions into an amazing volume that is beautifully curated and printed.**

**\$20**

**[RLCOLO.Org/Items](https://RLCOLO.Org/Items)**



# Reader's Corner

## The Master Builders: A History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania

### Vol III

by Wayne Huss

A Book review by  
WB: Kevin A. Wheeler



In volume III of *The Master Builders: A History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania*, we look at the biographies of all the Grand Masters dating from 1730-1986.

It is through these biographies that we can gain a better understanding of the astonishing accomplishments of these men and how they were pivotal in the shaping of both America and Freemasonry in Pennsylvania. For this essay, I will only discuss those whose accomplishments, both Masonic and non-Masonic alike, that tended to resonate with me.

The first of these great men is none other than the very first Grand Master (GM), Daniel Coxe. Daniel Coxe was the son of Dr. Daniel Coxe, the largest proprietor in New Jersey in the late 17th century, owning upwards of one million acres throughout East and West Jersey. Although Dr. Coxe sold most of his property, Grand Master Coxe received a sizable inheritance. Additionally, he was able to effectively exploit his political connections, serving as a member of the colony's Royal Council, Elected, and presiding as Spear of the Assembly. Coxe also served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of West Jersey and received a commission as a Colonel in the New Jersey Militia, commander of His Majesty's forces in the province and president of the proprietors of West Jersey. Masonically, GM Coxe was a member of Devil's Tavern No. 8 in London and was appointed as Grand Master for the provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania by Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, Thomas Duke of Norfolk on June 5th, 1730, effectively authorizing him to create subordinate lodges.

On January 29th, 1731, Coxe was in England "toasted as the "Provincial Grand Master of North America." (p. 3)

As famous as he was and still is today, Benjamin Franklin was the fourth Grand Master, and one every Mason should look to emulate. He lived his life as the epitome of an industry man. GM Franklin was born in England and developed a thirst for knowledge at an early age, learning to read and becoming an apprenticed printer for the newspaper, the *New England Courant*, owned by his half-brother James. By age seventeen, GM Franklin found himself nearly entirely destitute in Philadelphia in October of 1723. GM Franklin was industrious until his last breath, being a leading writer, printer, political philosopher, politician, postmaster, scientist, inventor, humorist, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat. Among those accomplishments, he was a humanitarian, founder of the American Philosophical Society. Masonically, GM Franklin began his Masonic journey with an attempt to expose it for being some type of negative entity; however, whatever he discovered caused him to join Masonry just four months after publishing an expose on the craft, the only and last time he wrote negatively about Masonry. He even joined several lodges in France, including the "Famous Lodge of the Nine Sisters" (p.15), reportedly *Marques De Lafayette's Lodge*.

Additionally, he aided in the initiation and funeral



procession of Voltaire. With the Moderns and Antients still feuding in England over which Grand Lodge had the oldest and most accurate records, it caused a similar feud throughout America. Eventually, the Antients were victorious, leading to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania changing its allegiance. What is upsetting is that at the time of his death, GM Franklin did not receive a Masonic burial and parade procession, which was common upon the passing of a Grand Master—all because he had never changed his allegiance from the “Moderns” to the “Antients.”

William Ball was the ninth Grand Master of Pennsylvania but the first of the Antients. Ball is of interest because he was the first Grand Master of the Antients Grand Lodge in Pennsylvania. It was also notable to say that he was initiated in the Grand Lodge of the Moderns, but nine years later, being uncertain how the feud between the Moderns and Antients would settle, he joined the Antients without demitting from the former. Although some may have viewed the act negatively, it turned out to be beneficial, as when the feud was over, his allegiance allowed him to retain his position as Grand Master.

I'd like to also point to a special Grand Master--Richard Vaux. Notably, he was the Grand Master who presided over the cornerstone-laying ceremonies of the Masonic Temple on Saint John's Day, June 24th, 1868. However, this is not why he is special to me. For me, it's unique and interesting because he was a member of my Lodge, now known as Richmond-Solomon Lodge No.3. Vaux accomplished remarkable feats, including being the “originator of the public school system and one of the founders of the Blind Asylum, the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, the Apprentices Library, the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society, the Frankford Asylum for the Insane, the Athenaeum, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Linnaean Society, and the Historical Society of Philadelphia” (p.191).

Clifford Paynter MacCalla, another Grand Master, was amongst the greatest of the Grand Masters of the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge--however, obtaining that title was not his most remarkable feat. His most significant accomplishments dealt with Masonic History and Education. GM MacCalla, “for twenty-three years (1869-1892), he was editor of the Keystone, the official Pennsylvania Masonic publication, to which he brought international recognition” (p. 240). As an editor, he was caused to study and republish various works of Masonic interest from all over the world,

allowing him to both gain and “exhibit his love and knowledge of Freemasonry.” (p. 240).

GM William Alfred Carpenter served as Grand Master when I was born. Another special significance for me. More importantly, he was the author who wrote an excellent Masonic piece of work, “The Exemplar: A Guide to a Mason's Actions” (p.445). In addition to this feat, he was the Grand Master who made seven Masons at sight and allowed up to five Masons initiated into a lodge at one time. He even proclaimed the penalties of the degrees to be symbolic and not literally inflicted.



WB:. Kevin Wheeler has also reviewed Volumes I and II in previous issues of The Lyceum. His review of Volumen I may be found in The Lyceum Vol 2 No. 5 (May 2022) and Volume II may be found in The Lyceum Vol 2 No. 6 (June 2022).

# GRAND LODGE IMPORTANT DATES

Grand Lodge Annual Communication is scheduled for October 7th & 8th. Based on the date of our event, there are some important dates you need to be aware of:

Item Due to Grand Lodge by:

Lodge Name Change Requests (30 days out) September 7, 2022

## EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

**Texas Masonic Con**, August 20th, 2022

**Masonic Con Kansas**, KC Metro - August 27th, 2022

**AMD Illinois- In-gathering**, Cancelled.

**Masonic Con South**, Greensboro North Carolina - October 15th, 2022

For more visit, [MasonicConferences.com](http://MasonicConferences.com)

If your lodge or organization is having an Educational Event (not related to instruction or charities), please let us know. Email the details to:  
[secretary@spesnovum.com](mailto:secretary@spesnovum.com)

Please give us at least a month notice so that we can ensure it is added.



