

Let's see them. . .

Paging Past Masters

VWB Lorenzo Talatala

Following Masonic tradition, the Master of the Lodge, during his tenure of office, represents the pillar of WISDOM and he is ably assisted by the Senior Warden as the pillar of STRENGTH and the Junior Warden as the pillar of BEAUTY. During his incumbency, the Master enjoins every elected and appointed officer for the ensuing year, as well as all the other members of the Lodge to cooperate with him in carrying out the program of his administration. He asks everyone to come to the Lodge punctually and regularly, to perform his assigned tasks devotedly and well, cooperate with one another, maintain harmony and to work together as one, for the betterment of the Craft in general and of the mother Lodge in particular. To insure maximum results, the Master usually leads the way, by setting the example for others to emulate. He serves as an exemplar in more ways than one, to guide the brethren in their efforts to attain the desired objectives. Soon the Masonic year closes and another set of officers are elected and appointed. Then amidst applause and approbation of the brethren, the installation ceremonies for the new set of officers are held. Then, a new Past Master is added to the roll, and a new member of the Grand Lodge in the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines takes a bow. He now joins the illustrious group of Past Masters, which may be classified into three (3) categories pictured hereunder:

1. FAST PAST MASTER

This category is best exemplified by a Past Master who, even after

vacating the oriental chair, never misses to attend any stated or special meeting of the Lodge and is sometimes reelected as Master, elected as Secretary or Treasurer, or appointed as Marshal or chairman of an important and/or indispensable Lodge committee. Some are appointed as Grand Lodge officers in fitting recognition of, and award for, their Masonic worth and past accomplishments. As always, they remain active and steadfast in their true devotion to Masonry. Literally, they are really *fast* in stretching forth their helping hands to aid and assist, in any manner possible, with the needs of the Lodge and of the brethren who may be in need of assistance. We cannot help but admire and pay high tribute to the brethren of this category. Inside and outside of the Lodge they serve as instructors of the less informed brethren, and of those who are new in the Fraternity. They readily extend to them their guiding hand and act as torch bearers for those who are less fortunate not to be in the same Masonic light. To them the Craft is gratefully indebted and as a fitting recognition of their valuable contribution to Masonry, they have earned for themselves the indisputable right to the award of the honorary title of

2. PASSIVE PAST MASTER

To this category belongs a large number of I-do-not-care type of Past Masters. Some may have paid their dues regularly, but attend Lodge meetings only every now and then — as they please. Also, they attend im-

Turn to next page

portant Lodge affairs especially during the installation of officers, banquets and other Masonic gatherings. They comprise the class of Past Masters who, during their incumbency, cannot even open and close a Lodge of Master Masons, confer any degree, receive Masonic dignitaries in open Lodge or conduct the flag ceremony, etc. A number of them can only open and close a Lodge of Master Masons, *when reading the Monitor, in violation of Edict No. 46 s-1962 of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.* After relinquishing the oriental chair to their successors, they believe that their responsibility is over and that others have already assumed the burden of running the affairs of the Lodge. So, they remain passively at ease and unconcerned over the future of the Lodge — why worry, so they say. Of course this attitude is reprehensible and should be corrected immediately. Soon they forget entirely whatever little they know of the rituals. They become rusty and eventually fade away from the scene, to avoid embarrassment inside the Lodge. It takes a lot of convincing and prodding, with the assurance that they will not be given work to participate in, to bring them back to the Lodge meeting. It may not be far from the truth that, this category of Past Masters might have been interested only in prefixing the title "Worshipful" to their names and to be called members of the Grand Lodge, but in reality they do not have the real zeal and interest to be of service to the Craft, to the brethren, and to their fellowmen. They are truly deserving to be awarded the derogatory title of **PASSIVE PAST MASTER.**

3. *FASTING PAST MASTER*

Quite a number of brethren become Masters of the Lodge only because of their benevolence in freely giving big

donations to the Fraternity. Quite a number also become Masters because of their personal influence and popularity in the community. The members of the Lodge, thinking that with their magnanimity, influence and prestige, they could sway the Lodge to activity and stir the interest of the community towards the promotion of the higher interests of the Order, elect them to office. But, the same brethren soon realize their mistakes, for the only time that this type of Master, whom they elected, attends the meeting of the Lodge is when he is installed in office and never...never more. Soon his term of office is over. He is presented with a Past Master's jewel by his Lodge and a Past Master's certificate by the Grand Lodge, despite the fact that the only time he was seen inside the Lodge Hall, was during his installation to office and when he relinquished the oriental chair to his successor and to receive the Past Master's jewel and Past Master's certificate. Unwittingly, the Grand Lodge is thus involved in issuing the certificate to an undeserving Past Master, through the recommendation of a "benevolent" Lodge. Then he joins the long list of **FASTING PAST MASTERS**, in the sense that they are likened to the people who, during the Lenten Season, seclude themselves from others, refrain from eating food for a few days and all they do is hibernate and contemplate. In the case of some Past Masters they seclude themselves from the Lodge all the year round — a long "Lenten Season" for them, indeed. They remain hibernating and contemplating without attending Lodge meetings, despite notices received and telephone calls from the Secretary and invitations from the brethren. By their behavior, they cause demoralization and disgust among the brethren. They serve as

Turn to page 20

bad examples to the other members of the Lodge, and aggravated by the fact that they are the Past Masters of the Lodge. There is no doubt, that we who voted them to office are the ones largely to blame, for if we were only judicious enough in selecting the officers to govern our Lodges, this despicable situation could have been averted. This is a serious malady which has infested many of our Lodges, and...it is contagious. To them therefore, who deliberately fail in their duties, through complacency and willful neglect, the disgraceful title of FASTING PAST MASTER is a fitting reward. Indeed, they do not deserve to be called PAST MASTERS.

There is no doubt, we must admit, that the Master who devotedly attends to his duties for the welfare of the Craft is truly the supporting pillar of the Lodge. He symbolizes the active creative power, in the absence of which, our efforts aims and aspirations cannot be fully realized. He symbolizes life itself, inside and outside the Lodge. As he dons the Past Master's apron, he leaves a permanent imprint of gold in the archives of the Lodge which will forever dwell in the memories of the brethren, the lasting gratitude and appreciation for a work well done. He remains a strong pillar of the Lodge, even long after he had vacated the oriental chair.

On the other hand, those Masters who do not pay attention to the affairs of the Lodge during their incumbency, and who after their tenure of office, continue their indifference, earn for themselves the disgraceful title of PASSIVE AND FASTING PAST MASTERS. They symbolize the beautiful BROKEN COLUMN near the SS of HH of KST, denoting the untimely death of the Grand Master Architect when as-

saulted and murdered by the ruffians. And...if, I were free to give meaning to the WEEPING VIRGIN, unfolding the wringlets of her hair, with the acacia in her hand, it is my feeling that a portion of her teardrops should be dedicated to the unfinished state of the Temple, and a portion to the big misfortune of the Fraternity in admitting them into its fold, and later aggravating matters by electing them as Masters — the PASSIVE and FASTING MASTERS, who, instead of helping the Fraternity, demoralize its members through the misgovernment of the Lodge, over which they are called upon to preside. Some Masters do not even endeavor to read and study the Masonic Law Book, our Constitution, and thus remain ignorant of its provisions. Even taken for granted, that the Master is very highly educated, he may be a genius in arts and sciences, well polished in any field of learning, an specialist in his line of profession, but if he takes his duties for granted, without paying due attention to it and fails to make any effort to improve himself in Masonry, thus remaining in the dark regarding its mysteries, and above all, he absents himself from stated and special meetings, he remains just the same, an *oppressive burden* to the brethren of his Lodge. To the brethren, therefore, who are about to occupy the oriental chair and to those who in the future shall govern the Lodge from the East, it would be for their own good and for the good of everyone who are proud of being Masons, to contemplate and open up their minds to the sad realities besetting our Lodges.

The foregoing presentation of our very own shortcomings, do not pretend to be complete or exhaustive. It may not even be as comprehensive as it should be, and that there are still many more that could have been in-

Turn to page 30

In every serious study of Freemasonry, the student has to delve into its history, philosophy, symbolism and jurisprudence — its rituals, traditions and practices — its ethics, spirit, aims and purposes. These materials are found not only in the works of Masonic authors and writers, but also in the various sacred scriptures, in the teachings of the world's geniuses such as Buddha, Brahma, Mahomet, Confucious and Jesus Christ — in the classical works of Homer, Virgil and Aesop — Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Voltaire, Bacon and Emerson, Victor Hugo, Dante and Goethe, and Bocaccio, Rousseau, Cervantes, Tolstoi and Rizal — in all of which the wisdom of the ages are concealed and revealed in and between the pages.

For beginners, the following are recommended for reading: 1. History of Masonry, by Delmar Darrah, 33°; 2. Symbolism of Freemasonry, by Mackey; (3) Masonic Jurisprudence, by Mackey; (4) Philosophy of Masonry, by Dr. Roscoe Pound 33°; (5) The Builders, by Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, 33°; (6) Symbolical Masonry, by MacBride; (7) Morals and Dogma, by Gen. Albert G. Pike; (8) Rituals and Monitors.

These may be ordered from the Macoy Masonic Supply and Publishing Company, or the Redding Masonic Supply Company, both of New York City, U.S.A.

Merits and Defects of Short-Cut Study.

Freemasonry being a free institution, we are free to study it in the manner of our own free will and accord. We can begin with the Rituals and a Masonic Magazine which would be quite inexpensive, easy and convenient. However, it will take a long time, even a decade, before we

cluded. It is hoped, however, that even up to this point only, that somehow, we have served enough constructive food for thought to every member of the Fraternity which, if only taken in the proper spirit for which it is intended, may pave the way towards the heightening or furthering the interests of the Order. Brethren, may I remind those of us who take Masonry with insincerity, to govern ourselves accordingly by dedicating more serious thought to our past errors and omissions, especially to those committed by "Worshipful Past Masters" who as the brethren expect, should be the main pillar and support to provide the necessary WISDOM, guidance and leadership, in making the light more brilliant, instead of being darkened in the East. All Past Masters may well remember that during their incumbency as Master of the Lodge, *they were seated in a place of honor in the East, where the sacred letter G is suspended and on his right is our national flag — signifying GOD and COUNTRY.* Let them not under any pretext, my worthy brother, become unmeaning symbols for you and me. Adore them, protect them from their enemies, and forsake them NOT. △



G. O. SABAS	
Jeweller	
Maker of Masonic Emblems and Jewelry	
D. R. ESCOSA	
Authorized Representative	
76 Sibuyan St., Sta. Mesa Heights	Tel: 68998
Quezon City	

have a working knowledge of Freemasonry because the rituals are written by symbols or abbreviations

Turn to next page