



Nugget

The Past Master's Jewel

Index

An exploration of the Past Master's Jewel.

Summary

An exploration of some of the facets of the Past Master's Jewel; part historical and part philosophical.

Keywords

Lodge, Jewel, Past-Master

The Past Master's Jewel

'I have much pleasure in investing you with this Jewel as the Immediate Past Master of the Lodge...'. The Jewel is defined in the Book of Constitutions as being, 'The square and the diagram of the 47th proposition of the 1st book of Euclid engraven on a silver plate, pendant within it...'. The 47th proposition is in fact Pythagoras' Theorem 'the square on the hypotenuse' etc.

So why is it a significant theorem? It is because it is one of the most basic requirements for the building of rectangular edifices, having been used since Babylonian times to construct a right-angle. Without a way to construct right-angles, the accurate assembly of rectangular buildings with upright walls would not be possible.

So why is this right-angled-triangle found on a Past Master's Jewel? It is possible that the right-angled-triangle represents the complete Man, comprising the three principal elements of our being; the Physical, the Intellectual and the Spiritual (Body, Mind & Spirit). Go back to your Initiation when you were instructed by the Junior Deacon to advance to the pedestal by three steps....a short one of about nine inches; one a little longer of around 12 inches and a much longer one of about 15 inches. If we are looking for a satisfactory explanation of the symbolic meaning attached to these three unequal steps which is nowhere explained in our Ritual, we need look no further than the construction of a right angled-triangle. These steps appear in the ratio of three to four to five and with the feet in the form of a square, attest to the condition of the candidate as a Complete Man, one possessing the essential elements of body, mind and spirit.

The placing of a right-angled-triangle, complete with its proof, on the Jewel of a Past Master can be viewed as attesting that the Brother wearing it has indeed passed through the Progressive Offices of the Lodge and occupied the Chair of Wisdom where he has symbolically found the knowledge he was seeking, or at least the means by which that knowledge may be found, a lifetime's task!

##END##

Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; *though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.*
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

For further nuggets and other learning materials visit “Solomon” at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

Acknowledgement:

UGLE gratefully acknowledges Michael Murton as the author of this item and for his permission to publish it in this form.

Disclaimer:

The views or interpretations contained in this article are those of the author. UGLE recognises there are many different interpretations of ritual, symbolism and history.

Copyright:

All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from The United Grand Lodge of England in writing.
