

TRAVEL IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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In the ritualistic work of the third degree, we hear the words seeing the temple about to be completed, and being desirous of receiving the secrets of a Master Mason, whereby we could travel in foreign countries.

Speculative Master Masons over the years have taken the words from our ritual traveling in foreign countries and have interpreted its hidden and spiritual significance as referring to the actual travel of Operative Master Masons, for upon completion of the temple, they found they must journey into the surrounding provinces where they could practice their craft.

In an ever increasing mobile society today, many of our brethren were also quick to associate themselves with the ritualistic lines whereby we could travel in foreign countries, which leads us to the precautions one must take before leaving his Grand Jurisdiction.

Confucius said, If language is not used rightly, then what is said is not what is meant. If what is said is not what is meant, then that which ought to be done is left undone; if it re-mains undone, morals and art will be corrupted, justice will go awry; and if justice goes awry, the people will stand about in helpless confusion .

A Master Mason desiring to travel to a foreign country who thinks that he might like to visit a Masonic Lodge should and must make himself cognizant of the terms, REGULARITY, RECOGNITION AND JURISDICTION as they apply to Freemasonry.

REGULARITY - Constituted, appointed or conducted in a proper manner.

RECOGNITION - The act of recognizing or the state of being recognized.

JURISDICTION - Lawful right to exercise authority, over those things for which such authority may be exercised.

WHAT IS A MASONIC GRAND LODGE?

A Grand Lodge is the governing body of Freemasonry within a certain domain in the United States, for governing Freemasonry in each State in our Union and the District of Columbia. Hawaiian Lodges are under the Grand Jurisdiction of California. A Grand Lodge of Masons has as its presiding officer the Grand Master and the legislation of the Grand Lodge is binding upon all Freemasons and upon all Masonic Lodges under its jurisdiction.

WHAT IS A RECOGNIZED MASONIC GRAND LODGE?

The fifty Grand Lodges of the United States have various conceptions of regularity. Thus, the Grand Lodge in State A is satisfied that the Grand Lodge of Foreign Country X meets the conditions of regularity, while the Grand Lodge of State B is not satisfied that the Grand Lodge of Foreign Country X conforms to all the conditions of regularity requirements of the Grand Lodge of State B.

Thus, a Grand Lodge of a foreign country may be regular Freemasonry to the Grand Lodge of one State and clandestine or irregular by another.

AM I ALLOWED TO VISIT IN A MASONIC LODGE ANYWHERE ON THIS EARTH?

No you promised and swore that you would stand to and abide by all the laws, rules and regulations of your Grand Lodge. Those laws provide that you can visit in the lodges which are under the jurisdiction of Grand Lodges which your Grand Lodge recognizes as regular. All regular United States Grand Lodges are in fraternal relations with each other. If your travels extend beyond this nation, and you wish to visit lodges in foreign countries, ascertain either from your Proceedings (published each year by all Grand Lodges), or by correspondence with your Grand Secretary as to their regularity with your Grand Jurisdiction. There is a chart titled Foreign Grand Lodges Recognized By The Fifty Grand Lodges of The United States. (This chart may be obtained through the Masonic Service Association of The United States, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4785.)

A Master Mason planning on visiting another jurisdiction either foreign or within the limits of these United States, unless personally known, which in Masonic language is defined as having sat in Lodge with, and who may have to apply for examination for admission to a Lodge, should be in possession of a current dues card and a certificate of membership showing his name, lodge name, number of his lodge (if it has such) and which should bear his own signature in the margin. Each such card bears the seal of the Lodge and the signature of the Secretary. On the reverse side is the Grand Secretary's certification as to the regularity of the Lodge.

Foreign Countries do not necessarily mean to us the various geographical and political divisions of the old world. Foreign countries could be, to a Master Mason, the same as a symbol; like most symbols, they can have more than one interpretation. However, unlike many symbols, none of them are very difficult to trace or understand.

Each year is published a paperback book titled List of Lodges - Masonic available from Pantagraph Printing & Stationery Co., P.O. Box 1406, Bloomington, IL 61702-1406 (\$5.50 postpaid) which is made possible through Grand Lodges who distribute the books to their constituent lodges and to the Grand Secretaries who correct the list of their lodges and recognitions each year. These Grand Lodges do not want any lists in the book except those they recognize, with the exceptions given at the end of the list of subordinate lodges.

Included are the dates of their annual meetings, the names and addresses of the current Grand Masters, Grand Secretaries, the names and locations of each of their subsidiary lodges, as well as other pertinent information regarding each of their respective Grand Lodges.

As an adjunct to the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America there is a Commission On Information For Recognition as a facility to gather, collate and from time to time revise information on Grand Lodges in other lands, as a service to the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America.

The Commission neither advises nor recommends that recognition be given to any Grand Lodge, but merely indicates whether or not it considers that a Grand Lodge in question satisfies the conditions of regularity, according to the adopted Standards of Recognition.

Standards adopted for use by The Commission on Information for Recognition in accumulating facts.

1. LEGITIMACY OF ORIGIN

That the Grand Lodge requesting recognition has been lawfully formed by at least three just and duly constituted Lodges, or that it has been legally recognized by a Grand Lodge in fraternal relation with the Grand Lodge from whom recognition has been requested.

That such Grand Lodge must be under the tongue of good repute for an adequate number of years before such fraternal recognition is extended. An existence for such a period as satisfies the Grand Lodge whose recognition is sought, during which time the highest standards of the Craft have been practiced by the applicant Grand Lodge, may cure what would otherwise be considered illegitimacy of origin.

11. TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY

That it is an independent, self-governing organization, having Masonic authority within the governmental territory over which it assumes jurisdiction - whether Country, Province, State or other political subdivision; or else shares such exclusive territorial jurisdiction with another Grand Lodge by mutual consent and/or treaty.

111. ANCIENT LANDMARKS

That it subscribes fundamentally, ritualistically and in all its relations to the Ancient Landmarks, Customs and Usages of the Craft. This requires adherence to the following.

1. Monotheism - An unalterable and continuing belief in God.
2. The Volume of The Sacred Law an essential part of the furniture of the Lodge.
3. Prohibition of the discussion of Religion and Politics.

Addendum to this article: if you wish to read more about the various Grand Lodges of the US and the world check out these two web pages put together by Brother Paul M. Bessel, Executive Secretary of the Masonic Leadership Center.

Recognition Standards of Grand Lodges or other Masonic Groups

<http://bessel.org/masrec/recstand.htm>

All Masonic Grand Lodges in the World - except those in the United States

<http://www.bessel.org/gls.htm>