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Short Papers Competition 2007

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Paper 10/2007

Title **The Return of the Craftsmen**

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The Terracotta Army, Hallmark and Apprenticeship

Most people have heard about the "Terracotta Army", a large number of clay figures of foot and horseback soldiers, which were buried with the ancient Chinese Emperors. It is not that commonly known, however, the individual figures were made by different craftsmen, and that each of them bore a chop mark of the marker. This allowed the identification and punishment of the craftsmen who failed to meet the emperor's requirements.
Around the eleventh century, hallmarks were introduced for silver and gold products to identify the minimum content of precious metals in the alloy. Since the Middle Ages implementing quality in products was the aim of skilled craftsmen. They were gaining a reputation for quality products through skilled craftsmen, which was maintained over years through enforcing a lengthy and rigorous apprenticeship of those who wanted to become masters of the trade.
I remember that when I was exalted to Royal Arch Masonry, I was asked to design and draw my mark.
I did not recognize what it meant exactly to have one's mark at that time. Later I did! To have one's mark on a product, is in today's business and industry's world, quality control and marking; a confirmation and compliance of such product to be eventually fit for the final users.

Then,
From, to: a choice to be made; this choice can be called a "paradigm shift". To move from established concepts and preconceptions and evaluate their effectiveness' in solving today's problems; one should change direction, and take the witness stand of his life and review if such conceptions and pre-conceptions practices are still valid, or should be altered.

In the company of good report
One comes to Freemasonry of his own free will and accord, in the company of a good report, a living stone; to fit in a greater scheme. The candidate and later a Brother uses the symbolic working tools presented to him during his journey to fine tune what is inherently present in his human nature, and eventually moves from the rough ashlar stage to the perfect cube.

When Light comes out of darkness
When Light comes out of darkness, Freemasonry points to, and leads the Candidate and later a Brother to what have always existed in the natural moral law; which are not created, rather they are known and then must be followed i.e., the Principal Tenets of Brotherly love, Relief, Truth and the Four Cardinal Tenets of Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice.

The Universal Moral Law
The Universal Natural Moral laws do not reduce the individuality of the person, because as those laws are universal, natural and moral, they develop a person's uniqueness into sharing with others the general goodness, and consequently truth and beauty.

One, who is duly conscious of quality, would only buy products from a craftsman, who mastered and fine tuned his work, and eventually, his product carry his hallmark.

Wouldn't you be interested to deal with such a craftsman?

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