

## INITIATION RITUAL FOR NEW MEMBERS

CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE: Mr./Madam President and Phi Sigma Iota members, I present these candidates for membership in \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of Phi Sigma Iota, the International Foreign Language Honor Society. They have been selected by virtue of academic distinction in their general college course, and particularly as students of one or more foreign languages. They know the aims and ideals of Phi Sigma Iota, and they wish to adopt them in becoming members.

FACULTY ADVISOR: Since you wish to become members of Phi Sigma Iota, and since you qualify under the Society Constitution, you may now share a knowledge of our ritual which explains our symbols and defines our purpose and goals. First of all, I wish to acquaint you with a statement of our common beliefs and the obligations that we assume with membership in Phi Sigma Iota. We believe:

1. that a discerning and sympathetic understanding of the peoples of the world is essential to the welfare of humanity;
2. that peace among nations and international amity are dependent upon an altruistic willingness to appreciate the character, the ideals, and the culture and civilization of other countries;
3. that the study of foreign languages is one of the best means of contributing to such an understanding;
4. that a broad study of foreign culture is also essential to an adequate comprehension of other races and peoples;
5. that it is our duty as world citizens to learn all that we can about foreign peoples and to strive to judge their achievements objectively, fairly, and tolerantly;
6. that it is our obligation to disseminate our knowledge and informed judgment of foreign peoples as widely as possible to further international understanding; and finally
7. that it is incumbent upon us to attempt to inspire in others a desire to study the language, literature, and other cultural manifestations of foreign peoples.

Are you willing to uphold this statement of beliefs and maintain an active interest in the objectives of our Society?

CANDIDATES: WE ARE.

FACULTY ADVISOR: It is now my privilege to invite our representative of the languages of the world to explain to you the meaning and history of the Phi Sigma Iota key.

THE LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD: (The Advisor has in front of him/her a large candle that he/she lights.) Our key is dominated by a five-pointed star. The pentagonal center of this star represents the Languages of Antiquity, source of the modern languages we study. You are doubtless familiar with Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and Hebrew, the literary languages of classical antiquity, through the Bible and the works of many famous authors. Although writers no longer compose their works in some of these tongues, they live on today in spirit, furnish the foundation for many modern languages, and transmit to the western world the basis of much of our culture. Latin originally formed the foundation of our star and was symbolized by the ivy wreath which surrounds the star on the Phi Sigma Iota key. The key was designed in 1935 by Robert E. Dengler, Professor of Classics at the Pennsylvania State University, and since 1935 was the bimillennium of Horace's birth, Professor Dengler put an ivy wreath in the design to recall Horace's famous ode to his patron Maecenas, in which the poet wrote:

*Me doctarum hederæ præmia frontium dis miscent superis...*

(As for me, I want the ivy, the crown of learned brows, that unites me with the gods above...)

Today our Society represents not only the Romance languages, but all the languages of the modern world. The five points of the Phi Sigma Iota star are now symbolic of the many rays of learning which emanate from the world's great linguistic and literary traditions.

**ARABIC:** The Arabic representative lights a candle and reads the following:

Arabic literature is divided into two main periods. The classical, beginning with the proverbs and poetry of the nomadic northern Arabs of the desert, was preserved by oral transmission from the early 6th century or before and first recorded in the 7th and 8th centuries; though the Arabic leadership in the Islamic world began to decline in the 11th century, classical Arabic literature continued into the 16th century.

Within the classical period, there is a major division between the pre-Islamic literature of the 6th and early 7th centuries and the literature that followed the rise and spread of Islam. The literature of the Islamic period is not a religious literature, except in the later part of the period, when Sufism (Islamic mysticism) influenced Arabic poetry. This influence is also seen in Persian and Turkish literature, which, in the Islamic period, are interwoven with that in Arabic. It started in Syria and Lebanon, where Christian communities--especially the Maronite Church--had been in contact with Europe since the 16th century. The freer environment of Egypt led many Syrian and Lebanese writers to emigrate there, and Egypt thus became the centre of the renaissance. Later it spread to other Arab countries. These developments were strengthened by the emergence of an Arabic press and by the spread and modernization of education.

**CHINESE:** The Chinese representative lights a candle and reads the following:

Classical Chinese (in Chinese, wen) boasts a history of well over two-thousand years as the principal written language of East Asia, including China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Philosophers of the classical period such as Mencius and Zhuang Zi, and the great historians of the Han dynasty, Sima Qian and Ban Gu, helped to establish Chinese prose as a medium capable of great subtlety and sophistication. Lyric poetry reached its apogee during the Tang and Song dynasties (ca. 618-1276 A.D.), the era of the poets Li Bai, Du Fu, Sh Shi, and Lu You. The Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods (ca. 1276-1911) witnessed the rise of drama and fiction written in a semi-vernacular medium, including works still widely read and admired today such as Mudan ring, Jin Ping Mei. and Hung Lou Meng. Since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, Chinese writers have discarded the classical language in favor of a closer adherence to modern spoken Chinese (baihua), thereby infusing new vitality into this great literary tradition.

### **COMPARATIVE LITERATURE:**

"Comparative Literature" is the study of one or various literatures in relation to one another (by movements, genres, themes, etc.) or of a literature or literatures in relation to other disciplines (like the art history, music, politics, philosophy, science, etc.). As the musicologist does not study only German music, or the art historian only Italian art, so the comparatist does not study only one national literature. (S)he must possess, however, at least three or four languages in reading proficiency. Comparative Literature is concerned today also with cultural and theoretical studies, as well as with the practice of translation.

**DANISH:** The Danish representative lights a candle and reads the following:

The oldest surviving examples of Danish literatures are the inscriptions carved in runic letters on stone monuments. These stones date from about 850-1050. After the introduction of Christianity to Denmark about 1000, Latin began to supplant runics. Early examples of works written in Danish are legal documents, such as the Jutland law written by Bishop Gunner of Viborg and the Rimkronike. a history of kings. The

reformation stimulated the development of literary Danish, particularly with the translation of the Bible in Danish in 1550. In the 17th century, majestic hymns by Thomas Kingo also contributed to the growth of literature in the mother tongue. The Enlightenment produced one of Denmark's greatest literary figures, Ludvig Holberg. A Norwegian by birth, Holberg spent much of his time in Copenhagen and is considered the father of modern Danish literature. In 1722 the first Danish language theater was opened in Copenhagen. Danish writers of international fame emerged in the 19th century. Hans Christian Andersen, the philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, and the critic Georg Brandes (1842-1927), all of whom played a major part in the Scandinavian literary awakening, encouraging Ibsen among others. The novelists Henry Pontoppidan (1857-1943), Karl Gjellerup (1857-1919) and Johannes Jensen (1873-1950) were all Nobel Prize winners, but have not achieved an enduring reputation outside Scandinavia. An explosion of women's literature occurred after 1970, represented by the works of Elsa Gress, Susanne Brogger, Ulla Dahlerup, and Dea Trier Morch.

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:** The ESL representative lights a candle and reads the following:

The body of literature in the English language abounds with outstanding works written by non-native speakers from around the world. From Africa, Nelson Mandela's essays in *No Easy Walk to Freedom* (1965), and the novel of his compatriot. Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The Wanderers*. (1958), which was designated the "Best African Novel" of 1968-69, were written in English to bring the sufferings of Africa's suppressed peoples to the consciousness of the largest possible Western audience. Nigerian playwright, poet, novelist and critic Wole Soyinka received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986, in part for the development of a Nigerian theater.

Europeans include the pioneering child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, who published his last book, *A Good Enough Parent*, in 1987 at the age of 84, and novelist and short story writer Joseph Conrad, who was born in the Ukraine and worked fifteen years as a seaman on mostly British ships, where he learned to use English so well that when he decided to dedicate himself to writing, he did so in his second language. As a result, we have his masterpieces *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*. as well as his numerous short stories.

From the Middle East, Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran published his trilogy, *The Prophet*, after living many years in this country. Elia Kazan, who migrated from Turkey, first wrote his autobiographical novel, *America. America.* and then received Oscar nominations for best screenplay, direction, and picture in 1980.

Asian authors in English came to us from all quarters: Ved Mehta, the blind Indian autobiographer, social and political historian, interviewer of historians, philosophers, and theologians, has likewise written the screenplay for a PBS production, *Chachaji, My Poor Relation*. Pakistani Ruth Prewar Jhabvala also has practiced her art in short fiction but is best known for her 1986 Oscar for the screenplay for *A Room with a View*; and the Philippines' Bienvenido Santos' fiction has included poems, short stories, and novels.

This richness of cultural diversity and points of view has done much to motivate universities across the country to study these figures and others from around the world who have chosen to express themselves in their second language.

**FRENCH:** The French representative lights a candle and reads the following:

This light stands for French, which became at an early date a forceful and subtle literary language, as such medieval works as the *Chansons de geste* and the romances of Chrétien de Troyes attest. The history of French literature is replete with internationally admired writers and works. The *Testaments* of Villon, Rabelais, the poetry of the Pléiade, the essays of Montaigne, the tragedies of Corneille and Racine, the comedies of Molière, and the varied literary output of Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, the romantic poetry of Victor Hugo and Lamartine, the novels of Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert and Zola, the evocative writing of Nerval, Baudelaire and Mallarmé are all evidence of the uninterrupted flow of French literary masterpieces from the middle ages to the present. Major French works from the twentieth century include the poetry of Apollinaire and Valéry, the novels of Proust and Gide, the plays of Giraudoux, Anouilh, Beckett, and Ionesco, and the writings of Sartre and Camus that explore in various genres the anguish of modern man.

The universality of French literature is evidenced by the many writers who received Nobel prizes, twelve of them in literature, the latest one being given to Claude Simon in 1985. Francophone authors are steadily becoming better known. Such is the case for Gabrielle Roy, Gérard Bessette, Gilbert Choquette, Anne Hébert, Marie-Claire Blais in Quebec, and for many authors in Africa and in the West Indies.

**ITALIAN:** The Italian representative lights a candle and reads the following:

After ancient Greece, Italy is the cradle of Western civilization. Philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and poet-theologians like St. Francis preceded the great of all poets, Dante, who was followed by Petrarch and the prose writer Boccaccio. It ushered in the Renaissance, which culminated in the writings of Machiavelli and Castiglione, the epics of Ariosto and Tasso, the art of Leonardo and Michelangelo, and the beginning of opera and a classical tradition in music. Succeeding centuries have produced such seminal voices as Vico, Goldoni, Manzoni, Leopardi, Verga, D'Annunzio, Pirandello, Pavese, the poetry of Ungaretti, Quasimodo, and Montale, the philosophy of Croce, down to modern novelists like Calvino and Eco--not to mention patrimonies in the visual arts and, in music, such landmark names as Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Respighi, and more. And with the films of Rossellini, Fellini, Antonioni, and others, the world of film also focuses on Italy, where much of its development took place.

**JAPANESE:** The Japanese representative lights a candle and reads the following:

Japan's isolation from the Asian mainland for much of its history allowed it to borrow selectively from the civilization to its west, without being absorbed by them. Hence, while adopting the Chinese written language as the official medium of public affairs, Japanese writers nonetheless produced an extensive and brilliant body of literature in their own native tongue from the seventh century onwards. Waka poetry flowered in the Nara and Heian periods (ca. 710-1185) with the compilation of poetic anthologies such as the Manyōshū, Kokinshū, and Shinkokinshū. Meanwhile, female aristocrats of the Heian court such as Murasaki Shikibu brought prose narrative to a remarkable maturity and beauty in the form of monogatari and diaries. In the Muromachi and Edo periods (the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries), drama and prose fiction achieved brilliance at the hands of the playwrights Kanze Zeami and Chikamatsu Monzaemon, and the novelists Ihara Saikaku, Ueda Akinari, and a host of other writers. Since the introduction of western literary influences after 1868, Japanese literature has entered a period of growth and renewal. Natsume Soseki, Akutagawa Ryunosuke, the Nobel Prize laureate Kawabata Yasunari, and Mishima Yukio are but a few of the many figures who have participated in the great burst of literary creativity of the twentieth century.

**LATIN:** The Latin representative lights a candle and reads the following:

Latin is one of the great languages of classical antiquity. In addition to being the language of renowned authors such as Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil, Latin remained for two millenia the *lingua franca* of Western Christianity and of occidental civilization in general. It was the idiom of Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. From the spoken Latin of Rome's empire, was born a distinguished family of modern languages and literatures which include the following among its principal members: Catalan, French, Italian, Portuguese, Provençal, Rumanian, and Spanish. A number of these are honored in the present ceremony. These Neo-Latin or Romance languages have spread far beyond their original borders and are spoken in many parts of the world. Few cultures which came in contact with Latin civilization failed to be profoundly influenced by it. Languages as diverse as Russian, German, English, and Welsh, which arose from non-Roman sources, reveal an extensive heritage from Latin in their modern lexicons. In addition, the modern professions of law and medicine are heavily indebted to Latin for their basic daily terminology. It is therefore fitting that our top star point to dedicated to Latin.

**GERMAN:** The German representative lights a candle and reads the following:

German literature gave us the medieval minnesingers and meistersingers, with the epic themes of Parsifal, Tristan, and the Niebelungenlied. German is the language of Goethe, the dominant literary figure of the classical and romantic periods in European literature, with his novels, plays, lyric poetry, scientific essays, letters, conversations, and the critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing; the dramatist and lyric poet Friedrich von Schiller; the lyricists Friedrich Hölderlin, Heinrich Heine, and Rainer Maria Rilke; the dramatists Georg Büchner, Friedrich Hebbel, Gerhardt Hauptmann, and Hugo von Hoffmannsthal; and the great twentieth-century writers of prose fiction Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, and Franz Kafka. Recently, the reunification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has led to a reunification of German culture and has given expression to Germany's new role in a new Europe.

**PORTUGUESE:** The Portuguese representative lights a candle and reads the following:

Portuguese literature showed great originality in the lyric poetry of early medieval period. In the 15th century, historiography became a major genre. Fernão Lopes remains unsurpassed in his description of the crowded events of the time.

The voyages of discovery of the 16th century introduced a note of exoticism and adventure which later appeared in poetry and the pastoral novel. Luis de Camões expressed better than any other poet the individual anguishes and the glories of the age.

Nearly 50 years after the discovery of Brazil, the Portuguese established themselves firmly on the new territory. **Antonio Vieira** was the great orator and prose writer who kept the unity of Brazil under Portuguese influence. In the 18th century, the theater enjoyed enormous popularity with Antônio Jose da Silva.

During romanticism, drama and fiction flourished while poetry became introspective and concerned with great social questions. In 1870, a new generation brought a new critical attitude to literature that fostered realism. Jose María de Eça de Queiros and Cesário Verde are the most distinguished representatives of this movement.

The poetry of Fernando Pessoa has won universal acclaim in the twentieth century and women novelists broaden the scope of narrative fiction. Brazil has developed an

exciting literature of its own with such writers as Gilberto Freyre, Gracilano Ramos, Jorge Amado and Erico Verissimo.

**RUSSIAN:** The Russian representative lights a candle and reads the following:

The first work of Russian medieval literature to lay claim to greatness is *The Lay of Igor's Host*, written in the 12th century. It was not until the rise of Moscow in the 16th and 17th centuries that signs of a national Russian literature could be discerned. The first major work is the autobiography written by the archpriest Avvakum Petrovich at the end of the 17th century. A century later Mikhail Lomonosov and Gavrila Derzhavin wrote poetry while Aleksandr Radishchev and Nikolai Karernzin dealt with prose.

The golden age of Russian literature emerged with the works of Pushkin, in particular *Evgeny Onegin* (1833), Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* (1839-40), and Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842). Major novelists include Turgenev, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy whose reputation is founded on *War and Peace* (1865-69) and *Anna Karenina* (1875-77). Chekhov and Gorky are also internationally famous.

The 20th century opened with a revival of poetry dominated by Alexandr Blot followed by Mayakovsky and Pasternak. More recent outstanding works include *And Quiet Flows the Don* by Sholokhov and later *The Gulag Archipelago* by Nobel Prize winner Solzhenitsyn

**SPANISH:** The Spanish representative lights a candle and reads the following:

This light is for Spanish, the language in which such immortal characters as Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, Lazarillo de Tormes, and Don Juan were created. Spanish boasts such varied medieval masterpieces as *El Cantar del Mio Cid*, Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor* and *El Libro de buen amor* of the Arcipreste de Hita. Spanish is also the language of many fervent mystics and of numerous renowned *conquistadores*, who discovered and colonized vast areas of the New World. The Golden Age produced a remarkable flowering of literature with poets such as Fray Luis de Leon, San Juan de la Cruz, Góngora, and Quevedo; authors of *comedias* such as Lope de Vega, Ruiz de Alarcón, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón; and that most famous of novelists, Cervantes. In the nineteenth century, Galdós created a vast and moving vision of the Spanish world in his novels, and the literary activity of the Generation of '98, including such writers as Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Machado, Baroja, and the Nobel Prize winner Juan Ramón Jiménez, produced a profound renewal of Spanish thought and letters. Major twentieth-century writers include Ortega y Gasset, Dámaso Alonso, García Lorca, and the Nobel Prize winners Jose Echegaray, Jacinto Benavente and Camilo Jose Cela.

Spanish is also the language of a host of outstanding Spanish American authors from colonial days to the present. Among them Rubén Darío, the leading Modernist, whose book *Azul* marks the start of a new era in Latin American letters. The twentieth century has witnessed an extraordinary blossoming of Latin American letters. The Chilean poets Gabriela Mistral and Pablo Neruda won the Nobel Prize, as well as novelists Miguel Angel Asturias from Guatemala and Gabriel García Márquez from Colombia and Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet and essayist. Equally important have been the creations of Jorge Luis Borges, whose international stature is indisputable because of his influence in Western literature

**FAMILY OF LANGUAGES:** I shall now remind you that the Greek letters Phi, Sigma, Iota superimposed on the five-pointed star are the initials of our motto: "Philotes, Spoude, Idioma," which means "Friendship, Research, and Languages."

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** And now, in the name of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter, I welcome you into Phi Sigma Iota. Members of the chapter will offer you their personal congratulations.