

Their lives will become filled with anger and gloom. Little by little, they will poison themselves and all they touch"

"It was foretold that these things would come to pass, but the Tree would never die. And as long as the Tree lives, the people live. It was also foretold that the day would come when the people would begin, timidly at first but then with great urgency, to search again for the Sacred Tree".

"The knowledge about its whereabouts, and of the fruits that adorn its branches have always been carefully guarded and pre-

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES

Protecting and conserving trees which bestow socio-economic and ecological benefits to human beings is in the interest of all on earth. Tree World, the monthly Newsletter has been trying to convey this message since long. Recently, through the courtesy of Mr. Nestor Kelba, Supervisor, Environmental and Outdoor Education, Calgary Board of Education, Canada, I received a publication entitled "Trees", meant as a resource to supplement the Alberta Education Junior High Environmental and Outdoor Education Course Studies. The excerpts published therein on the "Sacred Tree" is reproduced here as it is equally relevant to the situation anywhere and should be of interest to readers of Tree World Newsletter.

"For all the people of the earth, the Creator has planted a Sacred Tree under which they may gather, and there find healing, power, wisdom and security. The roots of this tree spread deep into the body of Mother Earth. Its branches reach upwards like hands praying to Father Sky. The fruits of this tree are the good things the Creator has given to the people: things that show the path to love, compassion, generosity, patience, wisdom, justice, courage, respect, humility and many other wonderful gifts".

"The ancient ones taught us that the life of the Tree is the life of the people. If the people wander far away from the protective shadow of the Tree, if they forget to seek the nourishment of its fruit, or if they should turn against the Tree and attempt to destroy it, great sorrow will fall upon the people. Many will become sick at heart. The people will lose their power. They will cease to dream dreams and see visions. They will begin to quarrel among themselves over worthless trifles. They will become unable to tell truth and to deal with each other honestly. They will forget how to survive in their own land.

served within the minds and hearts of our wise elders and leaders. These humble, loving and dedicated souls will guide anyone who is honestly and sincerely seeking along the path leading to the protecting shadow of the Sacred Tree".

'The Sacred Tree'. Judie Bopp, Michael Bopp, Lee Brown, Phil Lane. (Four Worlds Development Press, Lethbridge, Alberta, 1985).

The more one looks at the "Tree", the more one is struck by wonder at the role it plays as a microcosm supporting and sustaining a multitude of life from the lowly fungi to primates. By itself capable of photosynthesising suns energy for its sustenance, the tree helps to stem erosion, floods and adds to the richness of the soil through litter which easily biodegrades.

Aesthetically the tree is matchless. As a nation we are steeped in tree cult in some form or other. Yet, we have no remorse in bringing one down to satisfy our greed or our materialistically cultural demands. At the other end we have the sterling example of the Chipko women who demonstrated to the world what love for their trees could achieve. Our love for trees should be more sustained than a one day or transitory exercise in tree planting and not caring.

The Tree World Newsletter has a yeoman service to render in promoting and furthering public interest in Trees and Tree life. May the thought and spirit of the 'Sacred Tree' pervade in the minds of all humans at all ages to admire, appreciate and respect this life support system.

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