

EDITORIAL

Nadu Gaddika is an impressive drama which successfully awakens in us a sense of concern and commitment to the mother earth. In the last part of this play the chieftain of the tribe is forcefully grabbed and questioned for all the ruthless actions executed on the earth and the injustices inflicted on its people. He is then coerced to ask pardon for the exploitation of and violence to the earth. The chieftain kissed the earth as a sign of contrition for exploiting earth for personal comfort and commercial gain. This symbolic gesture of the chieftain is the admission of sacredness of the land. The betrayal of this sacredness is sacreilegious and therefore to be atoned for.

The tribals believed that earth belonged to God and the ancestors and therefore it must be worshipped. World Religions contemplate earth as beautiful, divine and sacred (*Atharva Veda*, XII.1.34; *Svetasvetara Upanishad*, VI. 19; *Bhagavadgita*, VII. 9.; *Genesis*, I. 1ff; *Psalms*, 104, 108; *Numbers*, 35:33-34; *Quran*, 22, 24, 45, 54). Religious Scriptures of World Religions as well as the beliefs and practices of tribal religions, therefore, address the earth with devotion and reverence. Earth is the epiphany of the Divine. It is the visible and tangible manifestation of the Supreme. All elements of the earth are sacramental symbols and they convey the sacramental character of the mother earth. The earth in Indian tradition is not only an object of meditation for achieving worldly prosperity but also a means of realization of the Supreme.

Earth, the beautiful planet of ours, is to be viewed as a subject to be communed with. With its mighty mountains and magnificent rivers, starlit sky and sweeping wind, blooming trees and chanting birds, nature invites us to enter into communion with the Sacred and experience the divine reflected in this world. This communion with natural world is so infinitely important for our social, economic aesthetic, and spiritual survival.

As we are well aware of, today all of us are right in the middle of an eco-crisis. Pollution of nature, depletion of essential resources, green house effect and the like endanger the very existence of life on this earth. "Man and his total environment form one single whole in nature One part cannot alter, move, or change without all the

other parts readjusting. For this reason, the spider's web is often used as an analogue of the eco-system. All strands are inter-connected in fantastic complexity. One cannot break, remove, add or put a stress upon any strand but what there is, (without necessitating) an adjustment throughout the entire web" (Frank Edwin Egler, *The Way of Science*). Unfortunately, the inter-relationships in nature are totally ignored in the relentless market-dominated economic activity and consumeristic egoism of the society at large. Our attitude towards earth has changed from "*pujya* (worthy of worship) to *bhojya* (object of pleasure)." Let us remember the message of the religious scriptures of the world that this is God's earth and it is sublime and sacred. "He who dwells in the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who controls the earth from within, He is your self, the inner controller, the Immortal" (*Brith. Up.* III:7.3). As the *Indian Annual Register* (Vol. II, 1936, p.238) rightly records: "It is neither of the capitalist' nor of Zamindars' nor of anybody. It belongs to God." We are responsible for loving and caring and sharing the nature and transforming the earth to a better abode for all to carry out their human tasks.

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