

The 'Tree of Light Ceremony'

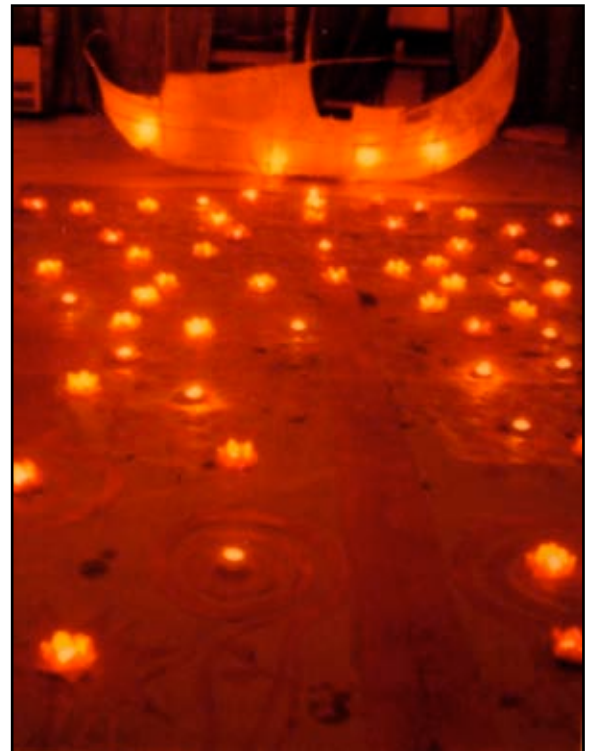


This ceremony is a beautiful way for people to enter together into an experience of bringing light, beauty and unity into the world. Using the symbolism of the tree and the elemental gesture of lighting candles, the ritual is very simple, has no religious or ideological connection and is accessible to people of all backgrounds and ages. Accompanied with songs and music from different ethnic origins, the event becomes a chorus for the world, embodying the dream for a humanity without frontiers or separation.

Many traditions honor the sacredness of trees: Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. In the Nordic myths we find Yggdrasil, the world tree, where Odin received the sacred runes. In the Cabballah the tree is a symbol for both the world and the human being. In many Jewish homes of eastern Europe paper cuttings of trees (Lelviahs) were used traditionally to decorate the windows for the Rosh Hashanah Lailanot, the festival of the trees. Yet beyond all this, the tree is a universal symbol of life and does not belong to any religion.



In the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, where the ceremony was first inaugurated, an original small paper tree was enlarged to a six by three meter tree image. This was placed on the floor and then illuminated with hundreds of candles which people placed at different points of the tree: roots, trunk or branches. With each candle people were bringing light to a place in themselves and a place in the world.



Since its creation the Tree of Light has been traveling throughout Europe, its beautiful artwork appearing at the core of conferences, celebrations and artistic events.



Previously to lighting the candles, the tree can be hung vertically and displayed in public, as a piece of art (size 3m x 6m). It will move in the wind, and passersby can contemplate it during the day. At night it is brought down and laid on the floor to be illuminated with candles during the ceremony.



Poems can be read, music played, stories told, prayers said. Experience has proved this to be a very moving happening. As it has no specific religious or ideological color, it is accessible to people of all of all nations, colors and religions. And yet it has the powerful spell of a ritual enhancing the link between the human family and the Universe.

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