



When you ask yourself, why have I never helped celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday, are you stuck for an answer? Serious about thinking globally, acting locally, and asking snotty questions of authority? Help's on the way. The second annual Tibetan Cultural Festival hits Portland (the big city in the Valley) July 6th-11th.

**Why the big fuss?**

In 1949, the Chinese military occupied Tibet. Arivederci, Shangri La. The planet's oldest theocracy was, there's no nice way to put it, violently swept away. In the political adjustment that followed, 12 million Tibetans, one sixth of the population, have died. More than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed (take a moment to think about this), their art pillaged, their gold statuary--once a treasure of the planet--either sold on the Asian antiquities market or melted down for bullion. Sixty percent of Tibet's literature was thrown onto Chinese built bonfires. Schools and hospitals were closed. By the 1970's, one out of ten Tibetans had been imprisoned. One hundred thousand remain in forced labor camps.

Thinking locally, if the Chinese government was Weyerhaeuser, the Tibetans would be spotted owls.

In 1959, 100,000 Tibetans followed the Dalai Lama, spritual leader of the oldest root of Buddhism, into exile in Dharmasala, India. The fourteenth reincarnation of the Compassionate Buddha and winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize turns 58 on the sixth of July. The second annual Tibetan Cultural Festival is a gift. Proceeds go to the Tibetan Foundation of Oregon and SW Washington and to the US Resettlement Project. Portland is one of 20 American cities hosting and sponsoring immigrants.

The amazing thing about these people, says Rhonda Kennedy, festival organizer, "is the complete lack of bitterness, either to the Chinese people or their government." With their nation deforested, plagued by floods, and suffering from famines unknown throughout their country's 2,000 year history, the universal compassion that forms the heart of the religion hasn't so much as flickered.

Once again, three monks -- personal emissaries of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama -- will sanctify the proceedings by constructing a sand mandala. The Fire Kalachakra is a ritual geometric figure of boggling beauty and complexity. A devotion, a meditation, and evocation of universal peace, it will be ritually swept away.

Impermanence under pattern, pushing upward.

Our thought for the month comes from Edward Abbey, pushy environmentalist: "Where there is no joy, there can be no courage, and without courage, all other virtues are useless."

**THE SEEDS OF EXTINCTION**

**Opinion**

Nineteen sixty eight, was a very different year than is 1993, especially for Silver Salmon, the Coho. The fish, traveling north from winter feeding waters usually arrive about July 4 off Newport. In '68 they arrived in numbers nearly unimaginable given the present condition of the stock. Day after day, I and other dory fishermen left the docks at dawn, filled our fish boxes, often by noon, (mine held 300 lbs) returned to sell our fish, have lunch, then went back out for the evening bite to catch more fish, lay up more bucks for the (then) 120 days of closed season from November til March.

It was the bonanza the state and federal fish managers had been promising for nearly a generation. They had been closing the small and (they said) inefficient hatcheries gracing nearly every stream capable of supporting a run of Coho and replacing them with large centralized fish factories they promised would fill the rivers with fish.

This bonanza, just as those earlier ones of gold and silver left desolate ghost towns on sagebrush flats, bequeathed its own legacy; salmon trolliers mouldering away on blocks beside the water. The fishermen, unfortunately, weren't like the prospectors, bartenders, whores and itinerant storekeepers who could abandon the ghost towns and move on. They were family men, often

operating a boat built by a father or grandfather. They had wives, house payments, children in school. They too moulder away pumping gas, frying burgers, driving gravel trucks or working in a sawmill until the doom created by another group of professional managers cinches off the log supply.

What happened? Maybe this... Silver salmon are primarily a "short river" fish. The rivers that flow for a few dozens or scores of miles from the coastal mountains to the Pacific and to a lesser extent the lower tributaries of longer rivers are their natural homes. Spawners enter the streams late in the fall, laying their eggs usually in December and early January. The young remain in the rivers until May or early June when they migrate to salt water as smolts. Two years later they return to their natal streams to spawn.

Each stream is unique. There are differences in size, in flow, in gradient, in available nutrients, even in the taste of the water. The latter evidenced by native stocks' ability to nearly unerringly return to their home stream.

Over the millenia of their existence, nature and periodic natural catastrophes winnowed out those fish less efficient in surviving the specific conditions of their home streams. If a fish wasn't among those who prospered in the stream, went strongly to sea and returned heavy with eggs or milt, that fish's offspring would not increase. They would be crowded out by others better able, during stressful times, to utilise the habitat to which they were born. Fish originating in the brawling mountain waters of a Toutle or Clackamas river are fit for an entirely different set of circumstances than those from the sedate sinuosities of a Trask, a Coos, a Yaquina easing down the flatter, ancient valleys from the Coast Range.

The small hatcheries, the ones that were closed in the 1940's and '50's, trapped fish native to the streams on which

they stood. They held them in a pond til the eggs in their bellies ripened, stripped the eggs, fertilized them and spread them in gravels in a flume through which the stream water flowed. After the eggs hatched, the hatchlings remained in the gravels of the flume until the egg sack was used up. They then went down the flume and entered the stream to begin life on their own. The only real difference between natural spawning and the way these hatcheries operated was that an average of 75% of the eggs taken by a hatchery hatched as opposed to 10-15% for natural spawn. These low tech, tiny, cheap to operate hatcheries produced enough fish that viable commercial gill net fisheries existed in most of the streams they served into the 1950's.

We haven't been so fortunate with the fish factories. With the big hatcheries it isn't possible, in the name of efficiency, to bring fish from hundreds of streams, mature them, keep them separate from other stocks and return their offspring to native waters. In many cases, what they had was what they planted in whatever stream was scheduled to get a dose of smolts that day. This has created stocks of Coho that have been crossbred, bastardised and mongrelised into genetic travesties unfit to live anywhere outside of the bottom lines of reports listing so many smolts raised, so many released, at a cost of so many dollars per...

But the fish managers and politicians love the big hatcheries. The politicians love the neatly trimmed acres of lawn dotted with cement pools filled with pretty fish to impress visiting VIP's. The fish managers love the government subsidised housing on site and not having to bumle up dozens of gravel roads to check on employees at ridiculous little hatcheries along the streams. Much easier to mosey over to the coffee room or go check out the guy running the lawnmower. His office is air conditioned and he's home every night for dinner. He gets to meet a lot of politicians and VIP's too. That can't hurt the old career.

So the Coho have had their cultures of brawling mountain creeks and quiet coastal rivers stolen from them. As the Sioux, the Cherokees and other tribes were forced from their lands to wither and die under government supervision on reservations, so the Coho wanes. Native Americans now hire or educate their own people as lawyers to protect their remaining heritage. The Coho haven't that ability. It would seem, a comparatively few dollars should be spent to re-open some of the small hatcheries on streams where native runs remain. I think it's worth a try. Not to try, to let the wild Coho disappear, is criminal.

*Alex La Jollette*

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