

**Stone Circle  
Only One Earth  
World Environment Day**  
5 June 2022

**Remarks  
Ambassador Tanmaya Lal**

Mamma Kajsa,  
Mr. Jan Mårtensson,  
Ms. Ann Follin,

Thank you for inviting us for this beautiful ceremony.

Greetings to everyone assembled here,

It is great to see so many enthusiastic young children.

This ceremony shows the unity of all humanity and our world.

Grateful to be part of this ceremony on the World Environment Day.

Stones tell stories. Stories of deep time.

Of billions of years ! Times that we cannot even imagine easily.

They tell us how we are all inter-connected, even things which may appear to us as non-living.

That's why many cultures, including in India, hold such rocks or stones or trees or rivers as sacred.

The stone from India here has come from the Ganga River valley on the foothills of Himalaya.

Rivers are considered holy in India and Ganga is the most sacred. Ganga has been like a mother to hundreds of millions of people through the ages.

The stone has come from Rishikesh, one of the holy pilgrimage places on banks of Ganga river. His Majesty The King of Sweden had visited Rishikesh in December 2019.

If you touch and hold this stone you will see that it is beautifully rounded.

That shows that its surface has been smoothed over millions of years by the waters of Ganga that flows down from the mighty Himalaya mountains, the tallest in the world.

They were raised when India separated from Africa in Gondwanaland around 100 million years ago, moved north and pushed the Asian plate. Scientists have found that some of the rock layers on top of the Himalaya mountain were actually under the Sea more than 50 million years ago.

And Himalaya is still rising. Like the Höga Kusten or High Coast of Sweden, which is rising after the retreat of the last ice age 12,000 years ago. This beautiful Stockholm archipelago was also created at that time. On many of the rocks here in the archipelago, you can see striations that are marks left behind by the retreating ice.

Many of those rocks on top of Himalaya mountains are limestone, which is made of the shells of sea creatures! So, these living creatures that lived under a sea or on the sea floor millions of years ago have today, turned to beautiful stones and rocks sitting now on top of a mountain.

Some of you may have noticed beautiful fossils in the limestone floorings and staircases in many old buildings in Stockholm. They remind us of creatures that lived 350 million years ago when Sweden was near the equator and under the sea! Many of these creatures are now extinct.

Just like the rocks, all of us are also made of atoms such as Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Iron, Nitrogen that are being continuously recycled. These elements were created in stars long time ago. And they have been around for a long time.

They flow between rocks that hold oil or water, trees, oceans and clouds and life on earth.

Therefore, rocks are like long conversations that keep happening in deep time between the earth, water, air and life.

Sometimes rocks even from outer space arrive on earth. Like the beautiful Siljan lake in Dalarna. It was formed when a meteorite reached earth nearly 400 million years ago.

So, the rocks remind us that in nature nothing is constant or permanent. Everything keeps changing and transforming. A message that is true for all our lives.

The human race began its journey when it started shaping stone as tools.

They also painted and carved scenes from their lives and imagination on rocks. You can see wonderful examples of rock art here in Sweden, for example in Nämforsen or Tanum, dating back to thousands of years.

Across Sweden we can see so many clusters of Runestones that are like diary of messages recalling important events in people's lives. There are some even in Gamla Stan, the old town.

We continue to use rocks and minerals even today. To extract water, or oil & gas, something we are finally moving away from, or we use them to build houses and these magnificent buildings or in glass, steel or cement or even in smartphone chips.

**Our ancestors had understood that we are all part of nature and everything that we see around us is interconnected. And that everything keeps changing. They respected nature and had understood the cycle of life.**

If we understand this truly, we can really work towards a much more peaceful planet, one where life will have a sustainable future for a long time to come.

Once again thank you Mamma Kajsa and GlobeTree for your enthusiasm and huge initiative.

Best wishes to everyone on this World Environment Day.

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