

A [sample entry](#) from the

# **Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature**

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There are certain taboos in this pilgrimage. Senior pilgrims advise novice members to protect themselves against possible dangers caused by abusive words. Unprotected speech may result in people getting lost in the journey. In particular, it is important not to offend the mountain deity. However, the taboos do not prevent the use of positive words. In the Sripada pilgrimage, pilgrims are highly active in making jokes, using good humor, and extending greetings to other pilgrims. One can also observe the devotees who recite devotional quadrants. These activities remove the boredom and make climbing more comfortable. The Sripada pilgrimage is highly entertaining and filled with intense devotional religious activities related to nature.

*Mahinda Deegalle*

#### Further Reading

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- See also: Sacred Mountains; Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

### Pinchot, Gifford (1865–1946)

Gifford Pinchot is known primarily as a forester and progressive politician in early twentieth-century America. Generally acknowledged as the first professional forester in the United States, Pinchot also emerged as a major figure in the Progressive and Republican Parties, leading to his election as governor of Pennsylvania in the 1920s. His work in forestry and progressive politics crystallized in his leadership of the movement to conserve natural resources, countering years of unrestrained exploitation of nature. Pinchot, sometimes called the "apostle of conservation," helped to cast conservation as a moral crusade for social reform.

Pinchot was born in 1865 in Connecticut to a wealthy Huguenot family from Pennsylvania with business ties to New York City. As a youth, Pinchot was immersed in the widespread evangelical Protestantism of his time. He read religious classics, attended Presbyterian services, taught

#### Pinchot on Church and Country

Gifford Pinchot expressed practical concerns for rural life and especially country churches in a time of their general decline. He co-authored two books on the country church which were published (1913, 1919) by the Federal Council of Churches, a national group then oriented toward the social gospel. The books were sociological studies of rural areas of New York, Ohio, and Vermont, showing how federated or "progressive" churches could restore the value and care of the land. The following remarks are from Pinchot's opening address to the Conference on Church and Country Life, Columbus, Ohio, December 1915:

There can be no permanently sound and vigorous life for the Nation unless life in the country is vigorous and sound. Country life cannot be morally sound, physically healthy, attractive in its social opportunities and business returns, and generally satisfying and efficient unless the country church does its full share to make it so. And the country church cannot do its part unless it is sound and vigorous itself. The country church is one of the greatest roots from which spring national integrity, vitality, and intelligence. Its life and power are of nation wide concern.

The permanent strength of any civilization is best measured by the soundness of life on the land. It was the failure of agriculture far more than the decadence of the cities that sapped the power of ancient Rome. The farmer feeds and clothes us all. From the country comes the strong new blood which renews the vigor of the towns. The tenacious spiritual ideals of the open country constitute our most resisting [sic] barrier against the growing laxity and luxury of our social organization. It is the country church rather than the city church which is in fact our best defense against the advance of the evils of our time.

*D. Keith Naylor*

#### Further Reading

- The Gifford Pinchot Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. "Address of Gifford Pinchot at the Conference on Church and Country Life." Columbus, Ohio, 11:00 a.m., 8 December 1915.

Sunday School, and was class deacon at Yale, responsible for conducting the religious activities of the class, such as weekday prayer meetings. Upon college graduation, however, Pinchot declined a religiously oriented job with the Young Men's Christian Association and instead cultivated his love of the outdoors, pursuing a career in the not-yet-established profession of forestry.

As an adult, Pinchot was involved with the Episcopal Church, but more important than institutional affiliation was his exposure to the social reform currents of evangelical Protestantism. He may be seen as part of a generational cohort that one historian has called “ministers of reform,” who eschewed the Protestant ministry but invoked Protestant values to push for social reform. Pinchot’s writings and activities revealed the influence of the then-popular social gospel, sometimes referred to as “the Progressive movement at prayer.” Social gospelers, eager to build the kingdom of God on Earth, sought to apply Christian principles to the myriad social problems arising from industrialization. Pinchot’s choice of location in setting up his forestry consultancy office disclosed his early conception of forestry (and later, conservation) as part of the broad movement for social reform. He opened his New York forestry office in the United Charities Building, the well-known headquarters in the 1890s for mission and tract societies, organizations fighting to end child labor and poverty, women’s rights groups, and consumer rights groups, among others.

Pinchot’s pioneering research in the vast woods of the Vanderbilt estate in North Carolina launched his forestry career. His work there formed the basis of his groundbreaking exhibit on scientific forest management at the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893. Pinchot advanced as a national figure in forestry, and was appointed Chief Forester of the U.S. by President McKinley in 1899, a position he held until dismissed by President Taft in 1910. Taking advantage of his close friendship with Theodore Roosevelt, Pinchot combined forestry with issues of irrigation and land reclamation and developed the conservation of natural resources as a primary domestic policy of Roosevelt’s presidency. The 1908 White House Conference of Governors on the Conservation of Natural Resources, masterminded by Pinchot, was a high point for conservation as a national movement, and led to historic conservation policies, a national inventory of natural resources, and later, joint conservation agreements with Canada and Mexico.

Pinchot’s popularization of the term “conservation of natural resources” revealed his utilitarian approach to nature. While an outdoorsman throughout his life, and a one-time camping companion of John Muir, Pinchot was, nonetheless, wedded to ideas of scientific management, efficiency, and economic benefit in relation to nature. Never an absolute preservationist, he sought to apply scientific principles to the maintenance and use of forests and rivers for the good of humankind. His typically progressive concern for “the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time” thrust him into battles against monopolistic corporate abusers of the land and cast him as a crusader for the public good.

Pinchot’s devotion to the public good was steeped in democratic idealism and was informed by the social gospel

emphasis on relieving economic exploitation. Pinchot linked monopolies and economic inequality to the ruinous exploitation of nature and argued for moral reform. His rendering of conservation was a blend of applied science (his forestry background) and applied religion (the social gospel influence) that became a hallmark of the Progressive Era.

Pinchot’s autobiography, *Breaking New Ground*, completed shortly before his death in 1946, serves as a significant history of American forestry and conservation. It documents Pinchot’s practical, utilitarian approach to nature, and perhaps more important, it registers his religiously based emphasis on the use and care of nature and its resources as a moral issue.

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- See also: Conservation Biology; Environmental Ethics; Muir, John; National Parks and Monuments (United States); Wilderness Religion.

## P Planetary Dance

In April of 1998 and 1999, the Institute for Deep Ecology, in conjunction with the Tamalpa Institute, put on a workshop entitled “Embodying Nature: An Experience in Deep Ecology.” The workshop took place at Mountain Home Studio in Kentfield, California, which is located at the home of Anna and Lawrence Halprin on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County, California.

The workshop represented the first collaboration between the Institute for Deep Ecology and Anna Halprin, who is one of the pioneers in Modern Dance as well as a leading figure among those who integrate the expressive and healing arts. The dance workshop, which I attended and here describe, conjoined and culminated in the annual Planetary Dance, which included people not in the original workshop. The Planetary Dance was a separate event from the workshop, with its own history of development, which I describe below.

The two faculty persons for the workshop were Anna Halprin and Ken Otter. Anna Halprin has been a major figure in the world of modern dance for much of the