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some parrots and several songbird species were domesticated for religious purposes, while howler monkeys, hares, quail, and woodpeckers were maintained in captivity for ritual purposes.

Domestication is a process by which humans have extended their control over nature, bringing certain plant and animal species under their direct control. The first domestication of cereals and herd animals in the Ancient Near East nearly 10,000 years ago led to a significant change in the nature of humans' relationship with their environment, one that had remained relatively unchanged since the species *Homo sapiens* first appeared on Earth. The more assured food supply permitted the emergence of permanent settlements, population growth, the rise of cities, social stratification, religious systems, technological advances – indeed, all the features commonly identified with "civilization." Traditional views propose that domestication was undertaken for utilitarian reasons, but these views have been challenged by those who argue that a religious revolution preceded the emergence of agriculture and that religious belief and practices may have played a critical role in this process. Whatever the validity of this view, numerous examples exist where religion and ritual may have been involved in the emergence of specific domesticates. Religion has, in a sense, acted as an arbiter between humans and nature. It has allowed humans to explain their place in the natural world, but has also allowed them to dramatically change the character of this very same world. The domestication of plants and animals has been one means by which the latter has been accomplished.

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See also: Ecological Anthropology; Ecology and Religion; Goshalas (Home for Aged Cattle); Hinduism; India.

Donga Tribe

The "Donga Tribe," as they came to be called, were a group of 15–20 young people who lived for most of 1992 directly on Twyford Down in an effort to stop the land from being destroyed for the M3 (Southampton–London) motorway. Twyford Down was apparently "the most protected site in Britain," its chalk downland the habitat for a number of rare species, ensuring that several areas were designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Twyford Down had long been an area of human habitation; a barrow containing excavated skeletons was just one of several Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The whole Down was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Another Scheduled Ancient Monument on part of the Down was the iron-age trackways where the Dongas had their camp. These trackways were first called "Dongas" nearly a century ago by the two ex-Winchester private schoolboys who left Twyford Down in the protection of Winchester College in their wills. Dongas is the Matabele word for the same type of humanmade gullies and remained the local word for the trackways. The group of

people who came together to protect and live on the land "acquired" the name the Donga Tribe, and this self–identification with the land itself quickly became explicitly tied to their political and spiritual beliefs.

The Dongas, Earth First!ers, and other activists (needless to say, these identities blurred) who, over the course of the protest, delayed the motorway construction through their direct actions, were the catalyst that sparked a decade of roads' protest and related direct action in the nineties, and up to the present day. The Dongas were, to borrow Sidney Tarrow's term, "early risers" in this protest cycle, and thus their actions and worldviews had a significant influence on the wave of activists who followed. In turn, many of these ideas had diffused down from Greenham Common women – whose long-lived anti-nuclear protests became a model for the Dongas activists to emulate.

In the first stages of the protest (autumn 1992), the primary action strategy was to defend the land from "attacks" by the contractors and their machinery; a regular occurrence was the arrival of bulldozers on the Donga end of the Down, activists lying down in front of the machinery, and the retreat of the bulldozers. This changed on "Yellow Wednesday" (9 December 1992 and, ominously for the Dongas, the date of a full moon lunar eclipse) when for the first time security guards were hired to forcibly remove the Dongas and other activists from the site. The three-day eviction sparked accusations of security and police violence, national media coverage, and a resurgence of protest at Twyford in 1993. "Site invasions" – charging onto the increasingly vast (40 meters deep, 250 meters wide, a mile long) scar through the Down and stopping the machines working – became a regular occurrence, sometimes attracting hundreds of people.

Underpinning the political direct actions of the Dongas was an ethical framework, an explicit spirituality – or to be precise, a political paganism. The Dongas explicitly articulated a sense of connection to nature; nature was seen as sacred. Crucially, the Dongas saw themselves and all life as part of this web: nature was not some "other." These concepts (most people were familiar with Lovelock's "Gaia" theories) were linked to ideas about significant landscapes and Earth energies. The Down, and the nearby hillfort St. Catherines' Hill, were "powerpoints," markers for currents of Earth energy or leylines. The Dongas were not alone on this; the founder of Winchester College, also a Mason, was also a keen sacred geometrist, and to this day, Winchester College schoolboys hold a service on the Hill on summer solstice morning.

The Dongas felt that these beliefs would have been shared by the Bronze and Iron Age people who had lived on the Down. Identifying with sacred landscape thus meant identifying with these earlier "tribes." They felt such a connection to the place and its history that they produced stories, poems, songs and myths about wheels come full circle, new tribes, old ways. Conscious parallels were also made with the beliefs and political land-rights struggles of indigenous tribes worldwide.

Magic reality, myth-weaving and sympathetic magic melded into direct action. Believing themselves protected by the land that they physically defended with their bodies, they symbolized this protection and called it into being with the use of significant images and objects. Music, especially drumming, and invoking protection through chants and songs, often preceded action, and went on during it. The Dongas would stop work for the day by running onto a worksite at the other end of the Down, dressed in a wicker and cloth dragon and sitting on the machines. They would meet the advancing bulldozers with (for example) goddess chants, faces smeared with chalk from the Down, sage sticks – the purifying herb used in ritual by the North American Indians – and hazel pentacles (the pentacle symbolised protection and the five elements – Earth, air, fire, water and spirit). Their camp was protected by a ditch that they dug in the shape of a dragon (the dragon symbolized Earth energy), runes, and a hawthorn hedge. Women on the camp would go out on moonlit nights and make very personal magic, planting (for example) garlic bulbs (as a purifying herb, garlic symbolized protection) and other objects of personal importance on the boundaries of the land. They would sing, invoke (most often) the moon, and ask for the land to be protected.

Simply on the level of group psychology, this meld of ritual and direct action worked well, uniting and empowering the group and making the digger drivers (and later the security guards) very wary. In the early days, it was significant how the bulldozers always stopped at the dragon ditch boundary at the edge of the camp. On the first night of "Yellow Wednesday," when the lunar eclipse started and the (outnumbered) Dongas broke back onto the land now defended by security guards, the guards huddled around their fires as the Dongas danced. Dozens quit their jobs the following day.

Donga paganism was of a very earthy, "hedge-witch" nature (i.e., closer to country herbalism than anything else). Thus plant identification, noticing what was in season and making herbal remedies with the results such as comfrey root ointment for bruises and rosehip syrup for colds was a mainstay of Donga paganism. Everyday nature, the facts of life, growth and change, were at the heart of what was seen as magical. Similarly, the Dongas observed and celebrated natural cycles such as full moon and winter solstice with fire, music, drumming, circle-dancing and often the ingesting of "magic mushrooms," an indigenous hallucinogenic mushroom which, whilst "recreational," also enabled shamanic connection to the Earth/universe, increasing the sense of sacredness. On such nights (and on many others), protection "spells" for the Down were made up on the spot during drumming and chanting sessions like performance poems, very

differently from formalized ritual. "Male" and "female" energies present in living things were celebrated, articulated in archetypal ways – the Green Man, the Triple Goddess (maid/mother/crone; also linked to the moon, new/full/waning). One such "spell" sung straight out went: "green man of sap springing / moon lady water flowing / both bound together / protect the land around us."

It should be emphasized that the Dongas did not claim to see these essences actually manifesting (unless they had eaten many magic mushrooms). Rather, they were symbolic ways of reestablishing connections to nature, and, as importantly, to history.

Such everyday "cookbook" eco-magic was tied into ideas about living lightly on the Earth through living communally and sustainably. The Dongas lived in benders (like rounded tepees) made from saplings and tarpaulins, ate communal simple meals, buried their feces, etc. Such alternative lifestyles were seen as providing at least partial solutions to overconsumption and an anthropocentric alienation from nature, viewed as the modern (Western) condition. Critiques of Christianity's role in creating cultures/structures of patriarchal anthropocentrism and dislocation from nature were a common thread, concentrating on such manifestations as the power implications of burning village midwives and herbalists as witches, the loss of animism, and the like. Such discourses, and the political paganism, link Donga spirituality to ecofeminist, deep ecology, and social ecology perspectives, as such distinctions often blur among and within individuals.

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See also: Anarchism; Deep Ecology; Dragon Environmental Network (United Kingdom); Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front; Ecofeminism (various); Eco-Paganism; Radical Environmentalism; Social Ecology.

P Dragon Environmental Network (United Kingdom)

Dragon was founded in London in 1990 to link environmental action with a magical practice called "eco-magic." Founding members sought a practical expression of the pagan belief that "the Earth is sacred."

Dragon's practical work began with woodland conservation, but within months we became involved in the campaign to save Oxleas Wood. Dragon worked closely with other campaign groups providing practical as well as eco-magical support. We initiated a postcard campaign and petition, published a school information pack on the Wood and helped organize fundraising events.

Dragon initially kept our magical work secret, but allowed it to become public knowledge once our practical worth was proved. Oxleas Wood became a major campaign success when the road project was shelved in July 1993. As Dragon became more widely known, the need arose to establish basic principles that allowed flexibility but clearly established our identity.

We agreed that:

1. Dragon believes that the Earth is sacred.
2. Dragon is a decentralized network – a web of people working together on local, national and international issues.
3. Dragon combines practical environmental work with eco-magic. Each is as important as the other and it is through this synergy that we focus our vision for change.
4. Dragon is committed to nonviolent direct action.
5. Anyone who shares our principles and aims is welcome to join, regardless of their religion or spiritual path.

Our aims were defined as to:

1. Increase general awareness of the sacredness of the Earth.
2. Encourage Pagans to become involved in conservation work.
3. Encourage Pagans to become involved in environmental campaigns.
4. Develop the principles and practice of magical and Spiritual action for the environment (which we call "eco-magic").

With Oxleas Wood safe, Dragon became more involved with the M11 road protests in East London and the Twyford Down campaign. The Dongas Tribe, who were encamped on the Down, were natural allies, although Dragon remained an essential urban pagan group.

Dragon grew throughout the early 1990s reaching a membership of over 300 in 13 local groups. The organiza-