

UNIT - 11

The King And The Tree Goddess

ACTIVITY - 1

Identify the trees and write their names.



ACTIVITY - 2

Read the following paragraph.

Kalpavriksha and Chatiyavriksha scriptures mention that worshipping of trees has been an ancient Indian practice. The Hindus, Buddhists and Jains consider the Asoka tree as the most legendary and sacred tree of India. Myth says that Lord Buddha was born under this tree in Lumbini. Bael tree is considered to

be sacred too because of its alliance with Lord Shiva, who is pleased by Bael leaf offerings. The Bamboo tree is also a sacred plant for its association with Lord Krishana – Venugopal, since his bansuri is actually made of Bamboo.

Banana is known as a sacred plant since its fruits are offered to Lord Vishnu. Tulsi plant is always associated with purity, revered by the Hindus and is most loved by Lord Vishnu. The coconut tree is known as “Kalp Vriksha” in Sanskrit and enjoys special importance in most Hindu rituals. The fruit is believed to represent Lord Shiva and the three black marks on the coconut shell depicts his eyes.

From the above paragraph complete the information in the column below.

Religious tree/plant	Religious significance	Its multipurpose uses

ACTIVITY - 3

THE KING AND THE TREE-GODDESS

This is a story, Koki's grandmother narrated the children on a wet monsoon evening, when it was impossible to play outside. Grandmother loved trees and this was one of her favorite tree stories.

There was once a king living in the Himalayan foothills, who longed to build himself a palace more beautiful than any he had seen in that part of the world. He could not make it richer, taller or stronger than any other without going to a great deal of expense and trouble. So he decided to build something different: the entire palace was to be supported by one column only, and that column was to be made from the tallest tree in the kingdom.

Key Words:

foothills – base of the mountains

delay – take a long time

protested – to oppose

steep – high and straight

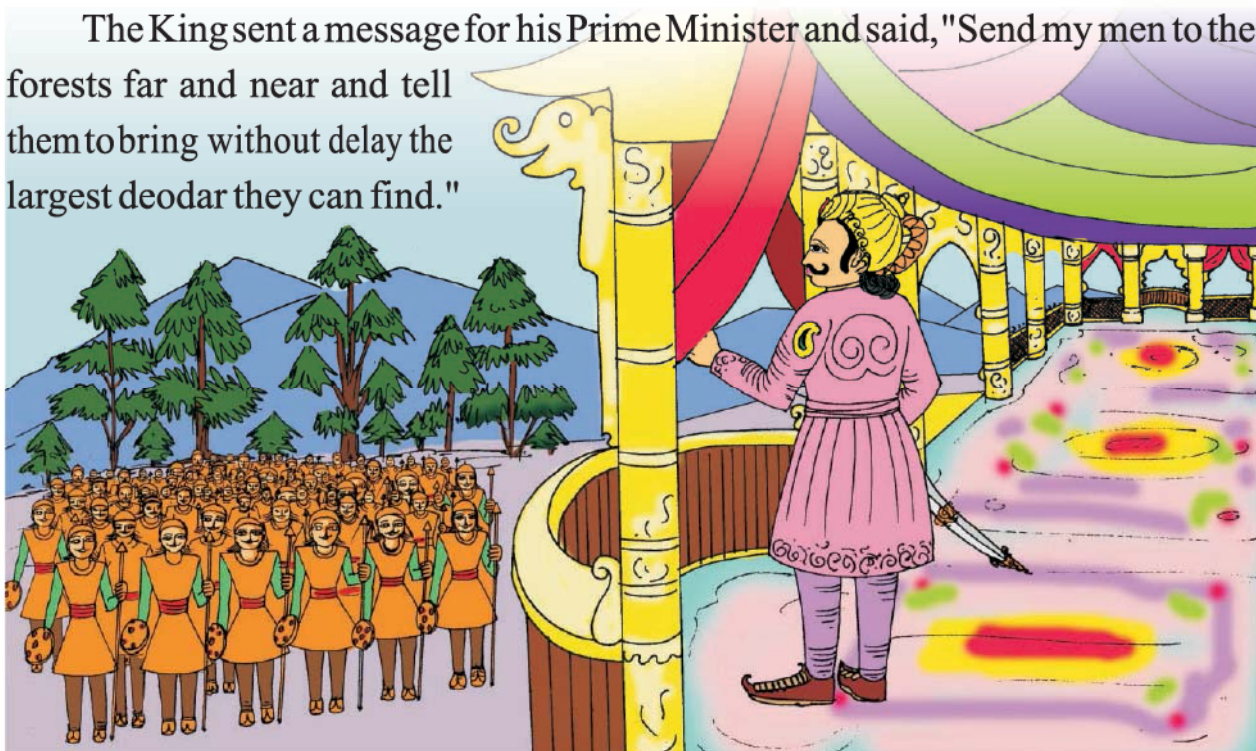
column – a strong straight pillar

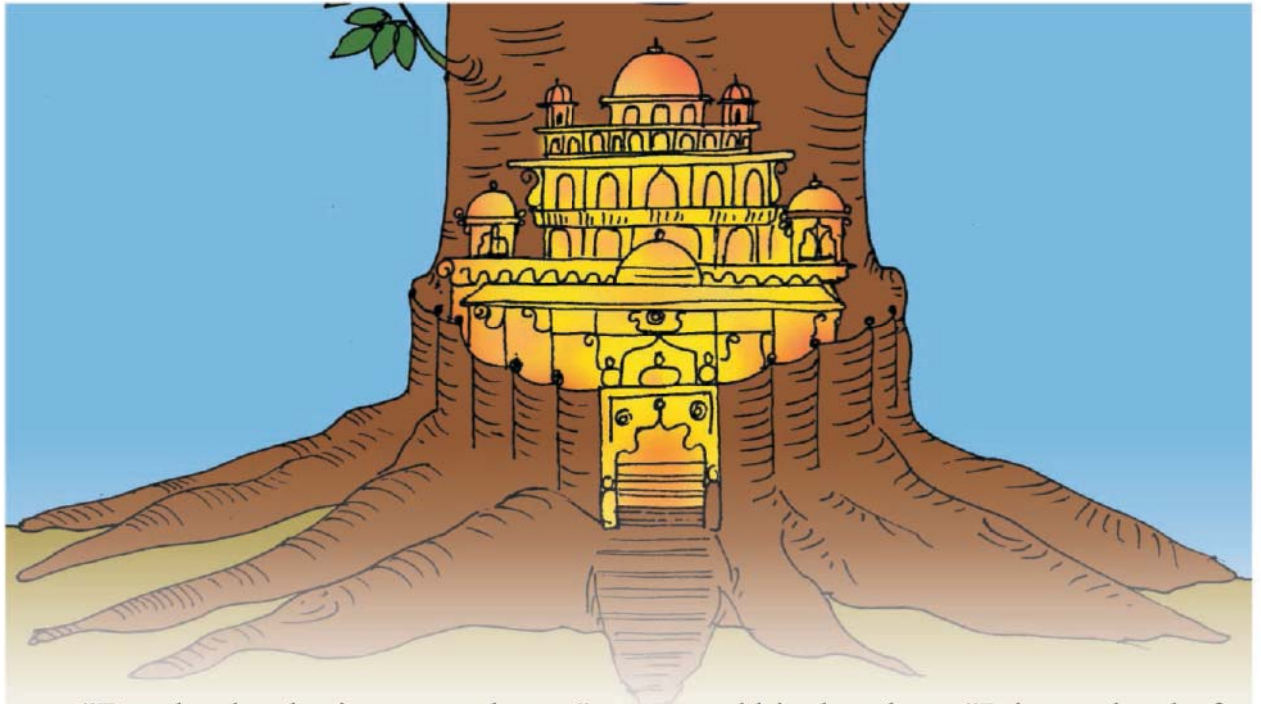
sacred – holy

drag – to pull

In the Himalayas, there were many tall trees - spruce and pine, oak and deodar. And the tallest and the strongest were the deodars, whose very name, Deo-Dar, means Tree of God.

The King sent a message for his Prime Minister and said, "Send my men to the forests far and near and tell them to bring without delay the largest deodar they can find."





"But the deodar is a sacred tree," protested his daughter. "It is used only for building temples."

"All the more reason for me to have one," said the King. "My palace shall be as magnificent as any temple!"

The Prime Minister sent out thirty men but they soon returned, saying that though there were many great deodars in the kingdom, they could never carry them over.

When the King heard this, he called his son and said, "Take your horsemen, and with the help of your horses, bring me one of these trees."

The prince rode out with his horsemen but returned after a few days, saying, "No horses could move such a tree even an inch. We have tried oxen too, but without any success."

"Well, then, try elephants," said the King.

Elephants were brought from the plains, but the hills were too steep for them, and the paths too narrow; they had to return to the valley.

"Very well," said the King angrily. "In one of my own parks you must find me a tree just as big as any in the forests. Bring it to me within seven days."

Answer the following questions.

1. What did the king wish for?

2. Write the name of trees that are mentioned in the story.

3. Do you find any difference between tall and tallest?

Tall, taller, tallest

These words are used to describe the height of something. In the story you will find the sentences like this:

He could not make it richer, taller or stronger than any other without going to a great deal of expense and trouble.

Look at the picture. You will clearly understand when to use this type of words.



Tall



Taller



Tallest

4. Read the story once again. Find out other sentences from the story in which such words are used.

ACTIVITY - 4

Part-2

After much searching, the King's men found a splendid deodar tree growing not far from the city. It was worshipped by the people of many villages round about, because within it lived a Goddess, and it was she who gave to the tree its great strength, size and beauty.

When the Prime Minister and his men decided that the column for the King's palace must be made from this lofty deodar tree, they came with garlands, lamps and music to pay their respects to the Goddess inside, and to warn her that she must leave her abode. Within seven days it had to be cut to the ground.

They lit their lamps and placed them in a circle round the tree. They hung their garlands upon the branches. Then, joining hands, some danced, and others sang:

With cruel axe we've come
To fell your age-long home;
Forgive us, great Tree-Goddess
We dance before your throne!
To please the King must we
Cut down your loveliest tree.

The Tree-Goddess heard, and understood what was about to happen. She remained quiet as a resting breeze for a few moments, and then all her leaves

Key Words:

abode – home

lofty – big and strong



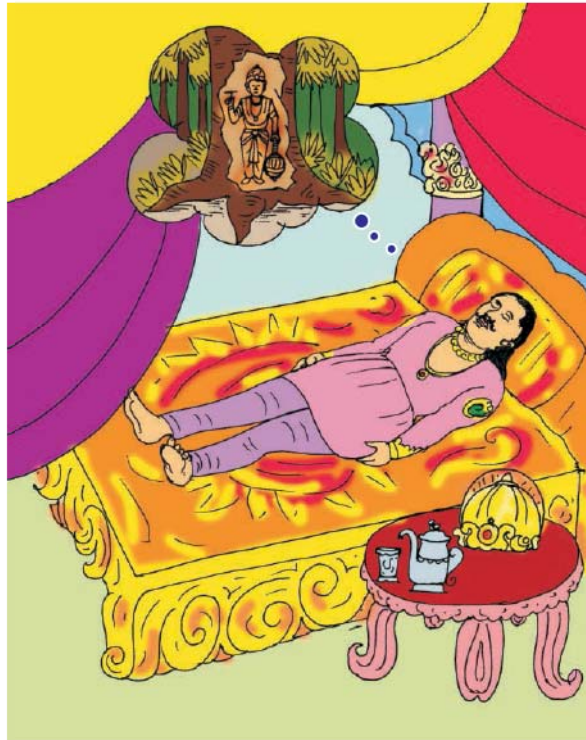
began to whisper and her topmost branches bowed. The men went away satisfied that she had heard and understood.

That night, when the King was asleep, a glorious figure appeared to him, and spoke in a voice that was like the rustle of autumn leaves:

"I am the Goddess of the Deodar tree, great King. Your men have told me that you intend to cut me down. I have come to beg you to change your mind."

"No, my mind is made up," answered the King in his dream. "Yours is the only tree in all my parks strong enough to support by itself a palace and therefore I must have it."

"But consider, oh King! For hundreds of years, I have been worshipped by the people of all the villages in your kingdom and nothing but good has gone out from me to them. The birds' nest in me. I send a most lovely shade upon the grass. Men rest against my trunk and wild creatures rub themselves against me. The earth blesses me and sends up new plants and herbs under my protective arms. I bind the earth with my strong roots. Children play at my feet, and women returning from the fields seek refuge in my coolness."



Key Words:

rustle – sound

draped – wound around

refuge – shelter



ACTIVITY - 5

Answer the following questions.

1. How did the people show their respect to the deodar tree?

2. Why did the prime minister and his men decide to pray to the deodar tree?

3. Imagine that you are the Goddess of tree. How would you convince the king to change his mind?

ACTIVITY - 6

PART-3

"That's true enough, good Tree-Goddess," said the King, "but all the same I cannot spare you. My mind is made up, my will cannot be shaken."

The Tree-Goddess sank her head upon her breast and spoke in tones of great sorrow:

"Then, mighty King, grant me one last request. Let me be felled in three parts. First my head, with its crown of waving greenery. Next my middle, with its hundred strong arms and hands. And last my base, which bears the heaviest and knottiest of my limbs upon it."

Key Words:

felled – cut

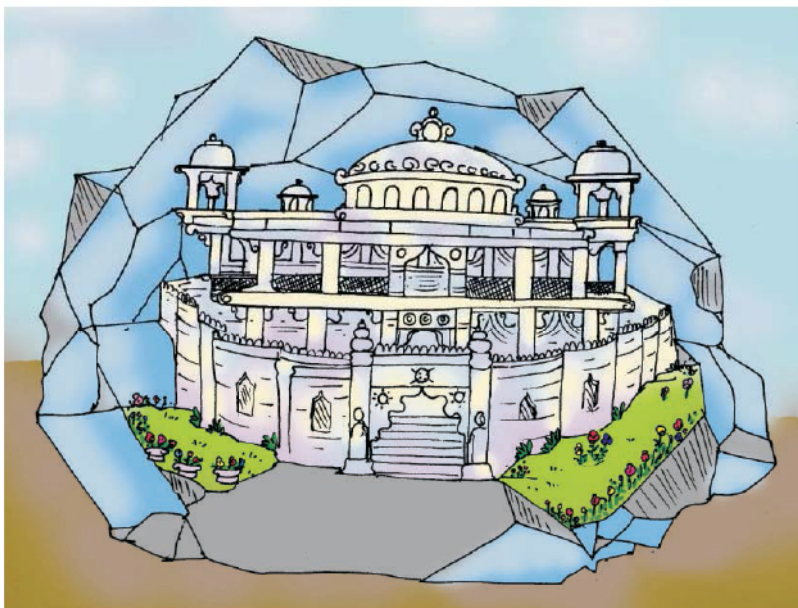
marveled – admired

vision – sight

flocked – together

"This is a strange request," said the King. "I have never before heard of someone who wished to suffer the death stroke thrice! Why not suffer it once, and have done with it?"

"The reason is plain," said the Tree-Goddess. "Dozens of young deodar



trees have sprung from me, and have grown up around me. Should you fell me with one mighty stroke, my weight would certainly crush all my children to death. But if I suffer the stroke three times, and fall in three pieces, some of the young ones may escape. Is my prayer granted?"

"Indeed it is," said the King, as the Tree-Goddess faded from his vision.

The next morning, the King called his children and his ministers and his foresters to him and told them that he had changed his mind and that the column for the new palace be built of stone, not wood.

"For," said he, "within the deodar tree lives a spirit nobler than my own."



And he told them of his vision, and they all marveled.

And the King built his palace upon a great column of stone.

Taking the example of the King, no one built their houses of wood any more. The houses were made of

stone, and the great deodars were able to spread freely through the forests.

" And if you go up into the mountains," said Grandmother, "you can still find those forests, all the way up the sacred river Ganga, to its source near the eternal snows."

ACTIVITY - 7

Answer the following questions.

1. Who said to whom?

"Dozens of young deodar trees have sprung from me, and have grown up around me."	
"Within the deodar tree lives a spirit nobler than my own."	
"The reason is plain."	

2. Did the king change his mind? How can you say?

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3. Find out the Gods and Goddesses related to the trees, list their names in your notebooks and tell the stories related to them to your classmates. Select any one story from them and narrate that in the prayer assembly.

ACTIVITY - 8

Circle  the odd one out.

- a) snarl, growl , scream, sleep
- b) run, swim, scamper, sprint
- c) smooth, shiny, gleaming, bright
- d) swift, steady, fast, quick

ACTIVITY - 9

Write a project report of an area which has been cleared of its greenery and replaced by multi-storeyed buildings. Do a survey to find differences in the environment then and now.

ACTIVITY - 10

Find the pictures of five different trees and write at least five sentences about each of them.

