

Parks of Study and Reflection

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Spanish translation by Ana L'homme)



The Parks of Study and Reflection are places which, more than anything, are meant for the study of Silo's teachings. Teachings that are both wise and kind.

They are also a haven for those whose hearts have lost meaning, for those who stopped believing in something, for those who still have hope.



The architectural elements and other objects common to all the Parks reflect the way in which the human being has listened to and interpreted the echoes of the sacred, from ancient times and in all cultures.

The Entrance Gate



Entrance gates mark the boundary separating two spaces: the space of the external world and that of the intimacy of home; the space of noise and that of silence; the space of daily life and that of seclusion and reflection.



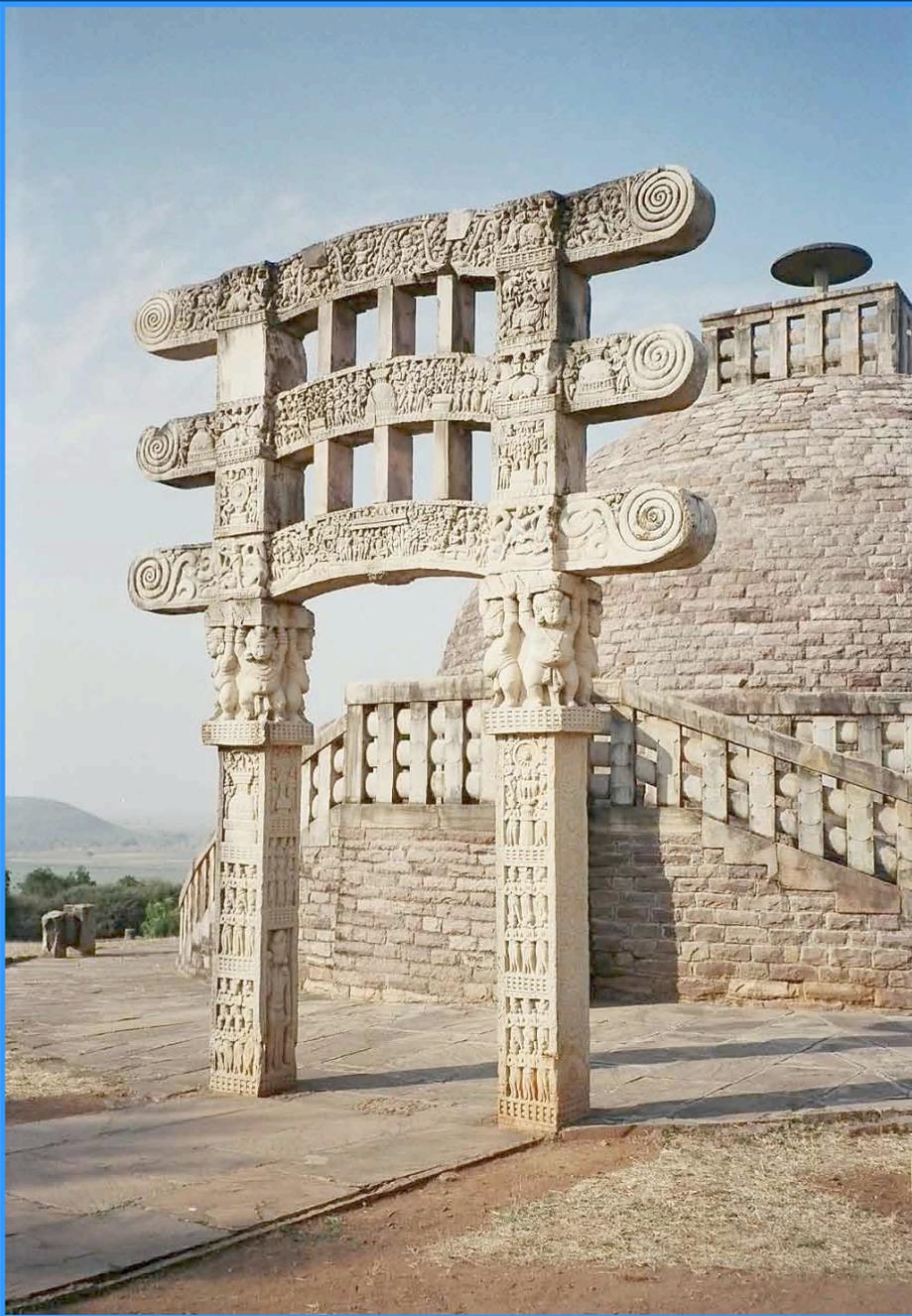
But entrances are also a point of convergence: the meeting point between an Intention to enter, and an Invitation to enter.

In all who pass through them, an entrance produces a change of state. This is the case, for example, with the traditional Japanese *Torii* or Shinto gate.

The Torii marks the entrance to a Shinto shrine. Some Torii have been built in the middle of the water, to represent the entrance for those arriving by boat from neighboring islands.

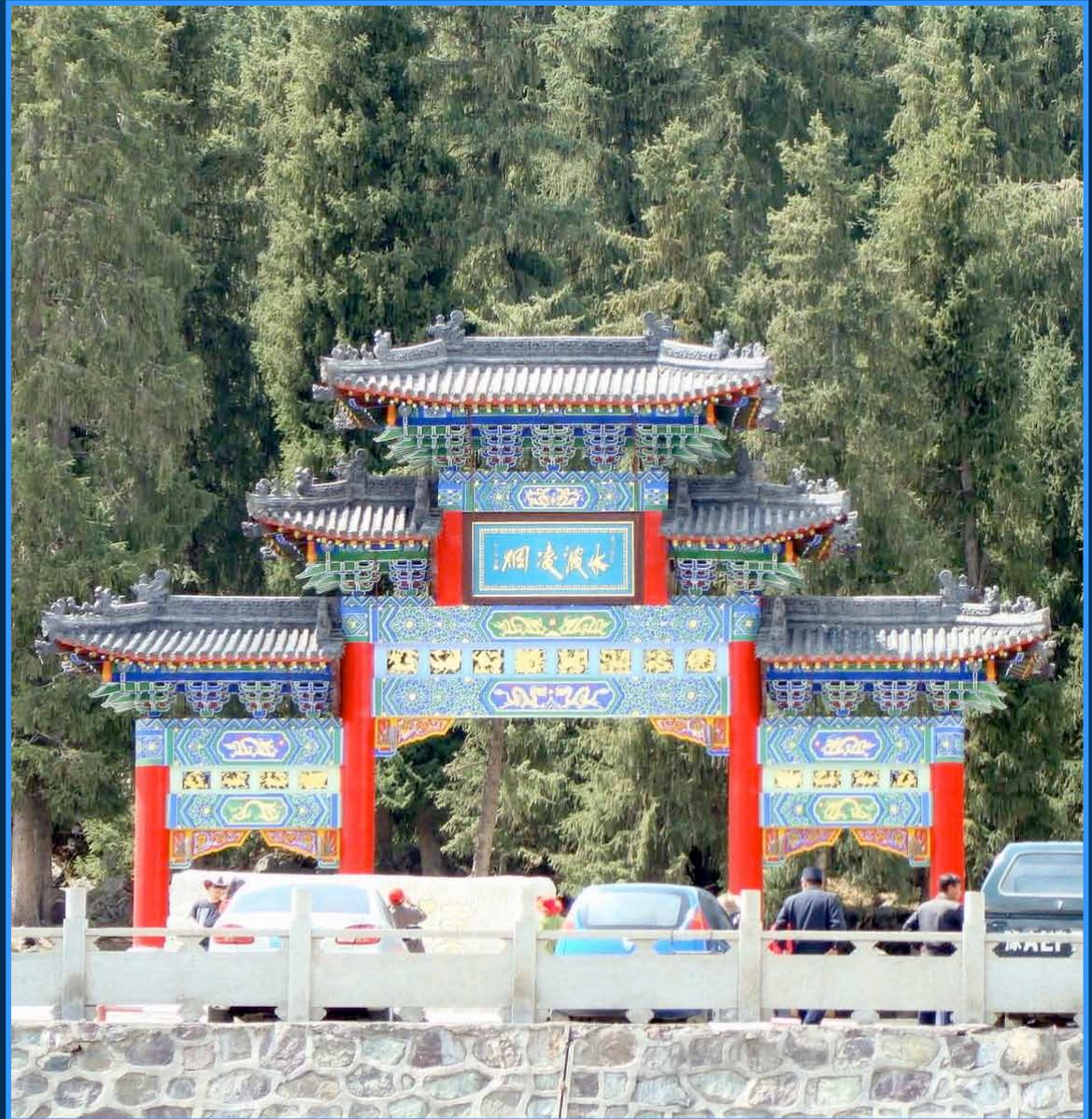


They were also places where the fishermen's Appeal to the sea gods joined with those same gods' Invitation to collect the fruits of their infinite generosity.



Another example of this meeting between the prayers of the lay people and the welcome of the divine is the *torana*, the entry gate to a Buddhist stupa.

In the Chinese *pai-lou*, it is the richness of ornamentation that marks the entrance into other spaces.



Gates such as the Door of the Sun in Tiwanaku on the high Bolivian plateau, built by the original peoples of South America, signal the proximity of a ceremonial area.



If one wished access to the non-profane world, the world of knowledge, one had to change something inside oneself in order to be able to hear the invitation from the gods.

Inspired by the Shinto Torii, the Entrance Gates to our Parks perpetuate these ancestral traditions.





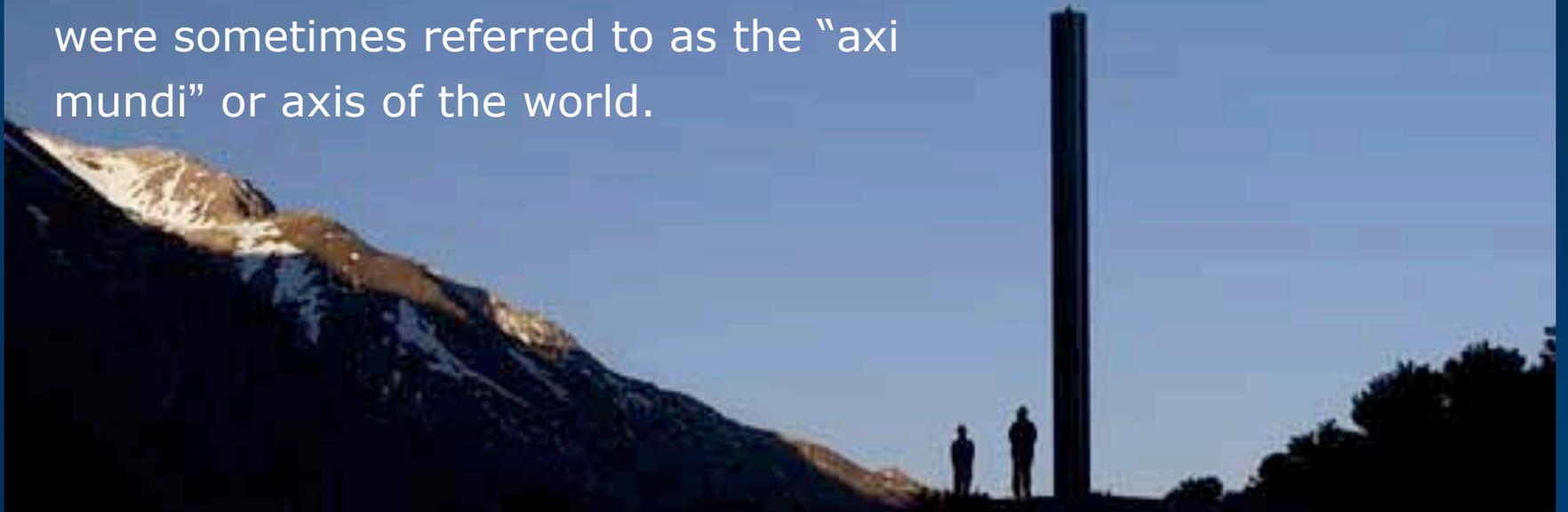
And they revive that invitation to cross a threshold in order to enter into other spaces and clarify our inner askings in our hearts...



The Monolith

Architectural forms like our Monoliths have been found down through history and in all parts of the world. In other times such connectives between “heaven” and “earth” were sometimes referred to as the “axi mundi” or axis of the world.

That was how one could reach the heavens: by climbing a tree, a vine, a stairway, a mountain...



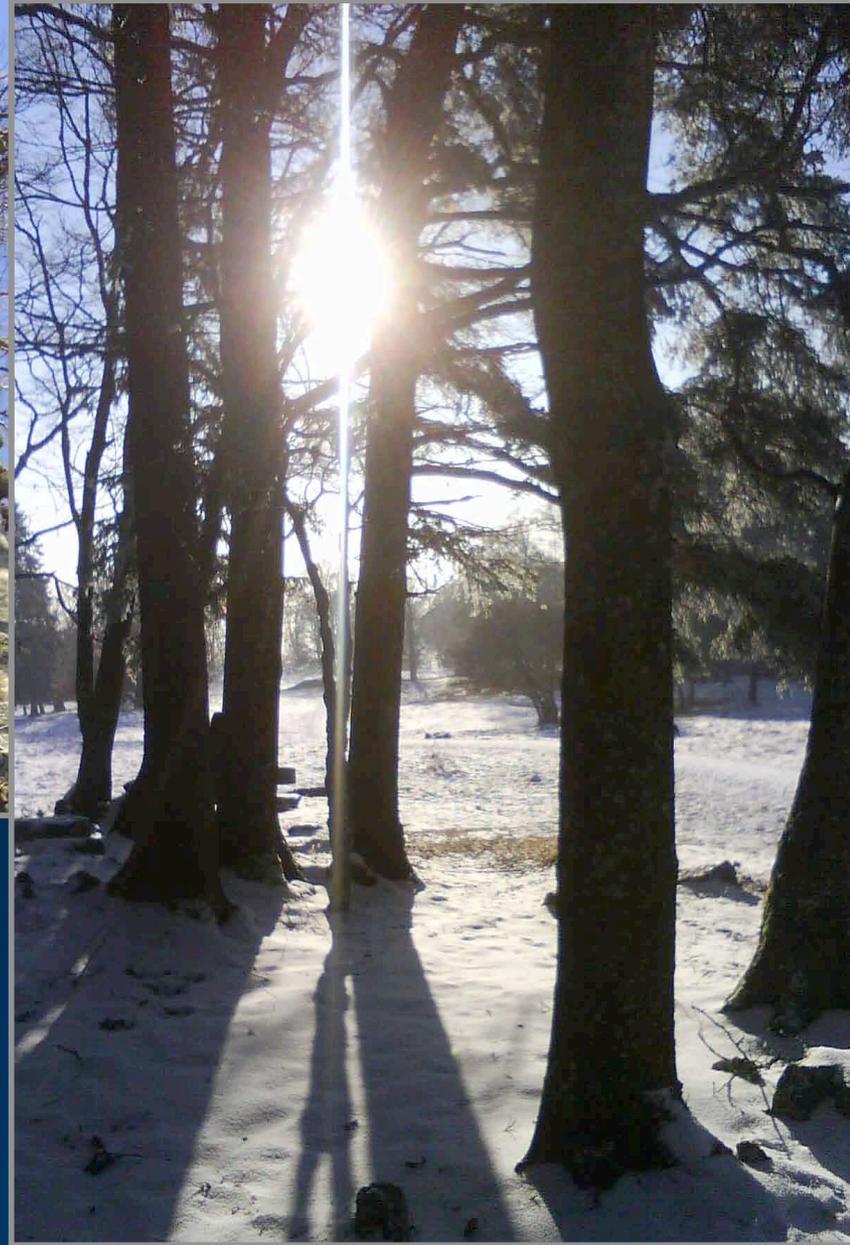


For the ancient Celts the woods were their natural temple, and their symbolic center was a clearing in the forest. There they made contact with the sacred. For them the oak tree was the way to knowledge.





In Nordic mythology, the great ash tree “Yggdrasil” was the council place of the gods where they determined the fate of mortals.





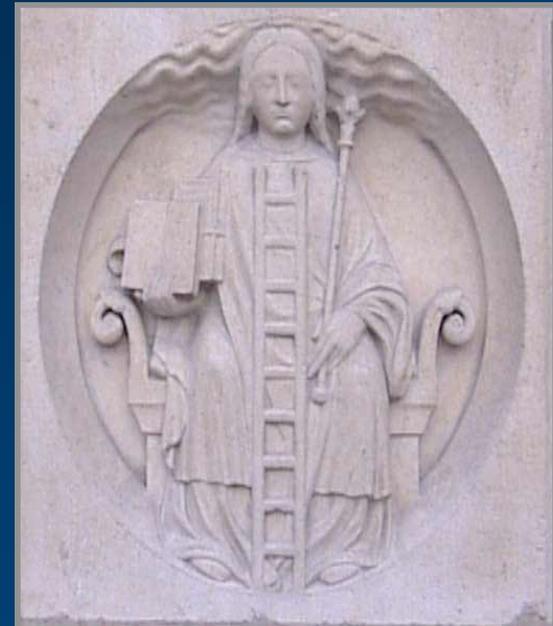
In Africa too the tree is the axis of the world. The baobab trees are altars where offerings are left for the spirits.



Stairways always give the feeling of a path for ascending and descending...

In his dream, Jacob saw the stairway where the angels ascended and descended.

And the emerald tablet of the ancient alchemists says: "as above, so below."



In ancient Egypt obelisks were carved out of a single block of stone and bore different inscriptions.

For the Egyptians these monuments symbolized a ray of sun from their sun god.

They believed that rays of sun held the power to revive the dead. They also believed that the monolith was the dwelling place of the god.

In the time of Akhenaten the obelisks and pyramids were considered petrified rays of sun, symbols of the sacred center of the world that united the heavens and the gods with the earth.





Every Park of Study and Reflection has a monolith that recreates this essential axis and fixes a reference for the time and place in which the Park was built.

The Fountain



In all creation myths and cosmogonical legends, water is the source of life, with its infinite attributes: nourishing, giving life, purifying, caring, bringing rebirth...

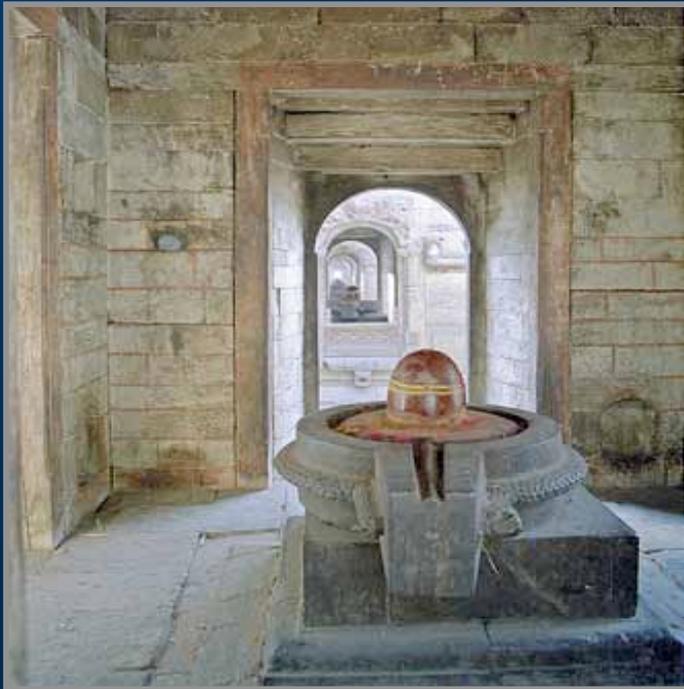
From Mesopotamia to South America, the waters are the symbol of the primordial substance from which all forms are born and to which all return.

That is why in ancient cultures water is a symbol of the sacred.

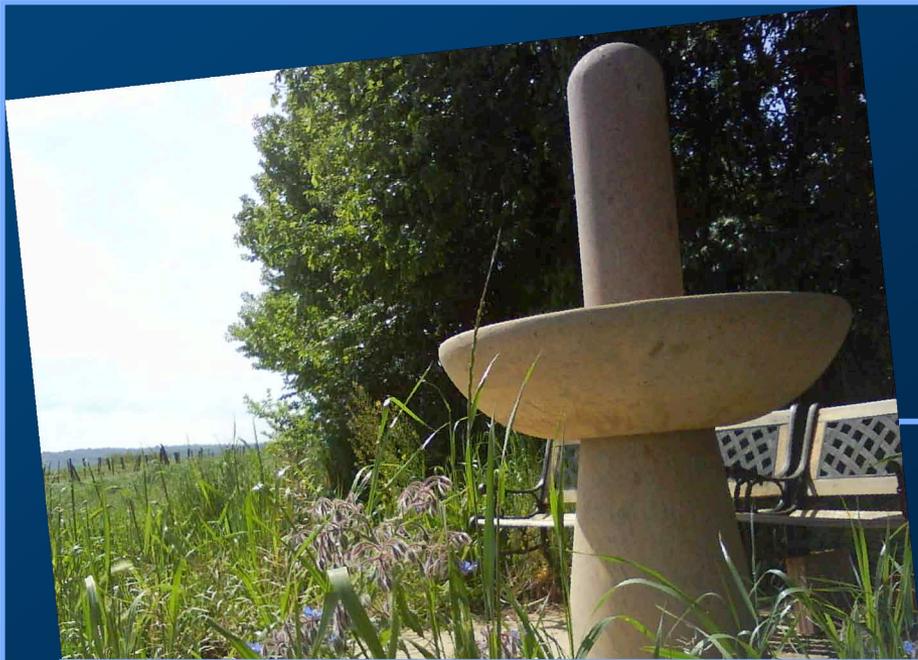


In ancient India the "linga" was a column of fire that joined the heavens and the earth, dividing them and bringing them together at the same time.

The welcoming, fertile earth was "yoni." The Yoni and Lingam from Hindu altars are a reminder that existence is divided into two united principles: the feminine and the masculine.



The Yoni-Lingam represents feminine and masculine sexual union. In Tantra the Yoni-Lingam is the maximum representation of God within us: it represents the creative energy expressed in thought and in the capacity to generate life.



The fountains in the Parks of Study and Reflection carry on this ancestral tradition.



The Meditation Hall

In certain very special circumstances, extraordinary experiences erupt in people's lives - experiences that are sometimes called "spiritual." At times these experiences acquire such a deep meaning that they completely change the direction of life for an individual, a community, or an entire people.

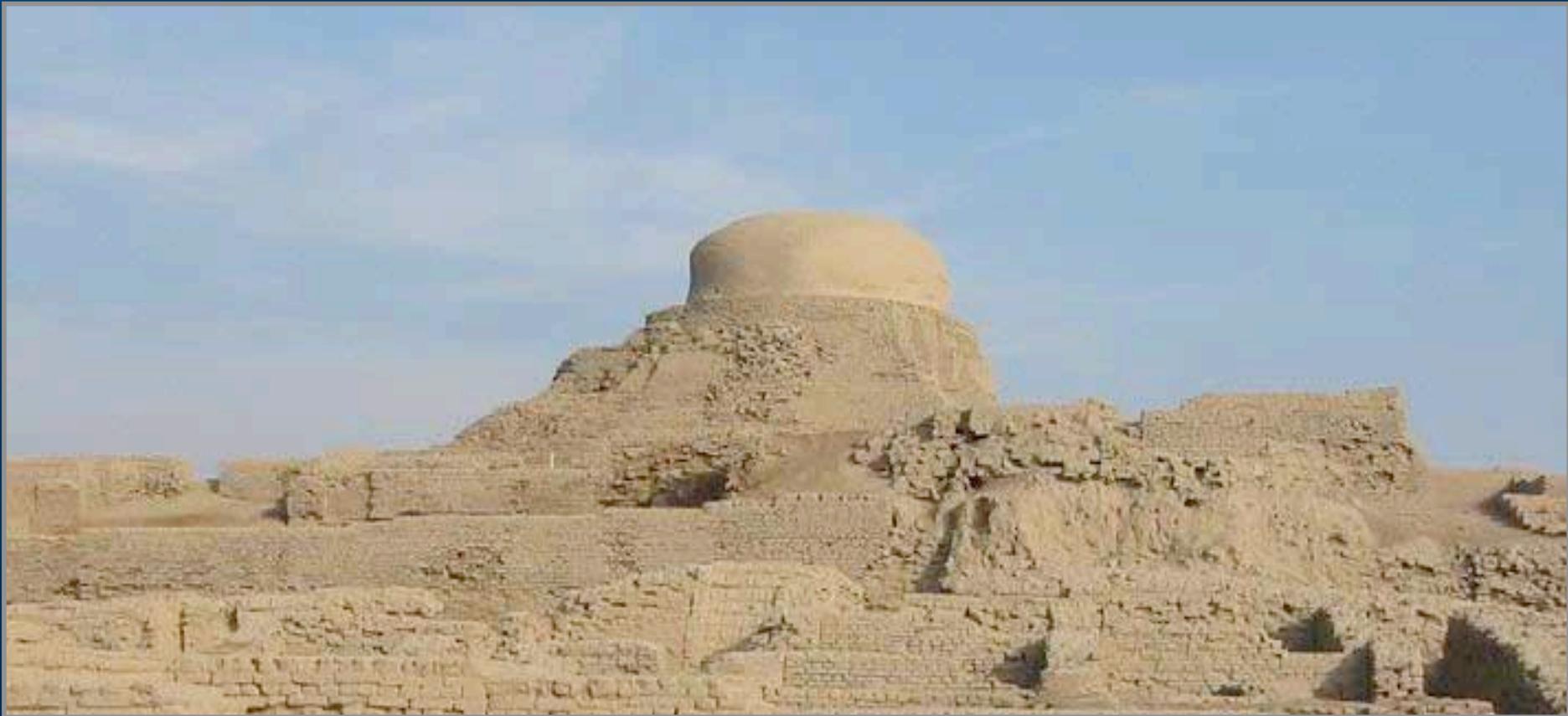


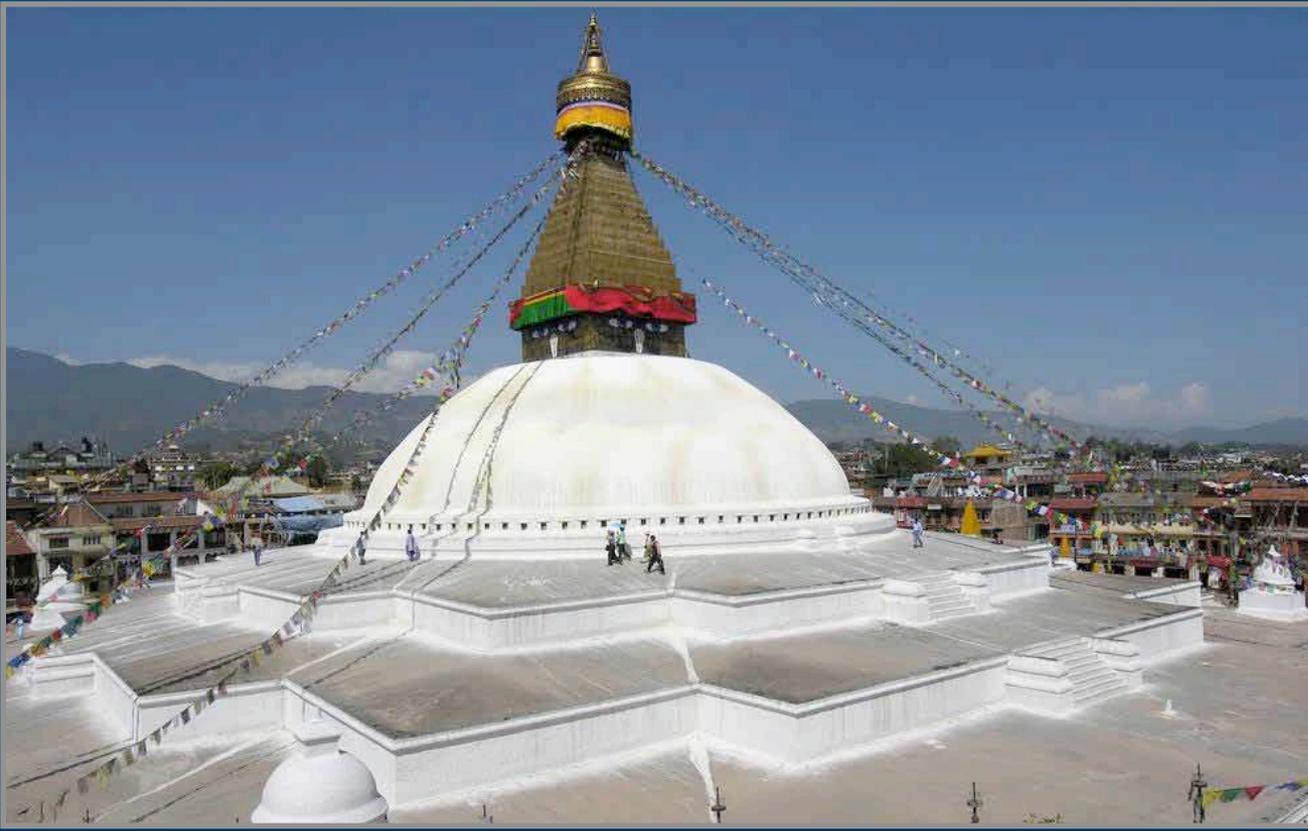
From the first moment human beings walked the earth, they began creating special places, places in which they could make contact with a higher reality, either alone or in the company of others.

In their search they might take refuge in a forest clearing, in a grotto, on a mountainside, or anywhere that offered tranquility, consolation, and... inspiration!



The first constructions where our ancestors gathered to feel the presence of a greater reality were burial sites. These rudimentary forms were the basis of more elaborate forms that evolved over the years into the monumental “stupas.”





In India and in other Asian countries we find magnificent stupas whose hemispherical shape rises into a cone.

From remotest antiquity up to today, these special constructions have been built with a great diversity of shapes and dimensions. At the root of all these external forms from the different ages and cultures, however, we find the same search, the same need, and also, perhaps, the same experience.



Like the great stupas, the Halls in the Parks of Study and Reflection are hemispherical, and touch the sky with the tip of their cupola.

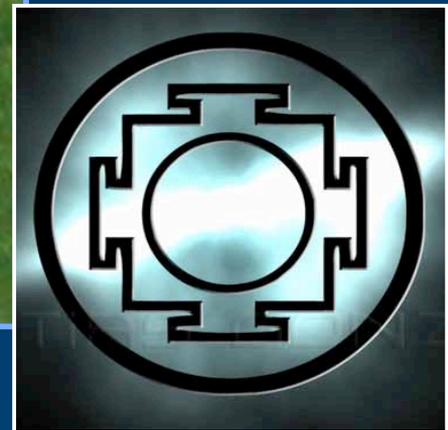
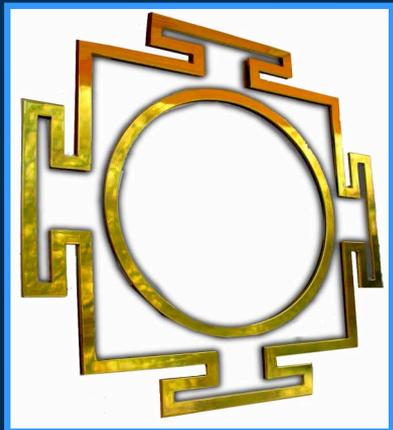
They are spaces in which any person, believer or non-believer, can feel at home and focus on their inner world.

Within this empty hemispherical space, people arrange themselves in circles.

In the Halls at the Parks of Study and Reflection the people are the most important.



The Hall has four symmetrical entrances that are protected from the exterior. An external circle provides a perfect spherical threshold.





The shape of the Hall is reminiscent of the Tibetan mandala and the chacana of the South American indigenous peoples.



The same basic form, with a great profusion of domes, can be found in many Russian Orthodox churches, for example in the Alexandre Nevsky Cathedrals in Sofia and Saint Petersburg.





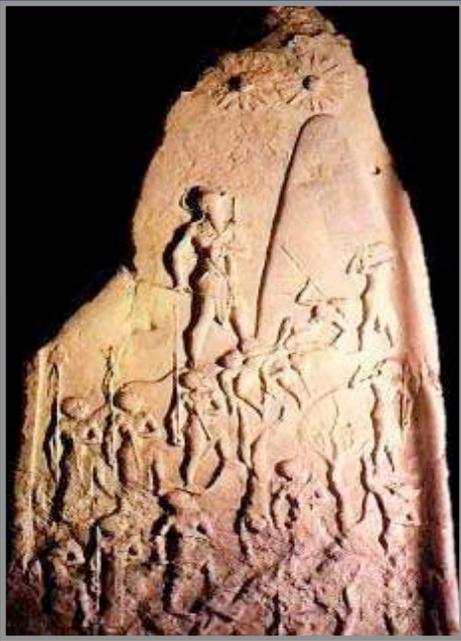
The empty hemispherical form of the Hall facilitates access to profound internal experience by making it easier to concentrate the energy and contact the sacred deep within us.

The Hall is an environment favorable for ceremony and meditation, in particular for working with one's inner Force and directing it to one's loved ones.

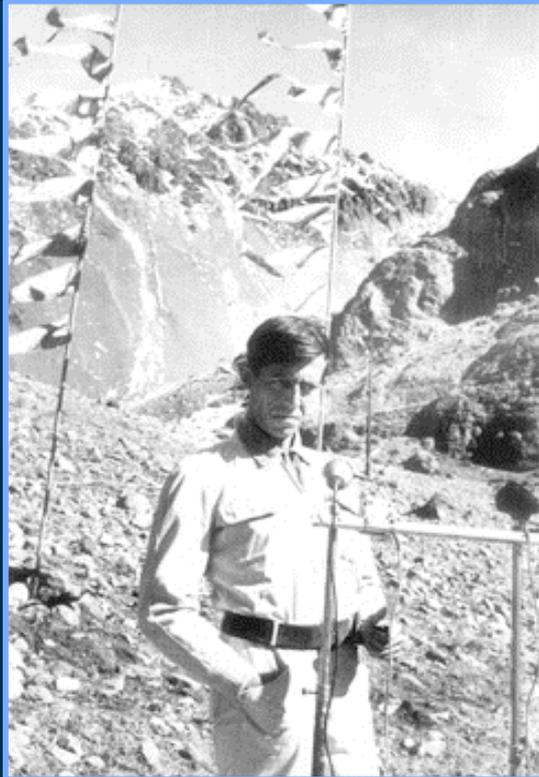
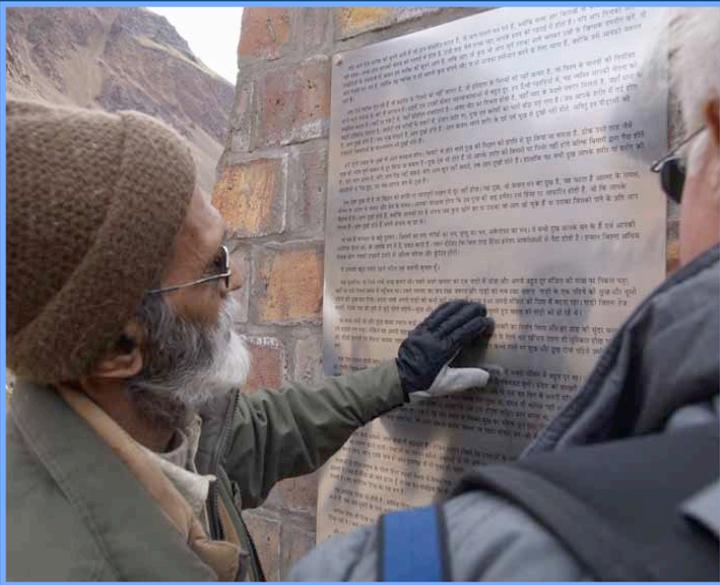


The Stelas

Traditionally engraved on stone slabs, stelas give testimony to meaningful historic events that took place at the time they were erected, for example in the Sumerian, Egyptian, and Mayan cultures.



In the Parks of Study and Reflection the stelas bear plaques engraved with the names of all the people who contributed to the Park's construction.



Adjacent to the Hall in the historic Punta de Vacas Park is the "Plaza of the Stelas." Here the text of Silo's "Healing of Suffering" from 1969 is inscribed on seven stelas in diverse languages of the world: Spanish, English, Russian, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, and Hebrew.

The Centers of Work

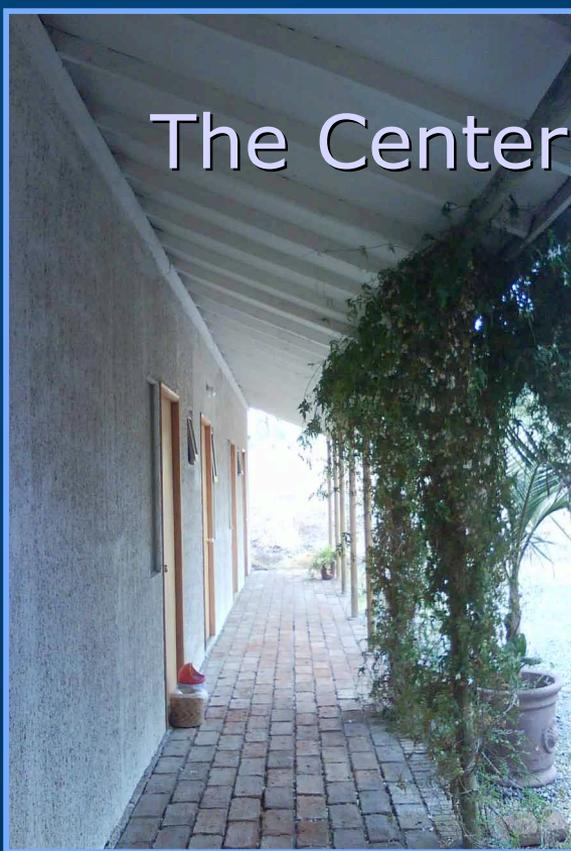
The Centers of Work offer the best conditions for personal reflection and group interchange.



The organisms of the Humanist Movement also organize their gatherings here, and Messengers meet here to carry out their retreats and their ceremonies.

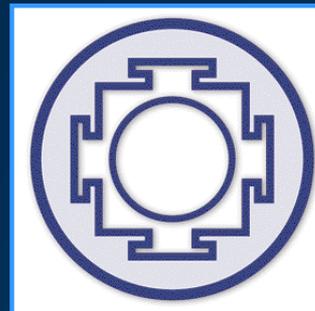


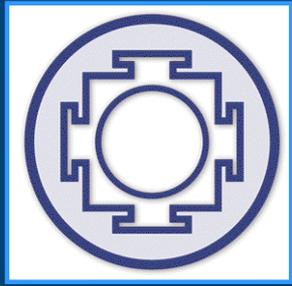
The Centers of Study



The Centers of Study are the center of gravity for the Masters of the School, who watch over the development of the Parks.

For them, the Centers of Study are places of inspiration. Here they find the best conditions for deepening their research and their meditation; here they may take a few days to meditate in solitude, or to interchange with others about their experiences or about their progress on their respective projects.





The Parks around the world

Beginning with the historic Park at Punta de Vacas, different Parks have been built in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, India, the Philippines, and Mozambique... and several more are currently under construction: in Costa Rica, Mexico, Portugal, and the Czech Republic. All the Parks are physically and mentally interconnected, since it is the same Purpose that animates this project everywhere, a Purpose tied to human evolution.



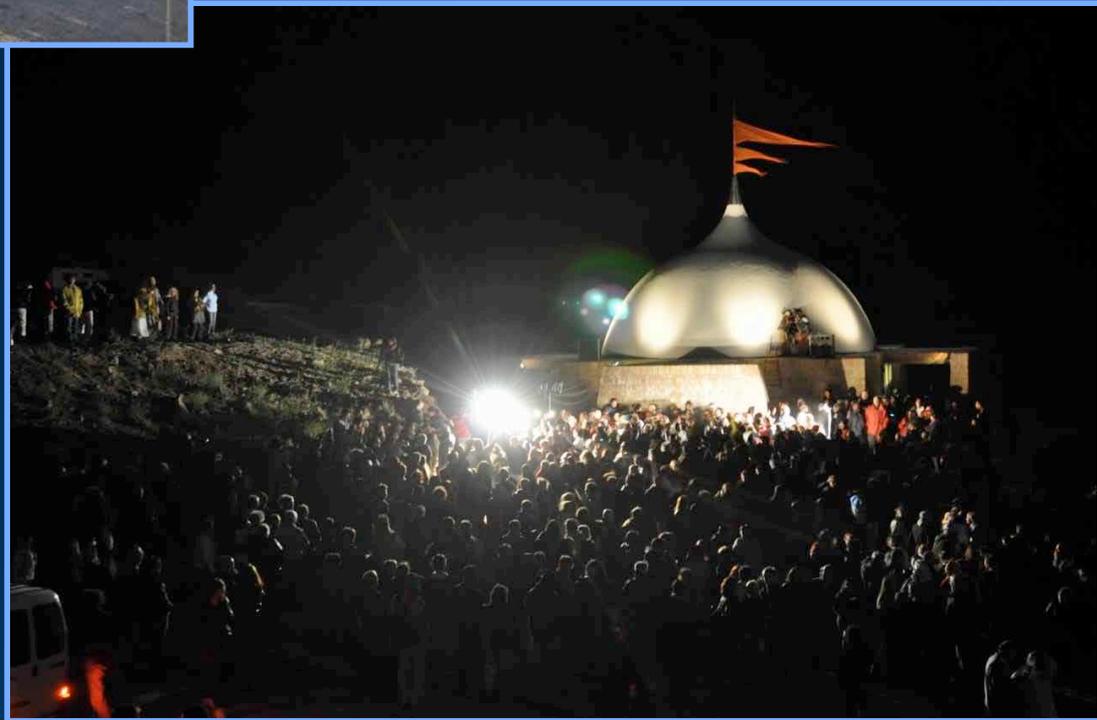


Sometimes the Parks are the site of great gatherings. At Punta de Vacas in particular, thousands of people from around the world have come together to hear the teachings of Silo or to share their experience.



None of these extraordinary places was built by, or for, any one individual. The Parks awaken and encourage the expression of a powerful sense of “collective unity,” something “transpersonal” that goes beyond the individual, beyond the “for me.”

Here neighbors, friends and family members enjoy celebrating different events together. It is not necessary to have faith in order to feel joy and kindness, and no one is ever asked about their personal beliefs.



Italy - Attigliano Park



Italy - Casa Giorgi Park

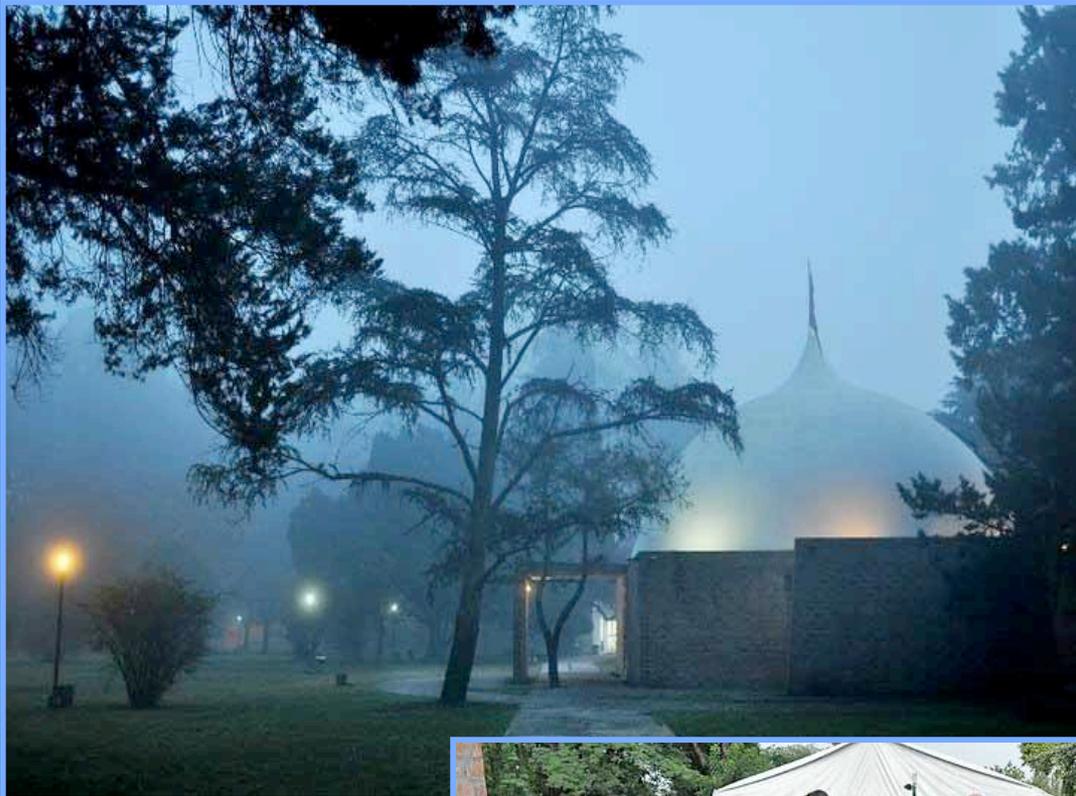


Bolivia - Parque Montecillo



Brasil - Parque Caucaia





Hungary Mikebuda Park

**Argentina
Parque La Reja**





Philippines - Banahaw Park



India - Khandroli Park



Mozambique - Marracuene Park

Chile - Manantiales Park



Spain - Toledo Park





California - Red Bluff Park

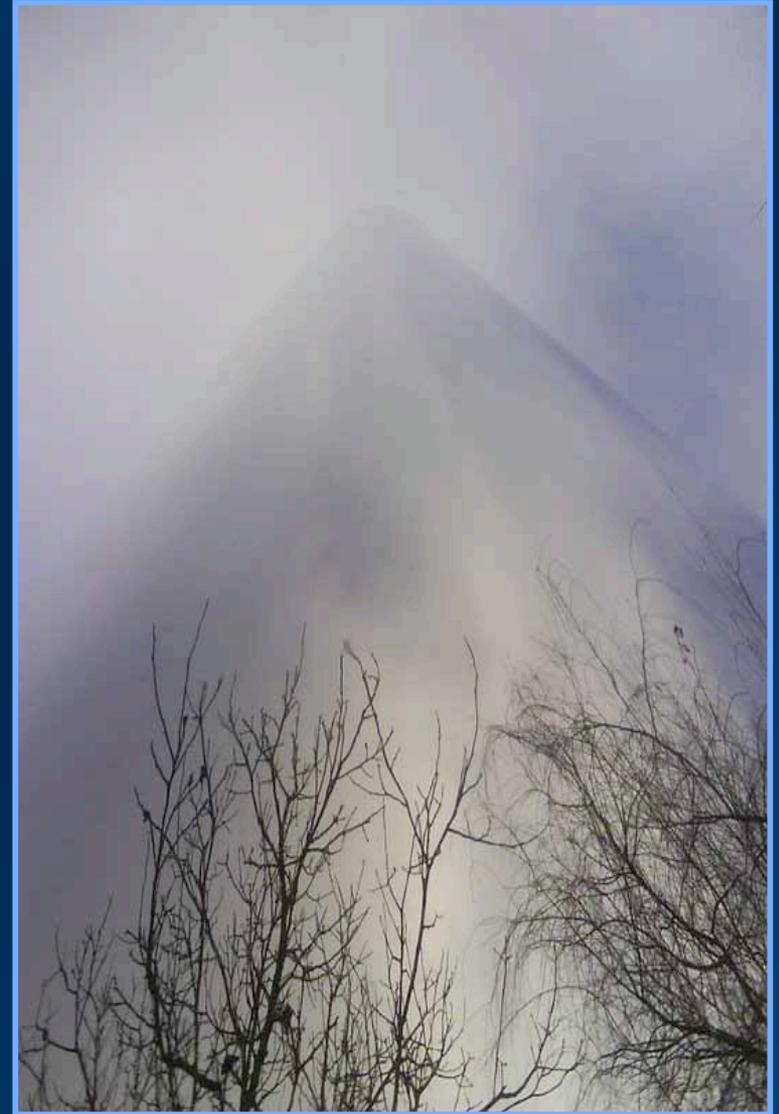


**New York -
Hudson Valley Park**



The beauty of the landscapes in which the Parks are set, the accumulated force of so many people, and the common Purpose of opening the doors to other spaces, make these exceptional places.

They are refuges, far from the turmoil of the city and of daily life, places where inspiration and the echo of the Real are sought...



Not long ago, in an attempt to express this reality in images and to testify to it, a book celebrating the Parks was published in Chile, inviting others to benefit from these sanctuaries...

In the Parks we can come to a new understanding of ourselves, as we pause at the quiet inlets where a relational way of thinking opens the way to spaces of inspired consciousness.

In these spaces, rational thought gives way to poetry, art, and "divine madness."

In these spaces, there are no words to translate that "other" reality, no words to express a Message of great kindness that eludes us when we try to capture it...

