

CHIEF SEATTLE'S SPEECH

A Brief Overview of the Story

Seattle mentions the sacredness that they associate with the ashes of their ancestors and therefore how they consider their land to be sacred whereas the whites move away from their father's graves.

- He mentions how in few decades the Red Indians will face certain kind of extinction and he also wants that somebody someday or the other the whites too will face the same destiny.
- Then chief Seattle accepts the proposal of acquisition of land of the Governor of Washington but puts forward a condition - that they will not be barred from visiting the ashes of their ancestors as the land is sacred to them.
- He ends his speech by saying that the white men will never be alone, as even if the Red Indians vanish, the spirits of the Red Indians will always populate the land. He further requests the white men to deal with the land sympathetically as for them the dead are not powerless at all.

▣ A Discussion about the style of the speech :-

Speeches are rhetorical as they are purposed to catch heed of the people - if one uses everyday diction, then probably it will not be possible to reach the mass. To make mass attentive, speeches need to be delivered in such a way that they not only catch the attention of the people listening to it or reading it but also at the same time should be so that they put impression on people in a such a way so as to act accordingly. Impression of a

speech depends on the vocabulary, oratory, relevance of the topic, in the gestures and postures in which the speech is being delivered, the simplicity of the language in which the speech is conveyed to the audience.

Instead of listening to the speech in our case, we are reading a speech. So there are lots of difference. Another fact is that the speech was originally delivered in a language called Lushootseed and the text that we are reading is a translation by Henry A. Smith which is regarded as the most authentic translation amongst many. And the speech is felt to be still relevant even in the 21st century.

The speech dealt with various themes despite having a central concern. The themes are as follows -

- (a) Red Indians attachment to their lands.
- (b) White man's supremacy
- (c) Ecological Sustainability
- (d) Red Indian's Gods and Whiteman's God.
- (e) Difference between the worldviews of Whitemen and Red Indians
- (f) In our next classes we will discuss these themes.