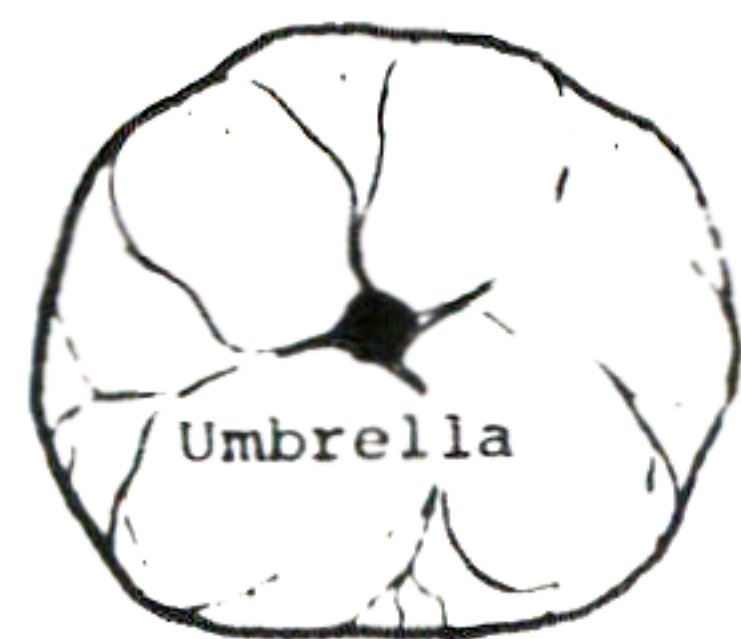


# Tree Places

*When trees are set down without regard for the special places they can create, they are as good as dead for the people who need them.*

Trees have a very deep and crucial meaning to human beings. The significance of old trees is archetypal; in our dreams very often they stand for the wholeness of personality: "Since . . . psychic growth cannot be brought about by a conscious effort of will power, but happens involuntarily and naturally, it is in dreams frequently symbolized by the tree, whose slow, powerful involuntary growth fulfills a definite pattern." (M. L. von Franz, "The process of individuation", in C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, Doubleday and Co., N.Y., 1964, pp. 161, 163-4.)

There is even indication that trees, along with houses and other people, constitute one of the three most basic parts of the human environment. The House-Tree-Person Technique, developed by Psychologist John Buck, takes the drawings a person makes of each of these three "wholes" as a basis for projective tests. The mere fact that trees are taken as bristling with meaning, equal to houses and other people,



*Therefore: Plant saplings and build around existing trees, paying deep attention to the kinds of social places it's in their nature to create. Make each tree a part of such a place: an umbrella, a grove, an avenue, or some variation. Let the built environment set off these places, never destroy them.*

is, alone, a very powerful indication of their importance (V. J. Bieliauskas, *The H-T-P Research Review, 1965 Edition, Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles, California, 1965*; and Isaac Jolles, *Catalog for the Qualitative Interpretation of the House-Tree-Person, Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles, California, 1964, pp. 75-97.*)

Intuitively, everyone recognizes the wonderful feeling that trees give to an environment. They are prized in nearly every part of the city. People grow attached to special trees in their neighborhood; they pay more for homes in neighborhoods with many trees. Even the developers now try to give one tree for each house, in their developments.

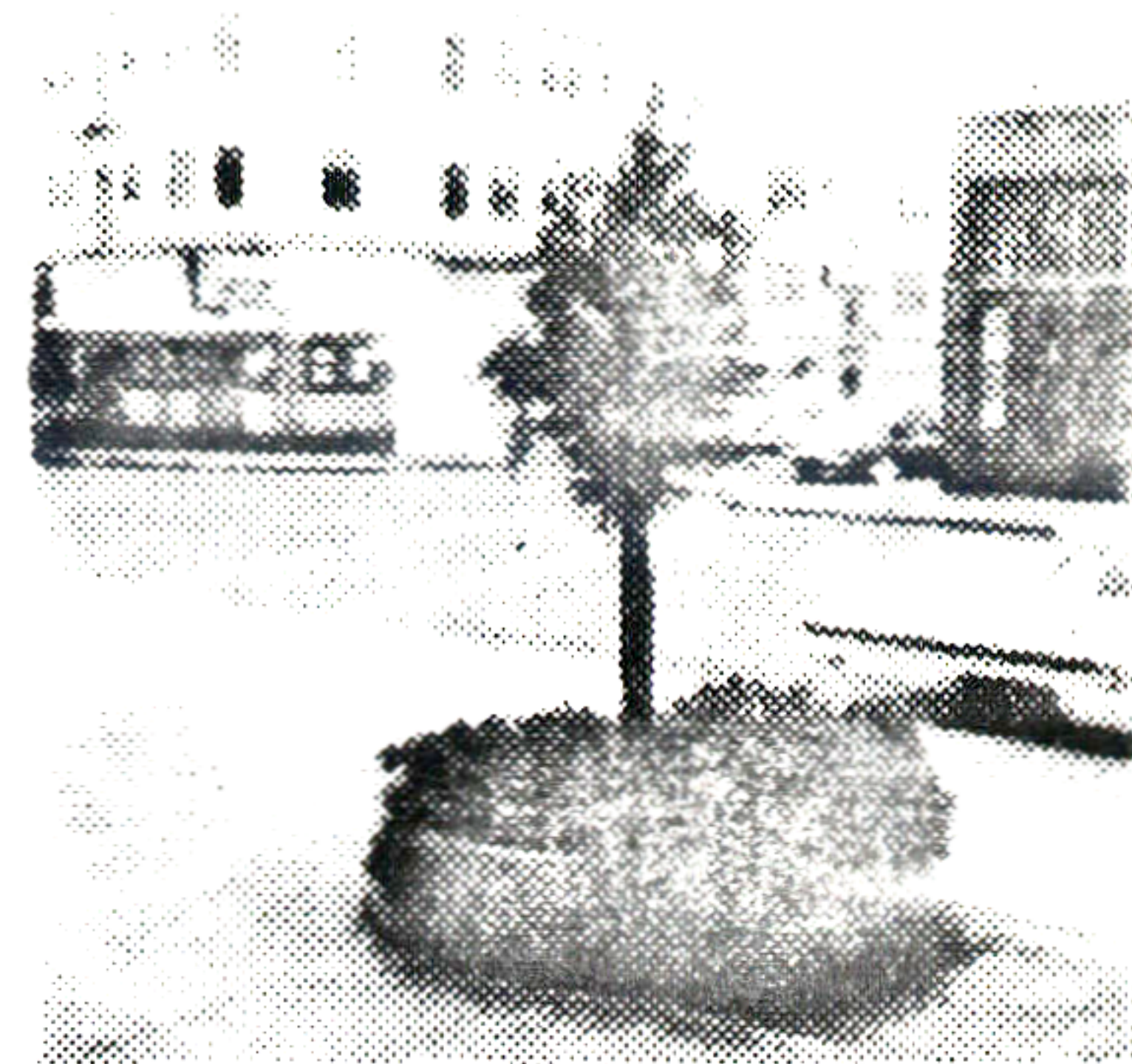
But for the most part, the trees that are being planted and transplanted in cities and suburbs today do not satisfy people's craving for trees. They will never come to provide a sense of beauty and peace, because they are being set down and built around *without regard for the*



*places they create.*

*The trees that people love create special social places; places to be in, and pass through, places you can dream about, and places you can draw. Trees have the potential to create basically three kinds of social places: An umbrella—where a single, low-sprawling tree, like an oak, defines an outdoor room; a grove—where several trees cluster together, roughly in a circle; and an avenue—where a double row of trees, their crowns touching, line a path or street. It is only when a tree's potential to form places is realized that the real presence and meaning of the tree is felt.*

The trees that are being set down nowadays have nothing of this character—they're in tubs on parking lots and along streets, in specially "landscaped areas" that you can see but cannot get to. They don't form places in any sense of the word—and so they mean nothing to people. (continued over)





## A Tree They Couldn't Cut

By Mamuff Abdullah  
*Chronicle Foreign Service*

### Kuala Lumpur

A school playground will be much smaller than planned because of an ancient tree which spooked all attempts to fell it.

Three years ago officials at the Cochrane road secondary school authorized clearing of a thicket to make way for a playing field. The thicket was soon cleared - except for one tree.

Workers who attempted to chop the tree down were stopped in their tracks before they could swing their axe.

A bulldozer was tried. Its engine died each time it approached the tree or the driver became dizzy and was unable to operate the machine.

School officials finally gave up and decided to spare the tree.

The tree, it is said, is the home of a deity. Allanah Palikutaru, 55, said she had been told in a vision that Hindu goddess Eswary lived in the tree.

"I was told to take care of the tree and warn those who wished to uproot it that sad things would happen to them," she said. Even if there's an earthquake, the tree won't be uprooted.

"I have been a regular worshipper here and my only purpose in living is to take care of the tree."

She has spent a large part of the money she earns as a domestic servant buying milk, fruit and oil to offer at the tree.

Residents of the area erected a shelter around the tree after attempts to fell it had failed.



By: Denny Abrams and Murray Silverstein.

December 1970

This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.