

Ecoconsciousness in Lisa See fiction *The Tea Girl of The Hummingbird****Lane*****Mrs.Blessia.T****Assistant Professor and Part time Ph.D Scholar****Manonmaniam Sundaranar University College Panagudi,****Women's Christian College, Nagercoil****Abstract**

Lisa See is the Chinese American has written nearly thirteen fictions. This paper focuses on the recent novel *The Tea Girl of The Hummingbird Lane*. The paper shows the importance of nature and it's protection. The protagonist of the novel is Li-Yan, a young girl from the tribal Village in a hilly region in China. She narrates her life and the villagers through this beautiful story. The villager's main occupation is tea cultivation. This paper reveals how even a tea tree is important to the people and environment. Due to lust and desire for money human beings are destroying the nature and they forgets the significance of the trees. They often replace the trees for economic purpose and lost their medicinal values of the old trees. Li-Yan struggles to protect her mother tree and how she succeeds with the help of her mother and husband are focussed. The main aim of the paper is to highlights that how women are eco-conscious in their surroundings and the environment.

“The best friend of earth of man is tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources on the earth.” – Frank Lloyd Wright.

As quoted, The tree is the best friend, mother and a good companion to those who respect and protects them. The novel *The Tea girl of Hummingbird Lane* and111 analyses a particular tree called tea tree and how this is to be protected by a women in the family. Lisa See, the Chinese American writer, who took interest in writing a particular tradition and belief of a mountain village called Akha tribe that is located in Yunan province in China.

Li-Yan is the protagonist of the novel, through her story everyone understands the life of Akha tribe. People in Akha tribe cultivates tea tree for many generation. Li-Yan’s mother is a midwife, prepares her medicines from the wild trees and cures many diseases in the village and the neighbour village. Her family and the villagers picks the tea leaf and sells to the government, this is how they earn money for their livelihoods.

Many people in the world knows that tea tree is a bush plant. But in reality tea tree is a large tree. In order to pick the leaf from the tree and the greed of man is what we naturally see the tea plant. Tea is grown for commercial purposes and naturally it is believed that the old tea tree leaves cures many diseases. Li-yan’s mother had a tea grove that is hidden from men ,the tea tree is tall and old considered to be the mother tree. The mother tea tree is one thousand years old and li-yan’s mother protects from her childhood. Her A-Ma takes leaves from the mother tree and prepares medicines from them. This tree was hidden from men. It is surrounded by sister trees and camphor tree.

Li-yan's mother takes her to the mother tree and tells her that this mother tree belongs to women in their family, so they had responsibility to protect the tea tree.

Pointing at the mother tree she tells that,

Rice is to nourish, A-Ma says. Tea is to heal. Always remember that food is medicine, and medicine is food. If you take care of the trees, the trees will take care of you. (TGHBL.44)

A-ma insist not only to her daughter, to all the women in the world to take care of the trees. She advises to protect all the trees. This helps one to understand that all human have the responsibility to take care of nature. A-Ma tells her daughter that once her father tries to reach the mother tree but unfortunately he fell into the pit and died. After this tragedy in the family no men is allowed to the grove. This tragedy A-Ma tells that, "caused your a-ba and brothers to hate all wild tea...". She continues that,

it's my duty to care for these trees, especially the mother tree. It will be your duty too one day. And you must promise that you'll never let a man enter this grove. (TGHBL.45)

Does anyone know why these women particularly protect this tree? She says,

if I let your a-ba and brothers come here they'd spray the mother tree with poison to kill all the parasites who'd be found a home in her bark. They'd scrape away the fungi and molds and smash the bugs with their fingernails,...(TGHBL.45)

The above quoted lines helps one to understand that men are dangerous because they would cut the trees and use chemicals to kill the parasites, that naturally affect the tree. Not only that, because of man's greed for money he naturally cut down

the trees for commercial purposes. He doesn't have the consciousness about the tree and its benefits. To illustrate this, take a glance on chipko movement. Mostly women and few men took part in protecting the trees from the enemies of nature. Those who have eco-consciousness naturally plant the tree and make use of it by protecting them.

In this novel, a business man Huang Benyu entered into the village to do business on puer tea. He brought his sick son with him. Li-yan's mother with her good and medicines nourishes the boy. Mr.Huang requested Li-yan to show him her secret grove, but she rejected the request. In order to make puer tea he asked her to bring leaf from mother tree for high price. Because of her desire for making money she secretly brings him the tea leaf. After many years she met him in the city where he tells her that her mother's medicine cures his sons bone cancer. She was surprised to hear this and somehow Mr.Huang found out the secret grove but still he has the consciousness to protect the tree. He realise the gift of nature through his son's cure. Li-yan also understands how important the old trees and she decided to protects in the future. Naturally everyone have the same responsibility to protect the trees, even if they have medicinal values or not protect them for the sake of safe future.

Abbreviation

TGHBL - *The Tea Girl of Humming Bird Lane*

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