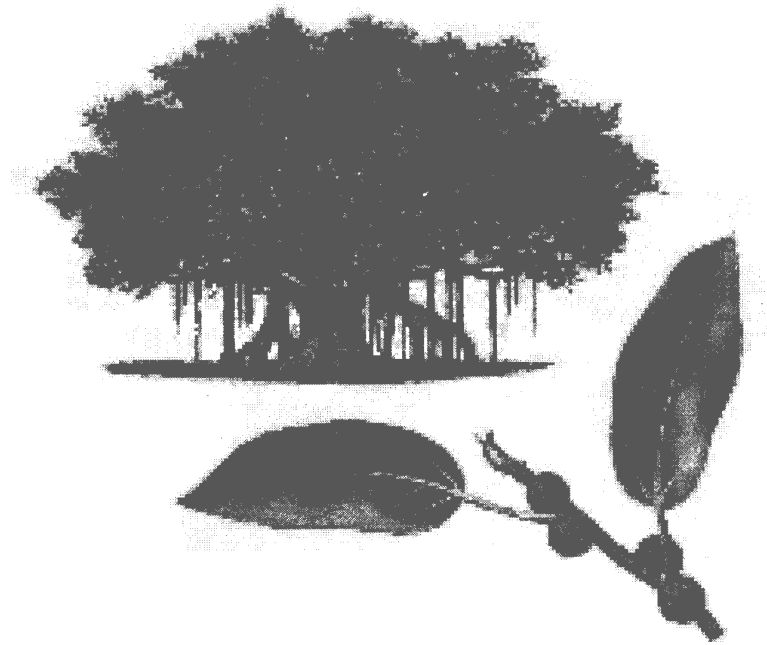


The Banyan Tree - - - -

A very strange tree.



This strange Indian tree starts its life as a seed which falls onto the stem of another tree. It sends up shoots that embrace the supporting tree, eventually reaching a height of a hundred feet or more. The wide-spreading branches send down many slender shoots. They reach the ground and take hold in the soil, and grow and thicken above into stout pillars which support the massive branches. In time a single tree looks like a whole woodland. One tree in India was reputed to

have three hundred and twenty large trunks and over three thousand smaller ones. It is said to have given shelter to seven thousand men.

From an Indian tradition:

“Bring me a fruit from this banyan tree.”

“Here it is, mother.”

“What do you see in it?”

“Very small seeds, mother.”

“Break one of them, my daughter.”

“It is broken, mother.”

“What do you see in it?”

“Nothing at all, mother.”

“My daughter, from the very essence in the seed which you cannot see comes in truth this vast banyan tree. An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe.”

