

Ever since I moved to Queensland from Ireland 12 years ago, I've always believed that the cane toad has had a bad rap. I see parents passing on their hatred of them by running them over. My son is learning in school that they are pests. I've told him that God loves every creature.

I've been the only (I think) voice of support for the cane toad since I came here. My theory is this: The cane toads didn't ask to be brought here. There is a greater scheme of things happening that we may not be aware of just yet. I believe that we will one day find out something about the cane toads that will make it invaluable in the greater scheme of things. The other species that are becoming extinct/poisoned - well, maybe it's their time to end their evolution and the cane toad is just here to help them along. Can you see how the cane toad may fit in with our current evolution?

Many thanks,
Trish.



SCOTT: "What a great question, Trish!

I have always advocated the view that, like Cane Toad, we (as white settlers) are technically an introduced or 'feral' species here in Australia. The difference being that we view ourselves as being members of the human race and, therefore, indigenous to Mother Earth. I try to remind people of this fact, while pointing out that, although Cane Toad's position in its present environment is obviously detrimental, it should be allowed to share the relationship to the Earth Mother that we so boldly claim for ourselves. Cane Toad, like all introduced or 'feral' animals should be recognised, at least, as being indigenous to Mother Earth, and therefore sacred in their own right. We, as white people, forget (or choose to ignore) the fact that we did a lot of damage to an otherwise perfect people when we 'settled' Australia some 200 years ago. We forget that Cane Toad, along with every other animal now regarded as 'vermin' did not come here of their own accord, and although their presence has had a permanent and possibly negative affect on our land and its animals, it is my view that we should be blaming ourselves and not the animals per se.

To perceive certain animals as being feral and destructive to the

environment actually says a lot about how we view ourselves and our place in this country as white people, in my view. What we perceive is generally reflective of what we are projecting at the time or how we feel about ourselves on a deeper level. We view these animals as being vermin because, perhaps, subconsciously, we acknowledge the fact that we have a lot to answer for. Perhaps we actually see ourselves as being the problem and not the animals at all.

Cane Toad is equipped with pouches on the side of its head, that when squeezed or tormented, these pouches exude a toxic venom. This venom represents Cane Toad's self-image. He suffers from self-loathing and believes himself to be less than worthy of most of life's simple pleasures. He radiates self-loathing, and that is what he attracts. Cane Toad has much to share, but who would listen to such a horrid looking creature? The more he tries to speak up, the more he is shunned. I do not believe that Cane Toad is here to help the other animals 'end their evolution'. I don't believe anyone - animal or human - has that right. That choice lies with Spirit and the animals in question. Legend says that deep within the Toad lies a precious stone. This precious stone represents Toad's self-love and gift to the people. Everyone has such a stone,

with most proud enough to display it. Toad, however, has over the centuries pushed his precious stone deep down within himself in a vain attempt to forget it. Toad embodies those of us who feel worthless, shunned, forsaken or cursed. It is said that all healing must come from within. We can visit all the healers in the world, but if we do not want to heal, we won't. It is also said that there is no such thing as a sick person who is not grieving for something. To address that for which we grieve, to take responsibility for our own healing and to remember our 'sacred stone' would mean that we could shake the self-loathing of Toad and, once again, walk our path as whole, united people. The sacred stone hidden deep within Toad is said to hold the anti-venom needed to reverse the affects of its own poison, thus the cure to its self-loathing lies within its inner-knowing. When we look at the Dreaming of Cane Toad in relation to the animals that are most affected by its venom, we are able to broaden our understanding of those aspects of ourselves that give reason for its (and therefore our) self-loathing."

Scott Alexander King is the author of 'Animal Dreaming - The Symbolic and Spiritual Language of the Australian Animals.' For more info on Scott and his work visit www.circleofstones.com.au