

Bamboo could emerge as 'green gold': Vajpayee

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Bamboo or the 'miracle plant', as it is also known, has always fascinated the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The fascination for this 'ordinary plant' with 'extraordinary qualities' is not only because it is a symbol of strength, flexibility, tenacity and endurance but also due to his personal association with the plant.

In the ancient 'vajapeya yajna' (sacrifice), bamboo seeds were offered to the fire, Mr. Vajpayee said. "There is a great beauty in bamboo's amazing range of functionality. In a flute it creates music, in brush and paper it creates paintings and poems and in simple sticks and strips in the hands of ordinary men and women, it inspires wondrous works of art" he said while inaugurating the Seventh World Bamboo Congress here today.

The plant, which for centuries has been integral to the daily lives of people throughout Asia, had 1,500 documented uses, from the cradle to the coffin, he said. Suggesting that it was in the process of being rediscovered, Mr. Vajpayee said that from an orphan crop, it could emerge as the "green gold" for India. The Government had allocated Rs. 2,600 crores in the Tenth Plan for the promotion of bamboo. It hoped to create about eight million jobs in the bamboo industry, lift five million families out of poverty and earn Rs. 16,000 crores from revenue by the end of the Tenth Plan in 2007.