

### **Tři inkarnace (*Three incarnations*)**

Josef Svoboda

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To write a review of the book was exceptional work for me because of several reasons. First, the book itself is not scientific one. It could be ranked among memoir literature rather than polar science books. In spite of that, it fits well to literature published by the family of professionals working in the field of polar science. It is because of the author, prof. Josef Svoboda, leading Arctic ecologist who has devoted more than 30 years to research in Canadian Arctics. Secondly, I have had an opportunity to meet prof. Svoboda and his friends many times and listen to his life stories, some of which are included into the reviewed book. After reading the book, I was impressed very much by these stories, so strong and sometimes almost unbelievable. They document the obstacles that prof. Svoboda had to overcome not only in the Czech Republic but also when he started his new professional career in Canada after his emigration in 1968.

The book is written in Czech and its title *Tři inkarnace (Three incarnations)* brings symbolic message to a reader. Life story of prof. Svoboda, as well as the book, is divided into three parts, incarnations, as he says. The first incarnation represents his childhood and happy life with his parents and siblings. He describes studies in Brno during which his interest in biology, especially botany, began to form. At the age of twenty, during communistic era, he was jailed for sedition and spent almost 10 years in prison. This period of his life represents the second incarnation. He went through several prisons (Bory, Leopoldov) and a gulag for political prisoners (Jachymov). During this period, he met a lot of theologians, poets, war heroes, wise and educated people who were imprisoned at the same time. This helped him to survive and find a job after his release in 1958. His employment in the Botanical Institute of the Czech Academy of Science where he worked as technician was most important. He formed and developed his professional skills especially in the field of plant ecology there. Such experience helped him to finish his university study and start scientific work after his emigration to Canada. His life in Canada is the last incarnation which includes study at the University of Edmonton and work at the University of Toronto where he became full professor. During his professional career, he carried out long-term research at the Ellesmere Island and many other locations in Canadian High Arctic.

In the book, especially in the third part, there are many descriptions of research projects that prof. Josef Svoboda has been heading or participated in. Among them, I would like to mention only two because they document the interdisciplinary approach that prof. Svoboda applied. The first one is field experiment called *Green Igloos Farm*. In fact it was garden in Alexandra Fjord, Ellesmere Island (78°53' N, 75°65' W). The experiment that exploited green tents as provisional greenhouses lasted for three years and met great success. Researchers were able to produce high quantities of a variety of vegetables from seeds even in such cold location. The second field experiment called *Polar aquaduct* was performed by prof. Svoboda and Ass. Prof. Elster, a Czech scientist who worked at the Ellesmere Island during his Ph.D. study. It was nutrient enrichment experiment with Arctic algae growing in the streams formed by melt water in the early spring season. In the Sverdrup Pass, they studied biodiversity and abundance of algae along artificially-made glacial stream (an aquaduct) when extra nutrient were added into melt water running from the Teardorp glacier.

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