

The Tree and A Boy

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Once upon a time, there was a boy and his best friend was a big apple tree. He climbed up the tree and ate apples every day. They were both happy. But one day, the boy left and did not come back for a long time. When he did, he was a young man, and said he wanted money to spend on his girlfriend. The tree suggested that he sell the apples on the tree. He agreed and took all the apples. The next time he came back, he was an adult. He told the tree he wanted a ship to go abroad. The tree suggested that he cut down its trunk and made a ship. He agreed, and took the trunk away. Only a stump was left and a long time passed. When he came back, he was an old man. The tree said to him, "I'm sorry my friend, but I don't have anything to give you now, I'm just stump." But the man said, "No, I don't want anything. I've done many things and am so tired. I just want to take a rest." The tree said, "Oh, why don't you sit on me then? This is all I can do for you." The man agreed, and sat down.

This is one of my favorite stories. Today, I ask you to think of the boy as the human race and the tree as Mother nature, the Earth.

Before the industrialization, we were just eating apples, the fruits of nature. Then, we started to take every single thing which is available from the Earth and changed it into something completely different.

Recent research has discovered many deplorable facts. The seals found dead on the coast of West Germany had in them as many as 150 kinds of harmful heavy metals and chemical including DDT, BHC and PCB. These products are dissolved in the sea water in every part of the Earth, and they accumulate in these creatures.

Recently we started to recognize the threat of Freon gas which can lead to skin cancer and a decrease in food crops. An endless number of trees have to be cut down so that we can consume loads of paper to photocopy our friends' notebooks or use countless pair of instant chopsticks, or *waribashi*. The trees are burned to make pastures to supply hamburgers for fast food chains. Acid rain caused by industries also damages forests. The loss of trees has resulted in floods and droughts which are getting more and more serious every year. The loss is also one of the causes of the greenhouse effect, which

is another serious threat. The predicted 4.5°C rise in the average temperature during the next sixty years is expected to cause a big slump in food crops, enormous typhoons, and a rise in the sea level by 1m, which will lead to a further erosion of land.

We have deformed Mother nature into a device, something like many time-bombs connected to each other. No one knows when they will explode, but eventually they will if we keep pursuing our 'happy' life. We all must be aware of these problems, and we all must participate in preventing these bombs from exploding. We can start from little things. To avoid using waribashi, carry your own chopsticks. Stop wasting paper. Avoid using Freon products. And there are much, much more to think about.

We must learn to live in harmony with nature. If the bombs explode, the Earth will not be as kind as the tree in the story to leave a a stump ready for you to sit in.