

Legacy for Next Generation

I spent my childhood in a small country town, about 100 km from Tokyo. The region had abundant nature of the kind that is impossible for children today to access. It is probably because I was brought up in such an environment that I still love being close to nature. During the playtime I enjoyed as a child, I learnt from people such as my friends and adults in the neighborhood as well as my parents, and many of the things I learnt are still relevant today.

These days, I often recall the words my parents said to me one day in my childhood. On that day, I had gone with my parents to the fields. While my parents were working in the fields, I had nothing in particular to do and so I waded into a small, shallow brook that ran through the hills. I played in the brook, making the water muddy and creating a large pile of dead leaves to block the flow of water. When my parents saw what I was doing, they scolded me. "Can you drink this muddy water?" they asked. When I replied that I couldn't, they said: "There might be people who wanted to drink the water you soiled and who are now waiting for it to become clear again. There might be animals waiting to drink clean water. There was no

need for it, but you made the water dirty and stopped it from flowing. If you did this sort of thing again, the god of the rivers would scold you. So the next time you do something, think about its consequences for other people."

I had forgotten about this episode that occurred so many years ago, but recently my parents' words come to mind each time I read or watch the news about global environmental problems. We no longer live in times when we can live for ourselves alone and be satisfied. The days are gone when only people who survived competition in the marketplace became the winners. What has resulted from such times? Widening disparity? Global warming?

We human beings have placed too much priority on economic development and pursued development without thought for the very earth we live on. We have only now woken up to the fact the human race has created carbon dioxide that exceeds the limit the earth can handle in its self-cleansing process. It is as if we have sealed the earth in a bag of carbon dioxide. What the human race needs to do now is to cooperate and study ways to remove this bag.



Instead of grouping ourselves into developed and developing countries and asserting our respective demands, we need to find a way to live together. I firmly believe that this is a step we must take so that our generation can leave behind a "beautiful earth" for the next generation. **E. Kozawa**

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