

## **Care the Earth**

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A cool, warm and gentle breeze caresses my skin, the coconut palms are dancing and rustling in the wind, the water of the river shimmering in the midday sun, and the fluffy white clouds drifted across the blue sky. How I love and enjoyed the God's work of art. God has bestowed us, the human being, with this precious treasure with a vast of flora and fauna-Earth. The world itself is the place for us to explore and have adventure. However, even with this greatest blessing of mankind, we shut our eyes, cover our ears, and close our heart, and like people lost in the dark, we fall foul upon the very thing we have without even noticing it. We've been violating it and without any conscience, we destroyed our own future. The earth where all living things, non-living things inhabits and where life occurred is dying, by the reasons of deforestation and pollution-dumping of domestic and industrial waste, intensive use of non-renewable minerals and burning of fossil fuels. During the ancient times, our ancestors have used nothing but their bare hand, unsterilized and hand-made simple utensils to prepare their meals. We might think that they are dirty people, whom didn't think about their personal hygiene, whom know nothing about bacteria, germs, and parasites. Even so, have you ever wondered why they are able to live up to hundreds of years? Nowadays, even after the devise of technology, production of modern medicine, and high-tech medical machines and equipment, we can't even reach an age of a hundred. Furthermore, the rate of people getting diseases increases day by day. Recently, new diseases are even aroses-H1N1, SARS, and Bird Flu. Why is this happening? What are the causes of these diseases? Even the doctors, pathologists, scientists and bacteriologist are twisting their mind out just to find answers for these questions, the answers that has been hidden and been denied within ourselves. Some people are even suggesting that God has mad, that this is the end of the world. What exactly are the reasons for these occurrences? The answer is non-other than "Pollution". Pollution, pollution, pollution! We've kept hearing this term now and then, but we kept ignoring it and never take action. We kept hurting the Earth, the place where we grew up, the planet where we gain all of our first experiences, the site for us to have adventures. We've been selfishly getting all the benefits from the earth and yet never bother to pay back.

My fellow comrades, people and reader, is destruction of earth inevitable? Can pollution be prevented? Through education, we've learnt that some human activities threaten the ecosystem such as deforestation. Rainforest are the oldest ecosystems on Earth and house almost half of the plant and animal in the world. Tropical rainforests have important ecological roles. They contain many unique species which provide food, medicine and other biological products according to the National Cancer Institute, 70% of the plants useful for the treatment of cancer can only be found in tropical rainforests. Rainforest also regulates climate by influencing wind, temperature, rainfall, humidity and patterns. However, the cutting of trees and timber for development(deforestation) causes many of this important forest to be destroyed. In accordance of losing the trees and roots for covering and anchoring the soil, soil erosion, flash floods, and landslides occurs. Deforestation also results in the loss of biodiversity.

Besides that, human activities such as burning of fossil fuel add about 75% of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere causing greenhouse effect and global warming. Burning of fossil fuels are the main source of air pollution. Fossil fuels are burnt in power station, industrial and domestic boilers, factories, and in the internal combustion engines of vehicles using mainly coals, petroleum and gas. Air pollution may cause many effects-acid rain, haze, and corrupts humans respiratory tracks which brings diseases such as asthma, conjunctivitis, sore throats, bronchitis, and lung cancer.

Deforestation and air pollution are not the only worse scenario yet. Water sources which is the primary basic needs for humans are the most easily contaminated as they are most effected by human activities. Industrial, domestic and agriculture activities produce waste that pollutes water. Agriculture run-offs and water from oil palm and rubber processing mills, untreated sewage consisting mainly of human feces, domestic waste such as detergents and food waste, effluents from industries, and underground pipe are the sources of water pollution. Some water pollution may even leads to eutrophication - excessive growth of aquatic plant life (algae bloom).

In this developing and technology-based era, men have invented new and advance transportation, machines operated by means of chemical and physical reaction, and even hydrogen bombs, missiles and nuclear power are used in war. In term of industrial development, hot water is discharged into nearby lakes and rivers from the effluents of industrial processes, and the cooling towers of electrical power stations which use water as cooling agent released excess heat into the environment leading to thermal pollution. Thermal pollution may caused certain aquatic species to instant death and eventually collapsing the entire ecosystem, moreover, the increase in temperature of water encourages algae's rapid growth leading to a higher BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Value) value.

Ozone layer is a region in the stratosphere, between 20 and 25 kilometers above the surface of the earth. Ozone layer is important to human as it absorbs the ultraviolet (UV) radiation and shield organisms from its damaging effects. However, the thinning of ozone layer has been recorded by scientists since the 1970s. in 1985, it was reported that the stratospheric ozone over the Antarctica had declined by 40% since 1977. The atmosphere in this area has very low ozone concentrations resulting in the formation of an "ozone hole". An ozone hole has now appeared above Arctic as well. Consequently, UV radiation has risen by 7% per decade in the northern hemisphere and by 10% per decade in the southern hemisphere. The destruction of the ozone layer is mainly due to the increasing levels of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the atmosphere which is used in air conditioning and refrigerators, propellants in aerosol cans and foaming agents in the making of Styrofoam packaging.

The human beings indeed have made many negative effects to the environment, which I myself ashamed of admitting being part of them. However, our tasks now are not to blame the past, but to plan for the future. Remember, that no one can go back and change a bad beginning, but anyone can start now and create a happy ending. Just remember that "a misty morning does not signify a cloudy day". Measures should be taken in the management of development activities. The government has enacted legislation to govern biological resources and the environment. Many laws and regulations are designed to control pollution which affects the quality of land, air and water such as the Environmental Quality Act, 1974, 1989 and Environment Impact Assessment Order, 1987. Even so, as human beings who are part of the species that have been taking advantages from the earth for generations, we shouldn't rely

wholly on the government and put all the responsibilities on their shoulder, we ourselves should take part in the process of protecting the earth. Preservation and conservation of soil, water, the flora and fauna of forests, and mangrove swamps should be maintained. For starters, we can practice the 4Rs-recycle, reuse, reduce and renew. Old papers, cards, aluminum cans, glass and metal pieces can be recycled; old plastics and container can be reuse; cutting down of the use of materials such as plastic bags can be reduce; and used materials such as bottles and plastic containers can be renew after they are cleaned.

Furthermore, we can safeguard the earth by means of technology. Catalytic converters can be installed in vehicles to clean up exhaust emissions and convert the harmful gases to less harmful products. Unleaded petrol can be used to reduce the emission of lead in the environment. The sewage can be treated in sewage treatment plants before discharging it to reduce water pollution. Toxic waste from factories should be treated before discharging it into the environment. Other than that, the hydrogen-based fuel-cell vehicles should be develop to reduce the burning of fossil fuels. In addition, renewable energy should be use more often such as solar energy instead of non-renewable energy that suffers depletion and pollute the environment such as fossil fuels. The practice of biological control is also better than using chemical controls which involves the use of pesticides that pollute the soil.

Last but not least, we can participate in the World Environmental Day, which falls on June 5. The aim of this day is to stress on the importance of conserving the environment and to increase environmental awareness among people in the whole world. During this time, we can organize a talk on "Saving the Earth" and even having a "Recycling Week".

In a nutshell, our world is now suffocating and needs our concern and care to survive. As a group, we can make our voices heard. As contrast what happens now. Tens of thousands effects of world destruction have causes deep scars in our lives. The earth is getting older and even dying because of human activities. People are more individualistic and materialistic with no naturalistic intelligence within them. Their mind is filled with possession, money and wealth rather than love towards the world. These kinds of attitudes are the reasons why our worlds keep changing to the worse. Therefore, it is time to step out from our comfort zone and make a huge change. It may take years or decades and even centuries, but let us try and begin now. In this bliss we have, we shall see, the cry and fear of the earth will stop existing! So, make a better world, make a better place, and the dream we were conceived in will reveal a joyful face. Let us stand together, hand in hand, create a world, with no pollution. Together we cry, happy tears, see the nation save the earth...