

# SONG OF THE EARTH

Life appeared on the Planet Earth about 30 billion years ago. The history of human beings, including the primitive mankind, does not go beyond three million years. However, human beings are ruining this planet like cancerous cells. The enormous increase in population and the devastating damage to the environment are the worst examples of the destruction which commenced with the use of fossil fuel after the industrial revolution, not more than two hundred and fifty years ago. The catastrophe was especially great in the last fifty years after the Second World War. In comparison to the length of human history, this period is like a fragment of a microsecond.

Human beings are annihilating this planet like cancerous cells. They ignore the fact that when carcinogenic cells destroy the invaded prey, they eradicate themselves, too. Mankind should realize that by ravaging this beautiful planet, they pave the way to their own destruction. Indeed the history of mankind is a history of destruction. Mankind is an unnatural creature which cannot survive without destroying the nature. It seems that the conquest of nature is an eternal aim of mankind. Human beings used to be scared of nature with feelings of reverence. Although they were antagonistic to nature, concurrently, they were modest in dealing with it, and had the tendency to coexist with it.

However, human beings misjudged by assuming that the scientific achievements, aimed at developing war technology, were omnipotent, and abandoned the "fear com-reverence" type of feeling towards the nature. Is it that human beings are conditioned to be concerned only about their daily routine and immediate surroundings? Though human beings know that the oil supply is on the verge of exhaustion and the environment is badly damaged, they don't bother about them, and don't take those matters seriously. They think they are matters of future concern, and something happening at a distance far away from them. They yell about environmental damage, and meanwhile lament over the stagnant economy. Those two problems cannot be dealt with together because they are two opposing issues.

Human beings have already noticed the symptoms of the approaching crisis, they know if this destruction of the nature progresses, the terminal stage, vanishing of mankind, is also imminent, but they ignore the truth and take no action. Isn't this mankind's arrogance? Or is it a lesson human species has involuntarily and tacitly learned from history, and abides by this contract? Or is it that human beings have become optimistic, thinking that it doesn't matter whatever happens, so far as their descendants can continue existing?

The speed of the destruction of nature by human beings is much greater than its recovery rate. The death of lakes and forests by acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer, the fear of the green house effect by excessive discharge of carbon dioxide, desertification and floods due to ruthless cutting down of rain forests, pollution caused by the overuse of poisonous chemicals, unnecessary production of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests, radioactive pollution due to accidents in nuclear power plants, all of these are destructive activities committed by human beings.

At some stage human beings pursued a policy of excessive production at such a rate that the products are far in excess to the consumption rate. They have adapted a wrong and selfish sense of values, assuming that "wealth" means economic development through excessive production. People might say that "wealth" means comfort and nice looks by possessing materials. It is believed that the better and more one possesses, the richer one is. "Wealth" has been considered as the relationship between human beings and materials. Materials are tools. I wonder if collecting piles of materials could be considered as the "wealth" human beings are seeking?

To "enrich" their lives, human beings will endlessly desire to have more food, clothing and housing. Choosing the policy of excessive production is related to these endless desires which lead to the piling up of goods beyond necessity and far exceeding the demand.

Awakened by the multi-purpose application of oil, human beings developed petrochemistry by reforming the transportation system. In the course of history, the material "wealth" obtained only during the past fifty years by the advanced nations through the excessive use of fossil fuel is very remarkable.

In search of "affluence", human beings destroyed natural resources beyond repair through excessive production and consumption.

The advanced nations which produce excessive goods beyond their domestic consumption rate, need to find overseas market for their surplus goods. The developing countries where manufactured goods are scarce, are easy targets, in other words a dumping ground, for the advanced nations who have to sell their products and elevate their living standard.

It is very obvious that the overseas aid by the advanced countries is nothing more than "throwing a spat to catch a whale" for the exploitation of the potential market in developing countries.

The commodities of the advanced countries are the objects of envy for the developing nations who want to achieve material smeared, false "affluence". Commodities are the life style of the advanced nations. This false "affluence" will destroy the spirits of the developing countries' people who coexist with the harsh nature, and also sever the relationship between human beings. "Affluence" offers human beings egoism and isolationism in the name of individualism. As material possession increases, the wall of egoism and isolationism surroundig human beings will become higher and more firm.

That's not all about it. The process of destruction still continues. The advanced countries plunder the natural resorces of the developing nations for their comfort and "wealth", and exploit their raw materials for further production of commodities in the name of economic development and trade. They even build factories without any pollution checking system in the developing countries where antipollution regulations are very lax. If they do the same in their own countries, the pollution and destruction caused by those ill-constructed factories will cause great problems. The developing countries have to bear the consequences of the destructions caused by pollution. Thus the advanced nations achieved "affluence" at the expense of their victims, the developing nations and environment.

I wonder if human beings, who continue bearing children, have the obligation to leave at least a bit of good environment for their descendants. It would be a very irresponsible act if they neglect to tackle this problem and leave it to their descendants.

We have to start dealing with the problem from the simplest things that could be done, but what is to be done remains a question. It might sound harsh, but I think there is no way to solve this problem other than minimizing consumption. The economic system that is based upon high consumption rates, would, someday, be damaged severely and will experience an unprecedented plunge, far more severe than the Great Depression of 1927 that shocked the world. Since human beings are compelled to choose either destruction or survial, they must get the courage to select one of the two. The more materials we possess, the more greedy we become, but contrary to that, we become spiritually poorer. Materials, being simply tools, affect human beings. Our spirits are invaded by materials, and possessing them has become the purpose of our life. According to anthropologists, consumption and dissipation are the fundamental motives of the process of production. Even if it is true, it may not be useless to reconsider our policy of endless desire for materials.

