

My Hero in Rubber Boots

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Look at these flowers. They are raised by my mother and father. My parents are farmers who grow rice and flowers.

As a little girl, I used to play in the greenhouse, that is, my parents' workplace. But I stopped visiting there once I entered junior high school because I became busy with club activities and homework. Since I started living in a college dormitory, I started to help my parents' work again every time I go home on weekends. That is how I returned to my old playground: the greenhouse.

The greenhouse doesn't look the way it used to. Has it changed? No. What it has changed is the way I look at my parents' work. In fact, I have learned so much from working with my parents.

A typical Saturday at home begins like this. "Hey, Sa-boh. Help me out with work today." As soon as I hear my father's voice, I wrap my head with a towel, wear gloves and rubber boots, and go to the greenhouse. In the morning, I water flowers. After lunch, I help with shipment of the flowers. Because of the heavy workload, I get completely exhausted in the late afternoon. But my parents' work does not end here. My father makes a night journey by truck to carry the flowers to the market. My mother finishes up the rest of the work and prepares for bath and dinner at home. Now I understand how hard they work, so that I feel embarrassed with having complained about 9-o'clock dinner.

By helping their work, the way I think of my parents have greatly changed. They grow rice and flowers with great care. My parents are the real professionals. When I was in junior high school, I found my father lazy to drink his favorite sake and play with our cat Jabbie at home. But the very same man looks very handsome at his workplace like a hero in a TV drama. My parents are the great role models of mine. Through helping with my parents' work, my perception of my future career has changed dramatically. I entered college of technology because I wanted to become a scientist to protect the environment. Giving a concrete example, I wanted to improve species of plants so that they can survive even in the desert. I used to imagine myself as someone dressed in a white coat and looking through a microscope. But now I imagine my future self differently.

One day, planting vegetable seedlings, my father said to me: "Greenery and plants are strong. Once we cultivate the land and plant them, they will root and grow on their own naturally." A few weeks later, when I visited the field, the tiny seedlings grew big with many leaves and were basking in the sun. I was deeply impressed by the power of nature. I had had an idea to simply improve species of plants to stop desertification. But I learned that my idea was disrespectful to the nature.

Nowadays natural disasters caused by typhoons or earthquakes often occur around the world. The nature might be screaming in pain because it has been damaged by

humans. Since we hurt the earth, we are the ones responsible to save her. To do so, we can't just rely on science. We should combine the power of nature and the scientific power of humans in a well-balanced way in order to conserve the environment.

How can I be a part of that process to save the nature in the future? As a scientist in a white coat looking through a microscope? Well, that should be a part of my future self. But what I really want to become is a scientist with the head wrapped in a towel and with rubber boots on, who go out to plant as many trees as possible. That is my dream. And it is my hard-working parents that gave me the dream.