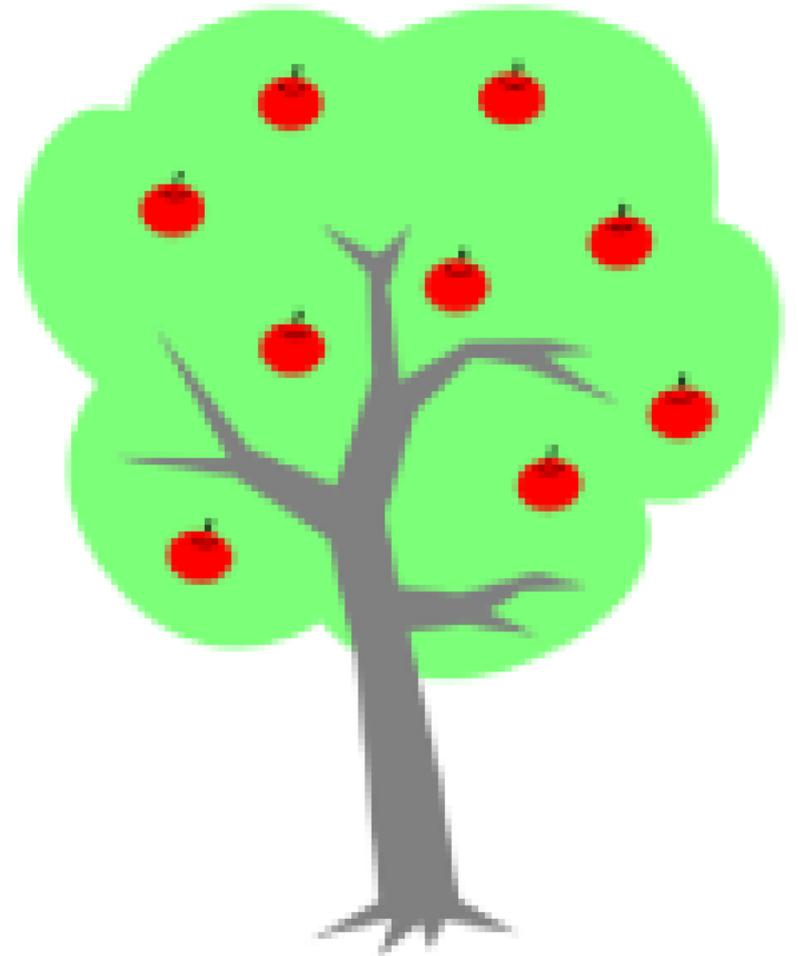


Chapter1: A Fruit Tree On The Outskirts Of A Village

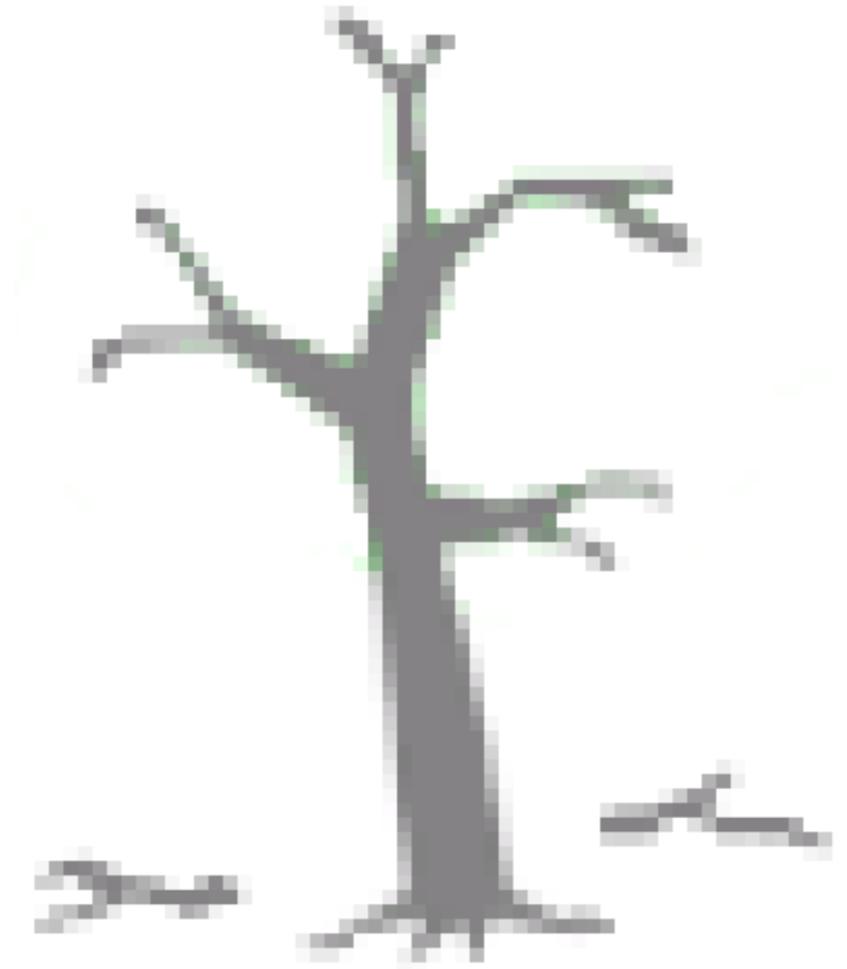
Long long time ago, there was a tree in a field of grass near a village. One day, this tree bore a lot of delicious fruit.



The fruit were very delicious. So villagers soon harvested all of the fruits.

There was no end to the number of people who cut branch of this tree and take them home.

Because of this, the tree died in a few years.



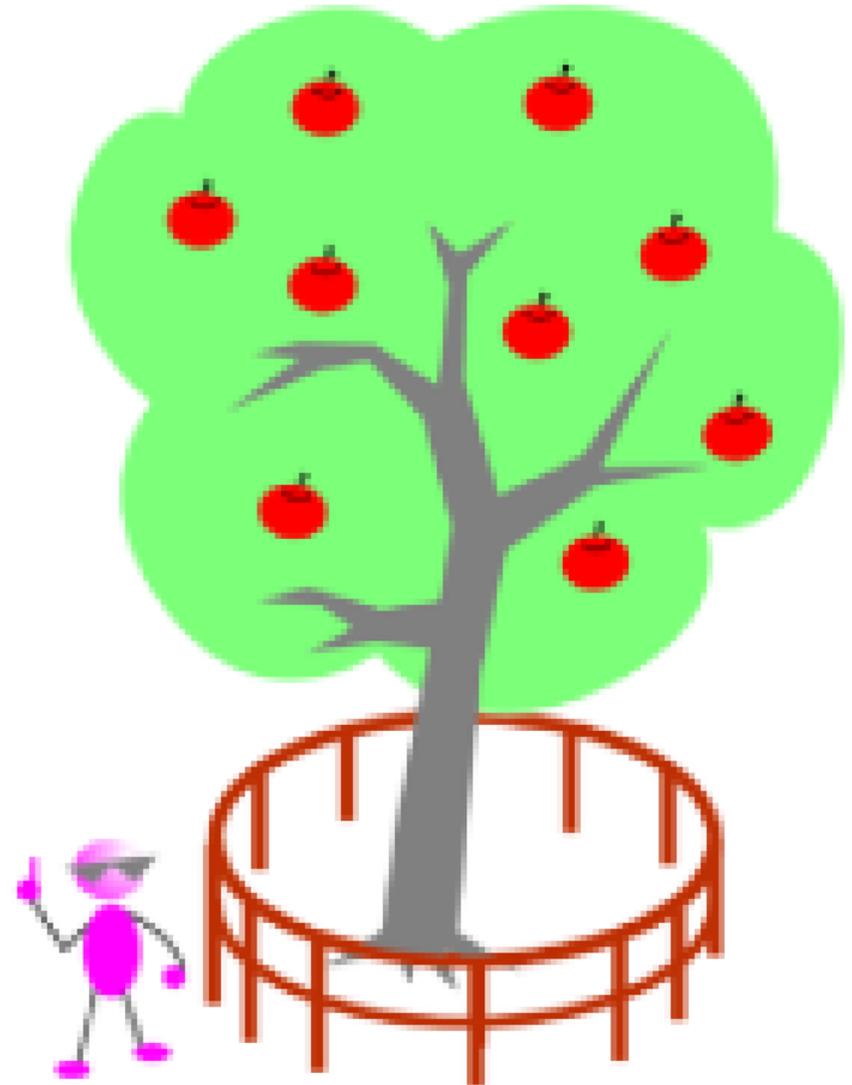
In the village, there was a clever merchant .

He grafted the tree before the tree died.

And he fertilized the tree, cut off branch when it's too much. He took care of the tree for a long time.

Then the tree bore fruit. He sold it and made big money.

He was a real worrier. He fenced around the tree and was always watching the tree.

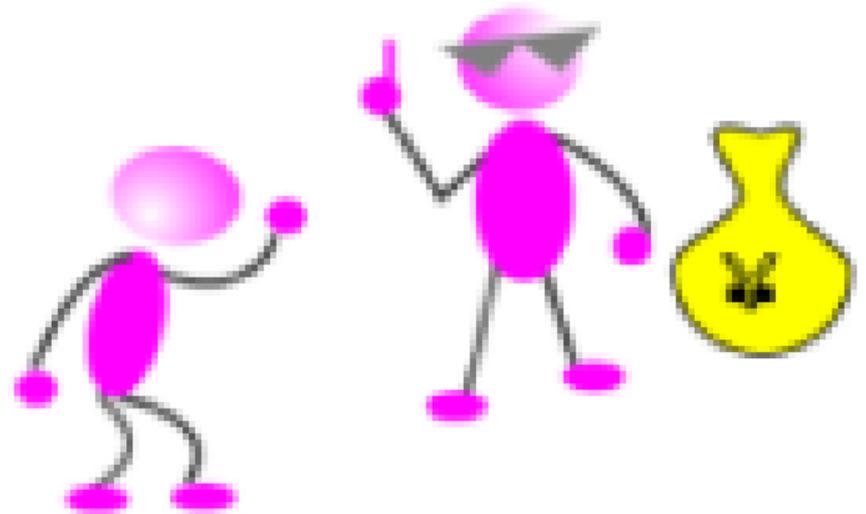


This merchant was not just an worrier, but also a hard worker.
His effort made the fruit more delicious and a lot of people bought it.
Some people delivered it to busy villagers,
and some people made jam from the fruits and sold it.

The merchant monopolized the fruit tree.

When someone said to him “ there are many worm holes ” , he heard nothing of it and said “ It's cheap so you can't complain that.”
When someone asked him “ do you use any harmful fertilizer?”
he said “ it's company secret” and wouldn't answer that question.
When someone offered him “ I'd like to buy branch” ,
he said “ I don't want to have competitors”
and rejected the offer.

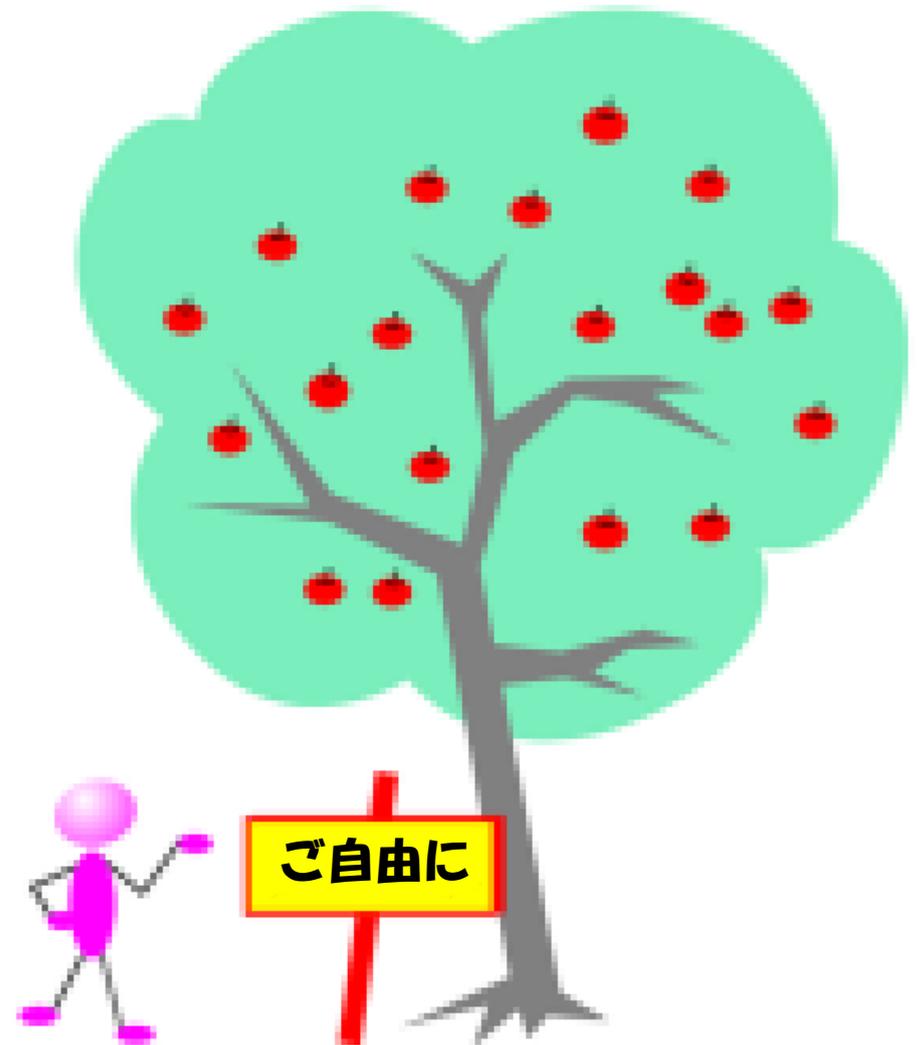
More and more people started to sell the fruit
and more and more people bought it.
Then the merchant increased the price and
made a big profit.



In this village, there was a young man who really loved this fruit. When the merchant increased price of the fruit, he couldn't afford it any more because he was very poor.

So, he got interested in another tree near the village. This tree also bore a lot of fruit, but its taste was not so good and no one had cared for it. The young man started taking care of it with his friends.

Therefore, the tree bore more fruit than they could eat. So they put up a sign board that said “Free”. There were some people who take the fruit away although they didn't take care of the tree, but the young man didn't mind at all.

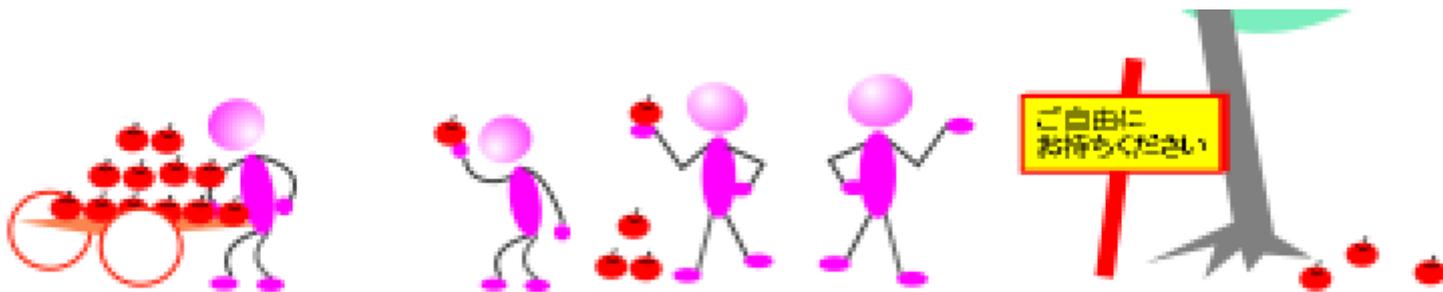


The young men kept making effort for years to improve taste of the fruit as much as possible. Some people who took the fruit said “ I will help you”, “I will help you too because we don't want to kill this tree like the first one” and helped doing time-consuming works.

The more people helped, the more people took the fruit. When the fruit run short, the people grafted the tree to grow more. They put up “ Free” sign boards on new trees also.

Some people delivered the fruit, and some people made jam from the fruit. They were very cooperative and sometimes they pay for agricultural equipment, fertilizer and inviting specialists to get advise.

So they reduced warm holes, improved the taste of the fruit, and their fruit became much more popular.



Years later, many fruit trees were planted around the village and bore a lot of delicious fruit.

The villagers started delivering the young man's fruit together to far-off town. In that town, many people said “I've never had such a delicious fruit !” and the fruit became popular. It sold like hot cakes.

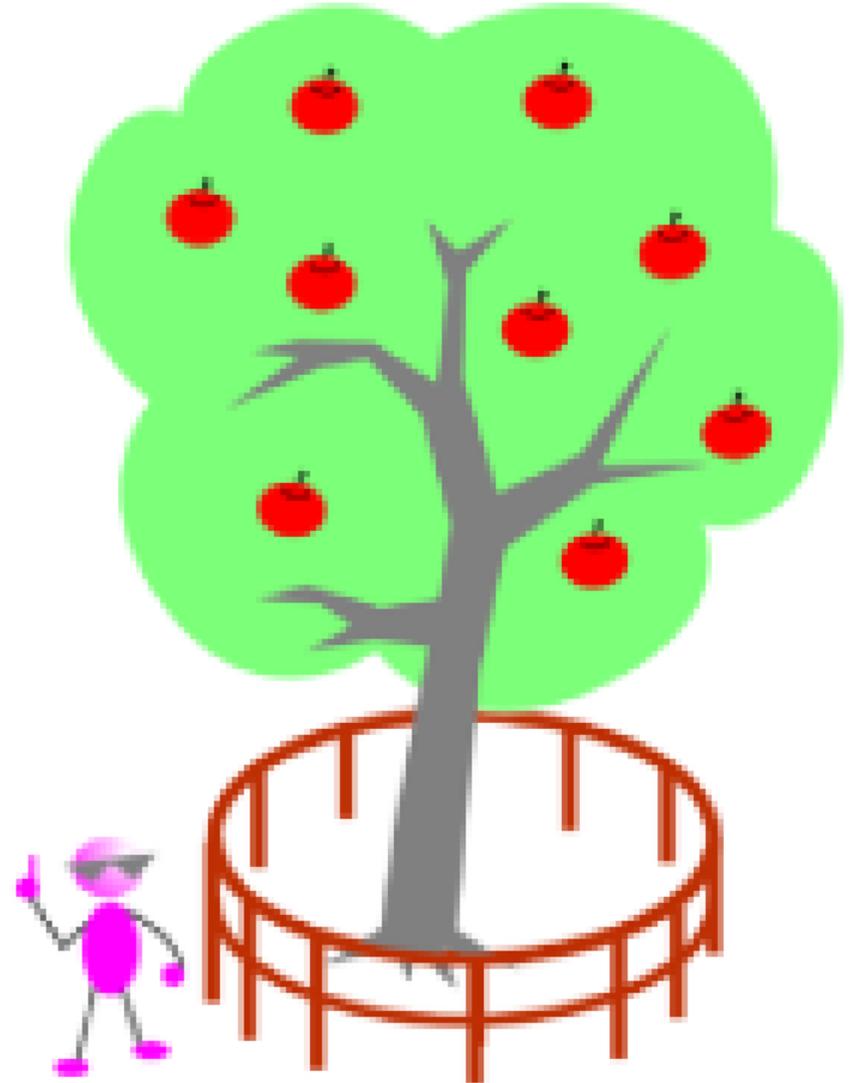
And not only the young man but also his friends and villagers all became happy.



By the way, what happened to the merchant who monopolized the fruit tree?

His business was also going well. For only a short while he had a few customers, but he expanded his business by hiring many people, shipping the fruits to far-off town, buying up fruit trees which had grown in other villages, etc.

There was no difference between the young man and the merchant in terms of making delicious fruit.



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*** Notice**

I used the same illustrations as the Japanese version in this English version. I didn't change text in sign boards in illustrations and left it Japanese to keep a record of the original Japanese meaning.

There are two meanings in English word "free."
They are "liberty" and "price zero."
We describe them as two different words. "Ziyuu" as "liberty"
and "Muryou" as "price-zero."

In this fairy tale's Japanese version, I wrote "Ziyuu" as "liberty."
If I translate this to "free", the meaning will be unclear.
In this case the meaning is "liberty", not "price-zero".

