THE STORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Assembly 1 – January 5th 2003

Welcome – to all of you who were here in 2002 and a special welcome to new members of The British School Family – we have about 14 new teachers and many new pupils – and I am a fairly new Principal. We are going to have an Assembly every day so please come to school nice and early. This school year is a new beginning for all of us and I want to make quite sure that we all understand what it means to be a part of the British School.

Today I want to introduce you to my Christmas tree. I brought some of the decorations with me from England. What is the date tomorrow? January 6th – the 12th day after Christmas. All the Christmas decorations have to be taken down and put away for another year. But I am keeping my little tree and hope to use it next year also, but it may be bigger and I may have to ask you to make some more decorations!

Do you know the history and meaning of the Christmas tree? Let me tell you. The idea comes from the eastern part of Europe where winters are very, very cold. The sun does not get up until very late and goes to bed very early. Everything is white (with snow or ice) and brown. In such countries there was often a midwinter festival. People would bring an evergreen tree into the house and decorate it. An evergreen tree is one that does not lose its leaves in a cold winter, like most of the other trees. It changes its leaves in summer and they get thicker and thicker and tougher and tougher – like leather - so that, when there is frost and ice and snow, these leaves are not damaged. The birds love these trees because the leaves give them shelter.

Most cold countries have a midwinter festival which existed before Christianity came, but the Christians said, "Don't stop! That is a nice tradition. We shall use it to celebrate hope in the middle of winter, green amidst white and brown and the light and joy of Christmas in the middle of darkness.

The tradition came to Britain because our great Queen Victoria married a German Prince called Albert. Prince Albert liked having a Christmas tree so the Royal Family always had one – and the British thought it was a lovely idea and copied them. When they and other European people went to other countries, they took the tradition with them and so it spread all over the world.

Here, it is a hot country and many trees have leaves all the year round. But please imagine how important evergreen trees are in winter in a really cold country. I hope that some of you will learn how to be like the evergreen tree – strong and useful in the difficult times. It is not difficult to be good and helpful when life is easy but what happens when the difficult times come? That is the test of true character. We hope that this school will help you to be strong people, for both easy and difficult times.

God bless you.

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LEARNING TO SHARE YOUR WORLD

Assembly 2 January 6th 2003

How many of you have babies at home? Or maybe you can remember what it was like when your little brother or sister was a baby? Babies think only of themselves and their needs. When they are hungry, they cry for food. It is ME ME ME all day long – and that is how they are.

But, as you grow older, you learn that you have a mother and father and they cannot be with you ALL the time. You have

brothers and sisters that you have to share your life with. In fact, you learn that there are other people in the world – and not only ME ME ME. There is US – and so you learn to share with your family – although there are some small children whose parents allow them to be little kings and queens and get rather a lot of their own way…!

And then you come to school! Your world is getting bigger! You are a very precious person at home – maybe you are the center of attention and suddenly you are one of 20 in a class and 300 in a school. Of course you are still very precious but so are other children and you cannot get your own way all the time and have to learn to share the teacher's attention with them also! You cannot just behave as you do at home but think of others in a new and different way. (I saw one little Nursery Class new boy downstairs with his father yesterday who had obviously decided he did not like school and wanted to go home!)

Please remember that we are many people sharing an up-down building. When you are on the stairs, please do not push and race. Keep to the left and move at the same pace as others. If you do not behave properly on the stairs, you could have a nasty accident. Also, if you scream and shout at home, maybe no one minds but here, we cannot have 300 pupils screaming and shouting!

There are some very big pupils in the school now and you must remember that we have a lot of very small children here so please be careful. Remember to look down from your great height sometimes and check that you are not treading on one of the little ones!

Sharing is a very important part of being a human being. During your time at school, I hope you begin to learn that you are not only part of a family and a school but a country – Bangladesh – and a great world of other countries and people. We all must learn to live together, in respect and care. If we do not know how to share our world properly, then we end up fighting each other – and that is very bad.