

37. Ryokan and the Starfish



Ryokan was a monk who lived in Japan. He was a well-known teacher and a poet and a calligrapher.

One day, he was walking on the beach and he saw that hundreds of starfish had been washed ashore in a storm. The storm had blown over and the starfish were dying in the hot sun. Ryokan began to pick up the starfish one by one. He threw them back in the sea.



“What’s the use?” said his disciple who was watching Ryokan. “There are hundreds of fish dying. Throwing back a few of them will not make any difference.”



Ryokan picked up another fish.



“It will make a difference to this little fish,” said Ryokan, throwing the fish back into the sea.

When help is needed, it is important to give whatever help you can give.

- **calligrapher** : someone who knows the art of fine handwriting.
- **ashore** : on the shore.

Things to do :

1. Answer the following questions :
 - (a) What did Ryokan see on the beach ?
 - (b) What did he do ?
 - (c) What did he mean by ‘It will make a difference to this little fish’ ?
2. Make a resolution to offer at least a little help every day to someone who needs it.

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