



# **Sowing Seeds in the Desert: Natural Farming, Global Restoration, and Ultimate Food Security**

*Masanobu Fukuoka*

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The earth is in great peril, due to the corporatization of agriculture, the rising climate crisis, and the ever-increasing levels of global poverty, starvation, and desertification on a massive scale. This present condition of global trauma is not "natural," but a result of humanity's destructive actions. And, according to Masanobu Fukuoka, it is reversible. We need to change not only our methods of earth stewardship, but also the very way we think about the relationship between human beings and nature.

Fukuoka grew up on a farm on the island of Shikoku in Japan. As a young man he worked as a customs inspector for plants going into and out of the country. This was in the 1930s when science seemed poised to create a new world of abundance and leisure, when people fully believed they could improve upon nature by applying scientific methods and thereby reap untold rewards. While working there, Fukuoka had an insight that changed his life forever. He returned to his home village and applied this insight to developing a revolutionary new way of farming that he believed would be of great benefit to society. This method, which he called "natural farming," involved working with, not in opposition to, nature.

Fukuoka's inspiring and internationally best-selling book, *The One-Straw Revolution* was first published in English in 1978. In this book, Fukuoka described his philosophy of natural farming and why he came to farm the way he did. *One-Straw* was a huge success in the West, and spoke directly to the growing movement of organic farmers and activists seeking a new way of life. For years after its publication, Fukuoka traveled around the world spreading his teachings and developing a devoted following of farmers seeking to get closer to the truth of nature.

*Sowing Seeds in the Desert*, a summation of those years of travel and research, is Fukuoka's last major work—and perhaps his most important. Fukuoka spent years working with people and organizations in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States, to prove that you could, indeed, grow food and regenerate forests with very little irrigation in the most desolate of places. Only by greening the desert, he said, would the world ever achieve true food security.

This revolutionary book presents Fukuoka's plan to rehabilitate the deserts of the world using natural farming, including practical solutions for feeding a growing human population, rehabilitating damaged landscapes, reversing the spread of desertification, and providing a deep understanding of the relationship between human beings and nature. Fukuoka's message comes right at the time when people around the world seem to have lost their frame of reference, and offers us a way forward.

## **Sowing Seeds in the Desert: Natural Farming, Global Restoration, and Ultimate Food Security Details**

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# From Reader Review Sowing Seeds in the Desert: Natural Farming, Global Restoration, and Ultimate Food Security for online ebook

## Trish says

I found a few interesting insights in this book. However, it wasn't what I expected. The author talks a lot about zen and being one with the earth. Overall it just didn't seem very practical or helpful.

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## chuobantho says

Ào sâu vào ch? ?? nào c?ng s? tìm th?y ni?m vui thích trong ?y.

Em có ?n t??ng r?t m?nh v? vi?c r?ng hoá ra, ng?m d??i các sa m?c v?n có các m?ch n??c ng?m, ho?c th?m chí là các dòng d?ng nh?, ch?y qua. V? ng??c l?i, ? g?n b? sông hoàn toàn v?n có th? có sa m?c n?u nh? th?m th?c v?t ? ó tiêu tán. Cát xem ra ch? là m?t th? làm m? m?t nh?ng ng??i không hi?u ???c nh?ng v?n ?? sâu r?ng và mang tính c?u trúc h?n. S? d?ng chính ph?c h?p các loài th?c v?t và v?n dung s? ?a d?ng c?a các b? r? cây ?? luân chuy?n và gi? n??c là m?t ý t??ng thu? l?i r?t ?n t??ng.

Em thích cái cách b?c ?i ??n nhi?u n?i ?? v?a chia s?, v?a h?c h?i, ??c bi?t là trong m?i t??ng tác v?i b?n tr? con. T?i n?i ?âu, dù b?n r?n ??n m?y, b?c v?n luôn có ?? th?i gian và n?ng l??ng ?? quan sát t?ng cái cây ng?n c? ? n?i ?y, ?úng theo ngh?a ?en, và nhìn ra ???c c?u chuy?n r?ng h?n v? h? sinh thái và ph??ng th?c n?ng nghi?p ?n ph?a sau.

Tuy r?ng m?t s? ý ki?n ??a ra h?i c?c ?oan ??i v?i em, ch?ng h?n nh? chuy?n ng??i ta c? t?nh chinh ph?c và "tu? ti?n" v?ch ra b?n gi?i gi?a các qu?c gia khi?n dân du m?c tr?n kh?ng c?n x? d?ch và ch?n th? lang thang n?a, hay nh? chuy?n so sánh gi?a ?ông y và T?y y, nh?ng tri?t lí v? n?ng nghi?p t?n?i, v? s? s?ng và cái ch?t c?a b?c v?n mang l?i th?t nhi?u ?i?u ?? suy ng?m.

Ch?ng h?n nh? ?ây là m?t ?o?n mà em r?t thích:

"Tôi ngh?, n?i s? ch?t th? kh?ng ph?i là s? cái ch?t c?a c? th? nhi?u l?m. Ng??i ta s? ph?i m?t ?i giàu sang và danh v?ng mà m?n ?ã g?n b?o, c? nh?ng ham mu?n tr?n t?c v?n là m?t ph?n c?a cu?c s?ng h?ng ng?y n?a. M?c ?? s? ch?t c?a m?t ng??i th??ng t? l? thu?n v?i chi?u sâu nh?ng g?n b?o và ?am m? th? gian c?a ng??i ?ó."

?úng quá ?i ?y ch?.

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## Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rhythmic!'), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's reviews on the blog typically feature two or three images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a book is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate it three-fifths

worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

The library had this book on a display about water use and smart farming. It sounded interesting, but turned out to be not so much once I started reading it. It was first published in 1996, and unfortunately is filled with "Gaia" talk along the lines of the whole planet being one living, breathing entity and it's blabbering about spirit and stuff, which is odd given that the authors appears to be an atheist. Some of what Fukuoka says makes sense, but none of what he says is ground-breaking or hitherto unknown. The author's main thesis seems to be that plants which have grown wild and become used to local conditions will do better than artificially engineered or bred plants. Well duhh!

The books seems full of contradiction, too. He talks on the one hand of naturally revitalizing areas which human depredation have rendered waste land, yet he derides attempts to irrigate those same areas and grow plants. Either growing stuff there will contribute to increased rainfall, as he advocates, or it will achieve nothing, as he also claims in deriding these projects! He doesn't seem to grasp that increased rainfall won't automatically precipitate just because you plant seeds and get a few plants growing. There are climactic, geographical, and topological reasons for rainfall or the lack of it. No one ruined the land to create the Sahara. That happened perfectly naturally.

In other instances he repeatedly says there are no bad insects - such as on page 43, where the page title is "In Nature There are No Beneficial or Harmful Insects" which is such patent bullshit that it would definitely fertilize crops organically. Later, he talks of protecting plants from insects and disease - such as on p93 (protect the seeds from animals and insects), p109 (susceptible to insects and disease), and p156 (more resistant to insects and disease). If there are no bad insects and no disease, why must we protect plants?! This scatter-brained approach to writing undermines everything he says.

Another contradiction lay in his relation of a story about an orchard on his family's farm. On the one hand, later in the book, he talks about letting nature work in our favor instead of fighting it, but at the start of chapter one, he tells us of this orchard which as a young man, he left to its own devices purely from his own laziness (i.e. letting nature rule instead of tending the trees). The result was that 200 trees died. What he did was natural farming - not doing anything to the trees and letting nature take its course, yet immediately after telling us this story of the dead trees, he then claims what he did wasn't natural farming! He makes no sense. He doesn't even revisit this to explain to us what he ought to have done - how the death of his two hundred apple trees could have been avoided.

The book is all over the place and full of unsupported anecdote. Repeated tales of the nature, "I did X and got a wonderful result Y" do not explain anything, or support his thesis - whatever that was supposed to be (he never really makes it clear other than to say nature knows best which is patently obvious). There are a lot of people who urge us to go back to nature, back to organic, back to the land, but not a one of them addresses the massive increase in farming yields brought about by modern farming methods or how we're to feed seven billion people by living as hunter gatherers.

Admittedly a lot of the bounty produced by modern farming techniques unfortunately goes to waste or to feed animals instead of feeding starving people, but you can't argue with the yield which is far higher than nature's original versions of the fruits and grains ever was. The truth is that there is nothing that we farm which is 'natural' - defined as 'exists in this form in nature'. Everything out there is a result of genetic manipulation - except that the purists are too dishonest to call it that. The food we enjoy was originally not manipulated in a lab in the manner in which modern agribusiness pursues those same aims, but it certainly

was genetically manipulated for quantity and size over many years by farmers.

Fukuoka is absolutely right in his assertion that no gods or Buddhas will save us. The plain fact is that no gods have ever saved us or ever will; it's in our hands, and we've screwed it up, but vague appeals to some non-existent, nebulous 'golden past' will not save us either. Neither will claims that there are no parasites and harmful insects. Yes, there are! Nature is indeed red in tooth and claw - and in virus and parasite. That doesn't mean we've been smart in attacking these problems, but sticking our fingers in your ears and chanting "Gaia will save us! Gaia will save us" doesn't work either. If it did, humanity would not have been almost wiped out a few thousand years ago - and Homo sapiens wouldn't be the only human species remaining on the planet. Everything save for about one percent of all living things has been wiped out, and none save the most recent of those were wiped out because ancient Middle-East farmers genetically manipulated crops or laid waste to land, or because Cro-Magnon people used chemical farming methods.

Fukuoka is woefully ignorant about evolution, and anyone who ignores or misunderstands those particular facts of life is doomed. Yes creationists, I'm looking at you. There was no oxygen on Earth when life first began. No free oxygen, that is - it was bound up in minerals and compounds. Contrary to Fukuoka's evident belief, it was life which produced the very oxygen which in the end killed life. Only those organisms which had mutations which could handle this highly poisonous and dangerously corrosive gas - a waste product back then - survived to go on to evolve into what we see today. The old life - the anaerobic life as we now know it - exists only in obscure, out-of-the-way locations these days, buried in mud, hidden away from the deadly oxygen which would lay waste to it. Yes, modern life lived on the excrement of anaerobic life!

Fukuoka also appears rather clueless about the nature of time and of the value of taxonomy, and he seems ignorant of the fact that  $E=MC^2$  was in the scientific air long before Einstein derived it. Scientists like Henri Poincaré and Fritz Hasenöhrl had been all over it, but had never put it all together in the way Einstein did.

At one point in this book (p86) there's a footnote which declares that Fukuoka is not saying his orchard was grown on a desert, yet less than a dozen pages later (p97), he says in the text "You may think it reckless for me to say that we can revegetate the desert. Although I have confirmed the theory in my own mind and in my orchard..." Clearly he is thinking of his orchard as a desert. And good luck with confirming a theory in your own mind very scientific! LOL! The problem is that he never actually defines desert so we don't know if he views a desert in the way in which deserts are commonly defined (through rainfall or lack thereof), or if he merely means impoverished land or land to which waste has been laid in one way or another. He appears never to have heard of the dangers of invasive species either in his advocating taking seeds from Thailand to plant in India to revegetate the deserts there. India has no native vegetation that would serve this purpose?

So no, I have no faith in what this author claims except in the very vaguest of terms: yes, variety is better than monoculture, and yes, we can't keep poisoning our planet in the name of agriculture, but experiments confirmed the mind are not the same as real practical verified results, and he offers no references for any of the claims he makes, so for me the take home was nothing I didn't already know. I refuse to recommend this book.

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### **Snooty says**

It made me think, "We might just be able to save this world."

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### **Jared says**

This book was okay, but my expectations were probably too high. I was hoping for more of the practical "hands on" explanation of natural farming and less of the zen, one-with-the-earth philosophy, which was the bulk of the book, and felt unnecessary.

I enjoyed the author's personal experiences with his farm in Japan as well as his integrated, non-tilling, multi-species seeding recommendations for healing damaged soil. That was helpful. I think he could have gone further with the inclusion of animals and their restorative qualities for the soil as well, but that may be personal preference. I, for one, am open to anyone who has proven, scalable, sustainable techniques to improve our agricultural behaviors. I suppose this book is still worthwhile even if it merely expands the awareness of the growing desertification of our lands and deterioration of our soil.

I will still read his first book, One Straw Revolution, but I have lowered my expectations for that one.

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### **Trang says**

a must-read for those who concern about the human's future.

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### **Simon Yoklic says**

This book is informally organized into two sections. The first is an overview of Fukuoka's philosophies regarding re-greening the man-made deserts of the earth. The second is part of the story of how he came to these philosophies, where he has seen them work, and how he himself applied them. When I started reading the first part seemed a bit preachy and out of character for Fukuoka. It was not until I finished reading the book that I understood why it was presented in that way. Maybe it could have been better organized but the text is sounds and the philosophies are reasonable, even if sometimes a bit ethereal. The book is profound and inspiring just as one would expect from Mr. Fukuoka. I would suggest a read, especially if you enjoyed The One Straw Revolution, just don't get lost in the first part and you will come to understand his message.

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### **Henri Moreaux says**

Having read Masanobu's first book, The One-Straw Revolution, I was excited to dig into Sowing Seeds in the Desert to gain more knowledge on his techniques and the practical applications of such. Disappointingly the book mostly deals with his philosophy of natural farming & being at one with nature.

It's a good book, but the majority of it is to do with his philosophy which wasn't of that much interest to me. There's some interesting recounts of travels through India & the United States of America and then (finally) the book gets into some practical applications at the very end.

If looking for a book to buy, I'd recommend The One-Straw Revolution over this.

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## Andrea says

Masanobu Fukuoka...I have now read his first book, *One Straw Revolution*, and his last, *Sowing Seeds in the Desert*. There is such a distance between eastern and western ways of knowing and thinking, I like how provocative it is to explore the spaces between them. I like how this book sets them in dialogue. Reading Fukuoka reminds me of seeing the Dalai Lama talk at the LSE -- they seem so idealistic, they speak using familiar words but in such different ways, seem so removed and unworldly and thus so easily taken advantage of by a capitalist system that thrives on co-opting everything and turning it into profit. Yet really, seems to me their points are needle sharp in deflating the engorged balloons of western, capitalist ways of knowing and valuing. If you listen.

It also, of course, resonates so much with indigenous systems, with permaculture, with struggles for biodiversity and tradition as against monoculture and many another relationship between generations and the land they are connected to.

From the editor Larry Korn, who also helped bring the first book into the world:

The most conspicuous of the cultural difficulties is that the Japanese way of telling a story or developing a complex argument is different from the approach that is generally taken in English. In Japanese, the author typically begins with the theme or the point he wishes to make, then he offers an anecdote or an argument that helps to take that story or bolster the point before returning to the theme, which is restated. Then the author goes on another loop, again returning to the theme. One might say that these side stories or arguments form the petals of a flower with the theme as its center. (xxx)

In Western writing, however, the linear is preferred. The character arc. The beginning ramping up to a climax and then a tidy conclusion. Even in our non-fiction.

There has never been a generation like the present where people's hearts are so badly wounded. This is true of every area of society--politics, economics, education, and culture. It is reflected in the degradation of the environment, which comes about through the material path humanity has chosen. Now we have the ugly sight of industry, government, and the military joining forces in the struggle for ultimate power. (14)

I don't know that this linear thinking can be blamed for our current world, but it is part of the larger pattern I think. Curious that old certainties about cause and effect, our capacity to know *everything*, so many simplifications are being increasingly challenged by new thinking in biology -- and this sounds remarkably like the kind of thing Brian Greene writes about in terms of new directions in physics:

Time does not simply flow mechanically in a straight line in a fixed direction. We could think of time as flowing up and down, right and left, forward and backward. As time develops and expands, multifaceted and three-dimensional, the past is concealed within the instant of the present, and within this instant of time is concealed the eternity of the future. (26)

All made of the same things, connected at the base like a chain of islands whose tops are above the ocean

In the past, present, and future, the true disposition of nature is toward abundance for human beings and for all species. Therefore the question should not be "Why are there too many people?" but rather, "Who has created the scarcity into which they are born?" And then, finally, "How can we heal the earth so it can support future generations?" (42)

On the equality and interconnectedness of all things...

Plants, people, butterflies, and dragonflies appear to be separate, individual living things, yet each is an equal and important participant in nature. They share the same mind and life spirit. They form a single living organism. to speak of creatures as beneficial insects, harmful insects, pathogenic bacteria, or troublesome birds is like saying the right hand is good and the left hand is bad. Nature is an endless cycle, in which all things participate in the same dance of life and death, living together and dying together. (43)

It is in using massive interventions to destroy parts of the cycle, with very little understanding of it and driven by motives of profit, that we have arrived at the point of destruction. This lack of holistic understandings is endemic, seen in many a western method for solving things.

When the specialized Western medicinal approach is used, the question of what gives life and health to the whole body and mind is put off. In other words, modern Western medicines puts the human body ahead of the human spirit. This separation is a starting point for emotional anxiety among people today. (44)

Fukuoka keeps them together:

Gradually I came to realize that the process of saving the desert of the human heart and revegetating the actual desert is actually the same thing. (47)

This is all talking about land and spirit and some of us (not me, especially not any more) will be rolling their eyes. But this understanding of the capitalist economy, the 'Money-sucking Octopus Economy' (50) as he calls it, is interesting, it definitely breaks things up in a different way than I am used to. At the heart of the octopus? politicians and the military-industrial-government complex. The legs?

- maintenance of the transportation network
- control of agencies administering transportation
- supervision of communications
- establishment of an economic information network
- education and administrative advising
- control of financial institutions
- control of information
- control of citizens' personal computers and registration (53)

I like this list, it's funny that control of land and resources is not on it.

There is nothing I don't agree with about consumption and our economic model though:

I have often said that value does not lie in material goods themselves, but when people create the conditions that make them seem necessary, their value increases. The capitalist system is based on the notion of ever-increasing production and consumption of material goods, and therefore, in the modern economy, people's value or worth comes to be determined by their possessions. But if people create conditions and environments that do *not* make those things necessary, the things, no matter what they are, become valueless. Cars, for example, are not considered to be of value by people who are not in a hurry.

Economies that aim at production and consumption of unnecessary products are themselves meaningless. (51)

Yet that is our economic model of development. And it is all about control and the marketing of products -- whether luxury goods or Monsanto's technologies:

When I went to apply for a visa from the Somalian government, I was flabbergasted when they told me that any kind of instruction that agitates the farmers and encourages them to become self-sufficient would not be welcome. If such activity went too far, they said, it would be considered treason. (76)

Colonial agricultural policies...Big money into big dams, big irrigation, drawing water from aquifers leading to salinization of land, cash crops, ending nomadic cultures resulting in massive stress on one area of the land and damage to a culture and a people, national parks that its former indigenous residents must leave, and suddenly go all the way around in their movements. The are sudden insights, like the ways that the irrigation of water in high dikes controls the people who surround it, cuts them off from free movement and free access to water. And it puts blame where blame is due:

I started with the recognition that the causes of desertification in most areas are misguided human knowledge and action. If we eliminated them, I believed that nature would certainly heal itself. (87)

It examines the real costs of our current agricultural practices of GMOs, monocropping and etc -- Fukuoka writes 'Agricultural "Production" is Actually Deduction' (88):

If you really count all the inputs of cost to the environment, mining and fossil fuel extraction, construction of machinery, damage from cash crops etc, we have the most inefficient agricultural systems possible...

It is not just in Africa that these problems exist.

About half of the land in the United States is, or is becoming, desert. I felt that the expanding American desert was at least as great a problem as the deserts of Africa, but most Americans seemed totally unaware that their country is becoming more arid. (123)

We don't talk about those kinds of things, but it threatens the communities, like New Mexico's acequia farmers, most likely to offer hope and the capacities to sustainably grow food in increasingly arid condition.

I do like that he toured the US saying this kind of thing:

Everywhere I went I preached the abolition of lawn culture, saying that it was an imitation green created for human beings at the expense of nature and was nothing more than a remnant of the arrogant aristocratic culture of Europe. (129)

This philosophy is a very particular way, very Japanese way of embracing the world, of changing it.

When people are released from the idea that they are the ones who have created things and have abandoned human knowledge, nature will return to its true form. The rebirth of nature is not simply a return to the primitive, it is a return to the timeless. My method of natural farming aims at liberating the human heart... (140)

I loved this final quote, partially a reminder that even if we are not the ones who love land and roots as farmers, we still can live in sustainable ways. But mostly it is good to encounter -- to know -- that radically different ways of being are still possible in this world:

I still remember the words of an Ethiopian tribesman who at first rejected my ideas of natural farming. "Are you asking me to become a farmer?" he asked. "To be attached to the soil and to accumulate things are the acts of a degraded person." (52)

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## **Edward says**

Fukuoka did with farming what Ueshiba Morihei did with martial arts--he radically transformed it by doing (what appears to be) less. And like Osensei, the inspiration to do so came to him suddenly, in a satori-like moment. From such revelations have sprung Aikido and natural farming. Really, they are the same thing.

I know some readers are disappointed by Fukuoka's books because they don't really seem to say anything. At times it reads like hippie nonsense, "drop seeds not bombs," etc. Osensei was accused of the same thing sometimes; that the idea of a "peaceful" martial art transforming the world through non-violence was ridiculous. This is understandable given the prevalence of "do-more" thinking in the modern world. If you aren't busy all the time, or straining yourself to the maximum level, than you must not be accomplishing much.

This is why Fukuoka's work is so important: it is a needed counter to this thought pattern, not to eliminate it necessarily but to restore balance. We need a middle path; too much of one philosophy can lead to stagnation. In the case of agriculture, it has led to literal stagnation of the soils and waters. There were times while reading that I found myself disagreeing somewhat with Fukuoka, mostly because I think his understanding of science was a little too critical or one-sided. But overall we would be better off if more people followed his advice.

And what is that advice? This is where people can get frustrated; when you are used to complexity, simplicity starts to sound like a cheat or a swindle. Don't till the soil? Don't use pesticides? Just let plants grow wherever "nature" wants them to? To a conventional farmer all of this sounds like a recipe for disaster.

And Fukuoka did meet with failure, at first--his initial attempt to grow an orchard by "doing nothing" resulted in a lot of dead trees. But he stresses that there is a difference between "doing nothing" and "abandonment." Natural farming is not about neglect. It is about working with nature rather than against it.

If you focus only on Fukuoka's words you will miss this crucial point. It is why at one point in his life he did not talk much about his ideas; words were simply inadequate. The words in this book are only one part of a larger vision, a vision that requires you to look at the world in a completely different way than you have always seen it. There is no separation between you and nature. The soil, water, plants, and animals do not exist just to serve you. Trying to make them do so is counter-productive because it just ends up hurting humanity in a round-about way.

In the introduction the translator spoke of how Fukuoka stressed the importance of philosophy over technique. In a similar way Osensei valued the spirit of Aikido more than the physical. If you concentrate only on the latter you may become strong, but you will not have really learned Aikido, you will not have achieved harmony, which is the whole point of doing Aikido in the first place. What is the point of growing more food, faster, if the food you make is less nutritious and healthy, and the methods you use make it more difficult to grow more food in the future? It is a self-defeating path.

"There is nothing for people to gain and nothing for them to lose. As long as people lived according to natural law, they could die peacefully at any time like withering grasses."

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### **Steven Lam says**

Fukuoka is a Japanese farmer and philosopher who largely coined the term natural farming. Natural farming is an approach to farming that eliminates the use of manufactured inputs and equipment, and instead, leverages the work of nature and ecosystems. Fukuoka's philosophy isn't so much to "do-nothing", but to work together with nature, not separate from nature. This book is about Fukuoka's experiences in developing and promoting natural farming.

Fukuoka claims that natural farming provides yields to the same extent to that of conventional farming, with the enormous benefit of having no negative impacts on the environment. Unfortunately, however, his claims and supporting evidence are almost entirely anecdotal. Going further, Fukuoka rejects scientific research, and thinks human knowledge is useless. As a researcher, I find this perspective a bit hard to hear. However, I imagine his perspective may be partly emotionally influenced, perhaps stemming from his frustration with conventional farming systems and the environmental degradation it has caused.

While I would have preferred more credible evidence to support his claims, I have much respect for Fukuoka. He challenged the norm and made me think a bit differently about how we grow our food.

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### **Brandon says**

Though I was looking for more of a practical guide to permaculture, this was the only book my library had that was even close to the subject. This is more of a philosophical book, talking about his beliefs on nature,

science, as well as giving sort of a history of how he came to his method of natural farming, as well as some of his travels and efforts in trying to spread the ideas.

I read it in a couple hours of highly engaged reading. I really like this man's take on farming and the best way forward. I don't agree with his notion of strewing seeds globally with no regard to what's native to the area... which actually seems to go against his own philosophy, given that he basically sees the last few thousand years of agriculture (and especially the recent century or so) as mistake upon mistake, full of unintended consequences caused by the mitigation efforts of the last round. Putting non-native plant seeds across a large area of the landscape could easily have major, negative effects on local ecology. So I can't get on board with this aspect of the book. But obviously the man's principles are sound in general, and can of course be utilized even with just native species.

He writes that it is not natural for the world to be so full of [rapidly advancing] deserts; many such places were not deserts in the past, even in living memory, and in some places, mere years before today. Knowing that the actions of humans are the cause, we must solve the issue, and his ideas for greening the desert are welcome to my mind. No more dams or irrigation wells, which are short term "solutions," but rather spreading seeds and using the plants' to shade and loosen the soil, bring water up from below, and pump more water into the air, bringing rains. No more heavy handed work; his way is the "lazy way" of letting nature do the work, with we humans only doing the truly necessary work. Stuff like plowing, though so entrenched in the mind, may not be necessary (he assures us it isn't), and we are encouraged to observe nature to learn, instead of just going by tradition. As the old ways are turning Earth into a desert, this seems wise to me.

I also appreciated that he stated the way advanced, technological methods of farming are in many ways just a way for those in power to control the people and the food (same thing, really). He doesn't dwell on this too much, but it's there, as it should be.

Here are a few quotes that I personally found striking:

"We have seen huge advances in modern medicine, but there is little value in the advancement of medicine if the number of sick people continues to increase."

"In ancient times, I would like to think that people must have made drawing close to nature the most important goal of their lives."

"Gradually I came to realize that the process of saving the desert of the human heart and revegetating the actual desert is actually the same thing."

"I still remember the words of an Ethiopian tribesman who at first rejected my ideas of natural farming, 'are you asking me to become a farmer?' he asked. 'To be attached to the soil and to accumulate things are the acts of a degraded person.' "

"If we list the things necessary for plants to grow, then sunlight, nutrients, water, and air are sufficient to create paradise."

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**Trong Dat says**

M?t cu?n sách c?c k? h?p d?n khác c?a bá? Fukuoka. Sách x?ng ?áng là cu?n sách g?i ??u gi??ng c?a nh?ng ai có ý ??nh ho?c ?ang trên ???ng làm nô?ng theo cách t? nhiên.

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## Sách Chuy?n Tay says

Fukuoka ?ã r?t n?i ti?ng trong gi?i nô?ng nghi?p h?u c? Vi?t Nam v?i cu?n Cách m?ng r?m ???c in tr??c ?6. Là tri?t gia kiêm nô?ng dân ch?n ch?nh, ông ?ã thành công trong vi?c chuy?n t? ??a h?t khoa h?c sang hòa h?p v?i t? nhiên.

G?n nh? Fukuoka ?ã ph?n b?i l?i l?i nguy?n c?a ch?nh m?nh t? sau khi vi?t Cách m?ng r?m là s? ? nh? t?n h??ng thi?n n?nh?n cho t?i cu?i ??i. L?o ?ã lang b?t kh?p n?i ?? ch? cho nh?ng ??a tr? ? ch?u Phi cách tr?ng c?y t? seed bomb, tr?ng c?y ? nh?ng n?i ?ang b? sa m?c h?o nh? ?n ??.

Con ng??i t?o ra công nghi?p và n?n kinh t? b?ch tu?c: ?i?u khi?n ng??i dân b?ng ti?u d?ng, gi?o d?c, th?c ?n, b?nh vi?n. N?o t? s?ng b?ng cách ?n nh?ng c?i x?c tu c?a m?nh. C?i h? th?ng m?a ch?ng ta ?ang d?a vào ?y n?o ?ang t? t? s?p ?? nh?ng Fukuoka ng?c n?nh?n th?y m?i ng??i v?n ?ang lao vào nh? ng?y d?i. Kh? th?n cho con ng??i (và cho c? m?nh n?a). Có l? ??n bao gi? con ng??i h?t ph?n bi?t và coi c?n trùng và vi sinh/ vi khu?n nh? k? th? th? khi ?ó ch?ng ta m?i c?u ???c ch?nh c?i th?n m?nh.

Kh?i ngu?n c?a ?au kh? là t? nh?t nguy?n sinh ra nh? nguy?n, n?n con ng??i và t? n?nh?n c?ng ch? là nh? nguy?n m?a th?i. T? n?nh?n là thi?n và con ng??i là ác. N?u con ng??i kh?ng c?m th? và s? h?i t? n?nh?n n?a th? gi?i th? thái b?ng (Có l?c l?i ngh? c? hai ch?t h?t ch?c c?ng b?ng y?n).

Cu?n n?y kh?ng hay b?ng cu?n Cách m?ng r?m n?n m?nh ch? cho 4 sao th?i. Dù sao m?nh c?ng ?ã kh?c khi l?o kh?c cho ng??i b?n th? d?n Da ?? ?ã tr?ng nh?ng c?i c?y tr?n kh?p n??c M? qua ??i.

Sky

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## MyNguyen1709 says

M?nh bi?t khi ng??i ??t ??n ??nh c?a m?t l?nh v?c n?o ?ó th? t? kh?c kh?ng c?n mang h?i h??ng c?a ch? l?nh v?c ?ó. M? m?i th? tr? th?n tri?t l?y, th?n s? s?ng... V? tr?i d?y trong l?ng khao kh?t b?c h?t gi?ng trong nh?ng h?t ??t s?t, ph? xanh l?i sa m?c và nh?ng v?ng c?n c?i. H?nh ?nh v? ng?i tr??ng, v? ng?i l?ng, ng?i nh? tr?n ng?n ??i l?i s?ng ??ng trong m?nh.

M?nh th?y ?au l?ng khi thi?n n?nh?n tr? n?n c?n ki?t. Nh?ng ??i n?i ? Kon Tum, ? T?y Ng?y?n tr? ra m?u n?u c?n c?i. Nh?ng m??ng, r?ch, nh?nh s?ng ? mi?n T?y c?n ki?t n??c, tr? l?ng... c?n ??u l? nh?ng ca t? trong quy?n gi?o khoa v?t l?y su?t ng?y ra r? Vi?t Nam r?ng v?ng bi?n b?c...

M?nh ?au l?ng khi nh?ng con ng??i tham lam, thô l? và thi?n c?n n?m quy?n h?nh tr?n th? gi?i n?y, v?t ki?t M? thi?n n?nh?n... t?i sinh ra, m?i ng?y m? m?t ch?a bi?t l?m ???c g?i ch?n l?i cho th? gi?i nh?ng t?i bi?t t?i th?i r?c. Ng??i ta c?m ??u v?o s?n xu?t và ti?u th? li?n t?c và ch?ng m?t m?a qu?n d?ng l?i t? h?i ?? chi v?y???

Nh?ng t?i bi?t v?n c? nh?ng ng??i l?ng l? l?m nh?ng ?i?u m?a ??i a s? ng??i c?n l?i kh?ng th? hi?u: l?m v?y ?? l?m g?i??i Ích l?i g?i?

Vì ng??i ta v?n suy ngh? ích l?i ph?i là ích l?i c?a b?n thân mình tr??c mà h? quên thiên nhiên không c?n h?  
mà h? c?n thiên nhiên nhi?u h?n...

Ng??i ta quên v? s? b?n v?ng

Tôi yêu nh?ng b?c v? trong sách n?a

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