

Final Straw (74 minutes)

Directed by: Patrick M. Lydon and Suhee Kang

Multilingual with English subtitles

Documentary Transcript

This program includes close captions and subtitles and has an interactive transcript when viewed as part of the Global Environmental Justice documentaries collection on Docuseek2.

Note that the time code on this transcript is offset by 3 min 20 sec from the on-screen presentation. An animation of that length was moved to the end of the film where it can be found at 1:11:00

0:00:00 Opening scene on screen time code

0:03:20 Opening sequence on this transcript

In 1975, Japanese plant-biologist-turned farmer Masanobu Fukuoka penned a book

00:03:27

This book "One Straw Revolution" became a cornerstone of the sustainable farming movement

00:03:34

More than just farming, the book offered hope and guidance to a generation of people

00:03:40

who wanted to heal the wounds of social and ecological injustice around them

00:03:46

Filmed in over three years in four countries by two people with a camera and determination

00:03:52

this film is the story of individuals who, like Fukuoka are changing the world... one straw at a time

00:04:03

A SocieCity Films Production

[YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

Sakurai, Nara Prefecture, Japan]

00:04:15

Humans and Animals,

00:04:20

as long as we are allowed to live in this universe,

00:04:25

and to live

within the nature of this earth

00:04:31

it's important to set time in your daily life
to let yourself be in nature.

00:04:39

Even if it's just a little bit.

00:04:44

To actively allow yourself time and place
within your capability is extremely important.

00:04:51

The outcome and product of this experience
is immeasurable.

[words begin to be obscured by background noise]

00:05:01

I would highly recommend it to everyone.
It's a basic part of life

00:05:08

and it's the way people 'should' live.

00:05:16

If you try it,

00:05:19

I'm sure you will understand it for yourself.

00:05:27

[You will understand for yourself
the beautiful nature of this world.]

00:05:41

[And how special it is that we human beings
are allowed to live in it.]

00:05:57

[Title Screen and Logo - Final Straw: food, earth, happiness]

Part 1 – Modern Life

Chapter 1 – Capitalism / Material Based Life

00:06:37
LARRY KORN

Author
Pupil of Masanobu Fukuoka
Oregon, USA

00:06:39
yes, of course the modern society and especially
the people that are making money,

00:06:46
the economics are geared towards everything
that natural farming is not.

00:06:52
It's exactly going in the other direction
in supporting a materialistic lifestyle

00:06:56
not caring about the degradation of the landscape

00:06:59
or what happens to other forms of life.

00:07:02
These are all the products of this human world.

00:07:05 – 00:08:18
[flowing and mysterious woodwind melody]

00:07:07
a film by patrick lydon and suhee kang

00:07:13
associate producer
kaori tsuji

00:08:08
filmed on location in japan, south korea, and the united states

00:08:17
KRISTYN LEACH
Natural Farmer, Namu Farm
San Francisco Bay Area, USA

00:08:20

There is an intentional way that...
for capitalism to function as a system,

00:08:26

agriculture had to become something different
than what it traditionally was.

00:08:31

So it's shifted from this subsistence way of living,
about self sufficiency and about community,

00:08:37

into being something that all of a sudden
was adopting an industrial standard of operation.

LARRY KORN

00:08:43

And then people get the idea somehow that

00:08:47

they can actually improve upon nature,

00:08:51

so they try this and that, thinking
that they can make human life better

KRISTYN LEACH

00:08:58

... the human species gets this great idea to innovate,
and move towards mechanizing things,

00:09:06

doing it on such a scale where,

00:09:09

I don't know how, as a farmer
you can have the personal investment

00:09:13

and knowledge of what's happening

LARRY KORN

00:09:16

Because of the limited understanding

that people have,

00:09:21

they can only get in the way,
mess things up somehow

00:09:25

and a side effect,
an unintended consequence occurs,

00:09:30

and so then people deal with that consequence

00:09:34

with the same way of thinking
that they did the first thing

00:09:38

and then that creates a consequence,
each one getting larger and larger,

00:09:43

until pretty much we find ourselves, today
all we're doing just about

00:09:47

is mitigating the unintended consequences
of the things that we've done in the past.

KRISTYN LEACH

00:09:53

By severing that type of relationship
that I think people typically have had with nature

00:10:01

and creating this sort of myth of a disconnect
that we're separate from it

00:10:06

has served a lot of things...

LARRY KORN

00:10:08

somewhere along the line
people got the idea that

00:10:11

human beings are different from other species,
that we're better,

00:10:16
we're of more value,

00:10:20
and that the world was given to us
to do whatever we wanted,

00:10:25
and that with our intellect
and through science,

00:10:28
we could actually improve things
for human beings

00:10:31
and, well, not so important what happens
to other species,

00:10:35
eeh, it's just collateral damage

00:10:38-00:11:25
[♪ haunting and mechanical woodwind music ♪]

Chapter 2 – Earth is Paradise

SEONGHYUN CHOI
author, natural farmer
Hongcheon, South Korea

00:11:34
With the naked eye,
the universe seems separate from me,

00:11:40
but if you look closely
it is 'one big individual'

00:11:49
that is to say, the individual person
is inseparable from nature,

00:11:55

because we are nature.

00:12:00

In the universe, the Earth is
a very miraculous planet.

00:12:06

So far as modern science knows,
there is no such planet like Earth,

00:12:14

with swaying grass, flowing waters,
colorful blooming flowers, butterflies

00:12:22

Living on Earth, it means a blessing

00:12:26

and miracle in itself.

00:12:39

I believe that the Earth is heaven.
If there is a heaven, it's here, on Earth.

00:12:45

And I think this way of thinking, living,
and farming is restoration of that heaven.

00:12:47 - 00:13:39

[Sound of crickets and cicadas in the forest]

00:13:40

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA
Natural Farmer
Fukuoka, Japan

00:13:45

When I am happy,
I can be happier in the fields.

00:13:51

When I am unhappy or going through troubled times,
I become happy in the fields.

00:13:58

If you have a problem with
your human relationships,

00:14:10

you can find the best answer
to solve it here.

00:14:22

RYOSOK HONG

Natural Farmer

Yeoncheon, South Korea

00:14:26

After rain, there is pure sunshine,
and a wind comes, grasses wiggle and wave.

00:14:33

At that point, I feel it's heavenly.

00:14:40

In those brilliant moments,
I'm so happy.

00:14:47

Before, I thought nature
and human beings were different,

00:14:56

but that changed the day I started farming

00:15:02

Now I feel that nature and I are the same.
This is a most rewarding pleasure

00:15:09

and it makes any other troubles I have
seem very insignificant.

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA

00:15:20

This place is like my canvas.

00:15:24

Just like drawing, I plant green peppers
for white flowers, or egg plants for purple.

00:15:39

Of course this changes each year. I planted egg
plants last year, so I have to give the soil rest.

00:15:48

The Okra grows so tall, like 2 meters.

00:15:53
So if I draw a picture with it,
I'll plant it at back, over there.

00:16:01
I want to say "Wow, it's beautiful!!"
when I come to my fields,

00:16:12
so I plant seeds by imaging a picture,
like I am drawing.

00:16:20
But I am not really drawing it,
the vegetables, plants, and flowers do it.

00:16:31
I like it.

Chapter 3 – Farmer Beginnings

00:16:37
MAKI SOBAJIMA
Akame Natural Farm Student
Osaka, Japan

00:16:40
In my normal life, I live in Osaka,
near Umeda, in the center of the city.

00:16:47 – 00:16:59
[sounds of people walking and the rumbling and hissing of trains]

[B-ROLL + CITY SOUND, OSAKA CITYSCAPE, COMMUTE WALKING, TRAIN]

00:17:00
Everyday was a life
where I would not step on anything but concrete

00:17:06
so I've always had a longing
for places like these.

00:17:12
Well, Children that come from the city
have problems touching insects, soil

00:17:21
and even getting dirty at all,
but when the parents talk to them saying

00:17:25
"hey look the frogs came out" or " look,
what a giant worm!", it sparks their interests

00:17:31
and they start replying "wow, that is
a big one! what's it called?"

00:17:35
It starts from that, and little by little,
they start being drawn into the abundant wildlife,

00:17:40
small plants and pretty flowers.

00:17:45
Also the fact that we(adults) are touching them,
makes them feel safe

00:17:50
and comfortable doing it themselves
and getting familiar with this nature.

00:17:55
I feel that that's the biggest harvest
in this experience.

RYOSOK HONG

00:18:05
Oh, I was in demand when I worked
as anyone else.

00:18:13
But suddenly I was fired from my company.

00:18:17
I felt that I didn't deserve to be fired.
I was absolutely furious.

00:18:25
It was a very difficult time for me.

00:18:30

It was during this time
that someone gave me a Buddhist scripture.

00:18:40
In the book, there is an expression
'no form and no abiding (無相無住無相無住)'.
'

00:18:47
It means we should not hold any image,
any form, any obsession,

00:18:47
and 'no abiding', also means
we should live fluidly, the way a river flows.

00:19:06
At that time,
I could not accept this crap.

00:19:12
So I quit reading the book because
I couldn't find comfort in it.

00:19:21
I started a small vegetable garden
near my house,

00:19:27
and I read books about farming.

00:19:32
Then I read Seonghyun Choi's writing
about natural farming.

00:19:42
In the book, he wrote 'farming is a symbiotic
relationship between plants and insects',

00:19:51
and this 'symbiosis' concept
touched my heart deeply.

00:19:57
Perhaps, this [Buddhist] concept of 'no form and
no abiding' that I previously couldn't accept

00:20:05
is also tied to the concept of symbiosis,
I thought.

00:20:11

And I read Kawaguchi's book called
"Standing in miraculous garden",

00:20:18

and then decided to do natural farming

00:20:23

and live a symbiotic life,
at least in the way of farming.

00:20:34

This is very joyful work
where I can overcome all difficulties.

00:20:40

I don't know how time goes by
when I work at farm.

00:20:47

Each experience is different
and it's amazing.

00:20:56

KENJI MURAKAMI
Natural Farmer
Fukuoka, Japan

00:21:01

In reading [Masanobu] Fukuoka-san's book,

00:21:06

I found that natural farming concept
made a lot of sense to me.

00:21:12

So I weighed my current work life
against the prospect of natural farming.

00:21:20

I concluded that natural farming
was the best answer.

00:21:29

After this point my only thought was,
when do I quit my job?

00:21:49

It took me five years
to gain the courage to quit my job.

00:21:53
I actually wanted to quit
as soon as possible.

00:21:59
My family was against my idea

00:22:06
and I was also worried myself financially.

00:22:16
However, in these five years, my feeling
for natural farming became stronger

00:22:26
and I finally quit.

00:22:32
Before this, I lived in Fukuoka

00:22:37
Then, in the last year and a half,
I lived in Yokohama

00:22:47
I worked in Landmark Tower

00:22:53
[loud noises of city and machine, alternating with silence]

00:23:02
On the 46th floor and no way to open the windows.

00:23:10
I strongly felt, this is not a way of living for humans.

00:23:20
If I live a life, I want to be convinced
from the bottom of my heart...

00:23:26
...that this is the right way to live.

Part 2 - Natural Farming

Part 2 Opening Cards

00:23:38

When it rains, a golden spider
makes a web just outside the window

00:23:45

That spider never works too much
it just hangs from the beautiful bamboo tree

00:23:52

Like the spider, we don't need to work so hard
or to make so much money

00:23:57

Just hang out on the earth.

00:24:05

Mr. Kita Osamu
Tokushima, Japan

Part 2 Opening Sequence

00:24:23

KAWAGUCHI YOSHIKAZU
Natural Farmer, Teacher, Author
Nara, Japan

00:24:31

Our family focused on profit
like every other farmer.

00:24:36

We didn't pay any attention
to environmental problems,

00:24:41

or safety in consumption of the crops
that were made this way.

00:24:49

We farmed that way for 23 years.

00:24:54

I started farming
when I was 15 years old.

00:25:00

There were no oil powered machines at the time.

00:25:05

All the work was done using tools such as
Kuwa(hoe), suki (plow), Kama (sickle), Shovel...

00:25:11

The daily work consisted of using our hands a lot

00:25:18

A little later, out of nowhere,
came the chemical fertilizers,

00:25:26

pesticides, herbicides(weed-killers),
and oil powered machines.

00:25:38

Little by little, we converted to chemical farming,
machine farming.

00:25:45

At the time, we didn't think it's wrong, or evil,
or anything like that

00:25:51

we just simply switched
to what was convenient and easy.

00:25:58

We had to make a living to survive.

00:25:04

So it was about how much we can make

00:26:09

and how much we can sell.

00:26:14 - 27:47

[Soft, driving percussive melody]

00:26:17

By then I was in my mid thirties.
I started to feel my physical and mental limits.

00:26:28

Thinking about the life ahead

made me depressed.

00:26:36

It seemed like there was no way forward.

00:26:41

I was physically and mentally going downhill.

00:26:47

I had started to doubt and lose hope
in the way of agriculture and in the way of living.

00:27:50

[sound of a car honk and vehicles humming]

Chapter 4 – Basic Natural Farming Ideas

SEONGHYUN CHOI

00:28:19

Historically, farming has been a process
of demolishing nature,

00:28:26

and without any reconsideration,
the process continues to this day.

KAWAGUCHI YOSHIKAZU

00:28:35

When you plow the land, you kill the lives
that were thriving within soil.

00:28:49

Once you kill the lives in the soil,
you create a world of death.

00:28:57-00:30:02

[Electronic humming and drum tapping]

00:30:02

YAMAMOTO YASHIKI

Natural Green Tea Farmer
Kyoto Prefecture, Japan

00:30:05

the soil itself has perfect nutrition
and a natural power to grow plants,

00:30:10
and the plants respond
to the farmers' compassion and intention

00:30:09
But to acquire such a realization
and sensitivity takes time.

00:30:18
It is a fallacy that the soil needs fertilizers
to provide nutrition to the plants.

00:30:21
Such mistaken beliefs are difficult
to erase from one's mind.

SEONGHYUN CHOI

00:30:27
Starting with Fukuoka,
a totally new perspective began.

LARRY KORN

00:30:53
Now to Fukuoka of course,

00:30:57
you know the usual approach to developing a system

00:30:59
is to say how about trying this
and how about trying that

00:31:02
he decided to go the opposite direction

00:31:05
how about not doing this
and how about not doing that.

KAWAGUCHI YOSHIKAZU

00:31:10
Anywhere you go on earth,
[natural farming] principles are the same.

00:31:16

The basic concepts are:
Don't plow the fields,

00:31:21
weeds and insects are not your enemies.

00:31:25
There is no need for fertilizers,

00:31:30
and lastly to adjust depending on the climate,
and the foods you are growing.

00:31:35
If these are covered, you can grow food
pretty much anywhere in the world.

00:31:41
The idea is to answer to the nature,

00:31:45
and to life itself.

00:31:48
To follow it.
And in the end, let nature take control.

00:31:53
That's the basic concept of natural farming.

Chapter 5 – Intellect vs. Intuition / Progress

00:32:08
OSAMU KITA
natural farmer, teacher
Tokushima, Japan

00:32:09
Humans see ourselves as
the lords of all things.

00:32:14
Because we see ourselves at the top
of some evolutionary process.

00:32:17
The smaller creatures,

spiders, sparrows, earthworms,

00:32:21

they live and eat by moving around the fields
where they were born.

00:32:25

The plants in the field don't really move
their whole life, but they still sustain a life.

00:32:30

But humans?

00:32:25

We are so greedy, we take what we please
from everywhere around the world.

00:32:37

...constantly fighting
against others for it.

00:32:40

What kind of stupid bullshit is that?

00:32:43

At birth, we are all gifted with a natural
and deep sense of 'feeling'.

00:32:49

But we are miseducated
from a young age

00:32:53

by learning that big money or high social status
are the most valuable things in life.

00:32:57

We lose our ability
to feel and live with our true nature

00:33:03

But we can feel again,
we just have to remember.

00:33:08

All we need to do is stand in the field.

00:33:11

Let go of everything else,

of all the unnecessary things.

00:33:15

Start with the basic thing,
start with what you need to eat today.

00:33:19

Like Kawaguchi says "stop concerning yourself
with what society is doing."

00:33:27

Concentrate on yourself first and
learn to live as an individual on this earth.

KENJI MURAKAMI

00:33:43

Through coming to the field,

00:33:46

through coming in contact with plants,
insects and birds everyday,

00:33:52

I noticed that it's very important
to learn from the nature directly,

00:33:58

not only from books and people.

00:34:09

Seeing with your eyes,

00:34:13

hearing with your ears,

00:34:16

and feeling with your hands,

00:34:18

these are the most important ways to learn.

KRISTYN LEACH

00:34:27

Part of the beauty to me in natural farming

00:34:32

is that a lot of it is just based on you've

a relationship with the place that's under your feet.

00:34:38

You have to make informed decisions that are partially guided by knowledge and research,

00:34:45

but also equally informed by your intuition and your relationship.

LARRY KORN

00:34:49

Usually westerners refer to that as observation,

00:34:55

but to me observation implies the viewpoint, it already implies the split, the separation

00:35:04

because it's the observer and the observed.

00:35:07

KAZUAKI OKITSU

Natural Farmer, Teacher

Tokushima Prefecture, Japan

00:35:12

I'm a part of nature.

00:35:17

I'm within the workings of nature.

00:35:23

So this makes it possible to 'feel' nature.

00:35:26

It can be said that here is where one can also feel the 'truth'.

00:35:32

'Truth' is what you feel in your own body.

00:35:40

In natural field, natural farming field

00:35:48

In your working time, you can feel truth.

00:35:54
Through whole body.

00:35:58
It is not something to be asked or taught.

00:36:05
It is within yourself.

00:35:11
Yourself must catch it.

00:35:14 – 00:35:33
[A clarinet plays the song of a beetle]

00:35:37 – 00:38:15
[A wind quintet plays freely floating melody with the plants]

OSAMU KITA

00:38:21
I see the vegetables I look after,
and they grow with so much life

00:38:27
In the field when I look up into the sky
I see the beauty of nature that surrounds us.

00:38:32
The clouds up over the mountains,
a light breeze crosses my face

00:38:37
I see the worms and insects crawling up,
the birds and butterflies flitting here and there.

00:38:43
What a beautiful world we live on.

KENJI MURAKAMI

00:38:48
The feeling is one of being connected
with all the living things around you, and the field.

00:39:02
It is a good feeling,
giving you freedom from any fear or anxiety

LARRY KORN

00:39:30

It's not the technique, it's the view.

00:39:33

And once you have that view

00:39:37

you enter into nature and participate from the inside
instead of as a visitor from the outside,

00:39:42

then you'll know exactly what to do

Chapter 6 – Perception of Natural Farming

00:39:45

DENNIS LEE

Chef / Owner

Namu Gaji Farm and Restaurant

San Francisco, USA

00:39:47

There will be journalists who are
very interested in what we are doing

00:39:50

and they come to the farm and they're expecting:

00:40:54

“okay, here's this natural, holistic approach
to farming. I can't wait to see it.”

00:40:01

“It's going to be this picturesque thing”

00:40:05

“with rows of perfect crops
and a shiny red tractor” and whatever...

00:40:12

and then they come there, and they're like
“woah, this just looks like...”

00:40:25

...almost like a wild piece of land.”

SEONGHYUN CHOI

00:40:29

We human beings, don't understand
how miraculous the Earth is,

00:40:41

and we live unhappily here.

00:40:47

Furthermore, we haven't really learned
how to "live" here yet.

00:40:56

We are always busy fighting against something.

00:41:01

If we knew how to live peacefully
with insects and weeds,

00:41:07

both of us would be better for it.

00:41:12

Struggling with the nature has led us
to environmental problems, to unhealthy foods,

00:41:16

and our table has been polluted.

00:41:22

Given all of this, I think the natural way
is the best method

00:41:26

not only of farming

00:41:29

but of living.

00:41:32 - 00:41:53

[near silence with early morning birds chirping in the distance]

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

00:41:55

People tend to think "to grow your crops rich,
you need to make your soil rich".

00:42:04

But those are thoughts by people
who haven't seen nature.

00:42:13

You don't have to make the soil rich.
You can't.

00:42:25

When you try to make the soil rich,
it will surely start to become poor.

00:42:40

If you don't do anything, the life cycles of the organisms
will make the soil fertile.

00:42:53

And for that to happen, what you need is time.
Time to let the organisms live and die,

00:43:04

and make a circulation within the soil
just like in the natural forest

00:43:19 - 00:43:44

[Sounds of birds, breeze, and soft hum of vehicles far away]

RYOSEOK HONG

00:43:45

Everyday I politely greet the field twice.

00:43:51

At the beginning it was perfunctory,
but now I say the words sincerely, with feeling.

00:44:00

Before if somebody told me that I was crazy,
I would get angry at them.

00:44:05

I would promise myself to kick their ass
just to make them regret their words.

00:44:12

I don't feel that way anymore.

00:44:16

I am grateful for what I do in itself.

Chapter 7 – Cycle of Life / Hidden Circle

SEONGHYUN CHOI

00:44:23

Instead of plowing the land,

00:44:27

one can feed the land with
what it really needs for its health,

00:44:33

By allowing the hidden circle that sustains
and purifies the earth to recover itself.

00:44:47

You can say that it works like a food chain

00:44:54

this 'mysterious' hidden circle that connects us
with everything else.

00:45:03

On this farm,
the hidden circle is alive and well.

00:45:07

There is a constant cycle of death and birth
of trees, insects and everything else

00:45:12

yet instead of a mountain of dead corpses,
we have healthy land and fresh air.

00:45:20

That is because here
the 'hidden circle' is allowed to prosper

00:45:28

In the modern farming,
we don't see it that way

00:45:33

We fight against insects and weeds,

00:45:36

But it's not like that here on the natural farm.

00:45:42

Here, the way of the 'hidden circle'
is alive and well,

00:45:46

and the damage that would have been caused
by insects or chemicals goes away.

00:45:51

That's when you experience
how much power the planet Earth has,

00:45:57

and we come to appreciate it
with blessing and gratitude.

00:46:02

But this would be hard to experience
with other farming methods.

00:46:02 - 00:46:35

[♪ calming pastoral woodwind instrument music ♪]

00:46:36

[abrupt sound of machine]

00:46:37 - 00:46:42

[silence]

YOSHIKI YAMAMOTO

00:46:44

These fields were once conventional farms
where tea and tomatoes were grown.

00:46:53

At that time, the river did not have any fish in it
and there were no lightning bugs in the reeds.

00:46:59

That was strange since there were plenty of both
living there when I was a child.

00:47:04

However, I began to notice that as the farmers
left the area abandoning their fields,

00:47:11

the more fish there were in the river
and the more lightning bugs flitted among the reeds.

00:47:23

Now I notice wild birds living there of a kind that
we have never seen in this area until recently.

00:47:31

This year, the birds have chosen
to raise their families here

00:47:36

and can be seen happily walking in the paddy
and fields with their chicks.

00:47:32

They seem to like staying in that paddy.

00:47:46

I think this is an indication that the ecosystem in this
area has been enriched and is regaining its health.

00:47:57

It seems the practice of natural farming
can help the surrounding environment,

00:48:03

reviving the scenery as it was long ago and restoring
our sense of beauty and peace.

00:48:07

[sounds of cawing and chirping birds]

SEONGHYUN CHOI

00:48:16

Look, there are many microorganisms,
and the soil is both a meal and a house for them.

00:48:25

The 'hidden circle' is here

00:48:30

and there are things far beyond what you could
ever imagine, happening in this soil right now.

00:48:43

I cannot help but to have a humble admiration

for this grand nature,

00:48:49

and for all of the life exchanges
happening in this soil.

00:48:56

Such a feeling cultivates modesty and happiness
within my daily life.

00:49:00 - 00:50:02

[♪ playful music on kalimba ♪]

Chapter 8 – (Bio)Diversity

KENJI MURAKAMI

00:50:07

Keeping diversity is
a very important point of farming.

00:50:13

Likewise, the natural world on its own,
becomes more diversified as time passes.

00:50:22

This diversity is important
because the environment is always changing,

00:50:27

there is always a struggle for existence,

00:50:32

and only living things suitable
for a given environment can survive there.

00:50:38

Considering this natural system, having many
varieties of species in small amounts

00:50:44

creates a stronger possibility for survival than having
a large amount of only one specie.

00:50:52

This is especially true
in this changing environment.

00:51:00

As a farmer, what I can do is
to plant seeds every year,

00:51:07

to harvest the plants that grow,

00:51:14

and to cook and eat the delicious plants.

00:51:21

I put the seed
back into the ground next year.

00:51:26

If all of these processes happen repeatedly,

00:51:32

then a new tradition can be born

00:51:39

which creates a strong natural cycle.

00:51:45

In order to accomplish this however

00:51:53

I must have a small scale farm.

00:52:00

[♪ drums and cymbals crashing ♪]

00:52:08

*[♪ guitars and drums with group singing
la, la, la, la, la ♪]*

00:52:38

*[♪ accordion and violin join
singers continuing, la, la, la, la ♪]*

00:53:05

*[♪ tempo quickens, accordion and violin play an up-tempo
circus-like tune ♪]*

00:54:27

[music ends, sounds of people talking in crowded shopping mall]

Part 3 – In Practice and Life

Part 3 Opening Cards

00:54:34

Every time we stand in nature
with the plants, the animals, and the vast sky above

00:54:39

we can feel joy in that simple moment;
smile if only because we are a part of life on earth

00:54:46

Everyone has these small moments
Everyone gets it, even if we don't realize it

00:54:52

We understand nature inside ourselves
We just need to cultivate this understanding

00:55:00

*Kazuaki Okitsu,
Tokushima, Japan*

Part 3 Opening Sequence

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

00:55:05

Without a doubt, being here in nature will give you
peace physically and mentally.

00:55:11

And being around the 'lives' here
also give you assurance of your own existence.

00:55:18

In the city, where there only exist humans
and no other kinds of 'lives'.

00:55:25

It can be mentally and physically draining.

00:55:29

The question is, how can you keep your peace
and sanity in a place like that.

00:55:36

Slowly, you become physically drained,
and your hearts become lean.

00:55:41

To overcome that in a city,
you need to understand

00:55:49

that the city
is a part of the universe

00:55:57

The same universe which houses the Earth,
the city, and this nature.

00:56:05

It is the source and support for all the lives.

00:56:21

It's important to understand
that no matter where you live,

00:56:26

in the nature or in the city...

00:56:32

That you live in a vast universe.

00:56:43

If you lose sight of this universe and this nature
while living in a city,

00:56:57

you will not be able to have peace in your soul.

00:57:11

Understand and accept that you live a universe,
and not in the city.

Chapter 9 – Doing Natural Farming

LARRY KORN

00:57:46

If you're a farmer,

00:57:49

it's not that farming

is intrinsically better than any other vocations.

00:57:55

But with farming,
you're out in the fields all the time,

00:58:00

you're interacting with the plants and soil
and the insects and the other creatures,

00:58:04

so you're right there.

00:58:06

The chance of having this experience
is so much greater when you're in the natural world

00:58:13

then when you're, for example,
sitting at a desk in a cubicle

00:58:19

Because all you see around you is the human things,
the products of human thought,

00:58:24

so it's hard to imagine a world outside of that.

00:58:25 - 00:58:58

[sound of birds chirping and machines]

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

00:59:00

The people who visit [Akame Natural Farm School]
have been living life in the city,

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA

00:59:11

they tend to be young generation
who are tired of the life in the city

00:59:21

and lost the power to live energetically.

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

00:59:30

and their parents too.
They're born and grow up in the city.

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA

00:59:39
Or, If they are not tired of the city, they are
looking for the true value of life,

00:59:49
somewhere outside of the city
which is covered by concrete.

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

00:59:59
And at some point they stopped
and questioned their way of life.

01:00:03 - 01:00:22
[Sound of train wheels clacking as the train pulls away from station]

01:00:07
They realized that society won't change for them,

01:00:12
that the government won't change for them,

01:00:16
that others won't change for them.

01:00:21
Eventually they realize that
nothing will change,

01:00:28
unless they change the lives
they live for themselves.

01:00:34
That's the root of it.

LARRY KORN

01:00:38
So, what are the benefits of natural farming?

01:00:43
Well of course you learn

to feed and clothe your family

01:00:46

in a way in which the earth is enriched,

01:00:50

you become partners again
with the other forms of life

01:00:53

and there's this upwelling of great joy,
what's not to like, really?

01:00:58

Except that you have to give up, ...

01:01:01

you do pretty much have to give up
the materialistic toys

01:01:08

which really have no place in that world.

01:01:11

So you need to make a commitment.

RYOSEOK HONG

01:01:24

I recommend natural farming to my sons, but they're
in high school and middle school.

01:01:33

I told them that after graduation they should live in
society for more than 10 years.

01:01:40

And if they want to live as a farmer,
they should go somewhere else

01:01:45

somewhere other than
my already established farm.

01:01:48

So they can suffer and make a farm
like their father did for 10 years.

01:01:53

Then they will be ready to be farmers.

01:01:56

During this painful period,
they can awaken

01:02:01

and realize the great joy in this earth.

LARRY KORN

01:02:07

So in your personal life,
how do you make this transition?

01:02:12

Well, I've kind of found it useful to follow
the same technique,

01:02:17

how about not doing this
or not doing that,

01:02:19

in the form of, in your personal life
living as simply as possible,

01:02:24

and there's great freedom
and joy in living simply...

01:02:29

so of course there's that,

01:02:32

and then there's changing the light bulbs
in your house, and things...

01:02:36

but it's in the thoughts.

RYOSEOK HONG

01:02:41

I think natural farming is the chance to get out from
this main stream of capitalism.

01:02:46

Money is not a value, it is only a method.

01:02:53

I believe we should be immersed
in the real value as we age.

DENNIS LEE

01:03:03

To me it's more like there is some bigger change
that (hopefully) that we can't see that's happening.

01:03:13

I think that's true in life in general

01:03:16

from my personal experience and accounts
from older and wiser people

01:03:22

is that during those times in your life
when you feel desperation

01:03:26

and you feel like things are the toughest

01:03:31

is usually when you are going through
some kind of change,

01:03:35

or something you didn't realize
has a big effect

01:03:42

and all of a sudden
you have a whole new perspective.

01:03:47

I think as a society,
we are kind of going through that.

Chapter 10 – As a Job / Self Sufficiency

KENJI MURAKAMI

01:04:03

I grow vegetables as my job.

01:04:09

Somebody who loves cooking uses
my vegetables as his or her job.

01:04:18

To combine our efforts and passions together
is good for both of us.

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA

01:04:32

The purpose is to feed myself.

01:04:36

I grow what my family and I
want to eat everyday.

01:04:42

For example, rice, several kinds of
potatoes, beans, leaf vegetables,

01:04:55

egg plants, tomatoes, green peppers.

01:05:00

All these are what my family eats everyday.

RYOSEOK HONG

01:05:09

After returning to farming, not just my farming
but also my family's lifestyle changed a lot.

01:05:19

My wife managed a clothing store, and one day
I asked her to close the store.

01:05:32

I told her it doesn't fit my lifestyle.
I'm trying to save money, conserve goods, recycle waste...

01:05:45

but you promote spending money
by selling clothes at your store.

01:05:50

convincing customers that they'll be happier
if they buy more stupid mini skirts

01:05:56

How can this work? It doesn't make sense for two different value systems to exist in one home.

01:06:02

So I asked, although it may be difficult, how about trying to find a job that she can do in the countryside.

01:06:08

So she quit the shop

01:06:11

Now she teaches healthy physical education classes.

OKITSU

01:06:21

Hoe and sickle, it's enough.

01:06:26

You know? Hoe, Sickle?

01:06:30

It's Enough.

01:06:32

Twenty years.

01:06:36

More than twenty years, I did it.

01:06:40

I send many vegetables to our customers.

01:06:47

It's easy.

01:06:49

No fertilizer

01:06:51

No pesticide

01:06:54

and no other things.

01:06:57

Only nature.

01:06:59
We need only nature.

01:07:01
It's very easy.

01:07:04
No money.

01:07:05
[Interviewee heartily laughing]

01:07:11
[no money farming?]

01:02:12
Yes, no money farming. Yes.

01:07:15
It's enough.

Chapter 11 – Relationships

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

01:07:48
When many people gather, and do these types of work, no matter how meaningful the work was,

01:07:53
for the experience to sink in and last for five, ten years, there must develop some relationship with others.

01:07:57
Relationship between staff members and students and to each other.

01:08:01
if this doesn't go well, the experience would not have a lasting impact

YOSHIKI YAMAMOTO

01:08:06
If I were thinking only about making money,

01:08:10

I wouldn't have met the wonderful people who surround me today.

01:08:16

Be it people's health, the environment, or the creation of a Paradise on Earth,

01:08:24

the most important key to success is that you have something beyond your own needs

01:08:31

as the motivation for engaging in this endeavor.

KENJI MURAKAMI

01:08:40

When scale increases, people begin to separate their jobs, and only know their individual role.

01:08:46

Instead, we should be able to take interest in what others are doing.

01:08:54

This way we can cook and eat food with a grateful heart.

KRISTYN

01:09:03

...It's beyond just how you grow food, it's how you approach everything

01:09:07

and if I can be really thoughtful and intentional about my relationships

01:09:12

with a bacteria, a fungus, a gopher, and a bird,

01:09:17

you know, most likely I can start to rethink the ways I'm relating to different people

01:09:23

and social relationships

that function on a bigger level...

01:09:27

it has much bigger implications, basically
beyond the immediate physical nourishment it gives you.

ETSUKO KAGAMIYAMA

01:09:36

In my village, relationship between the people
aren't based on natural farming.

01:09:43

They each have their own ways of farming,
some use chemical fertilizers and pesticides,

01:09:56

and I think it would be wrong for me
to force them to change their ways of course.

01:10:01

If they change, some people might change
just through looking at our way of life.

01:10:09

In fact a lot of people nearly 100 have already
come to learn natural farming here.

01:10:18

I have a small hope in my heart,
that things may change in the near future.

YOSHIKAZU KAWAGUCHI

01:10:26

It's not that everyone must live a farming life

01:10:32

or that everyone must be a farmer.

01:10:38

It's more that everyone,
especially young children or young adults

01:10:43

should put themselves on the field, in nature,
the ocean, the mountain

01:10:57

In the various subjects and directions
people may pursue in career,

01:11:02

whether it's education, art, economics,

01:11:10

having the understanding of nature and life
is extremely important.

01:11:19

If you try it, I'm sure you will
understand it for yourself.

01:11:31

You will understand for yourself

01:11:39

what a beautiful nature we are allowed to live in.

--

ENDING CARD (Post Credits)

01:14:00

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