

The Way of the Farmer

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Extravagance of desire is the fundamental cause which has led the world into its present predicament.

Fast rather than slow, more rather than less -- this flashy "development" is linked directly to society's impending collapse. It has only served to separate man from nature. Humanity must stop indulging the desire for material possessions and personal gain and move instead towards spiritual awareness.

Agriculture must change from large mechanical operations to small farms attached only to life itself. Material life and diet should be given a simple place. If this is done, work becomes pleasant, and spiritual breathing space becomes plentiful.

The more the farmer increases the scale of his operation, the more his body and spirit are dissipated and the further he falls away from a spiritually satisfying life. A life of small-scale farming may appear to be primitive, but in living such a life, it becomes possible to contemplate the Great Way. I believe if one fathoms deeply one's own neighborhood and the everyday world in which he lives, the greatest of worlds will be revealed.

Lao Tzu, the Taoist sage, says that a whole and decent life can be lived in a small village. Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, spent nine years living in a cave without bustling about.

To be worried about making money, expanding, developing, growing cash crops and shipping them out is not the way of a farmer. To be here, caring for a small field, in full possession of the freedom and plentitude of each day, every day- this must have been the original way of Agriculture.

To break experience in half and call one side physical and the other spiritual is narrowing and confusing. People do not live dependent on food. Ultimately, we cannot know what food is. It would be better if people stopped even thinking about food. Similarly, it would be well if people stopped troubling themselves about discovering the "true meaning of life"; we can never know the answers to great spiritual questions, but *it's all right not to understand*. We have been born and are living on earth to face directly the reality of living.

Living is no more than the result of being born. Whatever it is that people eat to live, whatever

people think they must eat to live, is nothing more than something they have thought up. The world exists in such a way that if people will set aside their human will, and be guided instead by nature there is no reason to expect to starve.

Just to live here and now- this is the true basis of human life. When a naive scientific knowledge becomes the basis of living, people come to live as if they are dependent only on starch, fats and proteins, and plants on nitrogen, phosphorous, and potash.

And the scientists, no matter how much they investigate nature, no matter how far they research, they only come to realize in the end how perfect and mysterious nature really is. To believe that by research and invention humanity can create something better than nature is an illusion. I think that people are struggling for no other reason than to come to know what you might call the vast incomprehensibility of nature.

So for the farmer in his work: serve nature and all is well.

Suggested Reading from Indicorps-Toolkit for Being the Change (www.indicorps.org)