Reconnecting With Nature Through Shumei Natural Agriculture

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The Natural Agriculture movement started in Japan in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century by Mokichi Okada, a philosopher, naturalist and art connoisseur.

It was in response to society’s lost connection with nature and the negative impact of conventional agriculture on human health and the planet.
What is Natural Agriculture?

Natural Agriculture is a way of cultivating wholesome food with pure seeds and without the use of any fertilizers, chemicals or additives. More importantly, it is a way of living in harmony with nature.
The core principle of Natural Agriculture is an overriding respect and concern for nature.
Key Components

- Trusting in the soil – soil has all the nutrients needed.
- Preserving the purity and diversity of seeds – using heirloom varieties and saving seeds from each harvest.
- Respecting Nature’s ability to adapt – continuous cropping.
- Maintaining balance in ecosystem – understanding the interconnectedness of all elements and beings.
Shumei believes in the inherent power of the soil to produce healthy crops.
Healthy Soil Ecosystem

The Soil Food Web

- **Plants**
  - Shoots and roots

- **Organic Matter**
  - Waste, residue and metabolites from plants, animals, and microbes

- **Bacteria**

- **Fungi**
  - Mycorrhizal fungi
  - Saprophytic fungi

- **Protozoa**
  - Amoebae, flagellates, and ciliates

- **Arthropods**
  - Root-feeders
  - Shredders
  - Predators

- **Nematodes**
  - Fungal- and bacterial-feeders
  - Predators

- **Animals**

**Trophic Levels**

- **First trophic level:** Photosynthesizers
- **Second trophic level:** Decomposing Mutualists, Pathogens, Parasites, Root-feeders
- **Third trophic level:** Shredders, Predators, Grazers
- **Fourth trophic level:** Higher level predators
- **Fifth & higher trophic level:** Higher level predators
Supporting Soil Health Naturally

• Minimizing soil disturbance – protecting ecosystem below the surface
• Mulching – utilizing organic matter from the surrounding area to keep soil moist and temperate
• Avoiding additives – maintaining pure, healthy soil to prevent soil erosion
Preserving Natural Seeds

• Utilize pure, living seeds to grow healthy and nutritious crops.
• Plant indigenous seeds which are suited for the local climate and resilient to changing weather conditions.
• Preserve crop diversity with wide range of heirloom varieties.
• Save seeds to increase self-sufficiency.
• Soil and seed adapt and improve with each harvest.
• Crops develop deeper root system naturally to access nutrients and water needed.
• Saving seeds increases resilience, self-sufficiency and food security for future generations.
Maintaining Balance and Respecting Natural Law

- Everything has a role. Farmers learn to observe nature and follow natural law.
- Insects are not seen as pests and infestations are a sign of imbalance.
- Pure, healthy soil increases water retention and carbon sequestration.
Appreciation of Beauty and Nature

• Helps us to recognize the beauty in every aspect of life.
• Cultivates a deeper respect, love and appreciation of nature.
• Develops gratitude and appreciation between farmers and consumers.
Cultivation of Spiritual Values and Attitudes

- Encourages people to commit to creating a harmonious environment.
- Helps to foster inner reflection and spiritual upliftment.
- Supports a mindset and behaviors in a more sustainable and peaceful world.
Natural Agriculture Around the World

• We are building sustainable communities all around the world through Natural Agriculture projects in Africa, Asia, South America, North America and Europe.

• It is helping farmers become self-reliant and resilient by planting and saving natural indigenous seeds, improving soil health and ecosystem balance.

• It demonstrates a way of living that is in harmony with nature and one another.

• It is providing opportunities for the next generation to connect with nature and their cultural traditions and knowledge.
Natural Agriculture around the World

Zambia  Philippines  United Kingdom

United States  Turkey  Italy
Key Benefits

• Produces healthy diverse, nutritious foods.
• Supports natural law and regeneration.
• Reconnects us to Nature and one another.
• Promotes a conscious mindset and sustainable lifestyles.
“Nature Can Teach Us Everything.”

- Mokichi Okada