

# Natural Agriculture

## Farming as a Spiritual Practice



For thousands of years, people across cultures have acknowledged that natural elements like forests, mountains, land, and water have a spirit or consciousness. This understanding and respect for nature shaped how people cared for the earth and relied on it for their sustenance and shelter. The connection to the spiritual aspect of nature has become less prominent in modern life. However, a rekindling of this sacred awareness is emerging with the desire to transform our current food and farming systems.

Natural Agriculture is based on an overriding respect for nature and a philosophy of gratitude and harmony that can help renew our relationship with the earth. It teaches us to recognize that nature is conscious—that there is a spiritual foundation behind what we see in the soil, the crops, the changing seasons, and the forces that sustain life. When we recognize these truths and the beauty in nature, our relationship with the natural world changes. We begin to see nature not simply as a resource, but as a conscious presence with which we share our lives. This awareness can reshape our mindset, bringing forth an attitude of reverence, openness, and trust.

It invites us to approach farming as a partnership, and to rediscover the deep ancestral connection between human life and the natural world.

Farmers who take a Natural Agriculture approach understand that the soil, seeds, and water are all living entities that respond to thoughts and actions. They view the natural world as a conscious partner in the growing process, and they nurture this relationship through mindfulness, prayer, and observation. Natural Agriculture farmers place trust in the innate power of nature. Therefore, they do not use any fertilizers, pesticides or additives in the growing process – they instead develop an intuitive relationship with the natural world to foster balance and harmony needed for healthy plant life.

*“When you have a sense that there are spirits in plants, you have a different relationship with them...you have a higher regard for them, when you plant, you pray for them to grow well, like a child. And when they grow well, and give you fruits, you give them gratitude.”*

*— Natural Agriculture Farmer*

*“Nature itself embodies truth. For this reason, it is extremely important to have nature as your guide.”*

— Mokichi Okada



Through the practice of Natural Agriculture, farmers often see the quality, resilience, and life force in their crops improve with each harvest. Seed saving and continuous cropping are important practices in Natural Agriculture, reinforcing nature's ability to revitalize itself when in a pure and natural state. By responding to the needs of nature, farmers experience a heightened sense of gratitude and connection to the land. This leads farmers to develop a deeper, more compassionate understanding of the interconnectedness of life and the importance of maintaining planetary harmony.

In a time of widespread disconnection and environmental degradation, the principles of Natural Agriculture offer a profound reminder: we thrive when we live in harmony with the earth. Through simple acts—mindful growing, seasonal eating, gratitude for what the land provides—we can renew our relationship with nature and help restore a sense of balance within ourselves and in our communities. Recognizing farming as a spiritual practice is key to developing a deeper sense of awareness of our interdependence and the shift in mindset needed to guide our actions towards creating inner and outer well-being.

#### **About Shumei International**

Shumei International is a Japanese-based spiritual organization dedicated to working toward the betterment of the human community. Shumei seeks to foster a way of life that is in harmony with nature and respectful of the natural world. In 2004, the organization received special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Shumei International recognizes the need for new approaches and for a shift in thinking to address the root causes of global issues. One of Shumei's main activities is the promotion of Natural Agriculture around the world. Natural Agriculture is an approach to farming that avoids all chemicals, fertilizers and additives in the growing process. Natural Agriculture is a way of living in harmony with nature rooted in a deep respect for the integrity and beauty of the Earth's ecosystems.

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