

KYUSEI NATURE FARMING - IT'S ROLE IN HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Rev. Setsunori Shinoda

Chairman, Board of Directors, International Nature Farming Research Center, Atami, Japan

(Presented by Dr.T Kawashima, Senior Managing Director, INFRC)

Minasama Konnichiwa, Yokoso, Kia Ora, Welcome.

Sir Peter Elworthy, Right Honorable Jim Anderton, the Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, Professor Teruo Higa, Mr. Segar Mason, the Chief Executive Officer, Bio-Gro, New Zealand, Dr.Xu of the INFRC, Mr. T Chamberlain, Ladies and Gentlemen, I present this speech on behalf of Rev. Setsunori Shinoda, Chairman of the Board of Directors, International Nature Farming Research Center, who unexpectedly was unable to attend this conference due to the pressure of work in Japan.

It is with significant happiness that I am here today, as the Senior Managing Director of the sponsoring organization, the International Nature Farming Research Center of Japan, which is responsible for developing and spreading the concepts of Kyusei Nature Farming, or nature farming, as it is called today in Japan. Many of you here today know what Kyusei Nature Farming is, and also the technology of Effective Microorganisms, which is identified as a part of this system of agriculture and developed by Professor Higa. However, this is the first occasion that a person responsible for spreading this method of farming is speaking about it in New Zealand.

The concept of this system of nature farming was advocated by Mokichi Okada, an eminent Japanese philosopher and educationist, who realized the dangers of chemical agriculture in the 1930s, which was a time when chemicals were not used abundantly. The fundamental concepts of Kyusei Nature Farming are as follows:

- Production of safe and nutritious food to enhance human health
- Economic and spiritual upliftment of producers and consumers
- Sustainability and ease of adoption
- Conformation to nature and protection of the environment
- Procurement of sufficient food for increasing populations

Analysis of these principles show that they are valid even today and most farming systems are attempting to achieve these five objectives.

Looking at agriculture and the environments of the world highlights a significant challenge to humankind. This is to find a way to lead a rich-fulfilling life without destroying the biosphere, which supports all life. It is often stated that humanity has never before faced such a threat, the collapse of the elements and biodiversity that keep humans alive. Many examples can be cited to highlight this aspect, but I wish to quote a few to

illustrate this phenomenon. Between 1804 and 1905, there were over 7000 varieties of apples in the USA. Today 86% of these are extinct. In vegetables, the picture is even grimmer. In Asia, over 100,000 varieties of rice were cultivated, but today, there are only 10 of these in popular use. Humankind is fast losing valuable medicinal plants. This shows that we are fast losing the biodiversity. Under such circumstances, how long can a growing human population feed itself?

Several solutions are being developed to overcome this disaster, amongst which the establishment of seed banks takes prominence. However, this alone is not sufficient, as we must look towards methods of farming that will preserve the environment and also biodiversity. Here lies the importance of Kyusei Nature Farming.

If one studies the objectives of Kyusei Nature Farming listed above, it is easily understood that the method advocated in the 1930's by Mokichi Okada endeavors to produce good quality food while preserving the ecological balance. However, one may ask - Can we have these old techniques with the growing demand for food? I wish to confirm that it is possible, as shown by many studies from all over the world, including Japan, where it was first developed. The successes will be highlighted at this conference too.

Kyusei Nature Farming advocates cultivation of soils, which could have an adverse impact on the detritus food chain, which is a vital component in agriculture and waste management. It is in this context that the technology of Effective Microorganisms (EM), developed by Professor Dr.Teruo Higa plays a distinct role. Kyusei Nature Farming thus stands well above all other methods of nature or organic or nature farming, due to the use of EM, as shown by many comparative studies in all parts of the world and also in this beautiful country. The results overwhelmingly support the concept that we advocate that Kyusei Nature Farming is a superior method of farming that produces abundant food while preserving the environment.

The International Nature farming Research Center, which I head, decided to support the international conferences to spread this message to the world, on an idea made by Professor Dr.Higa in the 1980s. It was felt that this is a noble task, to inform the world of a philosophy and a method of farming developed in Japan that would help humankind. The conferences were held in all continents except Oceania, and today, this objective has also borne fruit. Hence this 7th International Conference will be the last of these major conferences supported by our organization. However, progress and demand will decide the future activities.

It is opportune at this juncture to briefly state the work of our organization, the International Nature Farming Research Center. This organization, which is supported by the Sekai Kyusei Kyo Izunome Kyodan of Japan, has the mandate to spread the word of Kyusei Nature Farming to the world. Thus it has research, extension and international activities. We are a long-standing member of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM). This exhibits our interest in international activities. Our research has been cited internationally, including that of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau of England. Very recently it also obtained the mandate from the Ministry of Agriculture to certify organic products in Japan. Hence, our organization has

an active role in the agricultural sector of Japan, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture to promote a successful method of farming while preserving the environment.

Most advances in agriculture have truly been double-edged swords. These have done well, but they have also demonstrated the lack of wisdom and also the greed of humankind. A clear example is the green revolution, where significant quantities of food were produced in the developing world, which in turn destroyed the environment. The use of biotechnology is yet to show its true colors, although much research is being carried out. Will it show the same or worse results as the green revolution? Time will tell us the results. However, amongst all these developments, we must keep our heads high and be realistic. We must not forget nature and its inherent power to strike back if we go against its principles. Studying and exploring the principles of nature is one aspect, but trying to alter them through research and development is another. This is why our organization advocates a system of agriculture and environmental management that looks after the seen and unseen sections of agro-ecosystems, through nature farming and EM technology. We feel that it is a realistic system that has a distinct role in the life of humankind.

Distinguished guests, participants of this International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming, it is with happiness that I welcome you all, on behalf of the sponsoring organization. I am glad that over 30 countries are represented here today to share their experiences with the New Zealanders, and also learn from them. I have been told that the organizers have developed a very interesting program, and I do welcome you to actively participate in the activities. The participation of over 200 people is a true sign of the interest and endorsement of our objective, Please be assured that Kyusei Nature Farming along with the technology of EM, which uses natural microbes, is a promising method of farming for humankind. Thus, please do take an active part in this conference and more importantly, learn the benefits and adopt the technologies discussed and shown even in a small way in your respective ecosystems. This small seed, planted in your minds and activities in this beautiful city of Christchurch, in this wonderful land of Aoteroa will play a significant role to develop a sustainable and a better environment for us all and our future generations.

Thank you.