



“豊かな農業”を設計する



生産から販売まで、ひとつに
とけ合った力を生かして、農業の
繁栄をお約束することこそ、
全農が果たさなければならない
使命です。

すぐれた生産資材の提供をは
じめ、施肥や防除などへのキメ
細かい生産指導、営農団地構想
の実現、また集配センターなど
ととのった流通経路による安定
した価格での販売……

全農は、こうした農家のみなさま
の立場に立った活動を通じて、
未来にのびる農業と農村社会
建設の設計図を描きつつけて
います。



組合30年計画



ENGLISH THOUGHTS ON JAPANESE COMMUNES

by Susan Coppard, September 1973

I feel very unqualified to write any article about Japanese communes. My knowledge of them is very superficial as I have worked at only nine, for fairly short periods of time, and my Japanese is minimal! However, various impressions come across quite strongly. Firstly, the warmth, hospitality and helpfulness: I felt it was not just Japanese good manners but sprang naturally from the happiness of the community. The affection and closeness among members is plain to see, and it was good just to be in such an atmosphere. I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to live among these communities even for a short while. Secondly, one is impressed by how well at least the established communes function (I didn't visit any new communes). Everybody seems to work very hard and unselfishly for the good of the community, and with few exceptions the organisation appears to run smoothly and without conflict.

Working hours range from six hours a day to considerably longer, and the number of days off from one a week to only-when-requested - which means almost never! Westerners are often puzzled by the Japanese attitude to work. Of course we recognise the need for work, and we hope to do work which is useful and creative, and not too monotonous. But there are many other rewarding activities besides work and they all require TIME. So we cannot understand why, provided an adequate standard of living can be maintained,

Japanese people do not apparently seek to reduce their rather long working hours. (Considering that the more industry/construction/commerce/transportation/agriculture there is the more pressure still we put on our poor little planet, maybe we should question more closely the real value of work?) An exception is Atarashiki-mura who recognize the importance for the individual to have time to himself as well as his own room, and manage very nicely on a six hour working day - or less if you finish your work earlier! The streamlined efficiency of Maemoriyama, too, is very impressive: they have managed to minimize a great deal of the unrewarding, time-consuming work such as mucking out the cowsheds and washing-up after meals, without losing their very human warmth and zest for life.

The amount of democracy varies from commune to commune: some are run by committees on which members of the commune serve for a period, while others are governed "from the top" or just by general discussion. Some communes have a number of young unmarried members, others consist entirely of families; and each commune naturally has its own atmosphere and its own degree of collectivization. At Yamatoyama it was very refreshing to experience people bowing deeply to one another with real feeling when they met - a kind of timeless moment... nor shall I forget the praying-in-the-waterfall, the strange beauty of their Shinto chanting, or their exquisite flowering cacti. At Hokushi money is dispensed with but one is given anything reasonable on request; at Higashiyama Sangyo even volunteers receive a daily wage; while at Kimpu, a still-struggling co-operative farm high up in mountains near Enzan, SCI

volunteers actually contribute towards their maintenance. At Hokushi children over six years sleep together, and everybody mixes together at mealtimes, whereas at most other communes families eat and sleep together, or even have their own house with bathroom, washing machine, etc. (Personally I adored bathtime at Hokushi - sharing the bath with toddlers and mums and listening to the girls singing was delightful.)

Communes have various ways of getting together, from taking part in the local school sports day, to regular discussion meetings and/or monthly parties, table tennis, a bar where you can gather in the evenings, or games and tea ceremonies on Sunday afternoons. However, at most communes I saw little evidence of any cultural activity, and I must say that this was something I missed. Many communes are running marvellous schemes to help the general community, as readers will know: providing goods homes for old and handicapped people; building a high school; establishing a farming co-operative assistance organization, to mention just a few... And not least, of course, being willing to allow outsiders to come and share in their daily life for a while and learn about communal living by living it.

In view of the varied efforts of Japanese communes to provide happier alternatives to our present society, I must admit I was surprised, and I guess disappointed, that nowhere did I come across signs of any concern about the ecological catastrophes facing the world if we do not mend our ways immediately, and stop poisoning the environment and using up our natural resources. It's as if people

everywhere say "If I ignore this problem it will go away." Japan's communes and co-operatives, above all, seem to me to be in a position to seek answers to the dangers ecologists have warned us of and lead the way to a sounder, more ecological life style. At present, however, the majority are still consuming many of the products that industry churns out (often so wastefully packaged). They farm with chemicals, without (so far as I could tell) exploring organic farming methods. (Did you know, for instance, that herbs can help the growth of your crops, protect them from insect pests, and add valuable minerals to the soil? Or that cattle and poultry thrive together - the chickens eat up all the grubs, and their droppings contain minerals which are very beneficial to cattle.) They pour detergents down the drain. They eat unnatural, chemically processed foods (WHY always white rice, white flour and white sugar when brown is better for us and fewer factories would be needed?) Etcetera.

Communes in Britain, Europe and America, with all their failings, are very conscious of the need to return to self-sufficiency and a natural way of living and so undermine the technological superstructure which threatens our existence. Some of the areas they are devoting their time to are organic farming/gardening; recycling of rubbish; the uses of herbs; marketing and catering of wholefoods (ie. natural, unprocessed foods); making their own bio-degradable soap; tapping methane gas from manure and sewage for fuel; wind/sun/water power; and just buying fewer consumer goods. In short, trying to become independent of industry and live in co-operation with nature.

Of course, they're only just beginning and it's a vast problem with far-reaching implications. But we have to start now if we want our children to live to thank us.

Japan's communes, with the co-ordination of the excellent and helpful JKA, and doing a first-class providing job patterns for a new humane social structure; and proving that not only in Israel can people live and work co-operatively for a better life. Can't they now get together to observe and put into practice all that their counterparts in other parts of the world are doing to try and preserve the environment, and so set a vitally needed example for the rest of Japan?

If you do commit yourselves to the New Life, you'll find that not only are you providing a valuable inspiration and service to others, but that you've started on a highly exciting and rewarding adventure. Bon aventure!

-***-

It is not possible to say much about ecology and organic farming in this article. However, information, advice and contacts are available from:

1) ECOLOGY - ALL ASPECTS:

Friends of the Earth,
30 E 42 Street,
New York,
N.Y. 10017,
U.S.A.
(All donations gratefully welcomed!)

2) ORGANIC/NATURAL FARMING AND GARDENING:

The Soil Association,
Walnut Tree Manor,
Haughley, Stowmarket,
Suffolk, England.

Henry Doubleday Research Association,
Bocking
Braintree
Essex
England.

(Membership: about £3.)

Suitable introductory literature: 75p plus 90p airmail
or 50p seamail.)

Mr. Fukuoka,
2-201 Ohira,
Iyo-shi,
Ehime-ken,
Shikoku. (Telephone: 08998-2-8672)

-***-
***-