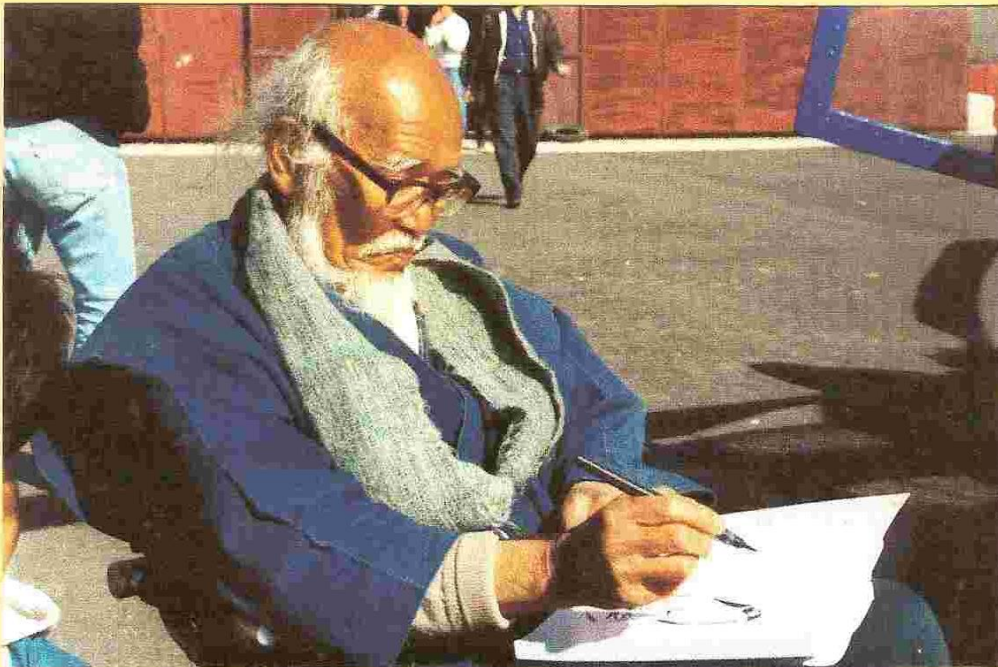


**ΤΑ ΒΟΥΝΑ ΤΗΣ ΧΩΡΑΣ ΜΠΟΡΟΥΝ ΝΑ
ΞΑΝΑΠΡΑΣΙΝΙΣΟΥΝ**

**WE CAN REVEGATE THE MOUNTAINS OF
THE COUNTRY**



ΧΡΟΝΙΚΟ: ΕΔΕΣΣΑ 20. 2. - 20. 3. 1998

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THE AREA AROUND VEGORITIS LAKE



THE INVITATION

WE CAN REVEGATE THE MOUNTAINS OF THE COUNTRY

Soil erosion, floods, landslides, decrease of the oxygen in the atmosphere, gradual increase of the temperature of the planet and millions of acres of fertile land changed into deserts: the heavy toll for "the forests that are being destroyed".

The expansion of the desert is becoming a big threat all over the world. In an effort to revegetate the deserts, Masakobu Fukuoka, the man who was inspired the philosophy of natural farming, developed a method that has as its basis natural farming. He comments rather characteristically: "While standing in an American desert, I suddenly realized that rain does not fall from the heavens; it issues forth from the ground. Deserts do not form because there is no rain; rather rain ceases to fall because the vegetation has disappeared. Building a dam in the desert is an attempt to treat the symptoms of the disease, but it is not a strategy for increasing rainfall. First we have to learn how to restore the ancient forests".

The method consists in sowing of the same time seeds of forest trees, bushes, fruit trees, green manure plants, vegetables and grains, before the rainy season starts. To protect the seeds from the birds and the small animals in general, we make clay balls.

One year later, the plants that will survive, will be the ones adapted to the local conditions. By sowing a big variety of seeds we can be sure that some will germinate, no matter if the conditions are not favourable. And if we use aeroplanes we can sow seeds over large areas within a short period of time.

Fukuoka has devoted his fifteen years in an effort to revegetate the deserts with positive results as in the case of India. His followers have already achieved successful results in Somalia, Kenya, Greece and other countries - though all of them are small in scale.

Fukuoka believes it that in order to check the expansion of the desert in central Europe we must revegetate the barren hills and mountains of all the Mediterranean countries, from Portugal up to Greece and Iran - Iraq.

This year in Greece we will try to revegetate a big area near the Lake Vegoritis (Northern Greece) about 10.000 acres. In March we will sow seeds over an area of 2.500 acres and in September - October over the rest of the area. Since we need big amounts of seeds, any offer in seeds, will be a great help in our effort.

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MASANOBU FUKUOKA

The 84 years old natural farmer, who promises to resurrect the arid areas around Vegoritis Lake.

Masanobu Fukuoka is also philosopher and poet. The 84 years old natural farmer, the sower of the deserts, gave up his career as a plant pathologist and dedicated the last 60 years of his life in natural farming. His theory and practice exclude the tillage of the soil, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, weeding. He believes that the age of aggressive expansion in our materialistic civilization is at an end, and a new "Do nothing" age of consolidation and convergence has arrived. Man must hurry to establish a new way of life and a spiritual culture founded on the communication with nature.

He is wearing japanese clothes, sandals and he is holding in his hands clay pellets, containing seeds. The seeds are protected this way and will not be eaten by birds and rodents. With those clay pellets, they will sow 10.000 hectares of arid land, around Vegoritis Lake.

When he walks, he is using a cane stick. Otherwise he is seated on a wheel chair. Accessible to anyone as he is, he manages to communicate perfectly well. He speaks with children and although he is speaking japanese and is receiving answers in greek language, he manages to communicate. How is it possible? We could not give an explanation. On a barren hill overlooking Vegoritis Lake, greek and foreign volunteers, school boys and journalists form a circle around him. Like a modern Socrates, whom himself considers as the wisest man ever appeared on earth, not in an ancient agora, but in a gathering, outdoors, he starts speaking. "Why do you think the valleys are becoming a desert?"

Maybe because of the animals grazing there. I, personally, believe that the tractors are the reason. Heavy, big tractors plow the soil. In the past, the farmers were digging it with hoes. Do you know the quantity of the soil eroded when we plow it? Around 5-10 tons of soil is eroded this way. Whenever it rains, the soil is washed away and carried further lower.

"Earth doesn't like to be nude, exposed to the sun, to the air. It is as if we ourselves were naked in a desert. The same is true about the soil. It is something natural for it to wear a green dress. I do not think this soil does not have nutrients. It is very young. Nevertheless, it is a sleeping soil. If we manage to awaken it, then we can grow anything on it. These clay pellets have seeds in them. What we do is essentially, what God has done in the beginning of creation, when he blew life in the clay soil. This red clay, that existed in the beginning of creation seems to be an inorganic mater, but within it there is DNA, there is everything. In this soil there was all the inheritance. The theory of the clay soil, from which life started, is becoming more and more evident.

"It took us two to three thousand years to destroy nature in Europe. The last 20 years I have been travelling around the world, sowing seeds in the desert. Up to now, our efforts were always on a small scale. The biggest one is this one here, now. In India we did not have very good success, and the reason was that many clay pellets, falling from the aeroplane, used for the seeding, were broken. Now, for the first time, in Greece, there are many people knowing, how to make perfect clay pellets. It is not only the clay we use. There is also cotton and paper inside. This way the pellets become lighter and stronger. It is the first time during the last 20 years, we have sowed such a large area by hand. We were really content that we sowed by hand.

"We will make it; it depends on our effort, it depends on the rain. If there is God, then surely he will help us!

"It is the leaves, the large green leaves that create the rain. It is the soil moisture up to 10 meters that brings rain. When the soil is dry, there is no rain. I would like together with you, to create a forest with trees at least 10 meters high, in this area. If we want to create such a forest, then we have to sow vegetables and grains, green manure plants under the trees.

"If we will succeed, Italy is not far, is waiting. The whole Europe will follow. The Green Olympic Games, I proposed to the Ministers of Agriculture and Environment, to be organised under Akropolis is much more important than the Olympic ones of faster, longer, stronger.

"The real beauty, good and truth exist only in nature. When we speak about the modern civilization, we speak about the imitation of beauty, good and truth. Human knowledge leads men to an artificial life, an imitation life. That was, in essence, what Sokrates said. To do nothing, to sleep. If we will create a paradise in Greece, then the old real civilization will be restored.

"The man believed that with tractors, fertilizers, chemicals could produce something, sterilizing the soil. When we do nothing, with natural farming, we succeed a lot more. The soil is improved and we get better crops. In Japan, in 1000 m² natural farming produces one tone of rice, when chemical farming produces 500 kilos. The model of the American and Japanese farming is to use two parts of energy and get one.

"Even in the desert, the seeds within the clay pellets will survive and germinate without water. The plants will develop roots two or three meters deep and will survive (he shows photos from papaya trees, that grew in the desert, within half a year). The Tagore and Gandhi organizations grow crops this way. They do nothing, then only sow seeds.

"The books I have written serve nothing. The watches, tape recorders (he turns his eyes to the journalists). Use the radio or the television to say that all these are useless."

People started leaving. I wonder if all answers have been given.

Do you believe that your method will be accepted all over the world, because it is the only answer?

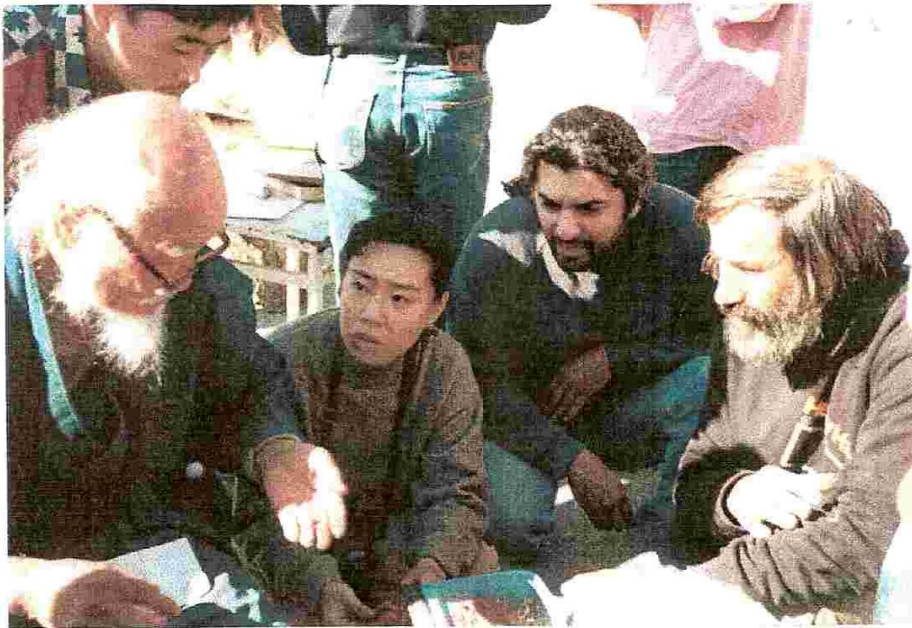
"It will not be adopted, that is the reason why we will be destroyed".

Are you afraid of death?

"Man and woman are one thing, a human being. Life and death are one.

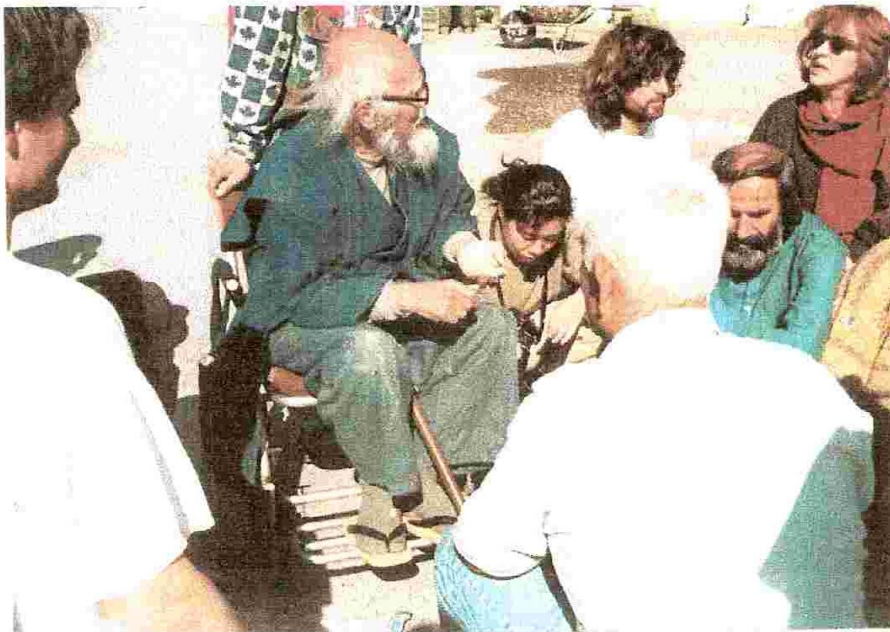
If Sokrates would be here, he would say, "you don't know yourself, how is it possible that you are afraid of dying?"

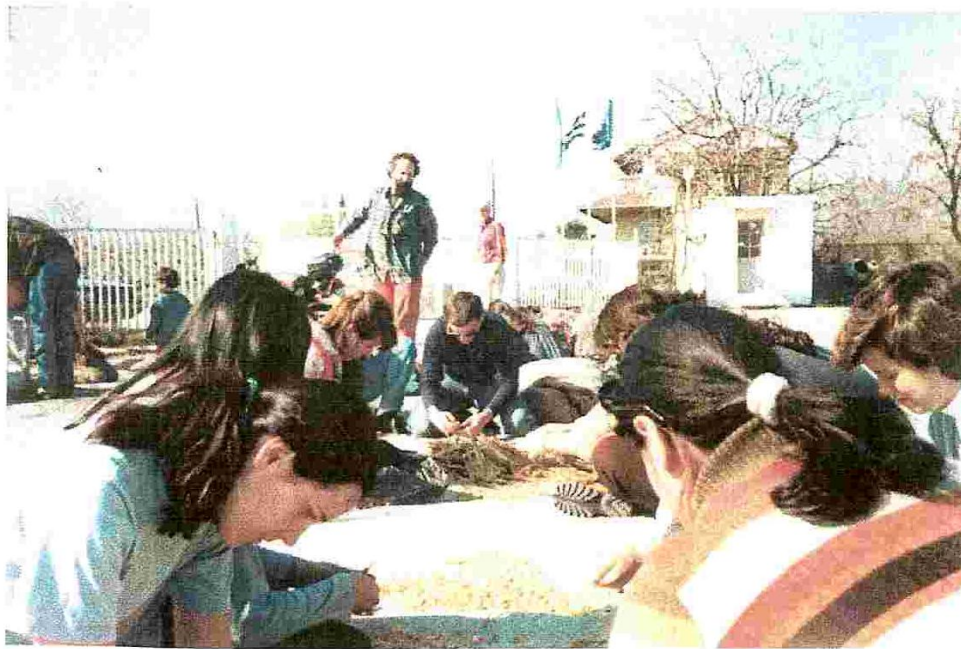
**I AM THE LAZIEST FARMER IN THE WORLD.
NATURE KNOWS HOW TO DO EVERYTHING BY HERSELF**



«Man destroyed nature and created the deserts. His duty is to sow seeds and to restore this way the vegetation. That's what we try to do with natural farming.

We start from here, from Greece, the effort for the revegetation of Europe, the effort to stop the expansion of the deserts. The whole world has turned his eyes towards us, to the seeding over a large area in Vegoritis lake.»





«The human knowledge and the wisdom of nature are two different things. The man thinks that the more he learns, the wiser he becomes. Unfortunately, the more we accumulate knowledge, the more we move away from this wisdom.»





«Rain does not fall from the heavens; it issues forth from the ground. Deserts do not form because there is no rain; rather rain ceases to fall because the vegetation has disappeared. Building a dam in the desert is an attempt to treat the symptoms of the disease, but it is not a strategy for inoreasing rainfall. First we have to learn how to restore the ancient forests.»

