

New Book Introduction

Leisure Farming: A Wild Flower Since Ancient Times

Editors: Sun Hongwu & Ma Huidi

Published by China Agricultural Publishing House in Feb, 2023, Chinese version

Abstract

What is leisure farming? Where did it originate? What does "the unintended wildflower from ancient times" mean? What are its relationships with nature, life, living and traditional agriculture? What was civilization in the minds of the ancients? How important is recreational agriculture in the context of life? How do leisure and agriculture interact in the construct of man and nature? We try to find these questions in the chain of humanistic logic that have been neglected by human beings for a long time, to explore the practices and experiences of the ancients in their daily life by restoring history, and to understand and discover the inner mechanism for the interaction of such practices and experiences by projecting them into the systematic and cross-disciplinary structure of our modern knowledge.

Leisure farming, as the industry and form of agrarian civilization, not only nurtured the flourishing of humanity, but also created the first "Axial Age" in the history of human civilization with its profound humanistic attributes, and has accompanied human beings for nearly 10,000 years. On the other hand, industrial civilization, which is only 200 years old, has turned the earth into a planet riddled with holes, resulting in much ecological anxiety and food anxiety, which are among the primary distressing factors of today's society. In these circumstances, sustainable human development is faced with unprecedented challenges.

Human experiences in history and in the contemporary have shown the system of humanistic values contained in leisure farming is the most reasonable and sustainable one. For here lies the wisdom for the co-existence and co-evolution of nature, agriculture, leisure, and humanity, and it tells us that allowing cities and rural areas to burst out with new hope, new life, and new civilization in a happy "marriage". Sorting out the history of agriculture and human civilization, discovering the secrets of human agricultural civilization for thousands of years, to aim promoting modern leisure agriculture to avoid various drawbacks in industrial civilization on the basis of carrying "dual genes" (natural and cultural), to avoid various drawbacks in industrial society, to persuade humanity to return to degrowth and more, to achieve "reconciliation between humans and all things in nature," and to realize the consciousness of human moral rationality.

Nowadays, more and more people realized the damage to earth by over consumption and development. How to change agricultural mode and to seek food alternative system and maintain a good relationship between humans and nature are becoming an urgent new topic. With interdisciplinary approaches to leisure farming studies, this book will traverse history, examine the

reality we are in, and look forward to step out of the anthropocene in the near future.

Rather than being a book on agriculture, it is more of a humanistic work.

Contents

Preface (by Sun Hongwu)

Introduction (by Ma Huidi)

Chapter 1: Leisure Farming: A Wild Flower since Ancient Times (by Ma Huidi)

Agriculture is the original form of human culture

“Leisure” and “Agriculture”: an Etymological Study

The Revolution in Agriculture

Out of the “Fraud of the Agricultural Revolution”

Leisure Farming: The Common Heritage of Human Culture

Leisure Farming of Today: Toward an Integration of Materiality and Spirituality

Chapter 2: The "Dual Genes" in Agricultural Civilization (by Ma Huidi)

The "Natural Gene" and the "Cultural Gene"

The "Spiritual Home" of Life and Mind

The Subject for Scholarly Research

The Significance of the "Dual Genes" for Modern Society

Chapter 3: Memory of the Land and Folk Beliefs (by Yi Neng)

The Memory of the Land

A Gift from Nature

Agrotechnology vs. Agronomy

Folklore and Folk Beliefs

Chapter 4: Food and Humanities in the Geographical Genealogy (by Sun Tiansheng)

Food in Geographical Genealogy

Food and Humanities

Food and Economic Geography

Transmission and Change of Culture

Chapter 5: The Environmental Ethics of Daily Life (by Wei Lanjun)

Garden as Home and Home as Garden

The Tinge of Civilization in Food Waste

The Cultural Metaphor of Farmers' Markets

The Farming Experience: The Production of Both Material and Spiritual Goods

Chapter 6: The Scale of Nature: The Multiple Purposes of Balcony Gardening (by Wang Chengwei)

The Logical Starting Point of Balcony Gardening

The Balcony in Transformation: Tensions among Nature, Socialization and Morality

Moral comeback in sustainability

Balcony gardening: the nature growing at home

Chapter 7: The Prospect of the New Future of Leisure Agriculture (by Sun Hongwu and Yi Neng)

The Chinese Wisdom

Chinese Land

Chinese Seeds

The Food Table of the Chinese

The Prospect of the New Future of Leisure Agriculture

Epilogue: Revelation from the History of Leisure Farming (by Ma Huidi)

Edo, ergo sum: The Starting Point of the Philosophy of Body

Food Ethics: A Way to Save the Future

An Unpredictable Future of the Anthropocene

Recultivating the "Wild Flower Since Ancient Times"

Comments

One of the things I find interesting is that often-historical studies have opposed agriculture and leisure--depicting the advent of agriculture as that which introduces directed toil into the more relaxed and social activities of hunting and gathering. But I think this book emphasizes the ways in which both "the wild flower" and the planted, tended, and sowed flower provide a source of nourishment for humans--and the "intentional flower"--the product of agriculture--is a source of the integration of humanity and nature; the nourishment of body, mind, and life; and may in many ways be the seed of spiritual growth. It is in planting, tending and harvesting that we join ourselves with nature in the wonder of the reproduction of life.

——Marjorie Miller, Professor of Philosophy, State University of New York

Ensuring food on the table has always been important for humans. But might there be more in the relations between humans and plants than first meets the eye? *Leisure Farming: A Wild Flower since Ancient Times* addresses goes back in time, studying the intersection of nature, agriculture, leisure, and humanity. With an innovative approach and a compelling Chinese perspective, the book beautifully carves room for the hypothesis that humans already have what is needed to achieve a sustainable world. There is no reason to wait for silver-bullet technologies.

——Marius Korsnes, Associate Professor, Department of Cross-cultural studies, Norwegian University of Science and Technology ; Coordinator of A Middle Way? Probing Sufficiency through Meat and Milk in China

