

## **Farming Satori: Zen and the Naturalist Farmer Fukuoka Masanobu.**

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This paper looks at how Masanobu Fukuoka adopts Chan Buddhist philosophy in relation to his Zen natural farming method. To understand this, it examines the development in Chinese Buddhism that allowed and required Buddhist to farm, defining farming as Buddhist practice. The paper is organized as follows.

- I. Seeds in the Mahāyāna
- II. Roots in Chan monastic regulations
- III. Farming *satori*, Fukuoka's writing on awakening.

### **I. Seeds in the Mahāyāna**

Masanobu Fukuoka (福岡 正信, 1913-2008) was a Japanese natural farmer and philosopher. As a teacher of farming, he propagated his method of making seed balls, incorporating a variety of mutually supportive seeds into a ball of clay. With these seed balls he would bomb deserts from airplanes and use them in other non-plowed landscapes, creating forest gardens. As a teacher of philosophy, his articles were widely published in Japanese journals of Buddhism. He also wrote several books, including his three-volume *Mu (Emptiness): The Kami (god/s or spirit) Revolution*,<sup>1</sup> self published in 1947 and *The One-Straw Revolution* which was published in 1975 and translated into English in 1978. The books are mainly about philosophy and farming respectively, but neither is entirely separate from the other. While Fukuoka is unknown to the general public in Japan and elsewhere, he is fairly well-known to those interested in natural farming worldwide.

Fukuoka was trained as a microbiologist and agricultural scientist. During a bout with pneumonia, he claimed to have a spiritual transformation and quit his job as an agricultural customs inspector in Yokohama and returned to family farm in rural Shikoku Japan. In the 1970s and 80s, Fukuoka traveled the world lecturing about this seed ball method of propagation for vegetables, how to re-vegetate deforested, desert areas, and devastated areas. He visited Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in California, spent time in Europe, Somalia, Ethiopia, Thailand and India, where he was influential in his teachings on natural farming.

Concerning his religious philosophy, although his articles are mainly published in Buddhist journals, he wrote,

I do not belong to any religious group myself and will freely discuss my view with anyone at all. I do not care much for making distinctions among Christianity, Buddhism, Shintō, and the other religious, but it does intrigue me that people of deep religious conviction are attracted to my farm. I think this is because natural

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<sup>1</sup> *Mu: Kami no Kakumei* (無 神の革命).

farming, unlike other types of farming, is based on a philosophy which penetrates beyond considerations of soil analysis, pH, and harvest yields.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Fukuoka often explained his ideas in terms of Buddhism. Likewise, in several writings he describes the differences between his natural farming methods and the natural farming methods of some others as being like Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Hīnayāna respectively. He writes:

Mahāyāna natural farming: This and scientific farming are on entirely different planes. Although it is a bit strange to directly compare the two and discuss their relative merits, the only way we have of expressing their value in this world of ours is by comparison and contrast. Scientific agriculture draws as much as it can from natural forces and attempts, by adding human knowledge, to produce results that eclipse nature. Naturally, proponents of this type of farming think it superior to natural farming, which relies entirely on the forces and resources of nature.

Philosophically, however, scientific farming cannot be superior to Mahāyāna natural farming because, while scientific farming is the sum of knowledge and forces extracted from nature by the human intellect, this still amounts to finite human knowledge. No matter how one totals it up, human knowledge is but a tiny, closely circumscribed fraction of the infinitude of the natural world. In contrast to the vast, boundless, perfect knowledge and power of nature, the finite knowledge of man is always limited to small pockets of time and space. Inherently imperfect as it is, human knowledge can never be collected together to form perfect knowledge.

As imperfection can never be the equal of perfection, so scientific farming must always yield a step to Mahāyāna natural farming. Nature encompasses everything. No matter how desperately he struggles, man will never be more than a small, imperfect part of its totality. Clearly then, scientific farming, which is inherently incomplete, can never hope to attain the immutable absoluteness of natural farming.<sup>3</sup>

To understand how Fukuoka's ideas about farming might be related to a specific development in the Buddhism of East Asia, we should consider how and why Chinese Buddhists changed the monastic vows so they could farm.

## **II. Roots in Chan monastic regulations**

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<sup>2</sup> *One Straw Revolution*, 101.

<sup>3</sup> *The Natural Way of Farming, The Theory and Practice of Green Philosophy* 76

In his famous *Life of the Buddha (Buddhakarita)*, Aśvaghōṣa relates the following episode which occurred as the Buddha was going forth, leaving the palace and newly developed urban community behind for meditative practice in the forest. Aśvaghōṣa writes,

Lured by love of the wood and longing for the beauties of the ground, he went to a spot near at hand on the forest-outskirts; and there he saw a piece of land being ploughed, with the path of the plough broken like waves on the water.

Having beheld the ground in this condition, with its young grass scattered and torn by the plough, and covered with the eggs and young of little insects which were killed, he was filled with deep sorrow as for the slaughter of his own kindred.

And beholding the men as they were ploughing, their complexions spoiled by the dust, the sun's rays, and the wind, and their cattle bewildered with the burden of drawing, the most noble one felt extreme compassion.

Having alighted from the back of his horse, he went over the ground slowly, overcome with sorrow, — pondering the birth and destruction of the world, he, grieved, exclaimed, 'this is indeed pitiable.'<sup>4</sup>

The Buddha then sits on the plowed ground and reaches the first *jñāna*, stage of meditation.

From this narrative, setting aside the suggestion that early Buddhism may be a larger rejection of the newly developing urban culture, we can guess that the Indian regulatory framework the Buddha established for his followers would likewise prohibit farming if simply on the grounds of the precept against killing. In fact, Indian Buddhism also required its followers to rely on and manage their livelihood by donations from laypersons. Thus the vinaya (Buddhist regulatory framework) specifically prohibited the monastic community from farming.

When Buddhism was propagated in China centuries after the time of the Buddha, because China was very different from India in terms of culture, geography, and climate, even though the Chinese imported the Indian vinaya texts, they felt those rules could not be literally applied in their country. According to what they saw as their unique situation, the Chinese monks Daoan (312-385) and his disciple Huiyuan (334-416) composed saṅgha regulations and domesticated vinaya rules for Chinese Buddhism.<sup>5</sup> Chan writings containing the new rules are sometimes called the second vinaya texts. These early rules were further modified during the Tang Dynasty (618–906), thereby establishing the uniquely Chinese tradition of Chan Buddhism that incorporated Daoist philosophy and Confucian social ethics.

Unlike their Indian Buddhist counterparts, Chinese Chan Buddhists suggested that their followers cultivate farms to establish and maintain economic autonomy and independence from outsiders. The earliest form of Chan monastic regulations strongly stipulated that Chan practitioners be independent from government administrative and legal interventions. The authors of these regulations did not revise and did not vocally criticize the Indian Buddhist

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<sup>4</sup> *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts*. Translated by E. B. Cowell, F. Max Müller and J. Takakusu. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894, 60-1.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China* by Yifa. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002, 8-28.

precepts but only made new regulations to manage their own monastic community.<sup>6</sup> Later, when Chinese Buddhism was persecuted by the government during the Tang Dynasty in 842, Chan Buddhism was able to survive more easily than doctrinal Buddhist traditions because it was more economically autonomous from the government than those other traditions.

We can identify three periods in the development of Chan monastic regulations, each of which reflecting changes in farming practices.<sup>7</sup> In the earliest period during the Tang Dynasty, we find descriptions of monastic farming that contrast with that of secular farming. The monastics engaged in communal work and shared the food they produced, unlike ordinary farmers. It is generally said that Baizhang Huaihai (720-814) made the proto-type for the Chan monastic regulations of the first period. The complete version of his regulations has been lost but we can see some fragments of his regulations through the recorded sayings of his disciple Weishan Lingyu (771-853) and others. Before this, Chinese Buddhists lived in temples regulated by the Indian vinaya while practicing Chan meditation. With Baizhang's Chan Monastic Regulations, Chan Buddhists were able to establish their own institutions and define their community as an independent tradition in China. So, Chinese Buddhists began to institutionalize Chan Buddhism from the eighth century and institutionally separated their tradition from other traditions in Chinese Buddhism. According to this history, we can say that the establishment of Chan (Zen) Buddhism as a separate institution is directly related to farming self-sufficiency. The first Chan monastic regulations were very egalitarian. They do not have a Confucian bureaucratic hierarchy governing farming practices, but require all members to participate in the work regardless of their position in the temple.

Just four years after Baizhang passed away in 814, his disciples erected a monument on Mt. Baizhang in Hongzhou with an inscription by Chen Xu (dates unknown). According to the inscription, Baizhang's disciples made a resolution stating that their monastic farms would not rely on tenant farmers who would pay rent to the monastery.<sup>8</sup> Instead, they decided to manage the monastery with a self-sufficient economy system by farming the land themselves.

However, in the second period, we find reference to Chan-managed tenant farming with a newly created position of a monastic collector of revenue. This Confucian-based bureaucratic element begins to show up in a writing called the *Monastic Regulations of the Chan Garden*.<sup>9</sup> This is the oldest extant complete version of a Chan monastic vinaya text. It was written by Zongze (d. 1107?) in 1103 during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). In the preface, Zongze explains why Chinese Buddhists needed different regulations. He writes, "Although in principle two different sets of vinaya should not exist, there is a particular tradition in the school of Chan that stands apart from the general, common regulations."<sup>10</sup> .... The Buddha established new teachings only when a given situation required it."<sup>11</sup> The following is a description of the farming positions from Zongze's *Monastic Regulations of the Chan Garden*.

#### Chief Gardener (*yuantou*)

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<sup>6</sup> Seok Wongyeong, "Go-cheonggyu ui jeongsin gwa uiui" (The Spirit and Meanings of Baizhang's Original Chan Monastic Regulations), in *Seungga* (Saṅgha) 5 (February 28, 2004): 184.

<sup>7</sup> This follows Chanju Mun in his "Chan monastic regulations of Chinese Buddhism."

<sup>8</sup> T.48.2025.1157a26.

<sup>9</sup> *Chanyuan qinggui*. X.63.1245.522a5-556a14.

<sup>10</sup> X.63.1245.522a10-11 and Yifa (b. 1959), trans., *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 112.

<sup>11</sup> X.63.1245.522a15-17 and Yifa, trans., 112-113.

[145] The duty of the chief gardener is to fertilize the crops, erect boundaries between fields, sow the seed, cultivate the sprouts, irrigate the crops, and eliminate weeds – all of which must be done in a timely fashion. The chief gardener should consult experts in these matters for assistance. He must gauge the seasonal weather conditions to guarantee that there will be vegetables in supply all year round. He must give the best vegetables to the assembly and can sell only what remains as surplus. He must continually repair or replace his tools and should try to maintain harmonious relations with the cook. Generally speaking, in the beginning of spring he should plant lettuce, turnips, and plantains. Before the festival of Hanshi,<sup>12</sup> he should plant eggplant, gourd, cucumber, senna, gumbo, and basil. Radishes are to be planted in the middle of the fifth month, cucumbers in the middle of sixth month, and cole and spinach in the middle of the seventh month.

Director of the Farming Village (*zhuangzhu*)

[146] The following are the duties of the director of the farming village. He must oversee the semiannual taxes paid to the government. Ploughing the soil, sowing seeds, hoeing weeds, harvesting, grafting, building dikes, and collecting fertilizer – all of these activities must be done by him at appropriate times...<sup>13</sup>

In the third period, during the Yuan Dynasty, we find that the Chan monastic regulations that more strongly incorporate the key Confucian virtues of state loyalty and filial piety and subordinate Buddhism to the state. At that time, the emperor ordered the composition of a document called the *Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*.<sup>14</sup> These were compiled by Yixian in 1311 during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368) when Mongolians controlled China. The regulations reveal that a hierarchal power structure had developed in the monastery according to Confucianism, wherein the director of farming no longer worked the farm but served as a manager. In the preface he says that Chinese Buddhists modeled Chan monastic precepts after monastic regulations included in vinaya texts.<sup>15</sup> The Chan monastic regulations included in Yang Yi's preface to this document required all monks to directly participate in communal labor, work in the monastery's farms and make the monastery economically self-sufficient. However, when we review the positions in the later *Well-Prepared Chan Monastic Regulations*, we find the head gardener, the mill master and the director of the farming village did not participate in the communal work in the farms directly but made novices, postulants and slaves work the farms; the head cook did not cook directly but managed postulants who cooked in the kitchen; the solicitors raised funds for the monastics and the common monastics did not need to directly participate in fundraising, begging or otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This festival took place on the 105<sup>th</sup> day after the winter solstice. Hanshi means “cold-eating” and no fire is used on this day.

<sup>13</sup> Yifa, 166.

<sup>14</sup> *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui*. X.63.1250.620a2-666c21.

<sup>15</sup> T.48.2025.1158c9-10 and X.63.1250.620b1-2.

<sup>16</sup> Choe Beophye (b. 1945), trans., *Goryeo-pan Seonwon cheonggyu yeokju* (An Annotated Translation of the Korean Edition of Zongze's *Chanyuan qinggui*) (Seoul: Gasan bulgyo munhwa yeon'gu-won, 2001), 53.

Because in the second period, Zongze had introduced the position of director of the farming village and the duties of that position in *Monastic Regulations of the Chan Garden*, it is assumed that the first Chan monastery of the Northern Song Dynasty may have abandoned the system of autonomy at the monastery.<sup>17</sup> The authors of Chan monastic regulations compiled later in the Southern Song Dynasty began to include the position of director of the farming village and the position of the estate revenue officer under the director. In the third period, Dehui, the author of the *Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations* compiled during the Yuan Dynasty, wrote a section on the estate revenue officer and introduced serious drawbacks associated with the position as follows:

In the *Ancient Regulations*, in the very beginning there was no post of the estate revenue officer under the director of the farming village. Only in recent times was this office created. Since the post was established, there have occurred innumerable evils. There are cases where the abbot secretly appoints someone who has been convicted of a crime, or out of personal interest, he falls into favoritism in appointing someone to such a post. There are also cases when officials and managers who have just retired upon the appointment of a new abbot overreach the latter's authority in appointing someone; or there are some who demand their own appointment due to their power based in the monastery community; or those who organize a group in order to obtain the post on the basis of its majority. There are even some who take the post by physical force. There is no end of such examples, which in all cases are harmful both to the monastery community and individuals. Even though everyone might wish to rectify this state of affairs and restore the proper form of the monastery institution, there is no way to realize this goal. Only if there are retired officials who are honest and assist the abbot may it become possible to select an appropriate person in terms of public election and appoint him over some limited area of responsibility. Or it may also be possible to appoint a person by lottery from among the practitioners. Anyone who holds this post must be rigorous in his standard of personal conduct and motivated to serve the community of practitioners. One must not impose heavy demands on the farming families. If the holder of this post is able not to cause any loss to the monastery's economy, it would be equally beneficial to others as to himself.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, Chan modified Indian Buddhism in terms of Chinese philosophical Daoism and ethical and social Confucianism. Daoism speaks of natural order and philosophy while Confucianism emphasizes social ethics and order, which Chan applies to bureaucracy in management of its monasteries and practitioners. The Daoist idea of *wuwei ziran*, naturalness without activity, can be seen in Chan and Zen as a major philosophical concept. Chan relies on the Daoism of Laozi when speaking of the deontological necessity of enlightenment and tracing its origin back the Dao (or Buddha-nature). Philosophically, Daoism and Confucianism are contradictory. Also, ethically, they are contradictory. However, Chan picked up pieces of contradictory philosophies and applied them according to their needs. For example, the famous Zen statement attributed Daoyi, that everyday mind is the activities of Dao, is similar to the concerns of Laozi about the Dao, *wuwei ziran*, naturalness without activity.

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<sup>17</sup> X.63.1245.533b15-24 and Yifa, trans., 166-167.

<sup>18</sup> T.48.2025.1133b22-c1 and Ichimura, trans., 193-194.

Fukuoka's thinking was eventually shaped by these historical development that defined Chan (Zen): the incorporation of Daoist elements and the inclusion of farming self-sufficiency. In various interviews, he said that although he called his type of farming no-action and no-work farming, he seemed to work much more on it than main stream farmers. Because he did not organize and control a group of organic farmers, he did not need to make Confucian-like rules as seen in Chan, but just accepted its Daoist-based organic and natural philosophy.

### III. Farming satori.

In the second of his three volumes titled *Mu (Emptiness)*, Fukuoka addresses the question of “who are enlightened beings” and “what do they do”? He begins the section called “*Satori*” (awakening) with the subheading “Gods and Buddhas.” In it, he uses the Japanese word “kami” not only when referring to Shintō spirits of nature as the term is usually used, but also when he speaks of Greek gods, Daoist immortals, the God of Abrahamic religions, and the human spirit. He writes the following.

#### 1. *Kaigo* (Enlightenment)

##### Gods and Buddhas

The meaning of enlightenment is interpreted in many ways and there are various representations of people who have awakened. *Satori* is to realize one's own original form clearly and to realize kami. Those who realize themselves free of delusion and understand truth, absolute truth, the most fundamental teaching, and the ultimate origin of the universe are enlightened beings. Because of the nature of these realizations, enlightenment cannot be expressed with languages and does not have content which can be explained. Only enlightened persons can realize enlightenment definitely. Thus, I will not attempt to interpret enlightenment here. That we are unable to explain it is all that I will write about.

When referring to enlightened persons (persons of *satori*), there are many terms that have been used: the enlightened ones, the true person (*zhenren*),<sup>19</sup> immortals, kami, holy persons, Buddha, Buddhas, saints, and the patriarchs. Even though all of these beings understood the same thing, they each explained it in different ways using various languages and due to different times and places. In all cases, they did not have the proper vocabulary to make others understand their achievement.

Who are these persons who attained enlightenment? Kami and the Buddhas are equally such beings. If it were possible to understand this with one word (kami) or with one phrase (the Buddhas) we could melt the ice surrounding it and clear it all up. Unfortunately, we do not have the vocabulary to explain enlightenment clearly and we do not have anything to transmit as enlightenment. We conceptually make *maya* (delusion)

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<sup>19</sup> Zhenren is the perfected person or Daoist master mentioned in the *Dao de jing* and *Zhaungzi*.

with our brains, and only consider that the kami and the Buddhas are not same. However, because people believe that their conceptual comprehension is true, they increase their mistakes.

All of those who are awakened are the same as the enlightened beings, the kami, and the Buddha. Because the ones who awake are those who open their eyes to the most fundamental things and comprehend truth, they are called true persons, immortals, and Buddhas. If we explain this in Buddhist terms, they are the ones who attain Buddhahood in the present body (*Sokushin jōbutsu*). That is to say, ones who become a Buddha are called Buddhas, meaning they have obtained liberation, freedom, bodies of harmony and non-obstruction.

Christianity, it goes without saying, is a religion using the idea of reuniting. That is, the separation from God is once more united, which is the equivalent of *Sokushin jōbutsu*. To transform the mind and to reunite (with God), both mean to attain enlightenment and become Buddhas. The Christ who is called the Son of God through reunion, is exactly identical with the Buddha (the person of *satori*) of Buddhism.

Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"<sup>20</sup> This is absolute truth. Only those who can comprehend absolute truth can declare the above truth with confidence. Shakyamuni said with delight when he attained enlightenment, "Below heaven and above the earth, I alone am the Honored One."<sup>21</sup> The statement is made with the confidence of a Buddha who comprehends ultimate truth. Nichiren's<sup>22</sup> claim that "There is no Dharma except my Dharma" is nothing more than the unconditional truth. This statement is one expounding the single absolute truth, not the voice of exclusion.

In all of these, regardless of whether Christ or Shakyamuni, regardless of whether from religions of the world or philosophies of the world, those who comprehended truth, comprehended the same truth, whether called the Son of God, Buddha, the True Person, or an Immortal, they arrived in the same world. However, those of later generations interpreted and criticized the worlds, separated kami from human beings, and tried to comprehend kami and Buddhas as separate.

This way of considering kami and Buddhas is a type of idolatry. Therefore, many conflicting statements are made. Those who attain enlightenment consider that "there are no beings above humans." However, ordinary persons established counterfeit kami, Buddhas, and idols. They speculate about each of these, and offer respect and sacrifices to them as kami. Because the disciples who followed the founder of Buddhism (the enlightened one) were, and later persons are, deluded about that which they cannot know, they made fantastic speculations and interpreted in various ways. Therefore, various ideas about each kami and Buddha spring forth and furthermore, expressions about kami and

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<sup>20</sup> John 14:6

<sup>21</sup> Unlike Fukuoka, various biographies of the Buddha place this statement at his birth, not at the time of his enlightenment.

<sup>22</sup> Lived 1222-1282.



Buddhas came to be applied to deceased persons and idols, all of which created more chaos.

Although originally “Buddha” and “kami” had the same meaning and were the same entity, they were separated and the meaning was destroyed, generating more confusion. Even though the terms “enlightenment” and “truth” are the same, they are described with various words. Laozi spoke of “the nameless.” Ordinary people gave the names “kami” and “Buddha” to that which cannot be named, resulting in delusion.

Socrates said, “People should say that they do not know if they do not know. It is better to know the original form of all human beings. Humans should know themselves.” Likewise, he did not say that we should know kami standing beyond human beings. The kami do not exist beyond human beings. Kami are pervasive in the universe. The original form of the whole world is kami. The original form of human beings is kami.

Many philosophers and ordinary people disregard kami and negate their existence, or they show respect to them in an altar. Kami are conceived of as separate from human beings and exist in a high place beyond us. However, the kami are not really existent outside of human beings.... If we say there are no kami, it is the same as saying there are no human beings. If there are no human beings, there are no kami outside of human beings. Such kami outside human beings are counterfeit kami, idol kami. Because the ones who attain enlightenment are ones who realize that they are kami, we do not need to respect the kami on alters beyond human beings. Therefore, we do not respect the kami. The reason that Nichiren criticized kami, Buddhas, and religion is that he was angered by those who respected counterfeit kami and Buddhas. Enlightened persons respect themselves and not something other-worldly. However, they severely criticize the generation of deluded minds which separate kami from themselves, who do not reunite with kami, and do not remember their own true natures. The enlightened beings make prayers to themselves and do not bow to others. However, in the perspective of enlightened persons, there is no self and others. Prayers for themselves are closely connected to prayers for the world. Ordinary persons respect idol kami and do not know to respect the true kami of themselves and to pray to the true kami themselves. Modern people laugh at the kami as useless objects, and consider themselves as being empty and nonsensical, even though they are kami. Kami and Buddhas are ourselves. The content of the kami and Buddhas are filled with truth. The truth is one which we should know and which we should utilize, but not that which we make sacrifice to and pay respect to.<sup>23</sup>

In the next subsection of his chapter on *satori*, Fukuoka builds a similar argument in respect to the various religious and philosophical views of paradise. Again, according to him, ordinary people conceive of heaven, the Buddhist Pure Land, and various otherworldly realms based on their delusion of separateness due to discriminative conceptualizations. In terms of ultimate reality, the awakened ones see that this land is not a different place than paradise. Likewise, enlightened beings see a continuum of life-death, pain-pleasure, etc. Accordingly, Fukuoka

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<sup>23</sup> This translates Masanobu Fukuoka’s writing on *satori*, awakening or “seeing into one’s true nature” in his book *Mu*, book II, page 188-191.

points out that the Buddha said form is no different than emptiness, and *samsara* (the here-and-now cycles of birth and death) is no different from nirvāṇa.

Finally, at the end of in his chapter on *satori*, Fukuoka offers an elaborate discussion on what he sees as the synchronism of the ideas of Descartes, Nietzsche, Christ, and the Buddha in terms of the activities of awakening and awakened beings. Building on his arguments above, he finds that only the unenlightened concentrate on extreme measures for attaining enlightenment. The practices of enlightened beings are natural activities. This plays into his idea of natural farming and establishes it as a practice of enlightened beings.

#### IV. Conclusion.

In Chan Buddhism, farming is not separate from Chan practice. This is illustrated in the famous Zen saying: "Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water." Chan Buddhism accepted farming as one major practice method. Its practitioners hope to develop their minds through farming, which is contradictory to the method of Indian Buddhism. In India, the Buddha required disciples to cultivate their minds through begging, but Chan masters required their followers to farm and cultivate their minds. This may be why Fukuoka refers to "Mahāyāna natural farming," since Chan is a Mahāyāna development. Chan developed eight activities which they say equally lead to awakening: walking, staying, sitting, lying, talking, remaining silent, moving, and keeping steady. For Chan practitioners one of these should not be practiced at the expense of the others. Accordingly, *satori* can be reached through farming and farming can be one part of everyday Chan monastic life. Chan Buddhists generally combined meditative practice with farming and adopted the saying "Those who do not work for one day, should not eat for one day."

Even though in the *Dhammapada* and other texts the Buddha uses the expression "cultivation" of the mind as a metaphor, Fukuoka literally applied that metaphor to the farming of the land as a way to cultivate our minds. However, Fukuoka's understanding of Buddhism is clearly along the lines of Daoist *wuwei ziran*, naturalness without structured activity. This also informs the radical subitist or sudden enlightenment branch of Chan Buddhism. As opposed to the gradualist Chan approach to awakening through long meditative training, Chan subitists believe that we can awaken suddenly due to the womb of the Buddha (Tathāgatagarbha) inherit in all of us. Therefore, we are all naturally Buddhas. That being their outlook, like Fukuoka, their practice for *satori* is informed by the Zen adage "live lively in the awakened mind."<sup>24</sup>

In many ways, Fukuoka life and ideas were as close to those of Shintō and Daoism as to Chan Buddhism. In writings, he points to all of these traditions in support of his methods. We could also look at him as an *ikigami*, a living god having supernatural according to a number of Japanese new religions. Perhaps in Fukuoka's case this would be supranatural, abilities, extraordinary but penetrating rather than transcending nature. After all Fukuoka wrote sūtra prose and the words of sūtra are typically reserved as those of buddhas. In addition, many people have tried seed bombing and no-till farming with seed balls with no success. Fukuoka appears to have possessed a special talent for getting those methods to work.

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<sup>24</sup> Chinese: *huo po po*, 活潑潑.