

The Key to Success



In my job, I have the opportunity to interview people whom I would not otherwise meet, and I also get to read articles from people in various fields who are working hard for others. I am learning many things through these encounters.

Suad Al-Mudhaffar, the principal of Azzan Bin Qais Private School in Oman, who wrote an article for this magazine three years ago, is the first Japanese to become an Omani national. She had the desire to offer excellent education for the Middle East country's children. Through tireless efforts, including those to take in the valuable things of Japanese education, she ended up turning the school into the most distinguished one in Oman.

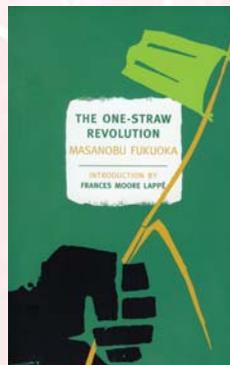
George Hara, president of an investment company who wrote for us in the previous issue, also works for goodness. By establishing an Internet business center in a developing country, he has succeeded in setting up a business model that is profitable and at the same time allows money to be placed in public investment to improve the lives of the country's people.

Masanobu Fukuoka, "the father of natural farming" whom I wrote about in 2008, had the dream of increasing greenery across the world by seed balls, planting seeds in clay balls, with great efficiency and on a large scale. He was busy visiting countries such as those in Africa and Asia to teach the method of "tree planting" by seed balls until it was

no longer physically possible for him to do so. Last summer, a year after his death, the English version of his book *"The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming,"* which had been out of print for over 20 years, was put on the market again by the great effort of people relevant to him. With the republication of the book, the ring of people who carry on his legacy is broadening. Last autumn, hardy seeds were sent from Japan to projects in Argentina and Chile that are promoting greening by seed balls.

In October, I was invited to the "Refugee Film Festival" hosted every year by the UNHCR, and which our magazine wrote about in 2008. It is a marvelous film festival that provides an interesting movie experience and also sends out a message urging us to take action and help the people who are suffering. JICA President Sadako Ogata was also present at a preview and I had the pleasure of saying hello to her. Madame Ogata looked like a gentle person, but I also felt there was nothing in the world that would make her flinch and I wondered if this was the sort of impression I would have received had I met Mother Theresa. A few days later, I read a newspaper report that the JICA leader had gone to Iraq to discuss reconstruction aid and I was glad to learn that she is a person who puts words into action.

In getting to know such great people, I get the feeling that the secret key to success is the wish to serve people and the world. I hope *Japan SPOTLIGHT* is also contributing to it in some way by introducing the activities of such people in our magazine. As for myself, I have started making "click" donations on the Web everyday, although this does pale in comparison to the great work that the people I have come into contact with are undertaking.



The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming (New York Review Books Classics)