Interviewee: Yuji Kun

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Q: Interviewer A: Interviewee

Q：你是什麼時侯開始種田的？When did you start farming?

A：我自己開始種田是兩年前吧，從小就有幫爸爸的忙啊，蘑菇還有稻米。I have started to do it by myself two years ago, but I had been helping my father with rice and mushroom farming since I was small.

Q：所以你是從小就有概念怎麼種，因為你從小就有幫忙？So you know how to farm since you were small?

A：從小就…怎麼說…跟農業有…接觸，就是在農村長大嘛，農業是在日常生活中。Hmm… I have been in touch with agriculture since I was small. Because growing up in a village, farming is part of my everyday life.

Q：那你為什麼兩年前想要自己種？Why did you want to start farming by yourself two years ago?

A：我大學畢業後在一般公司工作，在化學公司，然後覺得在那樣的地方上班跟回家種田這樣相比起來，回家種田更有用、有意義。I was doing an office job after college, in a chemistry company, I eventually think that farming at home is more meaningful than doing this office job.

Q：為什麼？你說的有用跟有意義是什麼意思？How so? What do you mean by more meaningful?

A：通過農業、教育啊…我對觀光業有興趣，通過這種東西啊，把…我老家這邊活化、地方創新，對…想做這種東西。I am interested in agricultural education and tourism. I want revitalize my hometown, and engage in innovative things. Yes… these are the things I wanted to do.

Q：你是一直都在這裡生活嗎？還是有離開過這裡？Have you been living here since you were small? Did you leave before?

A： 大學的時侯在新潟大學，也讀了農業的master，工作的話在東京那邊的化學公司工作，工作兩、三年左右。I did my Bachelor degree in the Niigata Prefecture, and also an agricultural master degree. Afterwards, I worked in the chemistry company in Tokyo for two to three years.

Q：所以大學念完書就去了東京工作兩、三年？So you moved to Tokyo after the master?

A：對，然後回家種田之前去美國一年學啤酒花。Yes, before moving back to farm, I went to the US for one year to learn about hop farming.

Q：為什麼對那個有興趣？Why are you interested in that?

A：我那時侯想開一個啤酒micro brewery，但是在日本要學micro brewery需要很多錢和license，這個很麻煩，所以有就先想啤酒花農家，自己來種啤酒花。At that time, I wanted to start my own micro beer brewery, but it was expensive to learn it and get the license in Japan, so I wanted to start my own hop farm first and brew my own hop flowers.

Q：日本有本地的啤酒花嗎？Is there local beer in Japan?

A：有是有，在北邊，青森的上面，那邊的啤酒花比較有名，他們產量最大。Yes, it’s located in the North, the hop there is more popular and they have the highest yield.

Q：那你為什麼會對啤酒有興趣呢？Why were you interested in brewing beer?

A：剛開始就是喜歡啤酒，然後在那個美國農業學習的時侯，正好有啤酒花的農家，那時可以自己選擇去怎麼樣的農家，然後我覺得在啤酒花的農家學習種啤酒花有興趣，也對自己做home brewery有興趣。是一個good question…為什麼我有這個念頭…因為美國實習裡面沒有稻米的，所以…自己也不知道該學習什麼。At first, it was because I like drinking beer. When I was doing the exchange study in the US, they offered the option of learning at a hop farm. I was more interested in that at that time, and I was also curious about home brewery. It is a good question… why did I want to do that… it was because they did not have the option of rice farming, so… I did not know what to learn.

Q：所以美國那個是一個internship？The study in the US was like an internship?

A：算是。Kind of.

Q：然後你就可以選去哪裡？So you chose to go to the hop farm?

A：嗯。Yes.

Q：那時侯還有什麼options呢？What were the other options at that time?

A：cow boys、chickens、veggies、milking，算有全部的，還有gardening、nursery… Cow boys, chickens, veggies, milking, they had everything, and gardening, nursery…

Q：你就是看到有啤酒花那個就… Then you chose the hop farm…

A：對，那個是比較有興趣的。Yes, I was more interested in that.

Q：但是你參加那個之前是沒有想過要弄一個micro-brewery的，是去完美國後才有的？Before joining the program, did you think about having your own micro-brewery?

A：沒有詳細的計劃嗎？沒有。Not for a detailed plan, no.

Q：你的master是念農業的，你為什麼會想要念農業的master？You mentioned that you studied in an agricultural master degree, why were you interested in that?

A：我高中畢業的時侯我覺得…那時侯我想當老師，然後我家也是農家嘛，如果我去農村的話我也可以學習農業，也可以拿到teacher license，那是高中的化學老師。After finishing high school, I wanted to become a teacher, and I have a farming family. If I go to a village, I can study agriculture and get a teacher license at the same time, I can be a chemistry teacher in high school.

Q：所以你那個時侯已經想要種田了？You already wanted to become a farmer at that time?

A：那時侯我也沒有什麼…覺得要做什麼的念頭，只是覺得…一邊可以學農業，一邊可以當老師，有這種options，我覺得這樣比較好，也可以去教育部，但是我覺得農學部會有更多的選擇。I did not have any idea of what to do at that time. I just thought that it was good to have the option of being a teacher and learning agriculture at the same time. I can have more options in this way.

Q：你剛剛說你兩年回來就開始種田，因為想revitalize這裡，那你現在在做什麼？你的計劃是什麼？Earlier you mentioned that you came back and started farming because you wanted to revitalize this area, what have you been doing?

A：這也是一個好問題，現在就是幫爸爸種水稻，還有剛剛給你看的啤酒花，水稻的話我想把我家的米賣給中國、香港、台灣，現在在找一個海外的渠道，我也想開那個origiri shop，可能在台灣的夜市，今年的冬天想做這種東西。This is also a good question, I am helping my father with rice farming, and also the hop flowers I just showed you. For rice farming, I wanted to sell my rice to China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, I am thinking of an overseas sales channel. I also wanted to open a rice ball shop, probably in the food markets in Taiwan, these are the things I wanted to do this winter.

Q：喔，你是今年冬天才有這些想法？Oh, you just started to have these ideas this winter?

A：對，今年的冬天才有這個想法，然後下一個冬天有點想做，香港也是一個目的地，但是香港的東西太貴嘛，我覺得台灣比較好，我也蠻喜歡台灣的。啤酒花的話就賣給home brewery，還有那個…新潟也有四、五個micro-brewery，一個是八海山那邊，今年有可能把我種的啤酒花賣給八海山了。Yes, these emerged this winter. Hong Kong is also a destination in my plan, the price level is higher in Hong Kong, so I think Taiwan is better at the moment. For hop flowers, I am selling them to home brewery, there are 4-5 of them in Niigata Prefecture.

Q：這個就是你春天準備要做的，或者是今年要做的？These are the things you are planning to do in the coming Spring?

A：現在在準備。I am preparing already.

Q：你的準備是指什麼？What do you mean by preparing?

A：也沒有準備啦，一般就是準備種田啊，在那邊育苗，然後從美國買啤酒花的根那樣的東西。I am preparing the rice field, and the seedlings, and buying the root of hop flowers from the US.

Q：現在種米跟啤酒花？At the moment you are focusing on planting rice and hop flowers?

A：對，也可以賣那個地下根。現在在日本有不少自己想種啤酒花的，所以我可以賣給這些人，我也可以自己準備啤酒花的幼苗，這個就是我春天的工作之一。Yes, I can also sell the roots of hop, some people are also interested in growing hop, I can sell the roots to these people.

Q：那你會怎樣形容你現在種田的模式呢？How would you describe your farming mode now?

A：很輕鬆的，你的問題是怎樣？Very relaxing. What is your question exactly?

Q：你種田的模式，farming style、features，你會怎樣describe？How would you describe your farming style, features?

A：現在在學習，跟我爸爸學習怎樣做好的米，我爸還有這邊的人對有機農業沒有興趣，或者覺得有機不好種，那我對有機有興趣，今年可能要試試做有機。I am still learning, learning from my dad about rice farming. My dad and other farmers here are not interested in organic farming. I am interested in organic farming, I wanted to try it next year,

Q：喔，所以你之前都沒有用有機的？Oh, you have been doing the conventional way?

A：沒有，啤酒花也沒有，啤酒花我也想試試有機。Yes, even for hops, I also want to try the organic way for hops next year.

Q：如果啤酒花不有機，那是怎樣種？How do you grow hops?

A：啤酒花比較怕潮濕的時侯，跟美國啊澳洲比起來這邊很濕嘛，所以比較容易得病，所以不能放農藥的話會很容易生病，可能會全部都不好。你們今年種的都是有機吧？Hops do not like humid soil, japan is more humid when compared with the US or Australia. It is easier for hops to develop diseases, so if I don’t use chemical pesticides here, it would be hard to get any harvest. Your rice farm is all organic, right?

Q：對，全部都是有機的。Yes, it is all organic.

A：水田的雜草是怎麼拔的？How did you deal with the weeds?

Q：用手。所以你之前的學習都不是用有機的？We just used our hands to weed. So you did not learn organic farming in school?

A：對，我在大學學習的是有機水田的化學性還有生物性，那時侯沒有好好學習，都在學習中文。No, I did learn a bit about the chemistry and biology of organic rice farming from textbook, but I did not study very hard in school at that time, so I am still learning now.

Q：你計劃會做一下有機，但是今年試嘛，還是明年？When will you try organic rice farming? the coming Spring?

A：今年會試。Yes, the coming Spring.

Q：你會怎樣試？你會用什麼方法？How will you do it?

A：我親戚有個叔叔他用了很多年有機水田的做法，可以從他那邊可以借拔雜草的機器。I have an uncle who has tried organic rice farming for many years, I will borrow some hand tools for weeding from him.

Q：你想要用這個機器？You wanted to try the tools?

A：對，不用化學農藥、肥料，會用雞糞。Yes, and no chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Q：你為什麼會對有機有興趣呢？Why are you interested in trying organic farming?

A：我是覺得…農藥…特別對農夫的健康不好呢，撒農藥的是農夫嘛，還有看我爸爸他撤農藥的時侯都沒有帶口罩之類的，有時侯也撤那個…用helicopter的，那些都是撤農藥，那個對環境帶來的影響也不好吧，對環境呀、蟲子啊，所以…我覺得還是有機好。但是農藥呀、化學肥料也很重要，需要餵很多人嘛，這樣的話效益也是很重要。所以，有機不有機、有農藥不有農藥，是有很多…矛盾嗎？不知道那個是好、那個是不好。如果有機的農法也可以達到好的收獲的話，我覺得有機也是被常規好。I think pesticide is not food for farmers, my dad also did not use a face mask when he did it. Sometimes they also used helicopter, it is also not good for the environments and insects. Therefore, I think its good to try the organic way. However, chemical fertilizers are still important. If we want to feed everyone, efficiency and yield are important. There are many debates between the conventional and organic way. It would be good if organic farming can also be efficient.

Q：那你回來種田兩年多，你有什麼遇到什麼x戰嗎？Did you encounter any challenges in the last two years?

A：去年是我的第一年，今年是第二年，x戰的話…是怎樣找…買家嘛，怎樣賣自己收獲的東西。It was my first-year last year, it’s going to be my second year. Challenges…maybe it is about how to look for customers and sell my harvest.

Q：你爸爸他們是怎麼賣的？他們種了是怎麼賣的？How does your father sell his rice?

A：用那邊的…這個村子的人一起做的農業公司，那個合作社也可以賣我的家米。We have an agricultural cooperative in this village, they help us to sell the rice.

Q：那如果你自己種的話，你也想要透過他們賣嗎？還是你想要自己賣？If you will grow your own rice, how are you going to sell it?

A：可能需要自己賣了，去年我種的全部透過他們賣掉的，那個價格也不高，所以自己找個賣家很重要。In the coming year, I want to sell it by myself. Last year, I sold it through the cooperative, the price was not good.

Q：他們是怎樣運作的？那個合作的過程是怎樣的？How does the cooperation work?

A：他們是幫農家種田、收獲，還有乾燥，所以農夫不用自己買大型的機器，給他們錢他們會幫我們種跟收獲。They help farmers to plough the field, harvest and dry the rice, so farmers do not have to buy those big machinery themselves, we just need to pay them to do all the tasks.

Q：喔，就是他們會coordinate整個種的過程…I see, so they will coordinate the whole growing process?

A：對，然後也可以在他們那邊打工，我自己開那個機器種田的話，他們會給我錢，算是part time job。Yes, we can also work for them. If I use the machinery by myself, they will give me salary, it is like a part time job.

Q：是不是…你們自己種他們會給你錢嗎？還是說…你去開那個機器，他們會給你錢？is it like, if you do everything by yourself, they will give you money? Or is it only when you drive the machines yourself?

A：對對對，他們幫我們種田、收獲、乾燥，但是…yes, they will help us with planting, harvesting and drying of the rice.

Q：種田是你指？what do you mean by planting?

A：那個插秧機、播土…播土的話我自己有拖拉機，但是我自己沒有那個插秧的機器，還有收獲的，所以種田和收獲還有乾燥大米的話，怎麼說呢…需要他們的幫忙。Rice transplanting, I do not have the machine, I also do not have the machine for harvesting and drying. That’s why we need their help.

Q：如果我想要在這裡種田，我有一塊地，我就跟他們買苗，然後我自己決定什麼時侯種，我可以打電話給他們，你可以來幫我翻土嗎？還是他們會…連那個日期也幫我安排好？If I want to farm here, when I already have a piece of land, I can buy the seedlings from them, then I can decide when I want to plant them? I can give them a call, they will come and help with ploughing? Or they will arrange the dates and everything for me?

A：那個日期每年都不一樣，是他們安排的，今年是從那邊開始，明年是從這邊開始，這樣比較公平。The dates are different every year, but they are arranged by them. This year it started from the west, next year it will start from the east, it is more fair in this way.

Q：但是你們要給他錢嗎？But you have to pay them for all these?

A：對。這個也是…可能自己買機器，自己做全部的東西比較划算，可是買機器也是要很多錢、很多時間去maintain，所以他們幫我的話比較好，我也可以從多點時間種啤酒花，可是啤酒花也不好賺啊，現在也是…在全部都是trial and error，對…Yes, we can also buy our own machinery, it is more affordable if we do everything by ourselves, but it also costs a lot to purchase the machines and maintain them. If I do rice farming with them, I can have more free time to grow hops. But it is also not profitable to grow hops, everything is like trial and error now.

Q：那你有什麼正面的經驗嗎？what are your positive experiences?

A：嗯…兩個禮拜前我去東京參加稻米的展覽會，那時侯有很多賣稻米的人，我給他們嘗試我家的稻米，他們說都很好吃，也有從海外過來的中國人、台灣人，他們也對我家的米有興趣，我覺得還是這邊的米很好吃，所以有機會去…推廣去國內跟國外，這個是positive experience嗎？Two weeks ago, I joined a rice exhibition in Tokyo, there were many rice sellers there, I let them try the rice from my family, they all said it was delicious. There were also sellers from China and Taiwan, they are also interested in our rice. I still think that the rice here is very delicious, if I have a chance, I would want to promote it to overseas. These are some positive experiences.

Q：那你過去一年或兩年，最開心的是什麼？就是回來做農業最開心的是什麼？What are the happy moments in the last one or two years?

A：農業的話…剛剛看的那個雞嘛，農業還是很好玩的，有意思，比上班好，雖然是蠻辛苦的，但是很好玩。去年剛好有藝術節嘛，遇到你們啊，這邊很辛運的有大地藝術節的這種活動，很多人在這邊創業，開了旅行社的朋友，很多…可以說是魅力嗎？很多創業的人。啊…你的問題是什麼？For farming, like the chickens I just showed you, agriculture is fun, it is more meaningful than doing an office job. It is physically demanding but it is fun. Just like the art festival last year, it was fun to meet you guys. Many people start their own businesses here because of the art festival. There are many attractive activities and innovative people. What is your question again?

Q：最開心…The happy moments.

A：開心的話是通過農業啊、藝術啊…跟很多有意思的人見面、交友。Getting to know art and meaningful people through agriculture.

Q：那我現在給你看那些照片，是一些artworks，然後…這些你都有看過嗎？I will show you some pictures of artworks, have you seem them before?

A：到現在看過了。Yes, all of them.

Q：現在才看到？之前有看到？you mean just now or before that?

A：之前有看過，差不多都有看過。I have seen all of them before.

Q：那這裡…你最impressed的artwork是什麼呢？Which one of these impresses you the most?

A：比較喜歡這個(POTEMKIN)。I like POTEMKIN the most.

Q：為什麼？why?

A：這個比較難說明欸…為什麼…我喜歡它。It’s hard to explain, I just like it…

Q：你看那個artwork的時侯你get到什麼message嗎？What was the message you get when you visited the artwork?

A：有點難過、寂寞、無奈…類似這種感覺嘛。I felt a bit sad, lonely and helpless.

Q：為什麼會有那種感覺？Why?

A：不知道…那裡比較偏僻嘛，沒有人…就有那種感覺，那邊蠻漂亮的，還有我喜歡那個河，那個整個環境感覺蠻好的。I don’t know. It’s a remote place there and people don’t usually go there, but it is quite a beautiful place, I like the river and the whole environment.

Q：但是為什麼會難過？你為什麼會get到一個難過的message？what did you feel sad?

A：不知道為什麼…I don’t know why…

Q：是因為那個wall還有金屬？Is that because of the metal wall?

A：嗯…有可能…maybe.

Q：那你in general你覺得有artwork在米田上面，你覺得有什麼感覺？How do you think about having artworks on rice fields in general?

A：也沒有很大的感覺，反正有意思呀、好玩…對…我也想弄一個藝術品呢，在我的啤酒花田上面。It’s quite meaningful and fun. I also want to put an artwork in my hops field.

Q：你覺得放這些東西在田上有什麼impact嗎？對你自己？Do you think putting an artwork in your field would have any impact to you?

A：可能有呢…It’s possible.

Q：為什麼你會想要放一個藝術品在你的田上？Then why do you want to do it?

A：這樣比較多的人對農業有興趣…我自己蠻喜歡藝術的，所以自己的田有藝術作品感覺蠻好的。Some people are interested in agriculture, while I am also interested in art, so I think it would be fun to have agriculture and art together.

Q：但是你說的好玩是什麼意思？what do you mean by fun?

A：比如說這個田上面有一個藝術品在上面，但是你為什麼會覺得好玩呢？其實今年也有想跟一般人一起種田的念頭，一般人指的是想體驗農業的人，跟他們一起種田啊、拔雜草啊、採啤酒花、收獲稻米，像做這種東西，然後做這種東西的時侯，有藝術作品的話會有比較多的人對我家的農業有興趣嘛，是一個推廣的方法。Nice idea，我要當藝術家了！if there is an artwork in the farm, why do you think it is fun? I have started to have the idea of farming with other people this year, it means something like doing some planting activities with urban people who are interested in agriculture. It can be things like weeding, harvesting hops and rice. When I do these activities, it would be fun to also have an artwork on my farm, it is also a good way to promote the farm of my family. Nice idea, I am going to be an artist!

Q：喔…所以你是很想要把種田跟你家的農業推廣出去，讓更多人知道…I see, you want to promote agriculture and your family farm to other people.

A：對。Yes.

Q：那如果你要放藝術品的話，你覺得你會放什麼東西？像這種嗎？還是一個natural的東西？What kind of artwork would you put in the farm? Something natural?

A：啤酒花的田地正好有一棵大樹，他可以變成藝術作品，而且他很適合做這種東西(human re entering nature)，今年正好需要做啤酒花的…啤酒花需要生長到五米、六米，所以需要很多poles。There is a huge tree in my farm, it can become a piece of art. It is very suitable to become something like ‘human re-entering nature’. I need to make some poles for the hops, they will grow up to 5, 6 meters.

Q：他其實像這樣爬的，然後有花嗎？They will climb like the vines in the artwork, and they will have flowers?

A：對，算是，他的花是綠色的。Yes, and the flowers are green in color.

Q：那你爸媽對於你回來做不同模式的農業，他們有什麼想法嗎？他們怎麼看的？How do your parents think about the kind of farming you are doing now?

A：覺得很好玩吧，也蠻開心的，兒子回來幫忙種田，因為我蠻lazy嘛，有時侯也會生氣。They think it is fun, and they are also happy that I come back to help them. But sometimes I am also quite lazy, so they also get angry.

Q：你剛剛說你想要不參加那個農業公司，這裡的人有什麼想法嗎？You just mentioned that you do not want to join the agricultural cooperative, how do the other people think about it?

A：這裡也有有所有設備的人，也有自己做自己的，我的話還是需要他們的幫忙。Some people here also have all the machinery and equipment, I can also ask for their help.

Q：你是可以用他們的機器，但是不跟他們買的？Is it possible to just use their machines without selling through their network?

A：對，透過他們賣是很低的。Yes, the price they offer is very low.

Q：所以那個合作社可以蠻有彈性的？It seems that the agricultural cooperative is quite flexible then?

A：對。Yes.