

The Amish Way of Life

from an Environmental Perspective

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Abstract

アーミッシュは時折、その300年以上変わらぬ独特の生活様式から、アーミッシュ以外の人々から理想化されることがある。馬が引くバギーで移動する彼らに遭遇したり、馬などの動物とともに農業をしている姿を見たりすると、懐かしさと不思議な気持ちを心に覚えるだろう。

アーミッシュ宗派はプロテスタントの再洗礼派の一派としてヨーロッパに成立した。再洗礼派は幼児洗礼を否定など独特の教義を持ち、カトリックや他のプロテスタントから異端視され、迫害を受けた。アーミッシュ宗派は、同じく再洗礼派に属するメノナイト派から袂を分かち、より厳しい宗教実践を提唱した。彼らは長く続く激しい迫害の後、信仰の自由を求めてアメリカへ渡り、農業基盤の生活を実践し続けた。

現在でもアーミッシュは一般社会から距離を置く独自の宗教共同体を構築し、コミュニティー内で彼らの信仰を実践しながら生活している。彼らは聖書中心主義や平和主義で知られる他、自動車の代わりに馬に引かせたバギーの運転、ドイツ語方言であるペンシルベニア・ダッチ

の使用、そして科学技術を拒むことでも有名である。これらのアーミッシュの規定はオードヌングといわれる規則に示され、口承で伝えられている。彼らの文化の根本にあるものはゲラッセンハイトという考え方だといえる。これはドイツ語で、冷静や泰然という意味を表す他、世俗や利益からの超然や従順といった哲学的な意味も持つ。ゲラッセンハイトの実践を通じ、彼らは自らの在り方を考え、教会への信仰を深めている。

アーミッシュの生活は環境に配慮した生活の良い例として挙げられることがある。“*The Gift of Good Land (Berry, 1982)*”の中で、小規模農家は多様性、質素、適正な世話などの必須条件を満たしており、アーミッシュはその小規模農家の好例であると述べられている。しかしながら、「アーミッシュは持続可能な生活をしている。」と断言するのは少し強引かもしれない。なぜならば彼らの生活には持続可能な生活とは矛盾する点がいくつか存在するからである。例えばそれは自動車、トラクター、電話、そして電気というものに見られる。それでも、彼らはアーミッシュ以外の人々の生活や農業方式と比較した場合、伝統的な農業方式や効率性から、より持続可能な社会に属しているといえるだろう。それではなぜアーミッシュは農業基盤の生活を続けるのか？また環境とアーミッシュはどう関連しているのか？

この論文は上記の研究課題を3章に分けて明らかにし、地球環境と私たち自身の生活の双方の改善策としてアーミッシュの生活から何を学べるか述べていく。

第一章ではなぜアーミッシュが農業に従事するか考察する。第一節から第四節ではアーミッシュの歴史、コミュニティー、ゲラッセンハイト、そして死生観について述べる。第五節では農業と上記の4点との関係について考える。アーミッシュにとって農業は人間の本質的な経済活動であり、優遇されるべき職業である。また、彼らの農業への関連はより神学的な要素を持つと考えられる。私は特に宗教的な農業の関わりを、宗教実践、家族と共同体の統合、そしてゲラッセンハイトの実践の3点について考察していく。

第二章ではアーミッシュの農業を通じて、アーミッシュが持続可能な社会に住んでいると論じることができるか考える。第一節では環境や生態系における持続可能性の定義を述べ、第二節ではアーミッシュと持続可能性の関連を、アーミッシュの生産性と効率性の観点を交えて考察する。そして第三節ではアーミッシュの生活における矛盾を指摘し、なぜそのような考えが生まれるか論じる。

第三章ではアーミッシュが直面している近年の問題について、特に職業と土地の観点から考える。第一説は人口増加について、第二節は

土地の減少と高騰について考察する。そして第三節では上記の問題がアーミッシュの生活にどう影響を与えているか述べる。

最後に、私たちが地球環境や自身の生活をよくするために何ができるのかということについて、アーミッシュの文化と近年日本でも注目されている断捨離の考え方を交えて考察し、結語とする。

Introduction

It was 2008 when I saw the Amish people for the first time in my life nearby my host family's house in Hiram, Ohio. When more frequently I visited the Amish Restaurant to stuff a delicious pie and mashed potatoes with gravy into my mouth, my interest in the culture and tradition of the Amish grew stronger. Now, I am a member of the seminar of environmental philosophy, so I would like to consider the Amish way of life from an environmental perspective. Additionally, the Amish I primarily talk about here imply the Old Order Amish.

The Amish form religious settlements and practice their faith in the community. They are well known for being obedient to the Scripture, being pacifists, driving a buggy instead of automobiles, speaking Pennsylvania Dutch which is a German dialect, and

refusing modern technology. They are sometimes romanticized by the Non-Amish because of their unique way of living as they have maintained a life centered on farming for more than 300 years. The sight of them with neat, simple clothes driving a buggy on a local road, near automobiles driven by the Non-Amish, would be expressed as both nostalgic and mysterious.

Moreover, the Amish way of life is taken up as a good example of ecological life. In *The Gift of Good Land* (Berry, 1982), small farmers are referred to as a prerequisite of diversity, thrift and care and he featured the Amish as a good example of small farmers. However, it is a bit forceful to define them as people who live in a sustainable society because their way of life includes contradictions in some points. For example, automobiles, tractors, telephones and electricity. Even so, it could be said that the Amish live in a more sustainable society than that of the Non-Amish, by examining their farming practices and efficiency. Then, why do the Amish maintain such a life centered on farming, and how are the Amish and the environment related? Moreover, what can we learn from the Amish way of life to make our life and environment on the earth better?

This thesis clarifies those research questions in the following 3 chapters.

In the first chapter, the reason why the Amish continue to be involved in agriculture is considered primarily from the following 4 points: historical background, community, *Gelassenheit*, and view of life and death, from section 1 to section 4. In the section 5, those points are summarized and the meaning of agriculture for the Amish is examined.

The second chapter examines whether or not the Amish live in a sustainable society. The first section explains the definition of sustainability from an ecological and environmental perspective. The second section considers a relationship between the Amish and sustainability. The last section exhibits contradictory facts of the Amish life and the reasons why they occur.

The third chapter explains the recent issues the Amish face. It is written especially from an occupational perspective. The first section is concerned with population growth and the second is the decline of the land and a jump in land prices. The last section considers the influence of these problems upon the Amish life.

The Conclusion suggests what we can learn from the life of the Amish to make our life and environment on the earth better when compared to the current state of society and the environment with referring to the thought of *danshari*.

Regarding the Scriptures, Martin Luther's German translation and the King James Version are primarily used in this thesis. The former one is used in the service of Amish, and the latter is used alongside of the former one.

1. Why Do the Amish Maintain Such Life Centered on Farming?

This Chapter considers the relationship between the Amish and agriculture.

1-1. The History of the Amish

The Amish are a group of the Anabaptist, which is classified as a sect of Protestant, Christianity. In the Catholic Church, which was the mainstream of Christianity in Europe before the Protestant Reformation, the Pope has been powerful after God and his words were strongly influential on the interpretation of the Scripture.

In 1517, a catholic priest named Martin Luther protested against the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church and he proclaimed that the faith of Christianity should be based only upon the Scripture. Although Luther's protestation affected believer's faith¹ strongly, the progress of reform was rather slow.

At that time, the Anabaptist Movement began in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525. They believed the following 3 thoughts: their religious practices must be faithful to the Scripture, believer's baptism must have been encouraged while infant baptism was believed in the Catholic Church, and church and state should be distanced from each other. Since infant baptism was found indispensable not only for salvation in the Roman Catholic Church, but also for a sign of God's covenant of grace in the Reformed tradition, the Anabaptists were regarded as a risk factor and heresy by church and state authorities, so they became a target of persecution. The bigger the movement grew in Europe, the more intense the persecution became. Even though many of the

¹ believer's baptism: "Baptism administered only to those who make a conscious profession of Christian faith and who have reached an age of accountability (adulthood). This practice is found in Baptist and other traditions." (Quote from McKim p.27)

Anabaptists were killed and tortured by the authorities, almost all of them believed in pacifism and were sacrificed for their beliefs.

Here is one of important figures in the Amish, Menno Simmons. He was a leader of the Swiss Brethren Anabaptist Church and built up the Mennonite tradition which is strongly related to the Amish. He was an advocate of non-violence and separation from this world. With harsh persecution continuing more than 100 years, the Mennonites escaped into the secluded places and began farming there. After the Thirty Years War ended in 1648, The Mennonites started to tenant many areas which were ruined because of the war and got a reputation as excellent farmers by landowners.

Landowners allowed them to practice their faith freely in return for taking care of their lands. Despite the persecution over the next several decades, they also were more accepted thanks to their excellent farming skills and frugal way of life.

Now, we shall examine how the Amish Church was established. The main figure is Jacob Ammann, who established the Amish Church in 1693. He was doubtful of some of the practices of the Mennonites because they interacted with non-Mennonites, which is inconsistent with separation from the world in the traditional

Anabaptist doctrine. He attempted to call for several meetings arguing over more conservative Anabaptist doctrine with a leader in the religion, Hans Reist, in 1693, and the intense conflict came to an end when Reist and the leaders who followed him were excommunicated. Afterwards, Reist and his followers continued to be Mennonites and Ammann and his followers became the Amish.

With the continuous harsh persecution not only by governments, but also by the local peasants who envied excellent skill of the Amish in farming which received the attention of landowners, the Amish yearned for stability and freedom to practice their faith. Some of them decided to immigrate into the U.S. to escape religious persecution and seek freedom. For many religious groups, including the Amish, Pennsylvania was a great place to practice their faith because religious freedom was promised there by William Penn who was a Quaker. There is no official record of when the Amish immigrated to the U.S., however, Cosgel assumed that they immigrated to America in two waves, first in the early 1700s, and later between 1815 and 1860 (*Cosgel* p320). Some of the Amish began to settle in the Lancaster area and most of others in Berks County. Although some of the other immigrated groups failed, the

Amish continued to move on and tried to seek places which were suitable for their way of life. This attempt formed more New Amish communities.

After their immigration, they started gaining land to cultivate. Some bought it, and the others gained lands that were already tilled by others. Although their land was relatively cheaper than that which Mennonites bought, the quality of soil was not so good. Afterwards, they moved westward and established communities in places such as Ohio, Indiana, or even in Ontario, Canada.

The Amish got caught up in wars several times in the U.S.. When the Seven Year's War ruined the east of Pennsylvania after 1756, they were attacked by Native Americans who were on the French side. During the American Civil War, which began in 1861, although almost all of them evaded the conscription somehow, they became a target of plunder by soldiers from both south and north sides.

Nowadays, it is estimated that the Amish settle in 30 states in the U.S. and Ontario in Canada, and 64% of the total Amish population live in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Amish settlements in Europe have been extinguished. Their history of

persecution is written in *Märtyrer Spiegel*, “Martyrs Mirror” in English, and read by them.

1-2. Community of the Amish

According to the New Testament (KJV), “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (*2 Corinthians 6:14*).” This passage represents Amish ideals and provides a reason why they hesitate to interact with Non-Amish. For the Amish who stay away from the outside world, community plays an important role in maintaining the Amish way of life. Preserving their religion and maintaining a stable community is primarily related to the Amish. How are their religion and community linked?

As it is mentioned in section 1, the Amish have a long history of persecution. One of their doctrines is separation from the world so that they can practice their faith without being persecuted by others. Also, they do not do missionary work, which means they do not seek members from outside. However, followers, namely humans,

are necessary to maintain the sect. Then how do the Amish retain their community?

The key of this issue is children. The Amish recognize that they need children to stay in the community so that they can retain and pass down their religion to the next generation without recruiting members from others or interacting with outsiders. In that case, do children have chance to choose whether they stay in the community or leave the community? There is surely some way for Amish children to choose their own future. The way is called *Rumspringa*² which is an experiential period of adolescence in which boys and girls are allowed to have personal freedom. As a good example, the percentage of automobile usage could be cited. It is estimated that 30% of Amish children had automobiles, 40% of them got driver's licenses and 70% of them had experience of driving (*Kraybill* p.149).

² *Rumspringa*: It means "running around" in Pennsylvania Dutch. It begins from around age 16 until in their middle to late twenties. Until it ends, they have to decide whether they will be baptized and become members of the church or leave the community. Reger to Amish Studies, "Rumspringa", <http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/Rumspringa.asp>

It seems that it is openly against the Amish rules, the *Ordnung*³, however, most of the Amish members do not care about the debauchery of their children. The reason is because children are not regarded as members of the Amish Church officially since they have not been baptized yet. In other words, they are not under control of the church, so the *Ordnung* is not enforceable. Once they decide to be baptized and become a member of the church after *Rumspringa*, they must swear an oath of obedience to the teachings of the church and the practice of religion. Supposing that they violate their oath, they must confess in front of members. They may somehow get *Shunning*⁴ if they do not follow the Church.

Interestingly, more than 85% of them chose to stay in the community. Why do such a large amount of children make up their

³ The *Ordnung*: It means “order” in German. It shows district regulations which are inherited by practice and oral tradition because they are unwritten. The regulations explain rules such as agricultural practice, clothing, technology and so on. Refer to Amish Studies, <http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/Regulations.asp>

⁴ *Shunning*: The rule that the Amish will be excommunicated if members break the oath of baptism, disobey the regulation of the church or leaders, and refuse to confess their sin. Refer to Amish Studies. <http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/FAQ.asp>.

mind in this way? According to Kraybill, the reasons are that they are accustomed to unique Amish culture and have been raised to become members of the church, they cannot contact their families and friends once they decide to leave their community, and baptism is necessary to get married in the community, as well as their ingrained faithful attitude (*Kraybill* p.153). Furthermore, especially interesting reasons seem to be economic and educational factors. The former relates to it being rather easy to make a living if they inherit the farm from their father or enter into a partnership with him. The latter is relevant because they have neither degrees nor technical training so it is difficult to get occupations outside of the community.

In recent years, the Amish have faced a big problem, namely that there are fewer lands to pass down to their children. This is discussed more in the third chapter.

1-3. *Gelassenheit*

One of the representative concepts of Amish culture is *Gelassenheit* which has spread broadly into the Amish society. The meaning of this German word is calmness or composure and a

synonym of it is *Gottergebenheit* which means meekness. Ikeda refers to it as detachment about the world and interests as a philosophical meaning and it can be linked closely to simplicity, obedience and inconspicuousness in the Amish way of life (*Ikeda* p.149). The early Anabaptists used *Gelassenheit* to follow God's intention completely, abandoning their own thought.

Kraybill claims that the Amish work earnestly to throw themselves into goals and activities of their community while other Americans work earnestly to look after themselves (*Kraybill* p.38). It can be said that the Amish work for the collective community while other Americans work for the individual.

Why do they suppress themselves? It is because they believe that the denial of ego and obedience to the rules of community, namely the *Ordnung*, is proof of following the intention of God. As Ikeda puts it, the goal of life of the Amish is to be a person who is obedient, polite, homey individual and they sacrifice themselves for the goal which is bigger than society (*Ikeda* p155). Jesus Christ was a person who abandoned himself and the Amish believed that they should live as Jesus lived, so Amish children grow up having been taught to abandon selfishness. They are taught that it is important to

abandon their ego by discipline and education at school from their childhood and learn how important it is to work for family and the community more than insisting upon their own desire from experience. Interestingly, a motto at the Amish school, “JOY”, represents what is important for the Amish. It means not only literally “joy”, but also are initials of “Jesus”, “Others” and ”You” which they care for more than themselves (*Ibid.* p.149).

In the Amish society, simplicity is also meaningful. Although simplicity is synonymous with several words according to *Longman Synonym Dictionary*, some words such as plainness, modesty, artlessness and sparseness seem to be especially related to the Amish culture because these words are all representative of their mind-set (*Longman* p.1,108). Then, why do they also seek simplicity in their life?

This question can be solved by *Gelassenheit*. They believe that living simply is also a way to obey the Scripture. Refer to the New Testament (KJV);

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: (*1 Peter 3:3-5*).

According to this passage from the Scriptures, the Amish wear simple clothes and do not wear fancy jewelry because they believe that beauty is found in their mind.

Simplicity also encourages the Amish to avoid conspicuousness because it is possible to threaten the collectivism which is the basic element of the Amish community. Vanity could generate conspicuousness, so things which are linked to vanity are forbidden. As an example, photographs are often taken up because it is possible to emphasize one's personality. Additionally, the Amish regard photographs as carved idols which are denied by Exodus. Furthermore, I think conspicuousness is related to creativity. In Genesis 1, it is mentioned that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (*Genesis 1 1:1*)." To be a creator is to reach

as high level as God and it seems to be impossible to apply it to the Amish who obey God.

1-4. View of Life and Death of the Amish

On October 2nd, 2002, a magnificent incident which tells us about Amish life took place. It was a shooting incident at the Amish school in Lancaster Country, Pennsylvania. 10 girls from 6 to 13 years old were confined and 5 of them were killed by the murderer, who killed himself after the shooting. It was an absolutely tragic incident, however, the Amish family whose daughter was killed not only forgave the murderer, but also consoled his family and raised funds for them. Marian Fisher, who was the oldest of the victims, begged the murderer to shoot her first. Ikeda considered that such a calm mental condition is made by *Gelassenheit* (Ikeda p.5-6). Then what does the Amish view of life and death consist of?

The Amish believe that they complete their faith when they die and are called home to Heaven where the eternal life is promised. Because the Amish, who obey divine providence, accept everything as God's intention, even death except suicide is regarded as delight. Hall expresses that "the Amish believe that the only way to attain

eternal life is to despise the world and abstain from its pleasures and conveniences (*Hall* p.60-61).” In other words, they would believe that loving their family, communities, hard work and inconvenience is the way to attain eternal life.

1-5. The Meaning of Agriculture for the Amish

As it is referred in the beginning of this chapter, this section clarifies the relationship between the Amish and agriculture.

Redekop observes that “the Amish and Mennonites are the only farmers in America who have stayed on the land they settled and have continued to improve it (*Redekop* p.63).” Why do they keep doing so?

They are involved in agriculture because it is an elemental human economic activity, it is related to their historical background and is regarded as a preferred occupation. Besides, it seems that their concern with agriculture is probably more theological since they believe farming is more than an occupation, but a way to protect their religion and the values of their culture. Cosgel examines that “success at farming is a sign of God’s blessing and strength of character (*Cosgel* p321).” What does that mean?

If they are good at farming, it is positively influential in their faith as they could gain both lands and freedom of faith historically when they were recognized as excellent farmers. They believe that their skillful work is thanks to divine protection, so they strive for farming. The passage in the Scriptures, “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; (*Romans 12:11*) (KJV)”, would also encourage them to work harder.

I believe agriculture has the following 3 important meanings regarding the above-mentioned 4 points: (1) the way of practicing their faith, (2) the way of integration among families and communities, and (3) the way to practice *Gelassenheit*.

(1) The Amish shape their economic practices according to their interpretations of the Scriptures and conceive that farming is their preferred occupation when compared to others. Here are two passages of the Scripture of Luther’s German Translation;

Und Gott der HERR nahm den Menschen und setze ihn in den Garten Eden, daß er ihn bebaute und bewahrte. (2. *Kapitel 2.15*)

Da machte Gott der HERR den Menschen aus Erde vom Acker und blies ihm den Odem des Lebens in seine Nase. Und so ward der Mensch ein lebendiges Wesen. (2. Kapitel 2.7)

In the former phrase, “*bebauen*” means *farm* and “*bewahren*” means *conserve, save, husband, retain* and so on. The *ihn* after comma implies *den Garten Eden*, so a human is set in the land of God to farm and conserve there. In the latter, humans are created *aus Erde vom Acker* which means from the soil of the field.

Davis examines the above-mentioned passages of the Scripture translated into English while he compares their meanings with those in Hebrew.

And YHWH God took the human and set him in the garden of Eden (le’obedah ulesomerah) (Gen. 2:15) (*Davis p.29*).

And YHWH God formed the land human being (’adam), dust from the fertile soil (’adama) (*Genesis 2:7*).

The former verb of ”-*b-d*“ and ”-*s-m*“ in Hebrew can be translated into *work*, *worship* and *serve*, and *keep* and *observe* in English. With this interpretation he claimed that the human is responsible for keeping the garden and observing it simultaneously. By examining the latter passage, he explains the principle of “the land comes first”. This phrase suggests the order of relationship between human and land in the sense that humans do not dominate the land. Humans are observers of land and are supposed to steward the land, which is created by God. The interpretation that humans have an obligation to take care of the land as observers is possible to apply to the Amish involvement in agriculture (*Davis* pp.29-31).

Furthermore, it is clear that agriculture is related to the Amish view of life and death. They continue stewardship of the land until a day of reckoning, because it is a form of good behavior which rewards eternal life.

(2) Agriculture plays an important role in the integration of family and community. Viewed as a family unit, the Amish family generally consists of a husband, wife and children. In a typical Amish family, the husband works on farming, his wife does

housework and their children help with both farming and housework. Such a relationship in a family encourages the children to learn how to live as Amish in the future and to acquire know-how in farming. Viewed as a community unit, agriculture encourages the Amish people in the community to watch each other to maintain their religious moral values and unique lifestyle.

(3) *Gelassenheit* is an ideal and purpose of the Amish and is related to agriculture. There are 3 main concerns regarding *Gleassenheit*.

Firstly, agriculture helps the Amish develop their mind-set and attitude based on *Gelassenheit*. They use limited farm implements and animals and do not use tractors or machinery in the field. Horses and mules are a symbol of Amish religion and using them shows their values of tradition, time, restriction, nature and sacrifice. Using such animals also encourages an emphasis on the difference in identity of the Amish from other general American societies, which implies that they do not pursue the progress of the world.

Secondly, sacrifice and inconvenience help to restrain their ego. For example, the Amish travel primarily by a buggy pulled by horses, which restricts how far they can travel in one day and their range of activities. They need to use a lot of time and effort to take care of animals and operate farm implements. Especially regarding animals, they have to feed, clean the horse's barn, take care of animals when they get sick or injured, and help injured or sick people too. It all involves sacrifice and inconvenience, so the Amish people must be calm and patient, otherwise they cannot rely on horses and mules.

Finally, they feel the intention and grand power of God directly in agriculture. They see a newborn calf, new-cultivated lands and fruitful grain through agriculture and strengthen their faith in God. Anything that humans are charged to conserve, for example animals and farm implements, have elements of vulnerability, which humans including the Amish could neglect or violate. Even so reasons that the Amish do not neglect them are considerable, not only due to vocation to take care of anything God creates, but also due to enjoyment and a sense of achievement when they get beyond their struggle in agriculture.

2. Do the Amish Live in A Sustainable Society?

As it is examined in the first chapter, agriculture is strongly related to the Amish culture and way of living. This chapter considers the Amish farming practices and argues whether or not they live in a sustainable society.

2-1. The Definition of Sustainability

“The notion of sustainability is about our obligation to the future,” said Prize-winning economist Robert Solow (*Redekop* p.11). It seems that there are various definitions regarding sustainability since this word covers various values such as economic, ecological and social. In this section the ecological and environmental meaning is particularly taken up. According to Ikeda, a sustainable agriculture is “capable of maintaining its productivity and usefulness to society over the long run. ...it must be environmentally-sound, resource-concerning, economically viable and socially supportive, commercially competitive, and environmentally sound (*Ikeda* p.30).”

On the other hand, Blake et al. explain that a sustainable farm is “one in which the ecosystem on the farm can reach a sort of

permanence, accomplished when nutrient inputs and eventual outputs are balanced and do not exhaust the natural resources of the farm (*Blake et al.* p.144).” This farm is considered to be ecological since it is controlled naturally. The keywords on the farm are the maintenance and stabilization of the dynamic equilibrium. They generate diverse crops and farm animals, avoid potential pollution, replace petroleum products with renewable resources, and give alternative means of weed and pest control such as crop rotation, integrated pest management, cultivation, or biological pest control a chance to take the place of herbicides and insecticides. Then which farming practice precisely implies a sustainable agriculture and farm?

Rigby and Caceres suggest that sustainability is related to organic farming which is the basic standard for production and processing. Although it is unclear whether sustainability and organic farming are synonymous, it is common to include organic farming in sustainability. As well as organic farming, self-sufficiency is suggested as an important form of sustainability because it depends on the outside world less than other farming practice. Then how are the Amish related to sustainability and those farming practices?

2-2. The Relation Between the Amish and Sustainability

The base of Amish agriculture is described as simplicity of life, frugality, neighborliness, family stability, and financial common sense. This attitude would derive from the way of thinking that the earth was regarded not as an enemy but as a friend by early Anabaptists. According to Blake et al., the Amish farming would be ecological agriculture, which is a combination of organic farming and farming practices which are influenced environmentally, socially and economically. Its final goal is to achieve a diverse, healthy, and productive ecosystem which has biological processes and cyclical domination (*Blake et al.* p.143-144). The permanency of a farm would be crucial for the Amish since they need land not only for the way of making a livelihood, but also to give their faith and stewardship to future generations. Then, how ecological are the Amish practices?

Amish farms are smaller than non-Amish ones because the use of machinery is limited and human and animal labor such as horse and mules is preferred. The proportion of farmland used for pasture and feed grains of the Amish farmer accounts for 55% to 57%, which

is smaller than that of non-Amish farmers which rate is 67% (*ibid.* p.146). Such a farm is praised because of its diversity, kindness to land, success, and profitability which are brought by proper management with using traditional farming methods and horsepower. It seems that using horses fits well to relatively small farms, because not only are horses cheaper than tractors and cause less damage to soft ground, but their dung also directly contributes nutrients to the ground. It also avoids the cost of fuel. It would be clear that using horses encourages the maintenance of a sustainable farm.

Here are some questions regarding whether or not the Amish farm is more efficient and productive than a non-Amish one. Regarding productivity, although some, such as Berry, would consider that the small Amish farms are extraordinary healthy and much more productive than consuming because they use small quantities of chemicals and commercial fertilizers, simple machines, almost no petroleum and grow their own sustenance, it is hard to determine that the Amish are indeed productive (*Berry* p.xix and p.9).

On the other hand, it seems that the Amish farm is more efficient than a non-Amish one. The followings help explain efficiency of the Amish farm by exhibiting the examples of soil, energy and human and animal labor, referring to Blake et al. and James.

(1) Soil: Blake et al. compare cropland on the Amish farm with a non-Amish farm that was applied to no-till farming methods referring to Jackson (1988). It resulted that cropland on the Amish farm has higher rates of water infiltration, higher activity of alkaline-phosphates, less compaction, and more organic points than non-Amish farm (*Blake at al.* p.145).

(2) Energy: Energy consumption was examined with the comparison of 47 Amish farms with data from ca. 1,180 non-Amish farms throughout Pennsylvania referring to the 1975 of Pennsylvania Dairy Farm Business Analysis. This examination showed that Amish were 30% to 40% more efficient than the non-Amish according to calculation of an efficiency level (energy ratio) dividing energy inputs into output. Besides, Amish farms produce 1 kg of milk by using half as much as the amount of total energy of Non-Amish farms (*ibid* p.145-146).

(3) Human and animal labor: It was examined that the quantified number of Amish and non-Amish were compared as producing the same amount of milk. Although it resulted that the Amish demanded 21% to 67% additional energy in human labor, greater fossil fuel efficiency was shown in human and animal labor on Amish farms (*ibid* p.145-146). Comparison of operator labor and acre between Amish farms and non-Amish farms resulted that the Amish farm was systematically higher than non-Amish ones. Regarding required hours of labor and acre for small grains, alfalfa hay, and corn were approximately 12, 25 and 17 on Amish farms toward approximately 3.5, 6.5 and 3.6 on Non-Amish ones. It shows that Amish farms require much more operator labor and acres than Non-Amish ones, however, a point is that Amish farms are smaller than others. While a typical Amish farm rotates 15 acres of small grains, 20 acres of alfalfa hay, and 15 acres of corns in only 920 hours per year presumptively, a Non-Amish farm works for just the 1000 acres of corn in 3,600 hours. Interestingly, Amish farms require the labor from the spring until fall, while Non-Amish farms require one only the spring and fall. In other words, Amish are capable of taking care of farms within their family, but Non-Amish

farms need to hire labor in specific seasons and which lead them to spend extra money (*James, 2007*).

It can be said that soil is better than Non-Amish farms due to horsepower, the amount of energy is smaller than Non-Amish farm, and human and animal labor are efficiently functioning on the Amish farm. So it concludes that the Amish farms are more efficient than Non-Amish farms.

Holster suggests that "The Amish approach to land contrasts sharply with the so-called Western view, which sees humanity as exploiters of nature (*Hostetler p.6*)." What is that supposed to mean?

I observe that the western view would concern industrial farm in which derelict buildings and machinery and overworked fields with low crop yields exist. Such a farm is too simple in that it excludes biology and human culture and it generate wastes which will never return to nature. Although it is apparently capable of producing food for lots of people, the land is spoiled due to the use of chemicals which are not only expensive, but also undeniable. Besides, it is dependent on economics and industry which is risky when economics and industry collapse. In addition, it is interesting

to consider the existence of technological optimists who believe that technology can solve any technological problems so attempt to fix them by using technological methods. However, it is suspicious because human life should be supported not by science and technology but by nature.

On the contrary, Amish farms have the ability to recover overworked and unproductive fields and maintain them healthily. It is proved by fact that the Amish have maintained land for more than 300 years by using methods which are close to nature.

2-3. The Contradictory Facts

Up to this section, it seems that the Amish live a sustainable life. However, there are some contradictory facts regarding the use of automobiles, telephones, electricity, tractors, polyester and chemicals. The Amish are forbidden to possess automobiles, but allowed to take one driven by the Non-Amish. They are forbidden to have telephones in the house, but allowed in the telephone booth in a community. They are forbidden to use electricity, but allowed to use batteries. They are forbidden to use tractors in fields, but allowed at barns. Moreover, they are allowed to use blended fiber

with cotton and polyester which is derived from petroleum for their clothes recently. Furthermore, the following examination shows fact that Amish farms use chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides as non-Amish farms. Blake et al. make reference to Losgdon's analysis of the costs of producing corn on a single Amish farm with ones on a typical non-Amish farm. As compared to a non-Amish farm the costs of the Amish farm were much lower, though a rate of chemical fertilizers is 21% and pesticides and herbicides are 6% of the total Amish expenses (*Blake et al.* p.144-145).

Then why do those facts occur?? Cosgel explains that "They adopted distinct patterns in investment to ensure the survival of their religious culture, which in turn affected their relative performance (*Cosgel* p.319)." In other words, it can be observed that things adopted are less possible to threaten their religion and Amish bonds with families and communities. An automobile enables people to make a long distance from their community while a buggy enables people to move in a limited area. Possession of automobiles is a symbol of wealth and it might bring people superiority or conspicuousness which can be risky for the Amish culture. Telephones could be the same as automobiles that it would gradually

make people distant from each other because it enables people to talk without meeting up. If some emergency happens or if they have to contact the Non-Amish people, they are allowed to use telephones which are in the telephone booth in the community. The use of tractors in fields might not only bring them to have lust for possession of automobiles, but also enable them to finish their agricultural work faster than using horsepower. Installing electricity in an Amish house is regarded as connecting with American society.

Differing from the above-mentioned facts, the reasons of permission of use of synthetic fiber with cotton and polyester and chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides are difficult to clarify. Regarding synthetic fiber blended polyester, it is appealing to Amish women for their clothing and quilts because it is easy to wash without electricity. It is inconsistent with their mind-set that they prefer to face inconvenience, but this convenience may not destroy the bonds of family and community. Regarding the use of such chemicals, although it is partly inconsistent with stewardship of land and sustainable agriculture, it might be adopted only as a starter of some crops which would lead to less impact on the land.

Here is a question whether or not the Amish themselves choose to live in a sustainable society. They seem that they do not involve in ecological issues voluntarily but automatically by following their faith and the Scripture. Although their own desire for a better environment seems not to reflect on their farming practice, it would conclude that the Amish live in a rather more sustainable society than Non-Amish.

3. The Recent Issues They Face

Although it is written that lots of Amish are still engaged in agriculture, some of them are engaged in other occupations. It is said that about a third of adults of the Amish are engaged in occupations separate from agriculture. Many of them make a living by various types of both Amish-owned and Non-Amish-owned works such as small shops, carpentry, construction, retail stores, restaurants and so on normally nearby their home (*Ikeda* p.219).

This Chapter examines their occupations and the problems they have faced in recent years.

3-1. Population Growth

The first problem is regarding population. The Amish have a large population. It is estimated that the Amish population of North America is 290,100 as of May 1, 2014 and that has increased by approximately 8,400 since 2013. The growth rate is 3%, which is much higher than 0.7% of annual population growth in 2014 in the U.S.⁵ 469 settlements existed in 2013 and 480 settlements in 2014, so 11 new settlements (geographical communities) were established during the past year.⁶

Then why is the Amish population growing so rapidly? It is possible to say that they literally interpret the passage in the Scripture, “And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. (*Genesis 9:7*) (KJV).” so they encourage early marriages and refuse to use birth control to have large families. It is estimated that Amish family have 6 to 8 or 9 children on average.⁷

⁵ Refer to The World Bank, “Population growth (annual %)”.
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>

⁶ Refer to Amish Studies, “Amish Population Profile 2014”.
http://www2.etoyn.edu/amishstudies/Population_Profile_2014.asp

⁷ Refer to Amish America. <http://amishamerica.com/how-many-children-do-amish-have/>

Redekop observes that “Population growth and overcrowding not only exacerbate the negative effects of congestion and deny the continued existence of a natural habitat for wildlife, but also negate even such simple pleasures as solitude and clean, fresh air (*Redekop* p.46).” He also suggests that the most important immediate goal to save the earth is to achieve a stabilized population (*ibid.* p.46).” Then, is that possible that the Amish can select the way to reduce population for the purpose of protecting the environment on the earth? I would say it is almost impossible because for them it is more important to practice faith than voluntarily solving problems we face. Although it is suggested that some more progressive Amish use birth control, it is surely the ultimate choice for them whether to let their population grow or to reduce their birth rate.⁸

3-2. The Decline of Lands and Jump Land Rise in Prices

⁸ Refer to Lancaster Online, “New research shows diversity amongst US Amish groups”. http://m.lancasteronline.com/news/new-research-shows-diversity-among-us-amish-groups/article_e25642fb-0c5a-56b1-b1a8-1dfbf6821645.html?mode=jqm

The second problem is regarding lands and their prices. It seems that lands for agriculture decrease and land prices have jumped.⁹ How are they caused?

One of the reasons of the decline of lands for agriculture is concerned with the Amish themselves. Due to their large population, Amish farmers are having trouble with finding land to give to their children. Additionally, the Amish Country also plays a large role. More public attention Amish Country receives, more people visit there on the purpose of tourism and restaurants and shops are built on land which is supposed to be assigned for farming. Ironically, the greater interest we take in them, more negative influence they suffer.

Regarding the jump land rise in prices, according to estimates in a March report by Zelman & Associates, land values across the U.S. jumped on the average 13% in 2012. The price of raw land has also gone up since its demand has grown in recent years. It is conceivable that wages and rents in cities have hiked with the increase of the demand of high-skill workers for living in

⁹ Refer to The Wall Street Journal, "U.S. Land Gets More Expensive".
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323820304578412632432865220>

metropolitan area. High-skill workers tend to value surroundings where amenities are satisfying despite of high housing costs while non-college-educated workers value affordability. More people desire to live in cities and suburbs, not only larger area is assign for housing, but also are higher land prices.¹⁰

3-3 Influence on the Amish Life

These problems in previous 2 sections force the Amish to move when they cannot afford to have farm land and to seek an occupation that is not agriculture. How does it influence the Amish life?

It is obvious that it weakens the religious tradition. The existence of fewer lands for farming and passing down to children cause the Amish to give up farming gradually. When they seek for occupations outside and get engaged in these, it is possible to interact with Non-Amish which is against their doctrine. Besides, working outside of a community might bring the collapse of bonds of family and community. Agriculture strengthens their bonds with

¹⁰ Refer to Stanford Graduate's School of Business. "Rebecca Diamond: What is Happening to America's Cities?" (<http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/rebecca-diamond-what-happening-americas-cities>)

sharing skill, pleasure and hardship through it, and gives chance to practice *Gelassenheit*.

In recent years, the Amish are gradually changing both internally and externally. There are some of the Amish communities that have adopted modern culture including in the agricultural sense. For example, some in Iowa and Ohio used steel-wheeled tractors and some in Lancaster Country, Pennsylvania, had adopted certain modern machineries such as mechanical milers, veterinary services and artificial cattle insemination by selection while they use horses and mules in the field.

Conclusion

According to the chapter 1 and 2, it can be concluded that they live in more environmentally-friendly society than non-Amish. On the other hand, as time goes by, it is getting harder for the Amish to continue the life centered on farming as the chapter 3 considers.

Even so, their way of life has possibility to be a teacher who tells us what is good and what is wise. It is too fantastic to suggest that our life should return to agriculture using horsepower or that we should

spend our life without electricity. Then what can we do in order to improve environmental problems from standard of living?

I would claim that the key is denial of greed and simple way of living. An example is shown: one day, in a lecture regarding realism, our lecturer showed us a photo of his two of students whose dressings were almost same as if they had prearranged. Although people think that they coordinate their clothes as they want to show their individuality freely, their choice would be restricted and controlled by medium without recognition. Even if this hypothesis were true, people would continue to pursue a trend in such situation. I am doubtful that trying to show individuality within a narrowed trend is really showing it? I would say it is less that than struggling with finding themselves in a superficial trend. Besides, buying cheap things frequently and leaving it behind the following year are waste of not only resource, but also money and time.

On the contrary, the Amish restrict their ego and attempt to find beauty in their mind as it is mentioned. I find the attitude of them that do not pursue the trends of the world more dignified.

I suggest that we should live a thrift life by controlling greed once and try not to spend much money and time. Then, it will make

us possible to see what is really important and on what they spend money. If we do so, not only our way of thinking and our life would be more abundant, but we would also be kind to others with having inner peace of mind. Furthermore, because it makes us possible to buy only what we really want to buy, it links to the reduction of the waste of resources.

In recent years, a Japanese word *danshari*¹¹ has been receiving public attention. The mind-set of the Amish shares some underlying ideas with *danshari*. Yamashita expresses that the thought of “one out, one in.” is more important than one of “one in, one out.” for a good life (*Yamashita* p.14). “One out” here implies not simply throwing something away. People would regret when they throw away something they have not used or do not know why they bought it because they feel it is obviously a waste of money and resources. Then, they would consider more carefully what to buy next time they go shopping. If they buy only something they want, the amount of trash would be less inevitably. *Danshari* also tells people their values do not change even if they would not have much

¹¹ *danshari*: It is the way of thinking that giving up something you do not need and choosing something you really important link to spend a better life.

stuff. *Danshari* suggests that the value is in their mind as the Amish believe.

When someone would ask me my religious view, I would answer “I am an onlooker.” I am Buddhist, but I like to study religion and faith objectively because I find each of them equal and each faith has lessons which make my life more abundant. Between one religion and another, they might find them heresy and brainwashed each other, although I find every religion is based on brainwashing, more or less. I am sure that the Amish are not exceptions, either. Even so, I respect their religion and culture. The Amish way of life would give us a chance to reconsider what is important for us from standard of living, and such attitude would lead you and the earth to the better future both humanly and environmentally.

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