

Words of Wisdom

Introducing the words of knowledge and insight spoken by our founder, Dyuh Fonach.

001

The Soil Knows Before You Do

There was an agronomist from [] who arrived with eleven instruments to test the nitrogen content of our fields. He took samples for six weeks. When he was finished he told me exactly what I had told him on the first day: plant here, not there. I asked him how he intended to bill me. He said: for the confirmation.

002

Build Fast or Build Nothing

A [] engineer spent two years drafting an irrigation plan for the eastern concession. He presented them to me on a Tuesday. By Thursday the river had moved nine feet south.

004

The Climate Does Not Determine Breakfast

Quinine grows in the country that produces the fever it cures. And in the morning, the civilized man eats berries from two climates.

005

The Wind

I once met a speculator in [] who told me he does not buy the banana. I said: you are describing the wind. He said: I am selling the wind. We understood each other perfectly.

006

The Foreman's Hands

I had a foreman in [] who could carry a stem of green bananas across the wharf without bruising a single finger. I asked him his secret. He said: I fired my three most aggressive sales managers this afternoon.

007

The Parrot of []

There was a parrot in the telegraph office at [] that learned to repeat the morning price of bananas. Traders began consulting the parrot. In the nighttime, I taught the parrot new numbers.

008

Eight Men in a Dinghy

I did not take the port at [] with a company. I took it with eight men in a dinghy. Three of those men could not read. One owed me money.

009

Subsidiaries, Front Companies

I have held operations in six republics under nine names. In [] I am stuck in a deposition concerning a business that does not exist. In [] I am missing inventory. In [], a man had twenty-three passports and was being sued by the rain.

011

The Method

A shipping agent asked me for my method. I told him I did not have one. He laughed and took out a notebook. I wake up. I walk to the dock. Something is wrong.

012

The Vine and the Bureau

There is a vine on the isthmus that grows back faster than you can cut it. I have met this vine in every customs office. It wears a uniform and stamps papers.

013

Selling Is the Thing

The product is incidental. I once saw a man in [] sell a crate of unsalted air to a ship's captain.

017

Diamonds in the Rough

The banks in [] told me my field workers were not creditworthy. A man who has been refused by a bank will work twice as hard for a man who did not refuse him.

018

Twin Risks at Dawn

Each morning I walk the dock and carry the fear of losing money and the fear of missing the chance to make it. Most men carry only one. I am holding a knife in each hand.

022

On Secrecy

I never sent letters or took notes, preferring to speak in person or by phone. The word spoken dissolves into air, returns to God. A man I admired in [] once told me he had never been photographed. I said: how is that possible. He said: I move before the shutter closes. This is the only business advice I have ever received.

024

The Tallest Grass

After a heavy rain you can hear the trees growing. I have stood in the fields at night and listened. It is the sound of money. I do not like furniture much.
