

# Shan Gao, Huangdi Yuan

Some folks believe that we can't possibly have liberty unless we somehow push a button and make all governments vanish. But why limit our imagination to those stifled and over-governed experiences which most of us in "developed" countries have inured ourselves?

Of the seven billion people on this earth, perhaps five billion live in places which cannot sustain such a greedy, omnipresent, and useless governing class. Provided that these five billion "keep their heads down" and escape notice, they are often free to behave as if there were effectively no government.

Taken as a whole, this is sometimes referred to as *Système D*, the informal economy, where people get things done without too much regard for police, bureaucrats, or paperwork.

*Système D* works alongside the "official" economy, providing things which the "official" sector cannot. It can be much larger than we few who "work within the system" imagine. If you've ever paid somebody in cash, you might have been part of *Système D*, of "Ancapistan", whether you realized it or not.

A spectacular subset is hinted at by James Tooley's research into education among the poorest people in the world, which he detailed in several books, the most readable of which being titled **The Beautiful Tree**. In some provinces, 80% of students attend parent-funded schools, many of which are unregistered, invisible to the "authorities," and part of *Système D*.

If you wonder how things might get done in an AnCap society, it might be well to ask how things are done when *the Mountains are High, the Emperor is far away* (Shan Gao, Huangdi Yuan), as the Chinese proverb has it.