

## HEPA Eco-Farming School vs Corona

Question: Why, when people all over the world feel so scared and worried about the Corona virus (COVID-19), for example, wearing face masks whenever going out, do HEPA and its people keep living so confidently and peacefully in harmony with nature.

It is because HEPA has been nurturing and preserving a healthy rainforest ecosystem in the watershed area, where wild flora and fauna develop normally in accordance with the law of nature. Every day I swim and drink water from the clean river which makes me feel completely safe.

In order to have such a safe environment, HEPA and its people have well understood the fundamental principles and features of the rainforest ecosystem which is characterized by diversity, uniqueness, inter-dependence and adaptability in accordance with its self-balanced organic law.

Over decades, human beings have overturned this inevitable law through their cruel interventions with so much illusion, and of course, they must suffer the consequences of their actions. Corona virus and its consequences have put many countries in the world in the worse-ever situation, critically affecting every aspects of the people's life. This is the cost that human beings have to pay for what they have caused over the last seven decades since the Green Revolution in 1960, when they started their journey to control and dominate nature by transforming nature's organic law and imposing inorganic process on the lives of all living things.

To achieve their endless and increasing ambition, humans have tried at any cost to:

- 1) Create the Green Revolution by promoting industrial agriculture associated with the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to substitute for organic ecosystem-related agriculture;
- 2) Increase GDP by exploiting the soil's productivity and transforming diversified rainforests to high-yield mono-crop plantations;
- 3) Change organic consumption and eating behaviors and habits to inorganic and industrial, causing gene mutation in animals, micro-organisms and other living things in nature.

HEPA is very biologically sensitive, because it is located in the upper catchment of the Ngan Pho River which supplies water to the hundreds of thousands of people living downstream on the lowlands for their daily life and production, while its forests supply oxygen. From 1975 to 2000, the HEPA area was overexploited, making its riverbed dry, and depriving its animals and micro-organisms of shelter.

Being aware of the risks of such destruction, HEPA has taken responsibility to preserve and enrich the biodiversity of the river upper catchment area of over 500 ha under the 50 year-land use rights certificate granted by the Ha Tinh Provincial People's Committee on 5 June 2002.

HEPA has created a free zone for village elders and their offspring, who came from the degraded forest areas to be there for sharing and practicing their philosophy of nurturing forests and enriching endangered native forest tree species and medicinal herbs in the HEPA forest. As a result, after 18 years, the number of rare and precious forest trees, wild animals, plants and micro-organisms in HEPA have been successfully enriched and the forest has been greatly developed, the volume of its underground water source has been increased, and the health of its soil has been recovered.

The emergence of the Corona virus is one of the inevitable consequences resulting from the inorganic and chemical transformation of food sources in the urban areas, which has overturned the natural development of animals, caused global warming and a lack of oxygen, leading to animal gene mutation.

Living in HEPA and in other healthy rainforest ecosystems, we will never feel scared or nervous about the Corona virus, as all beings here live relatedly in balance and harmony. As part of these living things, people in HEPA also enjoy the benefits of this ecosystem. That is the reason why I always feel very confident and peaceful with great respect and gratitude to the Mother Nature while living in HEPA.

For all of the above we want to thank indigenous people from all over the world in the Mekong, the Amazon, the Himalayas, Africa and the Pacific for nurturing nature. We have HEPA because we have adopted the indigenous people's philosophy of nurturing, not controlling, nature. Together with indigenous elders and young, we now take care of over 100,000 ha in Laos and Vietnam to ensure that nature in these areas is well preserved. While people all over the world are scared at this moment, we have the energy, given to us by the wisdom and values of indigenous people, to join with them in nurturing those areas of rainforest governed by and in the hearts and wisdom of indigenous people, so that along with all living things the people there can feel the same wellbeing as we enjoy in HEPA.