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Cambodian Organic Agriculture Association

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Wonder Organic Land

Finally, our splendid moment came. But the thunder and storm welcomed us first. The sun didn't rise, the earth still slept in the dim. Nevertheless, the abominable weather could seldom be a reason to bother us. With all the expectations and wonders, we went on the journey to Svay Rieng.

Looked out of the window, we were stunned by the orderly-arranged green field. As we seen in Phnom Penh, automobiles and dust were everywhere; bustling and anxious atmosphere only belonged to this city part—fresh air and low-paced lifestyle seemed a kind of luxury for the people who lived there. What's distinctive was that, in Svay Rieng, the sweet and oddly pleasant air was something easy to catch. The crops there emanated an unparalleled aroma that attracted us to explore deeper about them.



Before arrived at the organic farm, we used to think that there was not difference between traditional field and organic farm. The fact, however, astonished us tremendously. The soil's color was deeper and the smell of it consisted of only pure dust, without any pungent chemical substances. Because of the rain, the soil looked even more unique than usual. The mud was so appealing that we couldn't help us touching it. The texture was softer and warmer than ordinary soil, seemed as if a cradle for the fragile burgeon to sprout healthily. We were confused about the reason for this previously unseen condition. Farmer Kong Saron, who took friendly smile since we arrived there, unraveled the mysterious story behind it. "We strictly follow the organic standard that the chemical fertilizers, pesticides and growth regulators are not approved. If we have to use certain organic fertilizers, we need to get the fertilizers with accreditation according to the properly validated standard." The relevant training courses enabled the innocent farmers to form the knowledge system that was useful during their farming process. If without this kind of standard, the farmers would use chemical fertilizers in order to yield more quickly result. Only if we led them know the significance of following the standard could they finally acquire a strong sense of duty. We suddenly enlightened by the word this rustic farmer said. Keeping the soil healthy and pure was essential to the so-called organic planting. This process only belonged to a small section of organic standard.



After amazed by the soil condition, we then went to another field that was filled with immature organic crops. At this time, another question raised in our mind: why these crops looked so small and delicate? The Chinese crops, which treated in conventional farming and used chemical compounds, looked much stronger and were in more brightly-colored. Before we expressed out our confusion, the farmer beside us pointed out something we would never thought of: "The seeds have to be sent in the organic soil that has not been used for a period of at least 18 months in

a crop area of more than one year and 12 months in a crop that is less than one year old.” After we made an exclamation of astonishment, he continued: “We worship the principles of nature; every crop should grow in a regular period, absorbing sufficient sunlight and pure water.” The statement he illustrated subverted our original recognition of organic standard. The organic standard was not only about the rigorous regulation but also about the admiration of conforming the nature.



Walked along the continuously emerged field, we were ushered by the surrounding local peasants into the office building. Several farmers were at first chatting with each other and talking about the previous life condition and some sort of chores. But when the COrAA manager Tum convened all the farmers to hold a meeting about ICS (internal control system), they immediately sat straightly with close attentions. Tum said: “ICS is an agriculture practice that should be followed, it can assist the members to get the certification. In order to guarantee your benefit and protect the rights, the ICS is established.” After hearing what Tum said, we gained a deeper understanding about the function of ICS and the purpose of funding this institution. Merely obeyed the organic standard to ensure the quality

and quantity of organic crops was not enough, their effort needed to lay important emphasis on. The ICS gave the Cambodian peasants opportunities to expand their own business and make more benefits as organic farmer.



Prior to we left, we casted our last concern to the sincere Cambodian farmers that why did they choose to do the organic farming.

They looked at us, smiled earnestly, and said in proud: "We do it not only for the profitable benefits we can obtain from it, but also for making some contributions to Cambodian natural environment. We love our hometown."

These two training systems lay solid foundation for both the quality of organic crops and the permanent cooperation between farmers, consumers, and regulators. Even when we went back to our hotel couldn't we forget what we've learned from this fantastic journey.

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