

theravada buddhism - the basis of the khmer people's awareness of environmental protection in the south

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Theravada Buddhism - The Basis Of The Khmer People's Awareness Of Environmental Protection In The South

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Abstract:

Existing beyond human consciousness, the natural environment is gradually depleted due to human destruction and that destruction is caused by greed, envy, jealousy, comparison, etc. of humans that out. Therefore, at present, the issue of environmental protection has become extremely urgent, requiring every human being to raise their awareness of protecting the environment and their living environment. As the earliest ethnic group to set foot in the Southwest region, the Khmer on the basis of Theravada Buddhist philosophy have been and have formed a sense of environmental protection for many generations, which has become a traditional way of life from generation to generation.

Keywords: Environmental awareness of Khmer people, Theravada Buddhism and the environment, Khmer people with environmental issues

INTRODUCTION

Existing beyond human consciousness, the environment is all that belongs to nature, exists around people, is the habitat of all living things on earth. Humans are intelligent creatures, know how to moderate, exploit the natural environment, from being dependent to actively mastering nature, mastering the environment to serve their living needs (Dao & Van, 2020). This is the result of movement, labor, and production throughout human history (Luong & Van, 2021).

However, in the natural world, there are groups of renewable resources and groups of non-renewable resources. Therefore, when the rate of human exploitation exceeds the recovery rate of the natural environment, resources will be increasingly depleted, the environment will be polluted, and the environment will be unsafe, etc. and therefore, will cause serious and unpredictable consequences, directly threatening people's lives in particular and the living environment of species on earth in general.

The reality has proved that the current state of environmental pollution is becoming more and more complicated and unpredictable, threatening the conditions of survival and development of species on earth and environmental problems. It is also encapsulated within the territory, country, and nation that is the story of humanity (Dao & Van, 2020). Every action of an individual, organization, country, or nation is harmful to the objective existence of the environment. Therefore, the issue of environmental protection and environmental protection becomes more urgent than ever. The United Nations has also established organizations and developed many programs to contribute to reducing harm to the

environment such as the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program have established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (IPCC) in 1988. UNEP was also one of the implementing agencies for the Global Environmental Facility and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The program is also a member of the United Nations Development Group. The International Cyanide Management Code, a leading program in the management of chemical use in gold mining, was developed under the auspices of UNEP, etc. all governments consider environmental protection a concern. school is an important strategy in its action program. Vietnam is also not out of that orbit, the State has issued many legal documents and sub-laws to regulate the behavior of the People to make an important contribution to minimizing harm to the environment.

And today, the catastrophic level of natural disasters is gradually increasing because of the presence of negative factors created by man. Besides the usual natural disasters, air pollution, groundwater depletion, soil erosion, desertification, climate change, and ecological imbalance are other terrible disasters that humanity is facing. Those disasters are taking place everywhere, everyone knows and sees, but because of the needs of life and because of economic development, nature is increasingly being treated badly by humans, despite the more severe risks. that they will suffer.

Since recent decades, when environmental problems are warned to be getting worse and worse, many individuals and organizations everywhere have raised their voices to call for, seek and offer solutions to prevent this problem. prevent further damage to the environment.

On the Buddhist side, many individuals and organizations have also given their voices and offered positive solutions to this problem. Articles and lectures by famous figures in Buddhism such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Zen Master Nhat Hanh, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Nun Trinh Nghiem, etc. related to environmental issues have appeared in the media. pine; and environmental protection movements initiated by monks, nuns, and Buddhists have also been active in recent decades in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, and Japan, etc.

As Buddhist individuals and organizations, the solutions to environmental protection offered are often based on Buddhist philosophy and ethics from different Buddhist traditions. Teachings such as Dependent Origination, Causality, Mind Only, and even Zen thought have been developed to apply to this problem.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theravada Buddhism and the Philosophy of Protecting Nature

The Khmer people, when they arrived in the Southwest region, in the process of survival and development, merged with nature, relied on nature, treated nature, and considered nature as a "kind mother" who always protect and protect the people (Sen, et al., 2009). Therefore, the natural environment is their livelihood condition, and they are the people who understand the most about the ecological characteristics here. Therefore, their economic life is mainly based on nature, this is also the only survival condition of the ethnic group from the early days of exploiting this land until now. At the same time, the spiritual life of the Khmer people is dominated by Theravada Buddhism and the Dharma is the standard measure in their daily life, that natural attachment has created the enduring

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continuity of the Khmer people (Thuan, 2014). Ethnicity and Theravada Buddhism are the core, unique and unique of Khmer culture, all activities of the family and community of Phum and Squirrel are associated with the beliefs of "ethnic Buddhism" and Buddhist philosophy. Theravada religion is the foundation of the Khmer ethnic life philosophy (Voi, 1998).

In the teachings of Buddhism, it is always taught that Buddhists must stay away from and should not practice the "three poisons" of human life that are greed, hatred, and delusion, and the Khmer consider them to be poisonous things that can kill the people. in desire and greed (Raga in Sanskrit) lam, which is "excessive desire. Infatuated, interested in wanting to have many of the things you like such as money, beauty, fame, etc. That greed is never boring, the more you get the more greedy you get. Greed for himself, then greed for his relatives, country, and society. Also because of greed, humanity fights to kill each other. Greedy people hate those who are successful" (Lang, 1974). Once greed dominates in personal life, it will cause people to create evil karma, first of all from the human mind, making people only know how to be infatuated, enjoy fame, and pleasure, etc. from then on causing the subjective, evil psychology of desire for fame and profit, the idea of collecting, fighting for everything for yourself from fame, power, position to even knowledge, etc. will rise strongly.

“Cỏ hoang làm hại ruộng vườn,

Tham lam gây hại nhiều hơn cho người,

Tham lam ai đã lìa rồi,

Cúng dường vị ấy chẳng nơi nào bằng” (Tam, 2019).

(Wild weeds harm the fields and gardens, Greed does more harm to people, Who is greedy is gone, There is no place like to make offerings to him).

From those thoughts, it leads to people acting unobjectively, unfairly, abusing the surrounding things (positions, powers, etc., abusing nature) so that people can cultivate personal interests, live their lives. luxury, debauchery, respect for trivial material interests, contempt for genuine labor, etc., and also for their own benefit, people have used everything to exploit and exhaust the natural environment, making the natural environment impossible. restoration, the environment is threatened, the living environment of species is increasingly narrowed, the danger of extinction is present in many species, causing serious ecological imbalance, etc. the air is getting warmer. up, the ice at the two ends of the South, the Arctic gradually melts and in the near future will engulf part of the coasts of the continents. All those consequences are caused by human greed. And once the goal is not achieved by greed, people will become angry and will exchange everything to achieve their personal goals (Dao & Van, 2020)..

“Các người nên biết rõ rằng

Dễ gì chế ngự việc làm ác đâu

Tham lam, tội lỗi hố sâu

Kéo ta xuống chốn khổ đau đời đời” (Tam, 2019)

(You should know well that, How easy is it to control evil deeds? Greed, deep-seated sin. Drag we down to the place of eternal suffering).

“Sân” (Hatred), (in Sanskrit Dvesha) means "anger, anger, impatience, hatred when not satisfied, not satisfied as desired. Disgruntled because of being offended, that person does wrong things. After the anger, he will keep his hatred and look for an opportunity to take revenge" (Lang, 1974).

The Khmer people understand that typically in the "Sân", the psychological state of love-hate dominates the individual thoughts of each person. Vietnamese folk has a saying: "Love each other, "củ ấu" are also round, hate each other "bồ hòn" are also distorted". Love-hate is the basic cause of many causes of conflicts between people and once they fail to achieve their goals, people will become angry with everything around them, thereby arising jealousy. , comparing and calculating losses, envious of each other's results, hating each other, and finding ways to oppose and harm each other, etc. From those thoughts, making people act immature, easy to do harming the legitimate rights and interests of others, harming the natural environment and the living environment of people themselves.

“Khi cơn giận dữ bùng ra

Ai mà ngăn được mới là người hay

Giỏi như hãm lại được ngay

Chiếc xe đang chạy chở đầy, phóng nhanh,

Nếu không thì bản thân mình

Cầm cương hờ hững tài tình gì đâu” (Tam, 2019).

(When anger flares up. Who can stop is the best. As good as stopping right away. The car is running full, speeding, If not then myself. Also is stupid and incompetent).

Problems Of Hate, Love And Human Nature

If love is derived from the sacred sentiments of the human heart, a spirit of humanity, then that affection is like a five-color stone that always shimmers and shines, helping people to overcome unexpected life situations. happiness, the pain will be shared, sympathy, etc. From there, people will live more tolerant, know how to forgive, know how to sacrifice for their fellow human beings more. Those loves are priceless, the most precious value of life, a great motivation to help people overcome difficulties, hardships, and challenges, sympathy, and sharing of people with people. will warm hearts when they are at the end of suffering, it will be the necessary ingredients and spices in life once love is in the right place. To borrow the words of a Russian writer: "The coldest place is not the North Pole, but the place where there is no human love".

But if that love is placed in place, it will make people easy to go astray, lead a fallen life, debauchery, expect, rely on, lazy to work, wasteful. Just like parents to their children, once their children are pampered too much, making them unable to distinguish right from wrong, unruly, loving to be served, etc. gradually children will not see well – bad, lack of independence, do not know how to yield, lack of hard work, limitations in social integration, etc. which lead to children likely to suffer from depression (Lang, 1974; Thuan, 2004).

Through the above perception, it is shown that once between people and people, there is love that comes from the true perception of each person, which will be the driving force for human development,

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people are more confident, optimistic. and will live more positively towards people, as well as towards all things around (Set, 2009). On the contrary, it will make people bored, look at the problem negatively, be short-sighted, only see immediate benefits, group interests but ignore the interests of the collective, people, and humanity.

And hate is not liking, wanting to avoid, or feeling uncomfortable when having to contact a certain object, which is the exact opposite of love, this is a common psychological state. In every human being, folk songs have a sentence:

*“Thương nhau thương cả đường đi,
ghét nhau ghét cả tông chi họ hàng”.*

(Love each other all the way,
hate each other, hate the whole family).

or

*“Yêu nhau trăm sự chẳng nề
Một trăm chỗ lệch cũng kê cho bằng”.*

(If you love each other, then wrong becomes right, hate becomes love)

Through the sayings of the ancients, we realize that once people's psychological state when they hate someone, it will make them blind in perception, leading to inability to distinguish between good and bad, insensitivity to fear. sufferings of fellow human beings and gradually lead them to become petty people who always plot to harm others to seek illicit benefits. Seeing that, people's hatred for people is also for their own benefit, once someone threatens their interests, they will hate them, hate them, harm them to gain benefits. for yourself, for your group, for your party. Regardless of who they are, whether they are friends, relatives, or former comrades and teammates, even those who have helped and carried them (Lang, 1974; Van, 2019). Benefits have blinded their eyes, prompting them to plunge into life-and-death battles, and once won they feel gloating and pleasure in inflicting pain on others, etc. like the French philosopher Blaise Pascal once used to be. concluded more than 360 years ago "Humans are both the glory and the scum of creation" for their own sake, for their own sake, but from being a good person, a gentleman becomes a petty person, not giving up. an inhuman act to achieve a goal.

Psychologist Paul Bloom (1972) said: "The most terrible callousness can be the refusal to deny the humanity of others. People harm each other precisely because they see each other as real people who don't want to suffer pain, humiliation, or loss of honor" and jealousy is the key, the cause of so many complications and distractions in people, even creating tragedy and suffering. Once, not treating others as humans will make people more ruthless, crueler, despite all tricks to achieve their goals. It is also because the word "Inner Hate" arose, making people more complacent, envious of the prosperity of others, so people not only harmed each other but also did not hesitate to act. into the natural environment in a metamorphosed way, thoroughly exploiting nature, making it increasingly depleted

and changing, causing many storms, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and tsunamis that directly threaten the environment to environment of all species.

The love-hate things in each person cannot be blamed on anyone, nature or creation, but rather the word Hate in their hearts and this was pointed out to mankind by the Buddha more than 2500 years ago and human beings people will suffer forever when the word anger is not removed from their thinking (Lang, 1974). It seems that it is unthinkable when the era creates too fast-paced life, too many complications and jostles, competing for benefits, cultivating the individual as a "standard measure" of one's life. success makes people rush to compete for benefits like moths, defying morality, ethics, and retribution to achieve their trivial goals.

Life will be peaceful, happy, nature will be beautiful if people think that everything comes from creation and nature will take everything away when we no longer exist and it is a sweet feeling if think that, when we see someone as a human being, we will no longer harm each other, not compete with each other and also do not affect the environment in a degenerate way as we used to it.

“Si” (zh. 癡, sa., pi. *moha*, bo. *gti mug* གཏི་མུག) là “Si mê”, “Vô minh”. Also written as stupid (Zh. 愚). We can understand Si as sorrow, depression, darkness; and Lust is a special interest and is constantly absorbed in a certain work, to the point that there is no need for anything else or is so absorbed that it no longer distinguishes, perceives anything. Thus, ignorance is darkness, and ignorance and Ignorance are just a misperception of self and the world around.

The nature of "Si" within each human being was once pointed out by the Buddha, which is the source of all suffering in this world, the great afflictions, and one of the Three Unwholesome Roots because human beings are not. understanding and not distinguishing between right and wrong, not aware of the truth, the mind is obscured, making people no longer see the filth of society that is gnawing away from inside people day by day, hour by hour causing those bad habits to increase gradually and bring people closer to the path of sin.

The Buddha taught that ignorance is the worst defilement in every human being (Thu, 1973; Lang, 1974). In order for people to soon find peace and happiness, live a peaceful life and soon go to nirvana in the mundane world, it is necessary for people to give up their ignorance to become pure and capable people positive quality of life, upholding a lifestyle for people.

Although it is not possible to eliminate the notions of greed, hatred, and delusion in every human's thinking, the Khmer have considered Theravada Buddhism as the nation's dharma, always listening to the Buddha's teachings, practicing according to the teachings of the Buddha. The concept of Buddhism hopes that the Buddha will protect and comfort them in this life and will also reward them in the next life, and they also understand that the greater the desire, the greater the pressure on the mind and body. much, the stronger the lust, the easier it is to be tied to the sinful path, and once falling into the abyss of lust, the people will not be able to get out, always blind, hopeless, etc. (Voi, 1988). At that time, lust will erode goodwill, corrupt the conscience, destroy the personality and, as a result, turn the human race into a slave of trivial desires (An, 2009). Therefore, they always do good deeds, accumulate merit to help the ethnic people feel more peaceful and light-hearted, and when they do many good deeds, the blessings may not come, but the bad results will leave the people. Therefore, the Khmer people in the South West have a mind and ethnicity that always favors good, avoids doing evil, harms people, harms nature. Everything that is contrary to

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Buddhism is bad, contrary to the way of heaven, contrary to God. conscience and responsibility of each individual human being, etc. Therefore, they always reject and direct their children and young generation to live peacefully, maintain a peaceful mind through going to the temple to study, clear inner thoughts, have a generous, generous, and pure heart. calm, away from afflictions, to perfect themselves, to let accidents pass away, to be blessed, and the people to live in peace.

The Equipping People With Basic Knowledge Of Theravada Buddhism In Dealing With Nature

In the process of survival and development in the Southwest region, the Khmer people have shared their backs, struggled with their brothers and sisters, united to survive and overcome the difficulties of the new land; always behave with nature gently, always exist in the heart of nature and rely on nature for survival and development. They consider land and agricultural cultivation as their most precious tradition, from the first day of the history of exploring the South of Vietnam, the ancestors of the Khmer knew and grasped the law of the rising and falling tides, they took full advantage of it. Using tides to retain water in the field to remove acidity and saltwater for agricultural cultivation, they know when their crops need water and when to drain water for rice plants to produce seeds. In the distance from the canals, they build the banks of umbrellas to keep water when they need water, then they slap the water in with a dai bucket (a creative agricultural tool of the Khmer). The difficulties in the process of farming are also clear (before the presence of good farmers like the Vietnamese) and they can grasp, understand and classify the soil in their own way, which type of soil will be suitable. with any kind of tree, etc. the land is very well improved by the Khmer.

For the land with low fertility, they rotate the crop for 1 year and rest for 3 years to allow the soil to regenerate its fertility and when they re-cultivate, it will be better. They used scythes made of bronze or from the ribs of animals to harvest grain (Tho, 2020). Today, although there are many advanced means of exploring nature from equipment, techniques to chemicals, etc. the Khmer people still deal with land and water resources, etc. and varieties, plants, and materials. raised like a leopard, always cherishing, diligently working with human power to create the best, cleanest, least chemical products, with the least impact on the natural environment, so that nature can recover and serve good for the life needs of the people.

They live based on nature, see nature as the savior, and the Buddhadharm forms the buddha mind, the buddha nature of the people helps them see that greed for money and fame is caused by greed, hatred, and delusion, and greed. will harm the camaraderie, the brotherly love will cause the brothers to lose their peace, fight for the rice bowl, the clothes, and the fame and fortune. Therefore, they always think that, when their children grow up, get married, get married, the material part (money) gained in a lifetime of hard work will do them good, specially dedicated to the construction industry. pagoda, only a very small part is devoted to ensuring the couple's life is not lacking in their old age. Those perceptions, make the Khmer people always feel full in the mundane life, do not compare and calculate the loss with the community and society, and only rely on their genuine labor to meet their pursuits. life.

Therefore, their greed, hatred, and delusion are gradually dispelled, making them less materialistic, so they are less exploitative, less exploitative, less harmful to nature, live in harmony with nature, and protect nature. nature and always keep it fresh, etc. gradually formed a sense of environmental protection in the thinking of Khmer people according to Theravada Buddhism. That consciousness has always been carried out by the Khmer people through many ethnic rituals such as Ok om bok or Um tuk (boat race),

etc. are "ethnic festivals" that are aimed at educating people about direction. be good, know how to maintain morality in the relationships of life, between people and people, with the community of "Phum", "Sóc", with society and people with nature, protect nature.

Ok Om Bok festival, also known as the Khmer Moon Worshipping Ceremony, is held on the 15th day of the 10th lunar month (al) every year (October 15). This is the end of the harvest, the Khmer holds a moon worshipping festival to show gratitude to the Moon God - the God who is bringing them a good harvest and at the same time, they also remember the noble deed. of the rabbit, the past life of the Buddha. With profound meaning and value reflected in the sense of protecting the living environment of the Khmer (Quang, 2011).

Since ancient times, they have consciously considered land and water an invaluable resource, a condition for the survival and development of the ethnic group, and land and water will help their lives be long and sustainable. An excessive impact on the land and water will lead to the destruction of life, which in their opinion is the "wrathful God" that will make the soil degraded, make the water stop pouring down to the mundane world. make their lives more difficult when environmental conditions are no longer available. They are deeply aware of these things, so every year on the full moon day of the 10th month (lunar calendar) the products from land and water are precious offerings to the Moon God to give thanks and at the same time. It is also gratitude to God's blessing and flat rice (thanks for the grain of rice that feeds people), coconut (like the shape of the moon), sugar cane (meaning to rise up strong), "kđúch" potato tuber" (ground tuber), long dwarf potato "Hụn" (the type that lives in the sandy and sandy soil and was the first two types of potatoes found when the Khmer came here) was the sacred sacrifices they chose. With these values, the Khmer's Ok Om Bok festival is a positive cultural element in the Khmer's sense of environmental protection.

During the Um tuk (boat racing) festival, the Khmer people have a song that any Khmer know: *Hây đơ đơ hây đơ môn si bai lei đâm lôn tàu mól kê um tuk*" (hây đơ đơ hây đơ môn eat rice stuffed with potatoes go and see the Ngo boat). As for the Ngo boat bearing many typical Khmer values, it is not the product of any individual or group, but rather the traditional product of TN, depending on the characteristics and strengths of "Phum", "Sóc", things. The events of each temple are different, but they decorate their Ngo boat differently (the pattern of the boat's head and tail). Boat racing, Ok Om Bok, and releasing HoaDang are three different festivals but held on the same day with the meaning of worshipping water resources, seeing water as a god, and sending off the water season to heaven, welcoming the season. The dry season and the Ngo boat race symbolize the power to move the wet and dry seasons. In addition, the festival also contains the mundane wishes and spiritual wishes of the ethnic people for favorable weather, fertile country, and abundant alluvium to bring bountiful crops. If in Ok Om Bok ceremony is behavior, is the desire to protect the natural environment, in the boat racing festival, the Khmer people want to exploit nature, and the desire for nature to be harmonious is always full of alluvium and fertility. protect and nurture people. Both festivals are two but one, wishing to have a prosperous and prosperous life, peaceful and beautiful nature to serve as the basis for providing aesthetic values to people's spiritual life, are endless sources of inspiration of attractive topics in poetry and music of the ethnic group (Institute of Religious Studies, 2014).

Through the traditional festivals of the Khmer ethnic group, it is found that the harmful effects of the Three Poisons philosophy in Theravada Buddhism are the foundation in educating the Khmer people's

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awareness of environmental protection during the process of survival and development developed in this land. The people always know how to preserve the fertility of the soil, avoiding soil erosion; know how to behave with water to make the water always clean, etc. without the excessive influence of the ethnic group to harm the natural environment, that good sense is forever kept by the ethnic group. Today, when modern science and technology has developed, people's integration is getting deeper and wider, but Khmer people are still slow with hoes, plows, and with their own labors to create many clean products, with quality, without preservatives and pesticides, bringing to the community natural products.

CONCLUSION

Who will judge that, on the basis of Buddhist philosophy, not only Khmer people have a sense of environmental protection, but that consciousness will be in all other ethnic groups. It is not wrong and we also realize that there are inherently two parts in human beings, the natural part and the social part. But not everyone is ready in their thoughts to uphold the awareness of environmental protection, which must be taught through generations.

The difference in beliefs between the Khmer people and the rest of the Southwest is that the Khmer ethnic group has only one religion, Theravada Buddhism, so they are unified in their beliefs awareness of environmental protection from the philosophy of Theravada Buddhism and the teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation. Since then, the concept of greed, hatred, and delusion has gradually been eliminated among the people.

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