



**THE THERAVĀDA BUDDHIST EDUCATION SYSTEM IN
SOUTHERN VIETNAM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO
THE SOCIETY**

Ven. Dao Minh Van

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
C.E. 2017



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The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this thesis entitled "The Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam and Its Contribution to the Society" as part of education according to its curriculum of the Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

(Phramahā Somboon Vuḍḍhikaro, Dr.)
Dean of Graduate School

Examination Committee

..... Chairperson
(Phramahā Surasak Prajantasen, Dr.)

..... Member
(Phra Rajapariyattimuni, Asst. Prof. Dr.)

..... Member
(Ven. W. Piyaratana, Dr.)

..... Member
(Dr. Amnaj Buasiri)

Supervisor Committee

Phra Rajapariyattimuni, Asst. Prof. Dr. Chairperson

Ven. W. Piyaratana, Dr. Member

Researcher

.....
(Ven. Dao Minh Van)

Thesis Title : The Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam and Its Contribution to the Society

Researcher : Ven. Dao Minh Van

Degree : Master of Arts (Buddhist Studies)

Thesis Supervisory Committee

: Phra Rajapariyattimuni, Assist. Prof. Dr., Pāli IX, M.A. (Buddhist Studies), Ph.D (Buddhist Studies)

: Ven. Walmoruwe Piyaratana, Dr., B.A. (Pāli), M.A. (Buddhist Studies), Ph.D. (Buddhist Studies)

Date of Graduation : March 10, 2018

Abstract

The main object of this thesis is to study the system of Buddhist education in Southern Vietnam. Further, it also aims to study the development of Theravāda Buddhist educational administration and influence of Theravāda Buddhism on Khmer Society in Southern Vietnam, especially the Buddhist education.

During this research, the researcher found that Theravāda Buddhism which is practiced by Southern Vietnamese was highly influenced by Cambodian Theravāda Buddhism. Due to this establishment Buddhism, it also got a chance to integrate with other Theravāda Buddhist countries, like Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. With its very introduction and establishment of the Buddhism, it has been variously influenced on Southern Vietnamese people. It also was influenced on education system of this particular area.

Further it found that Buddhist education plays very significant role in the system of education of Southern Vietnamese society. People pay much attention to earn their primary education through the Theravāda centers, especially those who are in the Order. Monks and nuns are required to study Buddhism very well and many monastic educational centers have been established in order to fulfill the thirst of them. Meanwhile, responsible monks of the country have established a systematic Buddhist education model to teach Buddhism gradually and got

the official approval to recognize its standard equal to the general education system of the country. The Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Studies in Southern Vietnam is referred to the study programs of Dhamma Vinaya and Pāli school and Buddhist studies undergraduate school. The studies programs are classified into three degrees.

Further, the thesis discusses the contribution and impact of the Theravāda Buddhism toward Khmer Society in Southern Vietnam. It explores the significant factor of religious activities and society welfares of Khmer people in southern Vietnam such as fine art organized, schooling, Buddhist dissemination, social works and contribution to set up and maintain by Theravāda Buddhism.

Acknowledgement

This Dissertation has been completed with the assistance provided by various persons. Therefore, I'd like to take this opportunity to convey my acknowledgment for their kind assistance during completion of this work.

I would like to my gratitude to the Most Venerable Prof. Dr. Phra Brahmapundith, Rector of the Mahachulalongkornvidyalaya University, Ven. Assist. Prof. Dr. Phra Rajapariyattimuni (Pali IX, Ph.D), Director faculty of Buddhism and Ven. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammhaso Director of IBSC and Ven. Dr. W. Piyaratana, who gave me the most helpful guidance to finish this thesis. Also I like to thanks Ajahn Maha Nopparat, and all the officers of the MCU, who helped me during studies. I would like to express my gratitude to the Most Ven. Đào Như and Thạch Sok Xane, the two Vice Rectors of the Khmer Theravāda Academic for Buddhist Studies, who heartily answered my questions and gave new information for my research. I am greatly indebted to the authors and writers of the books, the Thesis, and the Articles listed in the bibliography for their valuable resources. I would like to express my gratitude to three persons who helped to revise my English grammar was edited my thesis. My heartfelt gratitude is also extended to the abbot of Wat Latsai and Ajharn Preejha, the assistant to the abbot for kindly permitting me to stay in his monastery. Besides, I am very grateful to the helping when I first came to Wat Latsai, Lamsai, Wang noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand. The credit also goes to the Venerable Thach Keo Vesana who helped to make the formatting of my thesis, as the spiritual studying Ph.D (IBSC) and to all teachers who taught me Khmer southern in Vietnam, and those who have been supporters of my religious life.

Last but not least I had express my thanks to my family and Ajahn Preejha Abbot Wat Latsai all Buddhists who have supported me to study abroad and to those who supported me variously during this Dissertation.

Ven. Dao Minh Van
February 5th 2018

List of Abbreviations

In quoting the Pali sources, the references are given according to the volume and page number of the PTS editions.

Pali Sources

Dhp : Dhammapada

Other Sources

A.D : Anno Domini

B.C : Before Christ

B.E : Buddhist Era

Ed : edited

HCMC : Ho Chi Minh City

KTB : Khmer Theravāda Buddhism

Ibid : ibidden/ in the same book

MCU : Mahachulalongkornvidyalaya University

No. : Number

Op cit : opera citato / as referred

P (p) : page (p)

Pp : pages

PED : Pāli-English Dictionary

PTS : Pāli Text Society

Tr. (tr.) : translated

TBV : Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam

Vol (s) : volume (s)

VTB : Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism

VTBSC : Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhist Sangha Congregation

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Historically, Buddhism was introduced to Vietnam in the middle of the 3rd century B.C¹ by *Phật Quang* (P. Buddhhaloka), an Indian Monk. From the beginning, Buddhism was integrated into the spiritual life of the Vietnamese and became primary in their minds' culture and education. Theravāda Buddhism has existed from as early as the 3rd century B.C.²

At present there are two main schools of Buddhism in Vietnam. They are Mahayana Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism. From its original history, the North part of Vietnam, for many centuries, was a part of Chinese Empire. The Mahayana Buddhism had been introduced into the Northern Vietnam whereas the Southern Vietnam was one of the former part of Khmer Empire where the Theravāda Buddhism has been practiced by the Khmer people.³ However, the history of Buddhism in Vietnam runs back to the 3rd century B.C. According to the legend Ven. Sona & Ven. Uttara visited the mountain named Pathe. The means of this word Pathe is “the mountain, where the two Theras have left”. It is said that the name has been given to remark the visit of those two Theras. This mountain is about kilometers away from Oc-Eo and belongs to Vong community in the Thoai Son District of the An Giang Province of Vietnam.⁴

¹Lê Mạnh Thát (1), **Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam, Tập 1** (History of Vietnamese Buddhism, Vol I), (Ho Chi Minh: Ho Chi Minh City General Press, 2006), p. 23.

²Skilton Andrew, **A Concise History of Buddhism**, (Brimingham: Windhorse Publication, 1994), p. 160.

³Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, "A Study of the Influence and Contribution of Theravāda Buddhism to the Khmer Community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam", **M.A Thesis**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2010), p. 2.

⁴Mae Chee Huynh Kim Lan, "A Study of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam", **M.A Thesis**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2010), p. 34.

From that time until today, Buddhism embodied deeply into heart of Vietnamese Buddhists, and especially it became the first educational course that they used to practice. Therefore, Theravāda Buddhism became the spiritual life of Khmer people in Vietnam nowadays.⁵

The Buddha surely had a suitable way to teach the Dhamma; but after his passing, to preserve the teachings of the Buddha and propagate Buddhism, the learning of the Dhamma was gradually established in the educational system of Buddhist countries. In addition, in Vietnam, the study of the Dhamma has been a cultural tradition of the Khmer people because Buddhism has become a Khmer cultural-lifestyle in southern Vietnam. To keep what ancestors have done to propagate, the Khmer Theravāda monks always try to hold Dhamma classes to educate Sangha members and lay devotees.

As a result, Khmer Theravāda Buddhism turned over a new page in history. Gradually, it developed together as educational sources for Buddhism in Vietnam. Nowadays, Dhamma classes are allowed by the Vietnamese government and even a Khmer Theravāda Academy for Buddhist Studies has just appeared in the city of Cần Thơ. That is the support of the Vietnamese government⁶ and especially Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Institute which is located in the Somron Temple, Chau Van Liem, Omon District, CanTho City. The first 4-years courses graduated 69 students in 2011. The second course graduated 29 students in 2015; and the third year course is in progress.

So far, there is no any research or studies have been done regarding the Buddhist education in Southern Vietnam. It makes the difficulties to those who wish to know about the Buddhist education or its contribution to the Southern Vietnam society, especially in terms of Theravāda Buddhist perspective. In related to Mahayana tradition, the various sources are available. This lack of information regarding the Buddhist education prompted me to do this research. It will be beneficial for future researchers to have some knowledge about Buddhist education

⁵Venerable Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶Mea Chea Huynh Kim Lan, op cit., p. 3.

system in Southern Vietnam and how this Buddhist education has contributed to the Southern Vietnam Society.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 To study the historical background of the Theravāda Buddhism in southern Vietnam

1.2.2 To study the development of Khmer Theravāda Educational Administration toward Khmer Buddhist generations

1.2.3 To analyze the contribution of the Theravāda Buddhism toward Khmer Society.

1.3 Statements of the Problems

3.1 What was the history of Buddhism in Southern Vietnam, and how Theravāda Buddhism had been propagated toward Khmer Society?

3.2 How has Khmer Theravāda Educational Administration been developed toward Khmer Buddhist generations?

3.3 How has Khmer society been impacted by the contribution of the Theravāda Buddhist Education system?

1.4 Scope of the Research

Researcher focuses on the historical background of the Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam to give out an answer of objective one of the research, the development of Khmer Theravāda educational administration to answer the objective two of the research, and contribution of Theravāda Buddhist educational system to Khmer community in Southern Vietnam to approach the objective three of the research. Most of information and data are based upon the secondary source and other concerned.

However, during the procession of research some extra information, data and currently events may and may not to be used in order to prove the value of academic work.

1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Thesis

Theravāda: “Way of the Elders.” It refers to the way of practice of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia where now Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma and Southern Vietnam are from medieval times until the present day. For Khmer Buddhist activities for religious worker, a

Buddhist technical word of “Theravāda” is derived from the word “Mahānikāya”. Theravāda is a school of Buddhism has been studied and practiced by Khmer people who living in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam.

Khmer: indigenous Khmer people in Southern Vietnam. It refers to the lower reaches of the Mekong Delta, south of Cambodia proper. Khmer people are spending their lives very close to Buddhist culture and respecting the Buddhist monks as their spiritual leaders.

Southern Vietnam: one region of the three ones in Vietnam, and the other two regions are Northern Vietnam and Central Vietnam. The largest city in the South is Ho Chi Minh City, the nation’s largest city. The next major cities include Can Tho and Bien Hoa. Southern Vietnam totally includes two sub-regions. Those are southeast and Mekong Delta.

Mekong Delta: the region in southwestern Vietnam where the Mekong River approaches and empties into the sea through a network of distributaries. Most of Khmer people are living along the provinces of Mekong Delta area.

Buddhist Education: Traditionally, the study of the Buddha’s teaching was found in the monasteries where Buddhist monks and novices lived and trained themselves. According the long history of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam, the Buddhist education system can be found in two ways which are Dhammavinaya study and Pāli study in order to know about the Buddha’s teaching. It can be said that not only monks or novices can study Dhammavinaya and Pāli but also laypeople who are the supporters of monks and novices for the purpose of their further study.

Therefore, Buddhist education is very essential for Khmer people from generation to generation. It is a lifetime inheritance and also a lifetime insurance of mankind without education. There is little work that person can do. Actually there is nothing which a person can do without education.

1.6 Review of the Literature and Research works concerned

Venerable Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, "**A Study of the Influence and Contribution of Theravāda Buddhism to the Khmer Community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam**", M.A Thesis, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2010.

Abstract: This thesis provided the main outline of the influence and contribution of Theravāda Buddhism toward Khmer people who living in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam. This research gave out the investigation of information and data about Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Southern Vietnam, not in Cambodia. It aims to give an evidence for the arrival and development of Buddhism since the earliest period of Cambodia's history, to investigate the influence of Buddhism on Khmer society which going in detail on tradition, education, moral ethics, way of thinking, religious belief, language, literature, arts, architecture and so on, and to provide a very important role which Theravāda Buddhism has contributed to the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. A researcher made prove that the Khmer Theravāda monks taking the monasteries as the foundation centers of their work place, played crucial roles that contributed to the fulfillment and presevation of Theravāda Buddhist culture in the Khmer society as well.

Mae Chee Huynh Kim Lan, "**A Study of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam**", MA. Thesis, Thailand: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2010.

Abstract: This thesis gave out a fundament knowledge of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam. Mae Chee Huyen Kim Lan on her academic work provided the three main points of view: (1) the history of Theravāda in Vietnam, (2) the characteristics and practices of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam, and (3) the present status of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam.

She claimed that Theravāda Buddhism was practiced by the Khmer people in the Mekong Delta, and the development of Theravāda Buddhism was greatly helped through contacts with Burma, Thailand and

Sri Lanka. She also provided us the clearly sources of the history of development of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam during the different periods of Funam, Chenla and Vietnam. In addition, it pointed out that there are the different things between the earlier Vietnamese and Khmer faith cultures based upon the two schools of Buddhism meeting together at the same land of Buddhism namely Theravāda and Mahāyāna schools. One more important thing, she examined the seven different fields of the present status of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam. Those covered (1) the monks and temples, (2) the education, (3) the propagation, (4) the meditation practice activities, (5) the relation between Khmer and Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam, (6) the relation between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam, and (7) the problem and their solutions for Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam.

Ven. Ly Na Ni, **"The Achievements of the Monks' Moral Teaching Temple School in the Khmer Delta, Southern Vietnam"**, M. A Thesis, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2014.

This thesis carried out the achievements of the monks' moral teaching temple school in the Khmer Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam. The main findings of this research are: (1) the opinions of students toward achievements of the monks' moral teaching temple schools of the Khmer Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam in the general is at good level ($\bar{X} = 3.96$). It showed that the technique, media, career, and method of teaching qualify to be very good. The measurement and valuation are accountability; (2) the acceptance of the hypothesis and significant are at the .05 level. With this result, it showed that the respondents feel satisfaction with the career of teaching which run by the monks who living in the Mekong Delta in Southern Vietnam. In addition, a researcher also suggests that monks who are teaching Buddhism have to be the good idol of the generation who engaged the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

Ven. Minh Khanh Kim, Kalyāṇayāno, **"A Comparative Study of Rites and Rituals between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in**

Vietnam", M.A Thesis, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2014.

This thesis went through a comparative research of rites and rituals between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam. A researcher focused on the rites and rituals of Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism and then he compared both of rites and rituals to find out the matching and different points of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in application for Khmer and Vietnamese followers. In addition, this academic work found out that the rites and rituals of both traditions have greatly influenced on Khmer and Vietnamese communities and provided them the harmonious lives.

Venerable Nguyen Thanh Hung, Thich Hanh Chon, **"A Study of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva in Vietnamese Buddhist Literature and Its Influence on Vietnamese Society", M.A Thesis, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2009.**

Abstract: This thesis gave out a study of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and its influence on Vietnamese society. A researcher Nguyen Thanh Hung on Avalokitesvara, Vietnamese society was influenced by the concept of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. By his good virtues of living kindness and compassion for salvation, of wonderful patience, of great filial piety, and so forth. He has naturally become a main object for developing and attaining of the Mahāyāna Buddhist practitioners in Vietnam. In addition, Buddhist devotees hold the annual festivals to commemorate his virtues and to express their gratitude to him as well as to wish to be granted miracles based upon the law of action.

1.7 Methods of the study

The research can be divided into three steps as follows:

1.7.1 Collecting the secondary data from Buddhist various sources like academic texts, historical records, articles, and interview, etc.

1.7.2 Analyzing the collected data critically

1.7.3 Formulating and providing the conclusion of the study.

1.8 Expected Benefits of the study

After doing this research, the following benefits can be achieved.

1.8.1 Knowing clearly the history of the Theravāda Buddhist education system in Southern Vietnam.

1.8.2 Getting the knowledge of the Buddhist education system in Southern Vietnam.

1.8.3 Having an understanding of its contribution made by the Theravāda Buddhist educational administration toward Khmer society

1.8.4 Engaging the enrichment of the academic source for the further researcher and be considered as a testament of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist educational system in worldwide.

Chapter II

Historical Background Of The Theravāda Buddhism In Vietnam

2.1 A Brief History of Buddhism in Vietnam

Vietnam is endowed with special geography, at approximately 331,688 square km (128,066 sq mi) in area, with international boundaries measuring at 4,639 km (2,883 km mi). It borders the China to the north, Laos to the northwest and Cambodia to the southwest. Moreover, thanks to Tam Ha: “In the part, Vietnam was very much like the intersection between India and China (That’s why the French call this country an Indochina). At that time, either walking, or by boat, people make a trip from India to China or vice versa, in doing so they must cross Vietnam, therefore, was a good place to stop by foreign businessmen as well as Buddhist monks”. For these reasons of geography, Buddhism was transmitted to Vietnam in two ways⁷. There are over 54 nationalities consisting of 80% Kinh nationality and 13% ethnic minority. Vietnam became not only a span of bridge connecting Asia with the Pacific, continents with islands in Southeast Asia, but also a line of intersection for merchants and missionaries, and a point of contact with various kinds of great cultures and civilizations all over the world.⁸

As a result, it had been founded in part by Indian colonists in the 2nd century CE and from Cambodia with both syncretic Mahāyāna and Theravāda schools. The Mahāyāna form predominates in the North, where Chinese Buddhism had the strongest influence, and the Theravāda form is pre-eminent in parts of the South, which has strong links to the Buddhism of Southeast Asia. In other words, Vietnam came to be the meeting place for the streams: (1) The Mahāyāna stream arrived in the North from India

⁷Thich Nguyen Tang, Buddhism in Vietnam, B.A degree Thesis, (Ho Chi Minh; Vietnam Buddhist University, 1997), p3.

⁸Nguyễn Quang Ngọc, **Tiến Trình Lịch Sử Việt Nam**, (The Process of Vietnam History), (Ha Noi: Educational Publication, 2000), p. 7.; Lương Ninh, **Lịch Sử Việt Nam Giản Yếu**, (A Summary in Vietnam History), (Na Noi: National Political Publication, 2000), p. 7.

along the silk route down into China and then into Vietnam. (2) The Theravāda stream came to the South along the sea-coast through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and then into Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnamese Buddhism has two forms, those are Mahāyāna and Theravāda forms.⁹

As a recorded result on the 6th Congress, the total number of Sangha members was 44,498 consisting of 32,625 Mahāyāna monks and nuns, 8,919 Theravāda monks (consisting of 8,574 Khmer Theravāda monks and 345 Vietnamese Theravāda monks), and 2,954 Mendicant monks. As regards monasteries, there are 14,775 monasteries consisting of 12,245 Mahāyāna monasteries, 528 Theravāda monasteries (consisting of 452 Khmer Theravāda monasteries and 73 Vietnamese Theravāda monasteries, 540 Mendicant temple, 467 small temples and 998 Buddhist places. In education, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha until now has opened four Vietnam Buddhist Academic Institutes (with 3,766 monks and nuns in graduation, and 2,106 in study) in the three parts of Vietnam (the North in Hà Nội capital, the Middle in Huế city, the South in Hồ Chí Minh city and in Cần Thơ city), 01 Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute in Hồ Chí Minh and its Sub-Institute in Hà Nội, 07 Colleges of Buddhist Studies (with 4,495 monks and nuns in graduation, and 819 in study, 30 secondary schools of Buddhist studies (with 6,700 monks and nuns in graduation, and 4,096 in study), and 26 elementary schools of Buddhist studies (with 1,569 monks and nuns in graduation, and 2,159 in study) all over the country and so forth. Besides, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha has 294 monks and nuns for study abroad in many countries of the world such as India, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Taiwan, USA, Australia, England, and so on. Among of them, there are 43 monks and nuns with Ph.D degree, 52 with MA degree, and 199 in studying at MA and Ph.D degrees.¹⁰

⁹Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, (Brimingham: Windhorse Publication, 1994), p. 159; Damien Keown & et.al., *Dictionary of Buddhism*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 326.

¹⁰Giáo Hội Phật Giáo Việt Nam, *Lược Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam*, (A Brief History of Buddhism in Vietnam), (Phuong Dong: Publishing House, 2011), p. 56.

2.2 Origin of Theravāda Buddhism in Southern Vietnam

Because of the complication of propagation of Buddhism to Suvannabhumi land by the two Arahants named Sona and Uttara during the 3rd century B.C., researcher needs to study the history of a present day Southern Vietnam. It aims to understand the origin of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam. That is right, what we used to claim that Southern Vietnam was the land of Khmer people and influenced by Indian culture including a part of Suvannabhumi land which we usually mention under the term of propagation of Buddhism for the Theravāda form.

According to Chinese historians, from the first to the seventh century A.D, the land of Southern Vietnam was the Kingdom of Funan. The center of this country was located on the lower course of the Mekong River delta, but its territory at the time of its zenith must have encompassed Southern Vietnam, including some part of the Mekong River and a large part of the Menam Valley and the Malay Peninsula. The capital of this territory was Vyadhapura, “the city of hunters”.¹¹ This is similar to what is recorded in the legends about the origin of Funan country. It was the marriage of an Indian named Kaudinya to a princess named Liu-ye (or Soma) of the land of Funan which started a royal line. The name of this country which the Chinese called Funan, in the modern Mandarin pronunciation the two characters were once pronounced biu-nam, which is the transcription of the old Khmer word bhnam, the modern form of which is phnom “mountain”. The kings of this country had as their royal title “Parvatabhupala”, a term meaning “King of the mountain” which in Sankrit is “Sailaraja” and in Khmer- Kroung bhnam.¹² From this we can clearly see that, the people of Funan were Khmers. Usually, when historians go anywhere to write about the history of an area, they will, based on the pronunciation of the area in the vernacular language, transcribe the name of that locality into their own language. With the original name of the area being in the Khmer language, proves that Funan belonged to the Khmer people.

¹¹George Coedgs, **The Indianized States of Southeast Asia**, (Honolulu: East West Center Press, 1989), p. 36.

¹²George Coedges, op cit., pp. 36-37.

According to Mr. Phan Khoanh, a well-known writer on historical topics, the peoples of Funan (including Chenla) were Khmers. They came from the Indo-China Peninsula several centuries before the Christian Era.¹³ Another researcher, Mr Thach Voi wrote that in 300-200 BC, the Khmer people at the Mekong river delta clustered on the phums (places). They established a way of living based on farming, cattle breeding, and they cremated their dead together with their ornaments. They followed matriarchy and believed in gods such as: Arak, Neakta, Tevoda. So the Khmers had their indigenous culture before the arrival of the Indian culture.¹⁴ Therefore, Funanese culture was a mixture of local beliefs and Indian ideas. This Funanese kingdom is said to have been heavily influenced by Indian culture. The coming of the Indians to Southeast Asia gave way to the establishment of Buddhism. It is known that the early Buddhist missionaries sent by Emperor Asoka propagated beyond India the Theravāda Buddhist School.

Furthermore, the history of the Khmer people revealed that two Theras came to Suvannabhumi, to spread the Buddhadharma to Myanmar, a region of Mon Land, Thailand, Laos and Funan. When coming to Funan, the two elders arrived at the Oc-Eo port, which now is the Kien Giang province, by a trading ship. At this time, Queen Nagi Soma ruled Funan. The two Theras stayed at a mountain preaching the Dhamma to the people of Funan. Based on the above historical data, we can conclude that recognizing the fact that Asoka reigned from 269-237 B.C, Theravāda Buddhism spread to Vietnam during the 3rd century B.C.

The Theravāda Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia claim that Buddhism was spread there in the 3rd century B.C by the two Arahants, Sona and Uttara. In Thailand, the Great Stupa today called Phra Pathom Chedi meaning the first Pagoda was built at Nakhorn Pathom. As a historic event this certified that Nakhorn Pathom was the capital or one of the

¹³Phan Khoanh, **Việt Sử Xứ Đàng Trong**, (The Southern Vietnamese History), (HCM: Khai Tri Bookstore Publishing House, 1969), p. 303.

¹⁴Trương Lưu (ed.), **Văn Hoá Người Khmer Vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Cửu Long**, (Khmer Culture in Mekong River Delta), (Con Tho: People Culture Publishing House, 1993), pp. 26-27.

most important cities of Suvannabhumi and it became an active center for the propagation of the Buddha's teachings.¹⁵ The Thaton area of Burma was claimed as the capital of Suvannabhūmi, where the Sona and Uttara Theras preached the Brahmajāla Sutta.¹⁶ Of course, what we all can believe is that the main duty of the two Theras who came to Suvannabhumi was to propagate Theravāda Dhamma and it is impossible to imagine that it happened only at one place. It is sure that the two Theras went to many other places to preach the Dhamma. This leads to the believe that Phnom Pathe (mountain which the two Theras had left) in Southern Vietnam of today is one of the places where the two elders: Sonathera and Uttarathera left their footprints.

2.3 Buddhism under the Different Schools in Vietnam

There are nine schools of Buddhism in Vietnam, but only three of them are more common knowing. Those are Mahāyāna, Theravāda and the Mendicant sects. The researcher is not going to study about Mendicant sect, because it has been established in Vietnam, and its principle also follows the Mahāyāna doctrine.¹⁷ Therefore, the researcher only focuses on Mahāyāna and Theravāda schools, and then classifies Theravāda school into two systems. Those are Khmer Theravāda Buddhism and Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism as they have appeared since the past to present.

2.3.1 Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam

In ancient time, Northern Vietnam had been part of the Chinese Empire for many centuries, and probably Mahāyāna Buddhism was introduced to Northern Vietnam in the first century C.E.¹⁸ Other source it was said that Mahāyāna Buddhism which is one pattern of the other South-East Asian countries was influenced along with Chinese tradition, custom and culture for a long time ago. Especially in the north of Vietnam, and around the 10th century after political independence of Vietnam was

¹⁵P.A. Payutto, **Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn_vidyalaya Press, 2548/2005), p. 24.

¹⁶Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar: A Short History**, (Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p. 27.

¹⁷Kỳ Kheo Thiện Minh, op cit., p. 125.

¹⁸Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 2.

won.¹⁹ In other way, due to the geographical location of Vietnam, it gave advantage to traffic of merchants and missionaries by the sea road between South-East Asia and India. Therefore, Buddhist missionaries, merchants travelled easily from India to Vietnam and other South- East Asia countries. In addition, according to history of Buddhism in Vietnam the four Buddhist monks from different countries, namely; Mou-Po (Chinese monk), and Indian monks as Khuong-Tang Hoi (Ka'ng-Seng-Hui), Ma-Ha-Ky-Vuc (Jīvaka) and Chi-Cuong-Luong-Tiep (Kālasivi) propagated Dhamma from the end of second century to the beginning of the third century.²⁰ Therefore, the most important thing, Vietnamese Buddhism developed and propagated the characteristic forms of A-Ham (āgama) tradition (second century), the Thien (Ch'an), tradition (sixth century), and Pure Land School. That is the reasons that Mahāyāna Buddhism is one part of the maturity in movement of history of Buddhism to unite many schools in reinterpretations of fundamental religious ideals, particularly it is based upon the beliefs and the values of feature Buddhism. So, it called Northern Buddhism, and its form of Buddhism as in Tibet, Japan, Korea, and China.²¹

The influence of Buddhism on the society has manifested itself in many ways. In the field of literature, the Mahāyāna Buddhist texts have been translated into the Vietnamese language. Simultaneously, Buddhist literary works were composed by Vietnamese monks and nuns, and Buddhist scholars to transmit Buddhist thought to the people. Through these works, the people were taught to understand Buddhist notions concerning the causes of suffering and its cessation.²²

2.3.2 Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam

The Southern Vietnam was once a part of Khmer Empire where Theravāda Buddhism was practiced by the Khmer people. The Southern

¹⁹ Andrew Skilton, op cit., p. 159.

²⁰ ĐĐ. TS, Thích Quang Thanh, **Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Nam Tông Việt Nam**, (A History of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam), (Phuong Dong: Publishing House, 2011), p. 14.

²¹ Ven. Minh Khanh Kim, Kalyāṇayāno, "**A Comparative Study of Rites and Rituals between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam**", M.A Thesis, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University 2014), p. 7.

²² Nguyễn Tài Thu et al, **Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam** (A History of of Vietnamese Buddhism), (Ha Noi: Science and Society Publishing House, 1988), p. 308.

Vietnam is comprised of many provinces in the Southwest, they are Long An, Tieng Giang, An Giang, An Giang, Kien Giang, Dong Phap, Can Tho, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Minh Hai, Vinh long, Benh Tre and Tra Vinh. It can be called the Mekong Delta which was a territory of the Khmer Empire.²³ However, there are more than one sect of Theravāda Buddhism in this land. Those Khmer Theravāda Buddhism and Vietnamese or Kinh Theravāda Buddhism. The researcher is going to trace on both sects in detail.

2.3.2.1 Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam

Unfortunately, the Buddhist scholars around the world know little of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Southern Vietnam. Most of them immediately recognize that only the Khmer Buddhist in Cambodia are following Theravāda Buddhism. On the other hand, while talking about Buddhism in Vietnam, they know only of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, it should be presented accordantly.

The Khmer people in Southern Vietnam have followed a way of life based on Buddhist culture since the third century B.C. Its historical account had been mentioned in *Samantapasādikā*, Commentary of Vinayain Pāli literature thus: "After the Third Buddhist Council held in Pātaliputta of Magadha City of India in the third century B.C. the Theravāda Buddhism was brought into Suvāṇṇbhūmi by the two Venerable Elders, Soṇaathera and Uttarathera."²⁴ During that time the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam were one of races who habited in a land of the Southeast Asian countries which are believed to be location of Suvāṇṇbhūmi.

After the demise of the Emperor, Jayavarman VII, the Khmer Empire entered a long period of upheaval that led to its eventual disintegration. Several internal struggles for control, religious conflict and foreign interference were the main causes of the decline of the Khmer Empire. A large territory belonging to the Khmer Empire was occupied by foreign invasions; about a million of Khmer people were placed under the

²³Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., pp. 1-2.

²⁴Huot Tat, Samdej Breah Bodhivaṃsa, **Buddhasasana Nov Prades Kampuchea Sangkhep**, 2nd ed., (Phnom Penh: Buddhist Institute, 1970), p. 2.

domination of other races. Particularly, the Mekong Delta as a large territory inhabited by Khmer was occupied by Vietnamese during the Nguyen Dynasty in the seventeenth century C.E. (1620 C.E.) and placed Khmer people under Vietnamese suzerainty since the seventeenth century C.E. until the present time. There are approximately 1,315,356 Khmer people in Vietnam.²⁵ Since that time, these Khmer people have been cut off from the support and governance of the Khmer Empire. Thus, they struggled to live in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam with self-salvation and self-Khmer identity maintenance under the Vietnamese domination by themselves. In this case, they faced with a lot of obstacles to live there and practice Theravāda Buddhism. Even though they faced many difficult problems, the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam have never abandoned their religion which comes from a deep faith since ancient time. The doctrines of Buddhism have given them a clearer understanding about kamma and its result. It is a doctrine which leads one to real happiness and also has deep influence on the way of life, tradition, arts and culture of the Khmer people.

The Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam have been regarded as the vital, successful centers for maintaining and developing the Khmer cultures in their communities. Khmer Buddhist monks have been playing a crucial role in Khmer community for teaching the Buddha-Dhamma to Buddhist followers. There are 449 Khmer Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam. Since they were placed under the Vietnamese suzerainty, the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam have no any official educational foundation. Khmer Buddhist monks consider that it is their responsibility to educate their own Khmer minority people in Southern Vietnam, to know how to maintain their tradition, language, art and culture; to be a good person with morality, to abandon what is bad, to cultivate what is good as well as to help each other. That is why Khmer people take the Buddhist monasteries as the centers for all fields and the monks in all monasteries as the managers and the spiritual leaders of their communities.²⁶

²⁵Muni Thach, **Tạp Chí Văn Hoá Tỉnh Trà Vinh**, (The Magazine of Tra Vinh Culture, Article No. 33, 2004), (Tra Vinh: Department of Culture and Information), p. 19.

²⁶Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 5.

In a perspective of the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam, Theravāda Buddhism is the religion of the Khmer families. Therefore, Theravāda Buddhism had become the spirit of the Khmer people. It has undergone several changes in the changing history of the Khmer people. Even the enforce policy to assimilate the Khmer people of Nguyen Lord which compelled the Khmer people to live according to Vietnamese culture did not change that. It included forcing the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks to become Mahāyāna monks, and the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks were not allowed to learn Khmer language in monasteries. However, it is not for these reasons that the Theravāda tradition was made weak in the heart of the Khmer people. They love Theravāda teachings as if it were own blood and bones. Although facing serious difficulties, Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks patiently tried to teach the Dhamma to younger ages. Dhamma classes were opened secretly to care for Theravāda Buddhist monks living in Southern Vietnam.²⁷

As a result, Khmer Theravāda turned over a new page in history. Gradually, it developed together with other people in Vietnam. Nowadays, Dhamma classes are allowed by the Vietnamese government and even a Khmer Theravāda Academic for Buddhist Studies has been run in the city of Cần Thơ. It was in 2005, that the Vietnamese government allowed Khmer Theravāda monks in the Tra Vinh Province to go to Thailand for higher study and there are 60 Khmer monks who have been studying at MCU up to now.²⁸

2.3.2.2 Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam

In 1939, the first opportunity for the Vietnamese Mahāyāna Buddhist practitioners came when Vietnamese monks, who were ordained according to the Theravāda tradition in Cambodia, led by Ven. Hộ Tông (Vaṃsarkkhita), together with the Cambodian Sangharāja, the Most

²⁷Huỳnh Kim Lan, **Phật Giáo Theravāda Trong Đồng Bào Khmer Nam Bộ**, (Theravāda Buddhism in the Khmer Community, Southern Vietnam), **B.A Thesis**, (Ho Chi Minh: Vietnam Buddhist University, 2005), p. 25.

²⁸Mea Chea Huynh Kim Lan, op cit., p. 3.

Venerable Chuon Nath (Jotaññāno) and 30 Cambodian Buddhist monks, came to Vietnam to establish the Sīma Boundary for the first Vietnamese Theravāda monastery,²⁹ and then the Vietnamese Buddhist accepted this form of Buddhism. In 1957, the Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha Congregation was formally established and recognized by the government, and Ven. Hộ Tông was voted to be the first President or Saṅghanāyaka of Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism in Saigon. Therein Theravāda Buddhism has been spread to other parts of the country. Most of Theravāda monasteries for Kinh Buddhist ethnic were established, especially in the Southern and Central part of Vietnam.³⁰

Since that time, the Vietnamese people have gradually come to know Theravāda Buddhism. From that period onwards Vietnamese Theravāda monasteries were found, following the tradition of the Elders. Although Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism is very young in the Buddhist history, but it got soon recognized in the Buddhist World as was the Ven. Naga Mahā Thera Bửu Chơn, who was an outstanding Vietnamese Theravāda monk, and also a counselor in the World Buddhist Council. The Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhist Sangha Council took part in the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.³¹ Nowadays, the Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism has spread deeper and bigger in the Vietnamese society. Many Vietnamese families now practice Theravāda Buddhism as their own traditional religion. A lot of Vietnamese children have been trained in accordance with the Theravāda tradition. For that reason, they love the Theravāda tradition very deeply. Wherever, Vietnamese people go, they always keep their own Theravāda tradition. People can see many Vietnamese Theravāda monasteries have been built in many parts of Southern Vietnam since 1939.³²

²⁹Tỳ Kheo Thiện Minh, **Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Nam Tông Việt Nam**, (History of Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism) **B.A Thesis** (Ho Chi Minh: Vietnamese Buddhist University, 1996), p. 38.

³⁰Ibid., p. 39.

³¹Nguyễn Văn Sáu, **Bước Đầu Tìm Hiểu Phật Giáo Nam Tông Việt Nam**, (A Primary Study of Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam), (Na Noi: Religious Publishing House, 2007), p. 56.

³²Mea Chea Huynh Kim Lan, op cit., p. 4.

2.4 Buddhism Integrating with the Way of Life of Khmer people in the Mekong Delta River

Tra Vinh is a provincial city in Southern Vietnam and it is also the capital of the Province. It is located in the Mekong Delta region which is in the Southern part of Vietnam. The city has many famous Khmer monasteries, tradition and culture which connect to the way of Buddhist practice, due to the large number of Khmer Krom, Khmer people there. The name of the city in Khmer is Preah Trapeang (ព្រះត្រៃព័ង្ស), Today, its name in Khmer as Preah Trapeang still continuous to call by some Khmer people, but some are called in official name as Tra Vinh instead.³³

Tra Vinh is subdivided into eight districts namely: Cang Long, Cau Ke, Cau Ngang, Chau Thanh, Duyen Hai, Tieu Can, and Tra Cu, and one provincial city which is named Tra Vinh Capital. There are at least three ethnic groups living together peacefully in Tra Vinh. They are Vietnamese, Khmer people and Chinese. Khmer Krom ethnic group is partly members of the old Khmer Empire who are endowed with the belief of Buddhism, later divided under political and historical turmoil.³⁴

Khmer monasteries in Tra Vinh Province are not only the fundamental center of religious and social activities, but it is also the places for Buddhist education and propagation of the Pāli Canon, the teachings of the Lord Buddha and Khmer literature. Khmer people have been grown up with Buddhist morality and most of them believe in Buddhism from generation to generation. By the contribution of monasteries, Khmer Buddhists could protect their native tradition and culture, and classes of Dhamma and Khmer literature have been running for monks, nuns and lay Buddhists' children up to now. Monasteries have been officially recognized by Vietnam Government.³⁵ In the perspective of Khmer people, they are considered monasteries as the schools for their generation, and their children are real effected by Buddhist teachings.

³³**Tra Vinh- A provincial overview:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trà_Vinh [5 October, 2016].

³⁴**Tra Vinh Province-A provincial overview:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trà_Vinh_Province [5 October, 2016].

³⁵Mea Chea Huynh Kim Lan, op cit., p. 70.

According to an actual situation of Vietnam war, Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks in Tra Vinh have contributed to the society in various ways. The Khmer monks participated strongly in keeping their native culture and identity, and also were the brotherhood of the Vietnamese to fight with France and America's regimes for the purpose of the National Independence.³⁶ When the war in Vietnam got freedom, the monks have gone back to maintain their duties as the sons of the Lord Buddha to teach the lay disciples about the core teachings of the Buddha up to now. Some monks keep in action to work for social welfare to reduce the suffering of the poor. To conclude, all social activities of Theravāda Buddhist monks in Tra Vinh have made their society a better form of living in the way of life.

All Khmer parents feel very happy when their children are well educated persons with knowledge and good moral conduct. This is significant goal of the Buddhist education for social development. Having good knowledge of the world and life, they can lead their lives of prosperity and perform whatever actions with perfect achievement in accordance with their individual ways. Khmer children have been trained to balance between both the good knowledge and conduct. According to the perspective of Khmer people, they believe that their children have to qualify with wholesome deed to be the useful and skillful citizen in the country of Socialist Republic of Vietnam.³⁷

2.5 Concluding Remarks

Buddhism came to Vietnam on very early days of national history. The introduction of Buddhism into Vietnam was rather early in comparison with other countries in this region. It entered Vietnam through a peaceful way, either directly from China and India, or via Cambodia during the 3rd century B.C. Vietnam Buddhism converges both Mahāyāna which came from the North and Theravāda which came from the South schools, and had experienced influence from the ways of life of Kinh and Khmer ethnics. In its history of nearly 20 centuries with its apex lasting

³⁶Ibid., p. 41.

³⁷Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 46.

from the 10th to 15th centuries, Vietnamese Buddhism has built a patriotic tradition with strong attachment to the nation, national protection, security for people and identifies of the ethnic groups throughout Vietnam. At the same time, it has contribution to the development of the national culture, mind-set, morality, education and lifestyle.

Currently, monks, nuns, and Buddhist followers from all over Vietnam are rallied in the Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation operating under the motto "Dhamma-Nation-Socialism". It is making important contributions to the renewal process of the nation, building for itself great prestige and exerting impact on Buddhism in this region. It is Vietnam only, the land both schools of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism matching together for the benefits of others.

Tra Vinh Province is the land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism. Khmer people who are endowed with the teachings of the Lord Buddha are the potential factors to maintaining peace among the different ethnic groups of Vietnamese, Khmer Krom and Chinese in the particular location, even if they were affected by the political and historical turmoil. Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monasteries play very important role in training the children of Khmer community including religious works, social activities, engaged Buddhism, maintaining Khmer culture and so forth. The members of Khmer monks were really engaged with social welfare during the Vietnam war fighting for the freedom of nation and the survival of social civilization. One more important thing, Khmer generation can reach their goals and dreams such as knowledge of the world and life and good conduct to be the useful citizens of Tra Vinh Province under the training of Theravāda Buddhist educational system.

Chapter III

The Development of Khmer Theravāda Educational Administration

At present, the Theravāda Buddhist education System in Southern Vietnam has been increasingly developed by two systems of Dhamma studies, the Khmer Theravāda Buddhism and Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism. This is because of the different language and the different management of each region.

The Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Studies in Southern Vietnam is referred to the study programs of Dhamma Vinaya and Pāli school and Buddhist studies undergraduate school. The studies programs are classified into three degrees. They are Primary Degree program for four years, Secondary Degree program for three years and Bachelor Degree program for four years. There are three main subjects namely Khmer Studies, Khmer Theravāda Educational Administration.

In Khmer Buddhism, there are a lot of advantages to open Dhamma classes for a large number of monks. The tradition to study has been practiced for a long time. According to the report on the expanding work, the resolution of Conferences of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhism at the Bạc Liêu province on, Oct 6, 2008, included the Khmer Theravāda Academic Studies on Buddhism. This was officially established with the support of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and the government. This is the fourth Buddhist Academy in Vietnam, which is reserved for Khmer Theravāda Buddhism. It was held in CanTho City and the Most Venerable Danh Nhuong was appointed the first Rector on Dec 06 2006. This academy was presented provisionally at Wat Bodhisomrom, Chau Van Liem Ward, in the O Mon District at Can tho City. At present, there are 69 Khmer monk students of the second year (2008-2009), in class I of the 4 year period (2007- 2011). Besides, there is an increase of higher studies by Khmer monks at University level.

The Pāli Dhamma classes of the lower level were also consolidated³⁸. In addition, almost all Khmer temples always hold Khmer language classes for children and students of the Khmer people in each region. It makes the development of the national tradition better and also increases the intellectual standard of the people in Vietnam. The Theravāda Buddhist education System in Southern Vietnam The official includes:

Pāli levels : 7 years (Intermediate level 4 years) Class I : Class II : Class III : Class IV. (Secondary school 3 years) Class V : Class VI : Class VII and University 4 years

The success of the Theravāda Buddhist education System in Southern Vietnam, Buddhist classes contributed well to the education plan for the monk's of the Khmer Buddhist education System in southern vietnam. Besides, members of the Sangha of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhism were educated in the Theravāda countries: Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India. In Thailand there were 96 monks studying in the MCU and another university 44 monks and an additional 30 monks were studying Pāli in Thailand. This was a golden opportunity for the development of Theravāda Buddhism in the future.

After graduating from the Vietnam Buddhist University, they can choose a higher study in India, Thailand, Myanmar, or Sri Lanka. Some of them take part in social activities. Besides, when the Khmer Theravāda monks who are studying abroad will return to their homeland they will increase the number of members of the Theravāda Buddhist University (Intermediate level) at Cantho city.

Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism does not have any opportunity to develop the education system of schools. Seeing this disadvantage, the monks of Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism attend classes at the Vietnam Buddhist University and study Theravāda Buddhism's traditional doctrine at Theravāda temples.

³⁸"**Giáo Hội Phật Giáo Việt Nam, Hội Đồng Trị Sự, Báo Cáo**", The Report about Summary of Buddhist Works of term of office V(2002-2007) and the Programme of Buddhist Works of Term VI (2007-2012) of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,op cit., p.25

3.1 Contemporary Situation of Buddhist Educational System of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Studies

Vietnam is a Country which gives an important role to educational system in Southeast Asian Nations. According to the "Socio-economic Development Plan 2006-2010" and the "Resolution on Comprehensive and Fundamental Reform of Higher Education in Vietnam 2006-2020 (No. 14/2005)", Vietnam has set the future goals and the following targets for higher education:

Increasing enrollment in universities and colleges by 10 percent annually, to reach a level of 200 students for 10,000 populations by 2010 and 450 students per 10,000 populations by 2020;

Revenue from science and technology activities increased to 15 percent of total university revenue by 2010, and to 25 percent by 2020;

Proportion of university teaching staff with master level degrees increased to 40 percent by 2010, and to 60 percent by 2020;

Proportion of university teaching staff with doctoral level degrees increased to 25 percent by 2010, and to 35 percent by 2020;

Ratio of university students to teaching staff reduces to 20:1 by 2020;

Encouraging the establishing of private institutions, including high quality, accredited and 100 economic managements; encouraging foreign scientific and educational experts and Vietnamese expatriates to teach in Vietnam.³⁹

However, the government of Socialist of Vietnam will be faced with the challenge of finding financial resource and getting continual supportive and consistent policies over time to achieve the goals set out. The researcher has supposed that the existence of the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam could help the goal of government getting success in advance.

³⁹"A Report of Meeting of Ready Preparation for AEC", on September 16-17, at a Meeting Hold: Pannanupheap, Mahamakutarajvidyalaya, p. 118.

The Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam is currently faced with a series of challenges leading to the failure or the limitation of its role. So, the academic quality of the Buddhist education needs to be reviewed. Quality in any monastic and higher educational systems are a multidimensional concept. Its assessment should take into account the quality of students, teachers, infrastructure, teaching methods, curriculum, assessment and learning resources. These aspects should be examined fully when doing the research on the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam. However, through the literature review done by the researcher, it was found that no systematic examination on quality measure for The Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam has been done. So, the purpose of this research is to review all quality aspects of the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam. On the other hand, the researcher has to consider what has been available and what needs to be improved upon. In this way, this research looked at some of the shortcomings that occurred in the past, some of which extended to the present then came up with the proposed solutions. The research methods used were based on the secondary source analysis mainly. If properly done, the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam can meet international standards, fulfil its role and more importantly can transcend the purely academic field. It means that the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist studies in Southern Vietnam at a higher level must firstly bring students to satisfy themselves and really understand Buddhism then get the personal liberation by practicing the Buddha's teachings throughout one's whole life.

There are Khmer Theravāda monasteries in the whole region of Southern Vietnam.⁴⁰ Most of them uses Khmer language program in teaching, and a few schools and institutes use bilingual language as well.

⁴⁰Mea Chea Huynh Kim Lan, op cit., p. 93.

The following table shows a list of Khmer Theravāda monasteries in Southern Vietnam.

A List of Khmer Theravāda Monasteries in Southern Vietnam		
No.	Name of City/Province	Number of Monastery
01	Ho Chi Minh City	02
02	An Giang	64
03	Ba Ria Vung Tau	01
04	Bac Lieu	22
05	Binh Phuoc	03
06	Ca Mau	07
07	Can Tho	12
08	Dong Nai	01
09	Hau Giang	15
10	Kieng Giang	74
11	Soc Trang	92
12	Tra Vinh	142
13	Vinh Long	13
14	Tay Ninh	01
Total		449

3.2 The System of Buddhist Monastic School

Because of the limitation of time in research, the researcher focuses on the local places which have the big amount of Khmer Theravāda monasteries as such Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh and others concerned.

3.2.1 Buddhist Monastic School of Bac Lieu Province

Bac Lieu is a province of Vietnam. It is a coastal province, and situated in the Mekong Delta region of the southern part of the country. It is the rich of economic source. The most important parts of Bac Lieu are rice farming, fishing, food processing, and clothing manufacturing. There are three different kinds of ethnic, Vietnamese, Khmer and Chinese living

in unity and happiness together.⁴¹ After the Fall of Saigon, April 30, 1975 Bac Lieu and Ca Mau Provinces were merged into one new entity called Minh Hai Province. Although it is located in Vietnam, many years ago this land was a part of the Khmer Empire which ruled most of Indochina many centuries ago. It is still home to many ethnic Khmer people. In 1996, Minh Hai Province was split into two, with the northeast becoming Bac Lieu Province and the Southeast becoming Ca Mau Province. The most of Khmer Buddhists there believe in holy abidings or sublime states of mind (Brahmavihāra).⁴²

Bac Lieu recently has 22 monasteries and 06 places for chanting in Khmer Theravāda Buddhism (Salaten), having 284 Buddhist monks including 88 monks and 164 novices, having classified the position for monk in the province clearly: preceptor 02, post-preceptor 05 and abbot 25. The activities of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Elementary Buddhist studies of Bac Lieu have 07 monasteries such as Wat Kim Cau and Wat Xiem Can in Bac Lieu Town, Wat Cai Gia Cu and Wat Cu Lao in Vinh Loi District, Wat Hoa Binh Moi and Wat Hoa Binh Cu in Hoa Binh District, Wat Kos Thum in Hong Dan District. Today, there are 180 Buddhist students in the province studying the following programs:⁴³

- Pāli-Vinaya classes I, II, III include 150 Buddhist students.

- Buddhist students who are studying outside the province: having five monks studying in B.A. Degree in Can Tho City; some monks studying in College and one other monk studying in B.A. of Buddhist Studies in Ho Chi Minh City, three monks studying in Pāli Supplementary School of Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang Province, five monks studying in Pāli-Khmer School in Elementary level in Tra Vinh Province. Totally there are 15 monks who are doing Buddhist studies, college and Buddhist university outside Bac Lieu Province.

During ten years ago (2004-2014), students got graduation in the total of 505 numbers.⁴⁴ The below table showed the increasing and

⁴¹Bac Lieu Provincial Buddhist Sangha in Khmer Theravāda Buddhism, "A Report of Summary of Buddhist Acting Task, 2004-2014", on August 27, 2014, p. 1.

⁴²Ibid., p. 2.

⁴³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

decreasing rating of Pāli-Vinaya III (Class Vinaya Eka) who were graduated in 10 years' assessment:

Year/Vinaya III	Amount	Monk/Bac Lieu Province
2004	57	monks
2005	48	monks
2006	46	monks
2007	47	monks
2008	48	monks
2009	68	monks
2010	56	monks
2011	36	monks
2012	39	monks
2013	29	monks
2014	35	monks

- That is totally two monks graduated higher education, 14 monks graduated B.A. Degree, 15 monks finished Pāli Supplementary School in Southern Vietnam, 474 monks had passed diploma Buddhist monastic schools in the province and outside provinces.

- Monasteries had opened primary school for children of Khmer Buddhists from grade 1st to grade 5th with an amount of 11, 250, 000 pupils who were joining classes of Khmer language on three-months vocation.

- Getting 11 dozens of text books which equal to 5, 357 books from the Vietnamese Government.

- Getting financial support 1, 857, 565, 000 VND (from the government for the field of education in Khmer language.

After I had finished the courses of Pāli-Vinaya III, students can go to study at Secondary Buddhist monastic school in Tra Vinh Province, and Pāli Supplementary School of Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang Province. Some students can continue their study at Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh, but it is very rare to do that. These are opportunities to maintain the identity of Khmer ethnic and to follow the Buddhist way of life, and it

is more important thing a study of Khmer-Buddhist studies can lead monks and Khmer youth to the brighten future to compare with other citizen in the World. Based on the belief of holy abiding or subline states of mind (Brahmavihāra), Khmer Bac Lieu can share the unity and happiness with other Vietnamese and Chinese ethnics.

3.2.2 Buddhist Monastic School of Tra Vinh Province

Tra Vinh is a provincial city in Vietnam. It is the capital of the Tra Vinh. It is located in the Mekong Delta region, which is in the Southern part of Vietnam. The city has many famous Khmer monasteries. Under the Republic of Vietnam, it was the provincial capital of a province with a population of 1,012,000, having three different ethnics, Vietnamese, Khmer and Chinese has lived unity, happiness and helpfulness in peace. In the province has 30 percent of Khmer ethnic and 142 Khmer Theravāda monasteries. Each annual year, there are 3,000 to 3,500 Khmer Theravāda monks and novices. The name of the city in Khmer is Preah Trapeang (ព្រះត្រៃព័ង្ស), Government Resolution No. 11/NQ-CP 04/03/2010 established the city of Tra Vinh with an area of 6,803.5 hectares and a population of 131,360 inhabitants and 10 administrative units.⁴⁵

Based on ratio of the early 2013, the sum of monks and novices in B.C. 2557 is 3, 616 monks and novices. Those are the total of 34 preceptors, 47 post-preceptors, 246 abbots, 1, 602 monks, and 1, 687 novices.⁴⁶ For an annual year, there are about 500 to 800 Khmer young people asking a permissions entering Khmer Theravāda monasteries to become new monkhood, which following the Khmer tradition, and about 300 to 400 monks and novices leaving the monkhood as well. Furthermore, each year Khmer Theravāda monasteries has opened 1,000 to 1,500 the Buddhist meditation courses for the Buddhist practitioners. In 2011-2012, Wat Bhisay, Cang Long District had been accepted from the center of religious ministry to run the seven day Buddhist meditation retreats, which

⁴⁵The Great Seminar of Loving-National United Buddhist Sangha of Tra Vinh Province, official term VI (2013-2018), p. 10.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 10.

had 128 practitioners joining the course. Each month, there are about 7,050 laities conducting the eight precepts.⁴⁷

In 2013, there are 99 from other cities and provinces dwelling in Tra Vinh to study Pāli-Khmer program in monastic schools, monks from Tra Vinh Province who are studying in Ho Chi Minh City with an amount of 03, in Can Tho City with an amount of 13, in Soc Trang with an amount of 26, in Thailand with an amount of 64, and Canada with an amount of 02.⁴⁸

Because of the demand of Khmer Theravāda's education and its changing in the modern life, the loving-national united Buddhist Sangha has upgraded the Pāli-Khmer and methodology for supplying their demand. Under the administration of the loving-national united Buddhist Sangha of Tra Vinh which cooperated with the levels of units, and the abbots and laities managing monasteries in the province established Buddhist monastic primary school for Khmer children who wish to learn Khmer language in three months on vacation from the official school in Vietnam.

- From 2009, there are 801 classes of Buddhist monastic primary school, having 19,345 Buddhist monk and laity students and 891 monk and laity teachers, to 2013, there are 923 classes with 20,019 students, and 925 teachers. It increases 2,121 students as comparing to the previous term.

- From 2009, there are 76 classes of Elementary Buddhist Studies, having 2,402 students which include both monks and laities, 1,201 teachers which include both monks and laities, to 2013, there are 99 classes with 2,597 students and 1,253 teachers. It increases 727 students as comparing to the previous term.

- From 2009, there are 10 classes of Secondary, with 198 students and 99 teachers or lecturers, to 2013, there are 13 classes with 396 students and 136 teachers or lecturers. It increases 102 students as comparing to the previous term.

Furthermore, Buddhist monks in the province have undertaken more knowledge at high school, colleges, universities including Buddhist institutes such as 11 monks studying Buddhist Studies at university of

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 11.

ethnic, university of social sciences and humanities of Ho Chi Minh City opening at policy school in Tra Vinh, 20 monks studying at the college which taken a major of English literature, 11 monks studying at the college which taken a major of Khmer culture in Southern Vietnam, 13 monks studying at college-university of Khmer literature, 35 monks studying at the university of law, 13 monks studying at the university of IT, 11 monks studying Buddhist Studies at Khmer Theravāda Institute in Can Tho City, 01 monk studying Buddhist Studies at Van Hanh Buddhist university in Ho Chi Minh City, 66 studying Buddhist Studies at MCU, Thailand, and 36 monks studying at Pāli Supplementary School of Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang.⁴⁹ The following table is showing ratio of Buddhist monastic school's activities from 2005 up to 2014.⁵⁰

A. Primary School: Khmer Language Classes in Three Months on Vacation

Year	Classroom/ Class	Monks/Pupils	Teachers	Result/ Unit-%
2005	497	12,028	577	98.5
2006	528	13,745	540	97.23
2007	713	19,854	750	99.15
2008	816	19,945	860	97.5
2009	712	19,754	740	97.15
2010	815	19,845	850	98.5
2011	911	20,756	919	99.5
2012	923	21,845	923	88.45
2013	923	20,010	923	97.5
2014	947	22,127	715	98.7

B. Buddhist Studies in Elementary Level: Buddhist Monastic School in Full Time Studies

Year	Classroom/Class	Monks/Pupils	Teachers	Result/Unit-%
2005	89	1,911	801	88.45
2006	85	1,837	793	97.19

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁰Khmer Theravāda Buddhism of Tra Vinh (August 27, 2014), "A Report of Summary of Ten Years in Applying the Resolution under Khmer Theravāda Buddhism VI at An Giang Province ". p. 4-5.

2007	90	1,784	1,077	88.45
2008	96	2,467	1,252	87.75
2009	89	1,764	1,067	87.45
2010	96	2,067	1,252	97.5
2011	97	2,461	1,154	99.75
2012	98	2,597	1,352	88.45
2013	98	2,789	739	97.5
2014	96	2,897	1,125	95.3

C. Buddhist Studies in Secondary Level: Buddhist Monastic School in Full Time Study

Year	Classroom/Class	Monks/Pupils	Teachers	Result/Unit-%
2005	09	241	75	98.5
2006	08	238	73	99.57
2007	10	254	99	99.5
2008	11	261	109	98.75
2009	12	274	102	99
2010	11	261	109	99.5
2011	13	367	130	98.5
2012	13	395	132	97.5
2013	13	347	152	98.5
2014	14	439	140	98.2

The accurate data collected in ten years above is a remarkable success in Buddhist educational administration of loving-national united Buddhist Sangha under the support of other units in the province. Furthermore, Tra Vinh Provincial Council has set up the target curriculum for Buddhist Monastic School in the zone of the province sufficiently. In this sector, the research would present only a curriculum of the Buddhist Monastic School in Elementary much more than others. The reason is (1) for Buddhist monastic school's curriculum in primary level takes only three months on vacation of children who have learnt at the official school of Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This course is following the text books which published in Cambodia, were imported from Cambodia to Vietnam. The purpose of these classes are to give the foundation of reading skill to new monks or novices, and Khmer children who are dwelling surround the

monasteries; and (2) Buddhist monastic school's curriculum in secondary level, the researcher is going to mention in the next section of Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh, because it is exactly the same to each other. A curriculum of Buddhist monastic school in secondary level differs from Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh as it doesn't follow Vietnamese Studies which have been taught in the official schools. Here is a curriculum of Buddhist monastic school in Elementary Level of Tra Vinh Province:⁵¹

A. First Year of Elementary Level:

Khmer Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	108 classes of year
03	Khmer Writing Skill	72 classes of year
04	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 6th)	108 classes of year

Buddhist Studies:

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	144 classes of year
02	Pāli Khmer Vocabulary	72 classes of year
03	Discipline of Novice	72 classes of year
04	Biography of the Buddha	72 classes of year
05	Religious Studies	72 classes of year

B. Second Year of Elementary Level:

- **Buddhist Studies:**

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
03	Khmer Writing Skill	72 classes of year
04	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 7th)	72 classes of year

⁵¹Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 96-99.

Buddhist Studies

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Dhammapada Translation (Vol. I, II)	72 classes of year
03	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72 classes of year
04	The Entrance to the Vinaya (Chp. 01 up to Chp. 10)	72 classes of year
05	Dhammavibhāga Explanation (Vol. I)	72 classes of year
06	Biography of the Buddha's Disciples	72 classes of year
07	Religious Studies (Part II)	72 classes of year

C. Third Year of Elementary Level:

Buddhist Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
03	Khmer Writing Skill	72 classes of year
04	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 8th)	72 classes of year

Buddhist Studies

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Dhammapada Translation(Vol. III, IV, V)	72 classes of year
03	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72 classes of year
04	The Entrance to the Vinaya (Chp. 11 up to Chp. 22)	72 classes of year
05	Dhammavibhāga Explanation (Vol. II)	72 classes of year
06	Biography of the Buddha's Disciples	72 classes of year
07	Question and Answer on Buddhism	72 classes of year

D. Fourth Year of Elementary Level:

- Buddhist Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
03	Khmer Writing Skill	72 classes of year
04	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72 classes of year

05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 9th)	72 classes of year
	Buddhist Studies	
01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Dhammapada Translation (VI, VII, VIII)	72 classes of year
03	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72 classes of year
04	The Entrance to the Vinaya (Chp. 23 up to Chp. 33)	
05	AbhiDhammatthasaṅgaha	72 classes of year
06	Buddhist Philosophy	72 classes of year
07	Jataka (the Previous Life of the Buddha)	72 classes of year

The Buddhist monastic school of Tra Vinh are comprised of two parts of study namely Khmer Studies and Buddhist Studies. The schedules of the Buddhist monastic classes in elementary level are provided in the morning and afternoon session, accepted students who are learning bilingual language program, Khmer program and Vietnamese program, they can be absent from afternoon session at monastic school. Students have to complete all courses of elementary level that consisted of 3,456 classes of the four academic years. At the end of the fourth academic year, students are required to write a elementary graduate examination held by Tra Vinh provincial Khmer Buddhist Council.⁵² Having graduated the elementary level of Buddhist Studies, students can continue to learn at secondary level of Buddhist Studies in the Buddhist monastic school in the province, either do an entrance examination to enter Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh in accordance with a certificate of grade 9th of Vietnamese program, or students can enter Pāli Supplementary School of Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang Province in accordance with a certificate of grade 5th of Vietnamese program. Those are the opportunity which Tra Vinh provincial Khmer Buddhist Council has created and designed for Khmer children and Khmer born Buddhist monks and novices.

⁵²Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 99.

3.3 Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh

According to the Resolution of People Affair in Tra Vinh (No. 459/QD-UBND/2014) on article 3, Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh has a full name in Khmer as "សាលាមធ្យមសិក្សាបាលី-ខ្មែរ", and a full name in Vietnamese as "Trường Trung Cấp Pāli-Khmer".⁵³ It is located at Wat Kompong, Le Loi Road #220, Village #2, District #1, Tra Vinh City, Tra Vinh Province. Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh has planned to open classes for the course 1 (2014-2016) as following:⁵⁴

No.	Classes	Time Limited	Students' Register until 2016/Unit-Class		
			Year Academic 2014-2015	Year Academic 2015-2016	Year Academic 2016-2017
01	Grade 10th	01 year	02	02	02
02	Grade 11th	01 year	0	02	02
03	Grade 12th	01 year	0	0	02
Total		03 years	02	04	06

All students, after having finished grade 9th in Buddhist Studies throughout the monastic school in Tra Vinh Province and grade 9th in secondary school, can do an entrance examination for entering Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh. An amount of students is not over 40 students per class. The total of classes in the first course (2014-2016) is 06 classes with 240 students joining the course.

⁵³The People Affair of Tra Vinh, "A Proposal of Establishment of Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh", p. 2.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 5.

Buddhist studies of Khmer people in Tra Vinh Province refers to the study of Dhamma and Vinaya in Pāli and Khmer program in general. For a specific Pāli-Khmer Secondary School, students require to learn a mix-programs which include Buddhist Studies and official subjects of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The following shows the curriculum of Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh in the whole course 1 in an amount of three academic years:⁵⁵

A. Academic Year 2014-2015:

Khmer Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	108 classes of year
03	Khmer Poem Composing	108 classes of year
04	Khmer Literature	108 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 10th)	108 classes of year

Buddhist Studies:

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation (Part I, II)	144 classes of year
03	Bhikkhupātimokkha (from Introduction up to Saṅghādisesa)	72 classes of year
04	Religious Studies (Vol. I)	72 classes of year

Vietnamese Studies: Pāli-Khmer Secondary School follows exactly the same subjects that are taught in grade 10th of Secondary school in Vietnam.

B. Academic Year 2015-2016:

- Khmer Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	108 classes of year
03	Khmer Poem Composing	108 classes of year

⁵⁵Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmuni, op cit., p. 100-101.

04	Khmer Literature	108 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 11th)	108 classes of year

Buddhist Studies:

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation (Part II, III)	144 classes of year
03	Bhikkhupātimokkha (from Aniyata up to Nissaggiya Pācittīya)	72 classes of year
04	Religious Studies (Vol. II)	72 classes of year

Vietnamese Studies: Pāli-Khmer Secondary School follows exactly the same subjects that are taught in grade 11th of Secondary School in Vietnam.

C. Academic Year 2016-2017:

Khmer Studies:

01	Khmer Dictation	72 classes of year
02	Khmer Grammar in Use	108 classes of year
03	Khmer Poem Composing	108 classes of year
04	Khmer Literature	108 classes of year
05	Cambodian Mathematics (Grade 12th)	108 classes of year

Buddhist Studies:

01	Pāli Grammar in Use	72 classes of year
02	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation (Part III, IV)	144 classes of year
03	Bhikkhupātimokkha (from Sudhika Pācittīya up to Adhikarana Samatha)	72 classes of year
04	Religious Studies (Vol. III)	72 classes of year

Vietnamese Studies: Pāli-Khmer Secondary School follows exactly the same subjects that are taught in grade 12th of High School in Vietnam.

Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh are comprised of three parts namely Khmer Studies, Buddhist Studies and Vietnamese Studies. Students have to complete all courses provided by the school. At the end of the course, students are required to write a secondary graduate examination held by Tra Vinh Education Affair, and Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh.⁵⁶ After students have graduated from this school, they get either a certificate of high school in Vietnam, or a certificate of 12th Pāli-Khmer program which usually interpreted as "Buddhist Diploma" when applied to enter MCU, Thailand. They can go to any college or university in the country or country abroad. These are a very big opportunity for students to enrich their knowledge to be international standard.

The List of Theravāda Temples in Vietnam

Zones		Temples	
		Khmer	Vietnamese
1	Hồ Chí Minh City	02	23
2	An Giang	64	00
3	Bà Rịa Vũng Tàu	01	07
4	Bạc Liêu	22	00
5	Bến Tre	00	01
6	Bình Dương	00	03
7	Bình Định	00	01
8	Bình Phước	03	02
9	Cà Mau	07	00
10	Cần Thơ City	12	02
11	Đà Nẵng	0	01
12	DakLak	0	01
13	Đồng Nai	01	16
14	Hậu Giang	15	0
15	Huế City	0	06
16	Vĩnh Long	13	05
17	Kiên Giang	74	01
18	Khánh Hòa	0	01
19	Quảng Nam	0	02

⁵⁶Ven. Tran Sone, Paññāmoni, op cit., p. 101.

20	Sóc Trăng	92	0
21	Tiền Giang	0	04
22	Trà Vinh	142	01
23	Tay Ninh	01	0
	Total	449	77
		526	

3.4 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cần Thơ City

Although it has a different educational program in each province, the study at University is the same. Now the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Academies for Buddhist Studies has been in place Colleges has got. The following are the curriculums of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Academy for Buddhist Studies in Cần Thơ City:

The Curriculum of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University (Bachelor Level)

1. The First Year

A. Buddhist Studies: (20 periods per week, 4 weeks per month. Totally, 80 periods per month; 615 periods per year, 41 credit).

1. Thai Language I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

2. Sociology: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

3. Sankrit I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

4. Meditation I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

5. Pāli Prescribed Text I: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

6. Pāli Syntax I: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

7. Pāli Grammar I: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

8. History of Buddhism: (4 periods per week, 16 pers. month, 60 pers year, 4 credits)

9. Buddhist Basic Teaching (3 periods per week, 12 pers. month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

10. English I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

11. Religions Policy of Vietnam: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

12. Computer Science: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

13. Khmer Literature I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

14. Khmer Culture I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

B. Further Activitives: (2 pers. month, 18 pers. year) - The Activities of the Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation: Charter and Regulations.

**Table Credits of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho
City Degree Program: Bachelor Level - Buddhist Studies
(Academic first year)**

N0	Course Title	Credits
	Academic first year	
1	Thai Language I	3
2	Sociology	3
3	Sanskrit I	3
4	Meditation I	3
5	Pāli Prescribed Text I	2
6	Pāli Syntax I	2
7	Pāli Grammar I	2
8	History of Buddhism	4
9	Buddhist Basic Teaching	3
10	English I	3
11	Religions Policy of Vietnam	3
12	Computer Science	3
13	Khmer Literature I	3
14	Khmer Culture I	3
	Total	41

Classified System	
First Class	3.50 - 4.00
Seconde Class (Upper Division)	3.00 - 3.49
Seconde Class (Lower Division)	2.20 - 2.99
Third Class	2.00 - 2.19

Grade Point Average

A =4.00, B+ =3.50; B = 3.00; C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;
D+= 1.50; D = 1.00; F+ = 0.50; F = 0.00;

2. The Second Year

A. Buddhist Studies: (25 periods per week, 4 weeks per month. Totally, 100 periods per month; 885 periods per year, 59 credit).

1. Ho Chi Minh Thought: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits)

2. Thai Language II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

3. Ethnic Policy of Vietnam: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 0 credits)

4. Sankrit II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

5. Meditation II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

6. Pāli Prescribed Text II: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

7. Pāli Syntax II: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

8. Pāli Grammar II: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

9. Pāli Literature I: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

10. Buddhist Sects: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

11. Marxism Leninism: (5 periods per week, 20 periods per month, 75 pers year, 5 credits).

12. History of Vietnam: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

13. General Law: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

14. English II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

15. Buddhist Philosophy: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

16. Computer studies (MS Office): (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

17. Revolutionary Policy of CPV: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

18. Khmer Literature II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

19. Khmer Culture II: (4 periods per week, 16 periods per month, 60 pers year, 4 credits).

20. Abbidhamma: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

- Rūpa and Nibbāna. - AbhiDhamma and Vijñaptimatravāda.

B. Further Activitives: (2 pers. month, 18 pers. year) - The Activities of the Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation: Charter and Regulations.

Classified System	
First Class	3.50 - 4.00
Seconde Class (Upper Division)	3.00 - 3.49
Seconde Class (Lower Division)	2.20 - 2.99
Third Class	2.00 - 2.19

Grade Point Average

A =4.00, B+ =3.50; B = 3.00; C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;
D+= 1.50; D = 1.00; F+ = 0.50; F = 0.00;

**Table Credits of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho
City Degree Program: Bachelor Level - Buddhist Studies
(Academic Second year)**

No	Course Title	Credits
	Academic Second year	
1	Ho Chi Minh Thought	2
2	Thai Language II	3
3	Ethnic Policy of Vietnam	0
4	Sanskrit II	3
5	Meditation II	3
6	Pāli Prescribed Text II	3
7	Pāli Syntax II	3
8	Pāli Grammar II	3
9	Pāli Literature I	3
10	Buddhist Sects	3
11	Marxism Leninism	5
12	History of Vietnam	3
13	General Law	3
14	English II	3
15	Buddhist Philosophy	3
16	Computer studies (MS Office)	3
17	Revolutionary Policy of CPV	3
18	Khmer Literature II	3
19	Khmer Culture II	4
20	Abbidhamma	3
	Total	59

Classified System	
First Class	3.50 - 4.00
Seconde Class (Upper Division)	3.00 - 3.49
Seconde Class (Lower Division)	2.20 - 2.99
Third Class	2.00 - 2.19

Grade Point Average

A =4.00, B+ =3.50; B = 3.00; C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;

D+= 1.50; D = 1.00; F+ = 0.50; F = 0.00;

3. The Third Year

A. Buddhist Studies: (20 periods per week, 4 weeks per month. Totally, 80 periods per month; 555 periods per year, 37 credit).

1. Logic: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

2. Thai Language III: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

3. Sankrit III: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

4. Religions Studies: (4 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 60 pers year, 4 credits).

5. Meditation III: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

6. Buddhist Social Thought: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

7. Pāli Prescribed Text III: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

8. Pāli Syntax III: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

9. Pāli Grammar III: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

10. Pāli Literature II: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

11. English III: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

12. Khmer Literature III: (3) (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

13. Buddhist Psychology: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

B. Further Activitives: (2 pers. month, 18 pers. year) - The Activities of the Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation: Charter and Regulations.

**Table Credits of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho
City Degree Program: Bachelor Level - Buddhist Studies
(Academic Third year)**

N0	Course Title	Credits
	Academic Third year	
1	Logic	3
2	Thai Language III	3
3	Sankrit III	3
4	Religions Studies	4
5	Meditation III	3
6	Buddhist Social Thought	3
7	Pāli Prescribed Text III	2
8	Pāli Syntax III	2
9	Pāli Grammar III	2
10	Pāli Literature II	3
11	English III	3
12	Khmer Literature III	3
13	Buddhist Psychology	3
	Total	37

Classified System	
First Class	3.50 - 4.00
Seconde Class (Upper Division)	3.00 - 3.49
Seconde Class (Lower Division)	2.20 - 2.99
Third Class	2.00 - 2.19

Grade Point Average

A =4.00, B+ =3.50; B = 3.00; C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;
D+= 1.50; D = 1.00; F+ = 0.50; F = 0.00;

4. The Fourth year

A. Buddhist Studies: (20 periods per week, 4 weeks per month. Totally, 80 periods per month; 765 periods per year, 51 credit).

1. Social Culture: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

2. Buddhist Culture: (4 periods per week, 16 periods per month, 60 pers year, 4 credits)

3. Thai Language IV: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

4. Sankrit IV: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

5. Meditation IV: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits)

6. Pāli Prescribed Text IV: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

7. Pāli Syntax IV: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

8. Pāli Grammar IV: (2 periods per week, 8 periods per month, 30 pers year, 2 credits).

9. Pāli Literature III: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

10. Civic Education: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

11. English IV: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

12. Science of Socialism: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 3 credits).

13. Psychology Defense Security: (3 periods per week, 12 periods per month, 45 pers year, 0 credits).

15. Essay (14 periods per week, 56 periods per month, 210 pers year, 14 credits)

B. Further Activities: (2 pers. month, 18 pers. year)

- The Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation: Introduction to 50 the Formal Structure of the Central Buddhist Congregation⁵⁷.

⁵⁷Ven. Dhammavamso, "The Growth of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam". Retrieved 30th July 2015, <http://atbu.org/node/35>.

**Table Credits of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho
City Degree Program: Bachelor Level - Buddhist Studies
(Academic Fourth year)**

N0	Course Titles	Credits
	Academic Fourth year	
1	Social Culture	3
2	Buddhist Culture	4
3	Thai Language IV	3
4	Sanskrit IV	3
5	Meditation IV	3
6	Pāli Prescribed Text IV	2
7	Pāli Syntax IV	2
8	Pāli Grammar IV	2
9	Pāli Literature III	3
10	Civic Education	3
11	English IV	3
12	Science of Socialism	3
13	Psychology	3
14	Defense Security	0
15	Essay	14
	Total	51

Classified System	
First Class	3.50 - 4.00
Second Class (Upper Division)	3.00 - 3.49
Second Class (Lower Division)	2.20 - 2.99
Third Class	2.00 - 2.19

Grade Point Average

A =4.00, B+ =3.50; B = 3.00; C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;
D+= 1.50; D = 1.00; F+ = 0.50; F = 0.00;

And of course, this is the Theravāda Buddhist College at the central region. Therefore, the monk students are all in the central region. In the South, Dhamma classes are still organized as before.

Education is a process of teaching, training and learning to improve knowledge and to develop skills. Here, the purpose of education by the Sangha of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam also aims at improving knowledge of the Theravāda doctrine and of developing skills of practice and propagation. Presently, what we can easily see, in the five Theravāda countries is that only males are ordained. Their common view is that men must be trained in moral principle of Buddhism during one's life. For the Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in southern in Vietnam, usually, males must be ordained about once in their lives. They either can live the religious life or can return to a layman life at anytime. It is an occasion to make merit in one's life and to offer it to their parents.

Besides, in southern Vietnam, if a Khmer male becomes a monk is the best way to learn Khmer language and the Dhamma, since Khmer temples are the linguistic and national cultural centers of the Khmer people. They learn the Dhamma, Pāli and the Khmer language. Therefore, joining a monk's life, Khmer males have a good condition to be trained in both the religion and in the knowledge of the Khmer culture. In language learning, is included and the national culture and language exist in the people's life. Recognizing these benefits, they always like entering the holy life. It is not only a duty but also is an honor in one's life. Whoever lives a long time in the holy life, the believers will greatly respect him. If he returns to a layman's life, he will become a member of the temple management. He contributes very diligently to the temple. He has a role of taking care of the monk's needs and of leading the believers in ceremonies. Summing up, the purpose of education of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam is to educate talent and virtue for the monks to preserve Theravāda Buddhism and training lay people, who have the ability to serve Buddhism and the nation. This also aims at educating citizen servicing societies. It contributes to have a good religion and world today and in the future. The Vietnamese people are different from others such as the Burmese, Khmer, Laotian and Singhalese, who have practiced Theravāda Buddhism as their

national religion. Vietnamese people came to Theravāda Buddhism by studying this Buddhist school, which they did not know before. Because the Vietnamese culture is influenced by Mahāyāna, They knew Buddhism only in the form of Mahāyāna. However, the teaching of the Buddha they have now realized is the system of mental training and not of only belief and worshipping. When studying the Theravāda doctrine, the Vietnamese came to understand the original teachings of the Buddha. They really received the ancient teachings as a true path of practice. In Vietnam, although fewer Vietnamese follow Theravāda Buddhism than other Buddhist sects, they deeply love the Theravāda doctrine and respect it as a magnetic needle leading to liberation. Therefore, they taught their off springs to follow Theravāda. Young disciples are trained according to the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. Gradually, the number Vietnamese who followed Theravāda Buddhism is increasing. For these reasons, the training of Sangha members has become important and necessary to keep and spread Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam. To learn the original teachings of Theravāda Buddhism, Vietnamese Theravāda monks usually go to Theravāda countries to learn the Dhamma. It is very clear that the purpose of educating the Vietnamese in Theravāda Buddhism is to spread the Dhamma, and to improve the knowledge of the Theravāda doctrine to develop Buddhism in the world.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

Education always plays very important role in Vietnam. The government of Socialist of Vietnam has set up the resolution to target the goal to increase the enrollment in higher education, to improve science and technology in university's workplace, to train the master and doctoral degrees for university teaching staff, to encourage the establishing of private institutions due to ten years from 2010 up to 2020. That is the hardest goal, because Vietnam is facing with the challenge of financial resource and getting continual supportive and so on. Look at the Buddhist educational system of Khmer Buddhist Studies in Southern Vietnam is also recently faced with a series of challenge leading to the failure of its

role. Therefore, the academic quality of the Khmer Buddhist educational system needs to be reviewed under the skillful of assessment into account the quality of students, teachers, infrastructure, teaching methods, curriculum, assessment and learning resources. However, because of time limitation, the researcher targets only on the activities of Buddhist monastic school in some common Buddhist province such as Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh and others concerned.

In the whole region of Southern Vietnam, it has 449 Khmer Buddhist monasteries. Bac Lieu Province recently has 22 Khmer monasteries, and six places for chanting on the Buddhist Holy Day. Based on the belief of holy abiding or sublime states of mind (Brahmavihāra), Khmer Bac Lieu can share the unity and happiness with other Vietnamese and Chinese ethnics. Bac Lieu Buddhist provincial council had opened seven classes of Buddhist Studies in elementary level which commonly called Pāli-Vinaya I, II, III in differential Khmer monasteries in the province. After I had passed the courses of Pāli-Vinaya III, students can go to study at Secondary Buddhist monastic school in Tra Vinh Province, and Pāli Supplementary School in Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang Province. Some students can continue their study at Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh, but it is very limited for students from other provinces taking enrollment. These are opportunities to maintain the identity as Khmer ethnic and to follow the Buddhist way of life, and it is more important thing a study of Khmer-Buddhist studies in Bac Lieu can help monks and Khmer youths connecting to other opportunities outside the local province.

Wherever has Khmer people, over there has monasteries built. because Buddhism is a Khmer religion in Southern Vietnam. In Tra Vinh, the population has reached 1,012,000 in accordance with 30 percent of Khmer Ethnic. There are 142 Khmer monasteries and Tra Vinh has 3,000 up to 3,500 Buddhist monks for an annual year. The Khmer Buddhist educational system of Tra Vinh Province has been divided into two specific parts:

(a) the Buddhist monastic school in primary, elementary, and secondary levels which focus on the study of Pāli-Khmer Buddhist Studies in the same course,

(b) Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh has been taught including Pāli-Khmer, Buddhist and Vietnamese studies mixing together.

After students had graduated Buddhist Studies in elementary level in the monastic school throughout Tra Vinh Province , they can apply for learning at Buddhist Studies in secondary level in the Buddhist monastic school in the same network, either do an entrance examination to enter Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh in accordance with a certificate of grade 9th of Vietnamese program, or students can enter Pāli Supplementary School of Southern Vietnam in Soc Trang Province in accordance with a certificate of grade 5th of Vietnamese program. Those are the big opportunity which Tra Vinh provincial Khmer Buddhist Sangha has created and designed for Khmer children and Khmer born Buddhist monks and novices.

For Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh, after students graduated from this school, they get either a certificate in high school, or a certificate of 12th Pāli-Khmer Buddhist studies which usually interpreted as "Buddhist Diploma" when applied to enter MCU, Thailand. Students holding a certificate in high school in accordance with a certificate in Buddhist Diploma of Pāli-Khmer Secondary School of Tra Vinh can continue their study at any college or university in the country or event abroad. These are a very big opportunity for students to vow to enrich their knowledge to be an international standard.

Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho city. The current has been throughed three courses:

Course I: Years (2007 - 2011) has 69 students studies, with 67 students had graduated (B.A). Total % is 97.10%.

Courses II: Years (2011 - 2015) has 29 students studies, with 29 students had graduated (B.A). Total % is 100%.

Course III: Years (2015 - 2019) has 25 students studying.

The system of education in the Sangha, the ordination name, These are similar to Theravāda monks in other Theravāda countries. They also practice in accordance with the Pāli Vinaya and study the Dhamma based on the Tipitaka. Specialy, they were Theravāda Buddhist Education System three levels.

- 1 Buddhist monastic school Elementary in Tra vinh province.
- 2 Pāli-Khmer Secondary School in Tra Vinh province.
- 3 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Can Tho city.

Chapter IV

The Contribution and Impact of Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam Toward the Khmer Society in Southern Vietnam

Apart from the impact on the Khmer culture and setting up the development of the Khmer civilization, Buddhism keeps on contributing a lot towards the Khmer society in Southern Vietnam. Generally, the significant factors of religious activities, culture and social welfare of the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam are established and maintained by Buddhists. Particularly, the fine arts organization, schooling, Buddhist dissemination, social work and environmental conservation are organized by Buddhists. They take Buddhist monasteries as the conventional centers and invite Buddhist monks as the leaders to run any project of Buddhist activities and social welfare of the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam.

4.1 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam to Monastery and Khmer Community in Southern Vietnam

Buddhism has been flourishing and developing in Khmer community in Southern Vietnam for more than 2,000 years. The Buddhist doctrines are taken as a Noble Refuge that can bring peace, happiness and progression to Khmer community in their daily lives. We can learn how the Khmer people practice Buddhism as well as depend on Buddhism through the essential relationship between the Buddhist monasteries and the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam as follows:

The social administration of the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam is the Buddhist organization. Usually, wherever there are more than a hundred families of Khmer people, they establish a monastery in that village for their members of the community to perform various meritorious deeds as well as to study and practice Buddhism. For this

purpose, they set up a Buddhist monastery community known as the Committee of Monastery and the villagers are placed under the guidance of the abbot and Committee of Monastery for religious activities and social activities. Actually each monastery has one Buddhist Community. All members of the community have the duty to support their monastery first of all while other monasteries can be supported in the sense he or she is a lay Buddhist in general. By establishing a Buddhist Community of a monastery, the Abbot of the monastery and the Committee of Monastery are able to know exactly the number of Buddhist followers belonging to each monastery. There are around 448 Khmer Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam.. These monasteries are the most significant centers that contribute immense benefits of religion and society depend on their communities.

4.1.1 The Monastery as a Center of Learning

At the center of all Khmer communities in Southern Vietnam is the monastery. By supporting the monks in the monastery, the laity contributes to the making and sharing the communal merits, the monastery in turn serves the community in part by serving as a center of learning. Khmer Buddhist monasteries have been regarded as the successful centers for studying various knowledge of Khmer literature (from basic to advanced), mathematics, carpentry, art and Buddhist studies. The program of this learning is generally known as Khmer Monastic Education. This program has never been regarded or supported by the Educational Ministry of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. However, the responsibility of this work has been placed with the Khmer Buddhist monks. Therefore, all Khmer Buddhist monasteries are requested to open a center of learning for their children's community to study their own mother language and other knowledge as well. For intellectual treasure conservation, the Khmer monasteries have to set up a monastic library to serve the need of learning and research of all local and international scholars. Thus each monastery has book shelves to preserve the significant scripture collection of Buddhism, such as the *Tipitaka* i.e. *Vinaya*, *Suttanta* and *AbhiDhamma* which are written in both languages, Pāli and Khmer. The original Pāli has been written in Khmer transliteration and in Khmer translation, especially

the collection of palm-leaf manuscripts are made by handwriting which is known as a unique documentary of ancient Khmer art. In addition the monastic libraries also collect Khmer and Vietnamese language printed material which contains general knowledge of education, sociology, science and agriculture etc. In so far, the monks act as the important providers for their community. They share many of the same duties and concerns to help the library profession around the world.

4.1.2 The Monastery as the Shelter of Khmer Students

In the sense of Buddhism as a religion for society, we can see that all Khmer Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam not only are the places for religious studies and practice, but also they are good places to serve the society in part of the contribution as a shelter of Khmer students. Therefore, all Khmer parents usually send their children to live in the monastery for moral conduct training, for learning Khmer literature and other knowledge under the compassionate instructions and care from the abbot and monks. Then, some of them ask for the ordination to be a novice and Bhikkhus as well. With this condition, they have a good opportunity to learn more about Buddhist studies and practice the Dhamma accordingly.

Many Khmer Buddhist monasteries are also regarded as the important centers to help residing and studying Khmer monks, novices and students who come from various distant villages of the southern Vietnam. Such as Wat Chandaraṅsey, Wat Bodhivong in Ho Chi Minh City, Wat Muniraṅsyārām (Munisaṅsey), Wat Bidūghosaraṅsey in Can Tho City, Wat Kheang in Soc Trang Province, Wat Munisākor Doem Ompil in Vinh Chau District of Soc Trang province,

Wat Bodhisālariaj Kompong and Wat Angkorrajapurey (Wat Aṅg) in Tra Vinh Province and so on. Those monks, novices and students are accepted to live in these monasteries and go to school in different field of studies of the Universities and Colleges. It is remarkable that many Khmer scholars who became ministers, officers, teachers, medical doctors, businessmen, engineers and architects used to live in the monasteries while they were following the courses of the Universities and Colleges. And this greatest attitude has been kept on from generation to generation up to present day.

4.2 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam to Monastery and the Khmer Fine Arts Organization

The Khmer fine arts in Southern Vietnam also have been included into multiple Vietnamese National culture. However, it has been maintained by the Khmer community only. Especially, the Buddhist monasteries have served as the conservation and training center of Khmer fine arts. Art generally is defined as technological knowledge created skillfully, sagely, dexterously, and expertly of man. These skills are dependent on constant training and experience. These skills include, craft, handicraft, sculpture, painting, modeling, and musician-ship and so on.

In Southern Vietnam, Khmer Buddhist monasteries are not only the places for practicing Buddhism, but they are also regarded as handiwork school and conservation center of Khmer fine arts. Usually, the Khmer people who have knowledge of religion, of various handiwork, of arts and literature used to be educated and trained at Buddhist monasteries at one time. Buddhist monks, novices and lay Buddhists can learn some kind of handiworks and fine arts in each Khmer monastery gradually. The skills are chosen to be taught and learnt in the monastery are: drawing, painting, modeling, sculpture, carpentry and constructions etc. The way to learn is the practice on the art works under the guidance from masters and carpenters directly.

It is certain that some Khmer in Southern Vietnam fine arts appeared at the same time of Khmer history through the development of Brahmanism and Buddhism, and the arts became evident at religious sanctuary and Buddhist temple, constructed in Khmer artistic style, such as Prasat Angkor Wat, stupas, Buddhist monasteries and so on. Particularly, each *Uposatha* Chapel of Khmer monastery in Southern Vietnam is found that its structures, and styles seem to have been designed by one Khmer architect only. Because each feature of the *Uposatha* Chapel seems similar in style of corridor, steep roof, chovea (a decorative ridge plate at two apex sides of ridgepole of a roof), the gable of a house and dragons with fine art sculptures.

The *Uposatha* Chapel of Wat Khleang in Soc Trang province is one of the significant Khmer Buddhist architectures in Southern Vietnam.

The Buddha statue is one of the Buddhist Holy objects that the Khmer artists have attempted to erect through the feature or form of Khmer people that can be identified as Khmer artist style easily. The Khmer artists have erected the Buddha statues to worship in their daily practicing with eight different postures of Khmer artist style.⁵⁸

a) Meditation Posture: In this statue we can see the Buddha sitting with crossed legs in the lotus position, his right hand facing up on the left one is placed on the crossed legs. This posture is called *Vitakamudra*.

b) Subduing Mara Posture: In this posture we can see the Buddha sitting with crossed legs the same as in sitting meditation, but his right hand facing down is placed on his thigh, touching the earth as the sign of being witness to his cultivation of perfections, his left hand faces up and is placed on his thigh. This posture is commonly known as “*Bhumisparsa-mudra* – the earth witness posture”. Whenever the artists draw this Buddha picture on the wall or on a piece of robe, they also draw the Mara and his forces, their hands with various kinds of weapons used for disturbing the Buddha.

c) Dhammacakka Posture: In this posture we can see the Buddha sitting crossed legged, his right hand holds fingers to be a circle as the wheel, his left hand does the same as the right one and face back to his body. This posture is called *Dhammacakkamudra*. If the artists draw this Buddha picture, they usually draw it with five Bhikkhus sitting and listening to the *Dhammacakkappavatana Sutta* respectfully.

d) Fearlessness Posture: We can see this Buddha statue with his right hand facing outward and his left hand hangs down at the side of body. This Buddha statue is seen in two kinds of standing and sitting crossed legged positions. They all are called “*Abhaya-mudra*, fearless posture” The statue represents the Buddha’s attitude; always give protection, peace and fearlessness to all living beings.

5. Posture of Granting Wishes: We can see this Buddha statue with his both hands placing down and facing forwards in the attitude of granting wishes to all living beings. This Buddha statue is called “*Varada-*

⁵⁸Sur Hai, Breah Upalivamsa, **Buddhasasana 2500**, (Phnom Penh: Buddhist Institute, 1957), p. 129.

mudra” There are two kinds of Posture of Granting Wishes; standing and sitting cross legged. The Posture of Granting Wishes statue symbolizes charity, compassion and granting wishes to all living beings. Normally the Buddha appears in this posture to welcome any Buddhist follower who approaches to him and questions him about the Dhamma.

6. Alms Bowl Holding Posture: In this posture we can see the Buddha statue standing, his both hands holding an alms bowl. This Buddha statue is commonly known as *Pattadana-mudra* – alms bowl holding posture. The statue represents the Buddha holding the alms bowl and going for alms round for receiving food from people every morning. This tradition is still practiced by Buddhist monks to earn their daily lives every morning even today.

7. Neak Prok Posture: In this posture we can see the Buddha statue in a sitting meditation on a *Nāga Mucalinda*. This Buddha statue is called Neak Prok Mudra in Khmer which means posture of the Buddha protected by *Nāga Mucalinda*. The statue is erected with reference to the Buddha sitting in meditation on the bank of Mucalinda Lake. At that time there was heavy rain. Suddenly a *Nāga Mucalinda* came to form a coiled seat and raised its large hood above the Buddha’s head as shelter to protect him from the rain.

8. Reclining Posture: In this posture we can see the Buddha statue lying on his right side with his left arm draped along the body and the right arm acting as pillow to support the head, his left leg put on the right one. This statue is called *Sayana-mudra* – reclining posture. The Khmer Buddhists recognize that the reclining Buddha statue is referred to the commonly lying down and lying down at the time of attaining *Nibbāna* of the Buddha.

These Buddha statues with different postures are the Khmer artist styles that have existed in the ancient time and have been maintained even in the present day. Certainly they are the Buddhist holy objects that the Khmer Buddhists recognize as worthy objects to pay respect to and believe in, because these kinds of Buddha statues have been erected in accordance with the life story of the Buddha. In addition, the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam as well as the Khmer of Cambodia have erected all of these eight Buddha statues postures not only in stone, bronze,

brass, wood and cement, but also have been found in paintings and murals on the wall of *Uposatha* halls, on pieces of robe, on glass and paper as well. The painted art objects on such material mentioned above are not only the eight kinds of Buddha images, but they have to be drawn in detail in accordance with the life story of the Buddha, as interpreted in a Buddhist text known as *Pathamasambodhi*.⁵⁹ Apart from painting the Buddha, the Khmer artists also draw the ten stories of previous birth of the Gotama Buddha (*Jātaka* story) and other stories which are related to Buddhism.

The significance of drawing these pictures related to Buddhist arts have been evaluated as a mean to provide the knowledge to every one; at least they can know the story of the Buddha who is regarded as their noble teacher. Though people have never studied or read books of Buddha's life, they can understand the Buddha's story through the pictures of drawing art on the walls, on pieces of robe, on glass and on paper as well. In sum, all Buddhist art of Khmer artist styles that existed in Cambodia as well as in Southern Vietnam are mostly created in accordance with the ideas of Buddhist texts. Whatever situations or stories are learnt from Buddhist texts, they can imagine or infer or set up a design in mind then draw them in pictures to help the people to understanding Buddhism easily. Even the Lord God, Brahma, Deity beings, Hell beings, Hungry Ghosts and Yakha... etc, who have never been seen but the Khmer artists can draw them to be seen in Khmer artistic styles from generation to generation. Particularly, the Buddha images or pictures that have the special characteristics which are different from common people that can be identified or differentiated precisely as who is the Buddha and who are his disciples or lay follower. In this case, the Khmer artists erect or draw the Buddha images with his hair tied into a top-knot *Moli* while all his disciples' hair is shaved off. These Buddha statues, drawing pictures and various sculptural arts are usually found in and spread out from monasteries. Because the Khmer fine art organization has never gotten any support from the Vietnamese National culture institute and art faculty, the Khmer Buddhist monasteries in southern Vietnam have been entrusted

⁵⁹Sur Hai, *Brahm Upalivamsa*, op. cit., p. 137.

that important role of preservation of art and culture with absolute responsibility.

Another important aspect of Khmer culture is music of Khmer, which depends on the Buddhist monasteries as well. The monk in the monasteries are not allowed by their monastic rule to enjoy music, but they can support this field, because the Khmer monasteries in Southern Vietnam are used for the conservation and as the training center of Khmer fine arts. So they have to set up a music ensemble of the monastery, such as the orchestra of classical music which is known as Vong Pleng Pin Peat for traditional music, classical dancing and so on. The abbots of the monasteries usually request the villagers who have skill in music to be the music masters and give musical training to musicians, singers and dancers in the monastery. In addition, the abbot provides material that can be helpful to make any kind of musical instruments and keep them in the monastery, but the lay Buddhists who are the music masters are in charge for keeping and managing them in the sense of social belongings. Apart from the band of musicians, the monasteries also help to establish some kind of traditional drama groups known as Lakhon Basak – Khmer Basak drama, Ayai – a kind of Khmer debate singing, yike – Khmer drama, chapei – a single guitar recital of unique Khmer art. These groups usually carry the name of monastery of their bands and drama groups. Of course, these bands as well as drama groups are established to serve of the entertainment of the villagers and some kind of art which is shown as a means to educate the moral conduct of the people and join in contribution to the development of Buddhist dissemination among the Khmer Community in Southern Vietnam. Therefore, much Buddhist literature is composed to be Khmer drama and long poems for singing with a typical Khmer guitar generally known Cham Reang Chapei, such as BreaH Vesantara story, BreaH Sabasith story, Neang Patācāra, the life of the Gotama Buddha and so on.

In addition, some classic and modern songs are composed to carry the meaning of gratitude and moral instructions that can cause the listeners enjoy and take them as a mirror to reflect on the righteous way of their daily lives. Of course, the training rule No. 7 of the eight precepts forbids Buddhist followers who undertake it not to sing, dance, play or listen to

music and to watch entertainment on Uposatha observance day. So the Buddhist followers determined to undertake the purity of this precept rule refrain from enjoying the music for a day and night, because they are the kinds of romantic songs that attract people to enjoy sensual pleasures and fail to educate people to have peace and purity in mind at all. These kinds of art can be said to be contradictory to the eight precepts of Buddhist morality. However, the Khmer fine arts such as Lakhon Basak – Khmer Basak drama, Yike – Khmer drama, Chom Reang Chapei – single guitar songs of unique Khmer art, Ayai – a kind of Khmer debate singing, classic and modern Buddhist songs are claimed to have no contradiction to Buddhist precepts at all, because they are seen as a mean to add to the understanding of Buddhism and moral instructions among the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam.

Generally speaking, all arts are significant aspects in the contribution for the development of a civilization. The effect of all arts, seen in human society until now is the specific evidence to prove a society's civilization by the achievement and creation of mankind from generation to generation. Even religious beliefs needs to be disseminated through fine art, while the religion in turn fulfils its own duties to conserve and improve the fine arts as well. In conclusion we can state that art and religion are necessary and are dependent on each other. Particularly, all kinds of Khmer fine arts in Southern Vietnam have been conserved and been aided by Khmer monasteries; such as sculptural art, drawing art, modelling art, carpentry, various handiwork, drama and music which were established, perfected and spread out from the monasteries. The monks, novices and lay Buddhists who prefer to study art have been supported and provided with comfortable conditions to learn and practice directly on those art works from Khmer monasteries always. From the above pages, we can conclude that Buddhism has contributed abundantly to Khmer fine art development, and the fine arts in turn have been used as a vehicle to serve the social moral instruction, for the entertainment of villagers, as well as for the contribution to the dissemination of Buddhism among the Khmer Community throughout Southern Vietnam since the ancient time up to the present day.

4.3 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System to Monasteries and Khmer Educational Activities

The Buddhist monasteries have been regarded as the successful centers for the maintaining and developing Khmer culture among their communities in Southern Vietnam, through monastic education and Buddhist monks of the monasteries have been playing crucial roles in this educational management. The study of Khmer language, education in social morality, and dissemination of Buddhism of Khmer people in Southern Vietnam are depended on the support from the monasteries. If there were no any monastery, these fundamental aspects of the Khmer identities would be surely very hard to continue to exist with the people.

The Khmer ethnic people in Vietnam are allowed to set up Khmer studies, Buddhist studies and cultural conservation for the purpose ethnic identity preservation lawfully. Evidently, the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam states that, “The various ethnic communities have the right to use their own language and writing, to preserve their ethnic identity and to nurture their fine customs, traditions and culture”.⁶⁰ So the Khmer Buddhist monasteries are requested to set up monastic education to carry on with three main factors of Khmer monastic educational activity namely Khmer Language studies, Buddhist studies and Buddhist dissemination among the Khmer people throughout Southern Vietnam. Hence these projects are run by the Provincial Khmer Buddhist Associations known as Samākum Sāmakki Breah Saṅgh Snehā Cheat throughout Southern Vietnam, and the Khmer Buddhist monks in each monasteries work directly with these projects. That is why they are respected as the managers and leaders of their community.

4.3.1 The Study of Khmer language at literate level

A literate level of study is the ability to read and write. The Khmer Literate level of study, however, is not a basic level, but a great ability of Khmer people in Southern Vietnam, because they are an ethnic

⁶⁰ Le Quang Dao, Chairman of the National Assembly, **1992 Constitution of The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (As Amended 25 December 2001)**, tr. by Allens Arthur Robinson, http://dut.khoaluan.vn/tai-lieu_1992-constitution-of-the-socialist-republic-of-vietnam-as-amended-25-december-2001-_155311, retrieved on September 29th, 2017.

group of people in Vietnam who have to try hard to achieve that level with very few available chances and efficacy to study. Before learning to know how the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam learn the Khmer language, it is helpful to know briefly about Khmer scripts, presented in the following pages.

The Khmer language is written in a traditional ancient script which was derived from an Indian system in around the 3rd century C.E. It can be identified that the Khmer writing system has been adopted from some form of the ancient Brahmi script of the South India. Evidently, the earliest inscription of Funan in Sanskrit in the 3rd century C.E found in Nha Trang province of South Vietnam today was identified as Brahmi script of South India.⁶¹ Another source, related to Brahmi script was found at the ancient International trading seaport Ok Eo of Funan which is located in Kien Giang province of Mekong Delta of South Vietnam today. A comparative study reveals that the Khmer ancient script and Brahmi script of South India are similar in characters.⁶² Of course, Khmer and India had a good relationship during the Funan period and the Khmer civilization received much influences from Indianization through Buddhism, Brahmanism, politic and trading as well. Because of such contacts, it can be proved with certainty that the Khmer writing system derived from Brahmi script of South India. The script that Khmer people adopted from Brahmi script of the South India to write in the ancient, is not the same as the script which is used today. In a detailed research, "George Maspéro in his book *Grammaire de Langue Khmère*" states that the Khmer script since the early establishment until present day has changed ten times to be the stable form of Khmer writing system.⁶³ Of course, such development of writing system for so many times has provided the Khmer script with more letters and a much easier way to write its beautiful forms likened to the sculpture of Khmer art. There are 67 letters of the Khmer scripts. They consist of 33 consonants, 21 dependent vowels and 13 independent vowels.⁶⁴

⁶¹Pang Khat, Viriyapandito, op. cit., p. 45.

⁶²Madam Tran Nghia, II op. cit. p. 93.

⁶³Leang Hap An, I, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶⁴Chuon Nath, Jotaññāno, Somdech Breaḥ Saṅgharāj Ganamahānikāya, I, op. cit.

Another special characteristic of Khmer script is the consonantal cluster. The Khmer consonantal clusters are not written in row, but they are written by putting one on the top of others. This way of writing caused it to set up subscript consonants in Khmer writing system. The significance of setting up subscript consonants is to use it to write under the others main consonants of the word and combine the sound of consonants as the means to investigate the consonantal cluster of the Khmer writing system.

After studying about the original source of Khmer scripts, its development and some special characteristic, it is identified that the Khmer scripts derived from Brahmi scripts of the South India. Then the symbols were skilfully created and set up more letters to enrich the vernacular Khmer scripts in accordance with grammatical rules. So the Khmer people have method of Khmer writing system properly to be used in any field of making note of their concepts or ideas or write out their feelings, making historical records and religious interpretation.

The Khmer language that is spoken by Khmer people in Southern Vietnam is not official language. It is a language of only the Khmer ethnic group of people in Vietnam. Certainly, they have to pass over some obstacles in order to know how to speak, to read and to write the Khmer language properly. Because most people have to speak Vietnamese as the official language in daily life, while the Khmer language can be spoken in family and to communicate with each other between Khmer people. Most people who do not know Khmer language properly usually mix Khmer and Vietnamese together in their expression. This way of expression can be identified as wrongly speaking Khmer. On the other hand, all Vietnamese citizens go to state schools for twelve years to complete High School, and then continue to University or College. The Khmer ethnic group of people in Mekong Delta is one of the Vietnamese citizens who go to the state school. For this reason, the Khmer people do not have sufficient time to study their own Khmer language. The school to learn can be opened in the Khmer monasteries only, and thus lacking proper conditions of knowing Khmer language properly. Whether it is, the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam do not abandon their mother language, but they try hard to learn it at least to achieve the level of literacy. So this level is known as the class fifth of primary school. Therefore all Khmer monasteries are requested to

open the schools to teach Khmer literacy studies in a short term of three months every vacation of the state school yearly.

The two series Khmer consonants are arranged in the chart:⁶⁵

a) Khmer (ភាសាខ្មែរ)

Khmer is a member of the Mon-Khmer group of Austroasiatic languages, and is spoken by about 8 million people in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, China, France and the USA. Khmer shares many features and much vocabulary with Thai as a result of centuries of two-way borrowing. There are also borrowings from Sanskrit, Pali, French and Chinese in Khmer.

Khmer is also known as Cambodian. The official name of Cambodia is the Kingdom of Cambodia (ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា [**Preah Reachanachâk Kampuchea**]). In the past it has been known as the Khmer Republic (1970-1975), Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989) and the State of Cambodia (1989-1993). The name Kampuchea comes from the Sanskrit कम्बोजदेश [Kambujadeśa] - "land of Kambuja"). The name Cambodia is an English version of the French **Cambodge**, which is a version of **Kampuchea** .

Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, China, France and the USA. Khmer shares many features and much vocabulary with Thai as a result of centuries of two-way borrowing. There are also borrowings from Sanskrit, Pāli, French and Chinese in Khmer.

b) Khmer alphabet (អក្សរខ្មែរ)

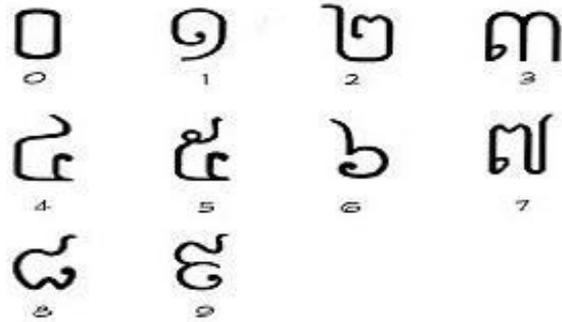
The Khmer alphabet is descended from the Brahmi script of ancient India by way of the Pallava script, which was used in southern India and South East Asia during the 5th and 6th Centuries AD. The oldest dated inscription in Khmer, found at Angkor Borei in Takev Province south of Phnom Penh, dates from 611 AD. The Khmer alphabet closely resembles the Thai and Laos alphabets, which developed from it.

⁶⁵**Khmer Alphabet**, <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/khmer.htm>, retrieved on September 29th, 2017.

Buddhist monks are the literacy teachers among the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam. This conservational project has been played as the crucial role of the Buddhist monks only, while lay people who also have ability of teaching Khmer literacy find it very hard to do as they do not get any payment for this work. Thus, this educational activity has been run by Buddhist monks as the volunteer teacher in every monastery. The subjects that have been chosen for teaching and studying in monastic schools are merely reading and writing skill in Khmer language, moral instruction and basic Buddhist studies, while various others knowledge can be learned at state school.

It is a little bit hard to run this school program, because the Khmer children have to go to the state school as well. They have to learn the officially required subjects in Vietnamese and a certificate, issued by the state school is available to apply for professional jobs in their future, while it is not possible in Khmer language. However the Khmer ethnic group of people in Vietnam cannot abandon their mother language. So in order to balance the ability and level of students who are able to follow the course of studies, the Khmer Buddhist monks held monastic school for short course of Khmer language during three months of the summer holiday from the state school which is in May to August. As a result, studying the mother tongue of Khmer ethnic group of people in Southern Vietnam does not help in applying for any professional job, but is significant to maintain the mother language that exists with their people only. Most people around the world can know Khmer people through the existence of their language, because it is a human culture that can show their Khmer identity to them.

Khmer alphabet (អក្សរខ្មែរ)



Khmer Numbers which Thai took to use

ក ka [ka:]	ខ kha [kʰa:]	គ ka [ka:]	ឃ kha [kʰa:]	ង ng [ŋa:]	
ច ca [ca:]	ឆ cha [tʰa:]	ជ ja [ca:]	ឈ ha [tʰa:]	ញ ha [tʰa:]	
ដ ta [da:]	ឋ tha [tʰa:]	ឌ da [da:]	ឍ dha [tʰa:]	ណ na [na:]	
ត ta [ta:]	ថ tha [tʰa:]	ទ da [ta:]	ធ dha [tʰa:]	ន na [na:]	
ប pa [pa:]	ផ pha [pʰa:]	ព ha [pa:]	ភ ha [pʰa:]	ម ma [ma:]	
ស sa [sa:]	ហ ha [ha:]	យ ya [ja:]	រ ra [ra:]	ល lo [la:]	
ឡ ja [ja:]	អ ha [ha:]	វ va [va:]			

Khmer Alphabets

Khmer Vowels

ក ka [ka:]	ខ kha [kʰa:]	គ ka [ka:]	ឃ kha [kʰa:]	ង ng [ŋa:]								
ច ca [ca:]	ឆ cha [tʰa:]	ជ ja [ca:]	ឈ ha [tʰa:]	ញ ha [tʰa:]		័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖
ដ ta [da:]	ឋ tha [tʰa:]	ឌ da [da:]	ឍ dha [tʰa:]	ណ na [na:]		័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖
ត ta [ta:]	ថ tha [tʰa:]	ទ da [ta:]	ធ dha [tʰa:]	ន na [na:]		័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖
ប pa [pa:]	ផ pha [pʰa:]	ព ha [pa:]	ភ ha [pʰa:]	ម ma [ma:]		័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖
ស sa [sa:]	ហ ha [ha:]	យ ya [ja:]	រ ra [ra:]	ល lo [la:]		័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖
ឡ ja [ja:]	អ ha [ha:]	វ va [va:]				័	៑	្	៓	។	៕	៖

Thai Alphabets

Thai Vowels

4.3.2 The Buddhist Studies

A Buddhist study of the Khmer Buddhists in Southern Vietnam refers to the studying programs of Dhamma Vinaya School and Pāli School. There is a policy concerning the right of freedom of religion and belief of the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as the key to set up comfortable condition to traditional Buddhist study and practice in Buddhism of Khmer people in Southern Vietnam.

Every religious organization that has been granted legal recognition by the Government has the freedom to function according to the law and is protected by the law. It has the right to carry out religious activities, open school to train workers, publish religious material and maintain, renovate or build their religious institution according to the regulation of the law.⁶⁶

In line with the above religious policy, the provincial Khmer Buddhist Association have managed to open the Dhamma Vinaya and Pāli schools, Buddhist colleges and a Buddhist University in Khmer medium instruction.

4. 3.3 The Buddhist Dissemination

Since the Buddha became enlightened with the Four Noble Truth he, out of compassion, devoted the rest of his life time for wandering and teaching the Truths to the world, people of all walks of life, castes and various religious followers accepted him as their teacher. Some of them requested to be lay Buddhists in order to practice the Dhamma and thus supported the existence and development of Buddhism while many others requested for ordination to be monks in order to practice the Dhamma and help to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha to the world. The aim of Dhamma dissemination is to bring peace, happiness and wisdom to the world. As the exhortation given by the Buddha to sixty monks, “Go forth, monks, on tour for the blessing of the many folk, for the happiness of the many folk, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, for the

⁶⁶Non-Author, **Concerning the Task of the Protestant Religion in the Northern Mountainous Region**, op. cit., p. 7.

blessing, the happiness of celestial being and men”.⁶⁷ This is the exhortation that the Buddha set up as the fundamental principle of Dhamma dissemination to the world with good attitude towards celestial beings and men of all social castes and any religion. Evidently, in the early years after enlightenment of the Gotama Buddha, many people who were workers, slaves and merchant, Kings, ministers, various religious leaders and followers had faith in Buddhism and requested to be accepted as Buddha’s Disciples equally, such as Pañcavaggiya Bhikkhu, the fifty five Bhikkhus headed by Yassa, the group thirty Bhikkhus *Bhaddavaggiya*, one thousand matted hairs ascetic’s followers of three Kassapa brothers and two hundred and fifty ascetics’ followers of *Upatissa Sāriputta* and *Kolita Mogallāna*,⁶⁸ and so on. As the result, all of these Buddha’s Disciples accomplished the final fruit of the path known as the Arahant which is referred to as the one whose taints have been destroyed. This fundamental principle of Dhamma dissemination had been established since the Buddha’s time and Buddhists in the whole world have upheld the traditions for Buddhist dissemination now-a-days. Referring to this original source, the Provincial Khmer Buddhist Associations, especially Khmer Buddhist monks in each monastery in Southern Vietnam have conformed to that principle to disseminate Buddhism within their Buddhist community too.

Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam have been respected for their spiritual leadership in religious affairs. The main religious affair is referred to the activities of Buddhist dissemination, to have a clear understanding and seeing the real value of the Buddha’s teaching that can be applied in daily life of people. The values of the Buddha’s teachings are many, but only some essential aspects are introduced in this article as follows:

The Buddha enlightened with the Four Noble Truths has taught the Truths to the world. This doctrine is the universe’s reasonable truth which is compatible with science that can be experimented individually everywhere and any time.

⁶⁷I.B. HORNER, M.A, tr. **Book of Discipline**. vol. IV, op. cit., p. 28.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 55.

Buddhism has taught non-violence which is regarded as the foundation of world peace. The world peace according to Buddhism derives from each individual's internal peace to the external peace of the world. As the Buddha addressed "Non-affliction is the happiness in the world, harmlessness toward all living beings".⁶⁹ This idea indicates that Buddhism has brought non-violent resolutions, harmony and peace throughout the whole world. In present day, the United Nation also accepts the value of Buddha's teachings as the religion of world peace. Evidently, on 13th December 1999, the General Assembly of the United Nation resolved that the Day of Vesak (Buddha's Day) should be internationally recognized and observed worldwide each year in May at the United Nation Headquarters in New York, USA and at other UN offices.⁷⁰

Buddhism is a religion of free belief of people. The people are advised not to believe in anything with blind faith but one should believe wisely accompanied by wisdom as a means for the experiment to find out through self investigation properly before believing in any ideas or teachings. As the Buddha advised *Kalamas*, "When you know for yourselves that, 'these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to harm and to suffering, then you should abandon them'; However, when you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness, then you should enter and remain in them'.⁷¹ This statement indicates that Buddhism has good attitude towards freedom of religious belief as well as traditional customs of people.

The Ultimate goal of Buddhism is *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is the cessation of all suffering. It is referred to the uprooting of craving, and then all sufferings are ended that is so called *Nibbāna*. So the aim of believing and practicing in Buddhism is to gain the enlightenment and *Nibbāna* through the practise of Noble Eightfold Path. These essential Buddhist values have been upheld to be practiced for the whole live and

⁶⁹Ven. S. Dhammika, tr. **Saddhamma Maniratana**, retrieved on September 29th, 2017. <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/dhammika/.html>,

⁷⁰The Most Venerable Prof. Dr. Phra Dhammakosajarn, **Messages from VIPs for the Third International conference on the United Nation Day of Vesak 2006**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2006), p. 17.

⁷¹Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. **A.**, **3.65**, retrieved on September 29th 2017, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than.html>

use them as the foundation of Buddhist propagation within the Khmer Buddhist community in Southern Vietnam.

For the Buddhist dissemination activities of the Khmer Buddhists in Southern Vietnam not much of high technology, such as radio, TV or internet, is available. Disseminated in the traditional ways, they usually consist of the teachings of the Buddha on every occasion of traditional ceremonies, Buddhist ceremonies and on observance days which are celebrated in monasteries and at home of lay Buddhists. The programs of these ceremonies consist of many events such as religious ritual, the chanting ceremony to pay homage to the Triple Gem, observing the precepts, invite Buddhist monk to recite paritta and dedicating merits and so on. Apart from these communal religious rituals, the essential Dhamma talk is usually delivered in relation to the meaning of each ceremony and moral instruction as well as other fundamental Buddha's teachings. Generally, the Dhamma talk has been recognized as a tradition that has taken place since the Buddha time. The Buddha always delivered the Dhamma and Vinaya based on different occasions to people or his disciples. The Khmer Buddhists also attempt to follow the Buddha's methods in order to propagate Buddhism on every occasion of ceremony, even for a common paritta chanting or food offering ceremony at home of lay Buddhists, the Dhamma talk is requested to be delivered at least about 20 to 30 minutes of the ceremony time. This occasion is usually proper time for listening Dhamma talk for Khmer people in Southern Vietnam.

Another way of propagation which is regarded as the most effective mean of Buddhist dissemination among the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam is the opening of schools of Buddhist studies in every monastery. Certainly the learning method can provide Dhamma knowledge to teachers and pupils. Because the teachers have to use all their knowledge and abilities to give lectures to pupils and the pupils in turn have a duty to study hard and understand in accordance with whatever knowledge or lecture given by their teachers. In this sense we can say that the skillful teachings of the teachers help benefit the right understanding of the pupils. So the opening of schools for Buddhist studies is very important aspects that the Buddhist propagation depends on. Especially, the Provincial Khmer Buddhist Association in Southern Vietnam have

attempted to send Buddhist monks to study abroad in order to improve their Buddhist knowledge and serve as the quality forces for the Buddhist propagation for later generations.

In sum, the Buddhist propagation in the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam can be done through their traditional system of delivering Dhamma talk in every ceremony occasion, through Khmer literatures and arts, through study and practice. As a result of Buddhist propagation not only provides the Dhamma knowledge or Buddhist doctrine, but also supplies the essential ways that the Khmer people can apply to live in daily lives with social morality, unity, harmony and restrain from ill-will such as violence in society. Apart from these benefits, the Buddhist doctrine is propagated to people to realize the Noble Ways that can lead one who practices to gain the Paths, fruitions and Nibbāna to end all suffering.

4.4 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam to Monastery and Social Work

Where there are Khmer people, the Buddhist monasteries have been established to serve their community. In this sense, Buddhism has been regarded as a religion for society, because we have seen that each Khmer monastery in Southern Vietnam is not only a place for religious practice, but is also the most important centers directly run by the volunteer monks in their community to contribute a lot to the benefit of religious and social succour. As the exhortation given by the Buddha to his sixty disciples, "Go forth monks, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, the benefits and bliss of deities and men". The ideas of the exhortation show the good attitude of Buddhism towards celestial beings and men in all social castes and religions which the Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam obey to serve for social works among their community today. Particularly, the educational field, public work, humanity and cultural conservation are into the main responsibility of Buddhist monks who head the Provincial Khmer Buddhist Association known as Samākum.

Certainly, education is a fundamental aspect that leads the human society to prosper, be happy and civil through moral instruction and cultivation of knowledge. Khmer Buddhist monks have taken these educational principles including Buddhist ethics to serve their community. Concretely, the formulas of moral ethics are obeyed to educate their members in the community, at monastic schools, in families and on every occasion of religious and traditional ceremony. The significance of moral instruction is to provide a formula for the mode of behavior conduct in the Khmer society as well as a fundamental aspect to cultivate each individual's behavior to be a person with good knowledge and good moral conduct. In addition, the moral instruction in daily life of Khmer people in Southern Vietnam, also has contributed a major part of good governance to prevent evil social problems from arising in the society, to overcome family violence, social corruption, disturbance in the human society and so on. Therefore, moral conduct is encouraged to be practiced in order to help people to improve themselves by transforming such constituent conditions of their existence from bad to good and from imperfect to perfect.

Apart from the contribution of social moral instruction, the Khmer Buddhist monks in each monastery also have taken part in schooling very actively to help improve the quality of studying monks and lay people in the villages. Usually each Khmer monastery in Southern Vietnam sets up an Educational Activity Program and cooperates closely with Buddhist monks and pupil's parents in order to find good solutions to help the study of pupils. Such as, giving them advice to try hard in learning, not to abandon school, giving awards to excellent students and scholarships to the needy and difficult cases. On the other hand, the Khmer Buddhist monasteries also serve the society a great deal in providing shelter to Khmer students. So monks, novices and pupils can live in the monastery under the compassionate heart of the abbots and monks in order to study Buddhist doctrine, world knowledge and professional jobs. Especially the monasteries in cities have offered residence and study facilities to Khmer monks, novices and students who come from various distant villages of the Mekong Delta. So they are accepted to live in such monasteries and go to school in different fields of studies of the University and Colleges.

Concerning public work, the Khmer Buddhist monks in Vietnam represent all villagers and cooperate closely with local authorities to take initiative in various social activities, such as construction of schools, bridges, roads, reservoirs even digging wells and canals. The monks take part in these social welfare programs by talking to local people about the projects to understand their use and benefit of the public, then raising funds for them and leading them to build these public constructions directly.

According to Khmer tradition, humane behavior is regarded as an important charity that has to be fulfilled, such as depending on each other in society. Usually Buddhist monks in each monastery lead the villagers to visit and provide material aid to the elders and the senior members of the community. They usually visit the sick and sometimes raise funds to help the sick, especially the ones who are poor and in a difficult position. The monastery also establishes a humanitarian foundation known as *Mulanidhi Maranānugroh* to raise funds and help performing funeral ceremonies for the dead people. In this way, every departed one's family is mourned with material aid fostering good attitudes of unity and support. Taking part in these humanitarian activities indicates that the Khmer Buddhist monks contribute a lot of benefits towards social welfare in their community.

Khmer Buddhist monks in each monastery in Southern Vietnam also have the main responsibility of developing and maintaining National culture, for example, Khmer literacy studies, tradition, arts and architecture are supported by Buddhist monks completely. Evidently, Khmer literacy studies are opened and taught in each monastery for three months during vacation of the state school yearly. The purpose of opening these schools is to improve the Khmer children's ability to read and write Khmer language as well as to maintain their mother language. Tradition and custom are promoted by keeping the original form correctly. Especially, the Khmer traditional ceremonies are celebrated in accordance with their concepts and values, such as traditional dedicating merits and paying gratitude to ancestors, traditional ordination, paying respect to the elders, to Buddhist monks and friends. So the monks play an important role to guide the villagers to obey and maintain such tradition and custom in their society. In addition, the abbots and monks allow setting up centers of training and

maintaining Khmer fine arts, architecture and various handicrafts in monasteries. So the monks, novices and lay people can learn some kind of craft and fine art in monasteries such as drawing art, painting art, modeling, sculpture, carpentry and constructions. Apart from these learning skills, the monasteries help establish bands of music, Khmer traditional drama teams and provide some place in storerooms of the monasteries to keep those art and musical instruments as well. Moreover the grounds of the monasteries also serve for music performances, art and drama shows and such entertainment for the villagers.

In sum, the Khmer Buddhist monks in Vietnam not only ordain and practice for the realization of *Nibbāna* which is the escape from all suffering of oneself, but they play a vital role of responsibility and contribution toward social work as well. Particularly education, public work, humanity and cultural maintenance are taken care of to serve very actively in Khmer society throughout Southern Vietnam. They allow the use of local monasteries as the centers to practice Buddhism and social work for the villagers. Buddhist monks are full of compassionate heart and always have managed and worked directly in these social activities for the villagers. This work has been done from generation to generation continuously.

4.5 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System to Monastery and Environmental Conservation

From early history, human has been living in harmony and co-existence with nature. Later on the growing world population and some the development of technological and scientific power have caused a great environmental crises. For example, in the ancient time the farmers planted rice and grew produce in the natural ways by using the water from rain fall, from the canal or from the river, using the excrement of animals, grass and leaves as the natural fertilizers in order to ensure a good harvest. They didn't have any problems from the negative impact of technology or pollution. They could drink water from the field, from the canal and caught fish and frogs from the field as their food.

Later on, as agricultural technology was developed and people followed such development, it caused many environmental problems having a negative impact on the health of living beings. Because farmers use chemical fertilizer with poisons to destroy insects for their farming and gardening, the water is polluted, and the animals which were regarded as the anti-insect forces are also destroyed. So, the fields and gardens were left without any anti insect forces, and give a chance that let the worms and insects grow up and seriously damage the plants, rice and vegetables of the farmers.

These are the ecological problems that the Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam also have tackled as part of the environmental conservation in every location where they live. Certainly, they follow the Buddhist doctrine that considers ecological conservation as the method that contributes toward a resolution of the local as well as global environmental crises.

It is helpful to refer to some significant source of the Buddha's teachings that consider the Buddhist attitude toward the environmental nature which the Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam have applied for the principle of environmental conservation in the villages where they are living in. In Buddhist practice we get the ideas of non-violence, loving kindness, compassion and liberation of all suffering of living beings through the ways of not only refraining from harming or damaging lives but we should also protect the natural world.

The Buddha used to dwell in the forest when he was an ascetic. He lived in the deep forests with all kinds of animals. He used the root of trees, the shadow of trees and the caves as his residential shelters for the benefits of practicing the Dhamma until he found the truths. So the natural world of the forest is a very useful and peaceful place for the Buddha and his disciples to depend on and to practice the Dhamma and the forest was encouraged to be protected by disallowing the damaging of all kinds of living plants.

Herein the monastic rule of the living plant chapter of Pācittiya states, "For destruction of vegetable growth there is an offence of

expiation".⁷² Instead of the phrase "Destruction of vegetable growth" within this context, Venerable Thanissaro Bhikkhu use it as "Damaging of a living plant". According to the Vibhaṅga, the term Damaging, here includes such actions as cutting, breaking, picking, burning and cooking, even picking flowers or leaves, uprooting a plant also included.⁷³ Another disciplinary rule of *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha* is found and realized as a basic principle of controlling global warming. The particular rule issued thus, "whatever monks desirous of warming himself, should kindle or should cause a fire to be kindled, there is an offence of expiation".⁷⁴ So the benefits of these Buddhist disciplinary rules are also useful for preserving natural resources and preventing the environmental problems through the attitude towards preservation of natural forests, purifying air and subduing global warming. Though these disciplinary rules are noted as the minor rules for Buddhist monks to follow, but they are the basic, vital and valuable rules which have been applied as the principle of good natural environmental conservation in the present day.

Referring to the original sources of the Buddha's teachings, the Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam not only practice in the sense of their Buddhist monastic codes, but these disciplinary rules and Buddhist ethic are applied to remind and lead the villagers to follow the contribution of the environmental protection in their villages as well. Every villager is encouraged to grow the plants as a means to create a green landscape in their home compounds, in villages and in public parks. Especially the landscapes of Khmer monasteries have plenty of old and large trees, the pleasant shade of trees with fresh clean air, and refreshing ponds. These natural surroundings not only sustain the existence of the natural world but they also provide the people with the best places to undertake contemplation leading to gain peace of mind, breaking of mental defilements, getting away from noise, pollution to realize the liberation from sufferings.

⁷²I.B. HORNER, tr. **The Book of The Discipline**. Vol. II. (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press), p. 227.

⁷³Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. **The Buddhist Monastic Code**, (Thailand: The Mahamakut Educational Council, The Buddhist University, 1993), p. 396.

⁷⁴I. B. HORNER, tr, **The Book Of The Discipline**, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 398

The movement of growing plant in domestic areas is a very important environmental activity as a part in world natural preservation where the plant itself creates forests. So the forests play a vital role in regulating climate, controlling water runoff, providing shelter and food for wildlife and purifying the air. However, cutting and burning forests causes the wildlife destruction, habitat loss, soil erosion, rapid water runoff and waste of forest recourse and causes the global climate change. That is why the Khmer villagers in Southern Vietnam are advised to refrain from damaging living plants and encouraged to grow plants and create the forests which is reckoned as a resolution that help solve the problems of declined forests, air pollution, climate change and various natural disasters which are considered a part of the global environmental crisis.

Concerning living beings, the Buddhist doctrines emphasize strongly to respect a life, which includes not only human beings but animals and celestial beings as well. All living beings have right to live in this world. Each individual has a right to love oneself and respect others too. A Buddhist proverb stated thus "*Natthi attasamam pemam* - There is no affection like that for oneself".⁷⁵ Because of love for oneself, the Buddha admonished his disciples to respect all kinds of living beings through practicing moral precepts and developing the four sublimes states of mind of Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic joy and Equanimity. Another fundamental Buddhist practice advises all Buddhist to do *Dāna*, generosity or gift, for the benefit and happiness of oneself and others. The humanity welfare is regarded as *abhayadāna* which is applied to medical treatment, emergency rescue, anti-violence, giving security, providing fearlessness, release and freedom for man and living beings. So *abhayadāna* is the most important work that should be applied for ecological conservation of the environmental living world.

At one time the prince *Siddhatha* rescued a swan that was shot by the prince *Devadata*. The swan was wounded and dropped down near by the prince *Sidhatha* who rescued him by taking care of him until its wound was recovered, then released him.

⁷⁵Bodhi Bhikkhu, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 95.

From this point of view, we can understand that the Buddha's teachings not only encourage man to refrain from the destruction of living beings but also giving health care, medical treatment, security, freedom and fearlessness to man as well as to animal. It is a beautiful tradition that is applied to practice as the principle of the environmental protection by the Khmer Buddhists in Southern Vietnam. Particularly, the traditional releasing of captured animals has been done continuously. They release fishes to swim into the chanal, into the field, into the river and feed them the food as well. The captured birds are also released to fly into the sky or to the forests. Especially some Khmer Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam, namely Wat Majjhimārām Kondal in Cau Ke district of Tra Vinh province, Wat Kompong Chrey in Chau Thanh district of Tra Vinh province, Wat Phno Doong in Tra Cu district of Tra Vinh province, Wat Ba-yām in Tra Cu district of Tra Vinh province, Wat Mahātup in Soc Trang province and Wat Debearām Prey Chop in Soc Trang province are well-known as the monasteries with quiet groves of old and large trees that provide a suitable shelter for animals and birds to make their nests and live peacefully in freedom.

In sum, the encouragement of growing plants to create a green landscape of natural surroundings not only to gets the best benefit to undertake contemplation leading people to realize the liberation of suffering, but is also an environmental activity taken part in subduing global warming and provides the safety and shelters for animal and birds as well. The feeding of animals, releasing captured animals and providing the safety shelters are tantamount to mean that the society has good morality and also takes part in natural resources conservation which helps prevent decline of the environment, because human and animals live therein without ill-will and harming each other.

When we talk about the environment, it should be mentioned that water is a basic requirement for living beings and living plants. In Buddhist perspective, the supply of water is a proliferate meritorious activity. As the Buddha exalted the person who gives a gift, including water, of a certain sort with his reflection, "Giving is good" it bears great fruit and great

benefit.⁷⁶ Therefore water is our natural resource that people should use properly and attempt to prevent the water not to be polluted which is cause of many kinds of diseases in daily lives. Concerning such problem, the Buddhist Discipline, *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha* rule No. 74 of *Sekhiya* states, "I will not ease myself or spit, if not ill, on green corn, is a training to be observed" and rule No. 75 also states, "I will not ease myself or spit in the water, if not ill' is a training to be observed".⁷⁷ Even for the personal property of Buddhist monks, the Buddha allowed the monks to use water filters in daily life in order to take care of sanitary health and reduce the impact of bacteria. This brief illustration proves that the Buddhist attitude toward environmental conservation of water is valuable from very tiny acts and is still an effective practice nowadays.

Referring to the Buddhist doctrine concerning the natural resources preservation, the Khmer Buddhist monks have applied the practice for the principle of environmental conservation since the ancient time up to present day. Now let's look into the Khmer Buddhist monasteries in Southern Vietnam, the abbots and monks in the ancient time led the villagers to dig ponds and canals in monasteries and in the villages to store water for public benefit, such as, use for gardening and drawing the water for family usage in daily life because there was no polluted water. However, the villagers nowadays have to use the water from tube wells and water supply pipes while the water of ponds and canals in the monasteries and in the villages is still kept in the sense of a park in the natural landscape as well. Especially those ponds and canals have been decorated with aquatic plants such as lotus, water lilies, water lettuces, water hyacinth, and water convolvulus for the beauty of the natural parks and to set up a mean to purify the polluted water.

The crisis of global environment becomes a more serious problem of the natural world today. The main causes of the problem are cutting and burning of forests, growing greenhouse effects and waste disposal etc,

⁷⁶Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. **A.,7.49**, retrieved on September, ²⁹th 2017, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an07/an07.049.than.html>

⁷⁷I.B. HORNER, M.A. tr, **The Book of the Discipline**, Vol. III (London: Luzac & Company LTD), Pulished for the Pāli Text Society, 1957) p.150, 151

created by the growing world population and some technological development around the world. To deal with these problems, the environmental protection organization and various environmental movements have been established for dealing with responsibility to protect them. In addition, Buddhism has taken part in this environmental conservation very actively. Particularly, the Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam have set up various ecological movements in accordance with Buddhist frame of mind towards the environments in locations where Khmer people live in order to gain the success in those movements, and the Khmer monks lead villagers to try to maintain the good tradition of ecological conservation which Buddhism usually practice and associate with organizations or programs of environmental sciences. Moreover, the knowledge of ecological conservation is instructed repeatedly to the public and to pupils to understand the significance of natural environmental existence and to be mindful to properly contact with natural resources as well as to refrain from the destruction and polluting of the natural environment. In conclusion, we can say that Buddhist ethical considerations are still available to be applied for the environmental conservation and all nations worldwide should better take part to solve problems of the global environmental crisis.

4.6 The Contribution and Impact to The Buddhist Educational Systems of the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam

The original source of Buddhist idea that the Khmer Buddhists have applied to celebrate Donta ceremony goes back to the story of King Bimbisara who performed a ceremonial offering of alms to the Buddha and his disciples with the attitude of dedicating the merits toward his Petas relatives which is an account. As the Sutta makes clear understand that, “In the world of Peta, there’s no farming, no herding of cattle, no commerce, no trading with money. They live only depending on the meritorious transference which their living relatives can make for them through the dedication of merits from the human world”. Therefore the Khmer Buddhists who are Peta’s relatives should accumulate merits by performing generosity, morality and mental development and share them with their deceased relatives.

The purpose of the Khmer Buddhists to celebrate Donta ceremony is the Khmer Buddhists celebrate Donta ceremony with the purpose of dedicating merits to their ancestors and departed ones, for family union, friendship, education and gratefulness.

The Buddhist educational systems of the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam are - Khmer language literate level studies - Buddhist Studies.

The Buddhist education system of the Khmer community in Southern Vietnam is known as Monastic Education. It carries on with three main factors of educational activities namely Khmer language literate level Studies, Buddhist Studies and Buddhist Dissemination.

The Khmer language literate level Studies is a basic level that begins from class first up to class fifth of primary school. Its courses can be opened to study in a short term for three months of summer holiday from the state school in May to August yearly. The subjects which are chosen to teach and study are Khmer language mainly for reading and writing skill, moral instruction and basic Buddhist Studies.

The Khmer Buddhist Studies in Southern Vietnam is referred to the study programs of Dhamma Vinaya and Pāli school and Buddhist studies undergraduate school. The studies programs are classified into three degrees. They are Primary Degree program for four years, Secondary Degree program for three years and Bachelor Degree program for four years. There are three main subjects namely Khmer Studies, Buddhist Studies and Vietnamese Studies.

4.7 The Contribution and Impact Theravāda Buddhist Education System to the ordination of Khmer tradition in southern Vietnam

The symbolic meaning of decoration for Buddhist ordination of the Khmer tradition are Commonly, Khmer people may realize that the Coconut Decoration for Buddhist Ordination of the Khmer tradition is a material offering which used to be displayed since the ancient time. However some Khmer senior sage gave the idea that it is not only a material offering of the Khmer traditional religious ritual, but also carries the symbolic meaning of the Buddhist ordination in Khmer tradition.

Certainly, the meaning of this material symbol, Sladhor Doong (decorated coconut) in Khmer traditional Buddhist ordination is a symbol of eradicating the defilements and craving for *Nibbāna*. The coconut will have no condition to grow up any more whenever it is extracted to be coconut oil. Similarly, a man can be free from the combination of five aggregates or be free from the circle of birth and death *Samsāra* whenever all defilements and craving are eradicated or uprooted. So the Khmer traditional Buddhist ordination to be a Buddhist monk and practice the Dhamma for the extinction of all the taints and eradication of defilements and cravings is paralleled to the coconut extracted to be oil.

The meaning of the Khmer Traditional ordination in front of the fire of cremation. In general, the Khmer people realize that traditional ordination in front of the fire of cremation (buos mukh pheong) is to pay gratitude to parents. But the meaning of traditional ordination in front of fire of cremation is explained as, “The decision to ordain as a Buddhist monk in front of the fire of cremation instead of lamentation, weeping, grieving for the dearest departed one is a mean to subside the attachment of the dearest one. So, it is evaluated as a righteous decision to choose the renunciation as an effective way to solve the problems that derive from attachment as well as getting away from the combination of five aggregates to be birth which is the cause of decay and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair of all living beings”.

The Khmer Buddhists use the art to disseminated Buddhism are commonly the arts and religions are necessary dependent on each other's. The Khmer Buddhists use the arts as a means of entertainment for the villagers, for the social moral instruction and for the contribution to the Buddhist dissemination among their community, because it causes people to be interested in and understand the ideas of the stories which are shown through all kinds of arts easily. Certainly, Buddhism has been disseminated through the genres of Khmer arts such as sculptural, drawing, painting, modeling, music, drama, ayai – a kind of Khmer debate singing and chapped – a kind of single string guitar singing of unique Khmer art and so on.

The contradiction between observing arts and Naccagitavadita-Visukadassana rule of the eight precepts. Certainly the training rule No. 7 of the eight precepts prohibits Buddhist followers who undertake it not to sing, dance, play and listen to music and go to the see or watch the entertainments on the observance day. So the Buddhist followers should determine to undertake it with purity of this precept rule for one day and night, because those arts are the kinds of romantic entertainments that attract people to enjoy in sensual pleasure and never educate people to have peace and purity in mind. These kinds of arts could be said to be a contradiction to the eight precepts of Buddhist morality. However the genres of Khmer arts as mentioned above shown with the ideas for the formula of education, moral instruction and understanding the doctrine of Buddhism that lead people to have peace and purity are claimed to have no contradiction.

4.8 The relationship of Khmer Saṅgha administration within the Administration of Vietnamese Buddhist Saṅgha

There are 449 Khmer Buddhist monasteries and 77 Vietnamese Buddhist monasteries with more than ten thousand Khmer Buddhist monks in Southern Vietnam.

The relationship of Khmer Saṅgha administration within the administration of Vietnamese Buddhist Saṅgha are Referring to the policy concerning freedom of belief in religions and non-religion of Vietnamese Government, Buddhism in Vietnam has unified all Vietnamese Buddhist sects and organizations; when the Vietnamese Buddhist Saṅgha Association was established in 1981. The Khmer Buddhism in Southern Vietnam is a Buddhist sect that is included in the Vietnamese Buddhist Saṅgha Association. The unifying of all Vietnamese Buddhist sects into a Vietnamese Buddhist Saṅgha Association as only one assembly in the sense of a committee as well as member of the Association exists here in order to have smooth cooperation of Buddhist activities and social welfare under the equal law controlled by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The Khmer Buddhism in Southern Vietnam however, still maintains the individual original form of the ways of practice according to their tradition and culture.

4.9 Some Developments of Khmer society in southern Vietnam.

Concurrent with this phenomenon is the increase of the Buddhist teaching and practice. This has led to the appearance of new meditation centers and the growing number of practitioners, the increase in the number and activity of Buddhist groups in colleges and universities, and a new trend of ordination in which more monks are recruited from modern educated young men. of privileged classes in towns and cities. With the loss of its authority and leadership, especially in its intellectual aspect, through its unimproved traditional system of education and the separation between the traditional monkhood and the modern secular society, the Sangha (here, especially the administration represented by the Council of Elders) can not communicate with these modern people and is often ignored or overlooked in their spiritual quest. Then in their independent search of the true teachings and the correct practice. without a central authority and direction to turn to, different teachers and different groups develop different interpretations of the Buddha's teachings and different methods of practice. Moreover, they criticize one another for misinterpretation and wrong practices. There are also some developed monastic movements, with their own settlements, outside the Sangha administration, the crafty actions of the perverted monks who feed on the religious faith of the populace and other challenges to the authority of the Sangha. This is the only renewed interest in Buddhism, but division. Disharmony, conflict and criticisms also are characteristic of the period of spiritual confusion.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to go to extremes. While a number of rural poor youths who stay in monasteries as monks and novices for education purposes are preoccupied with secular ends, making use of the monkhood solely as a channel of social mobility and neglecting religious training. many modern people who turn their backs on the worldly ways, whether young or old both the lay and the foreigners, tend to go to the extreme of isolating themselves from society, indulging in the bliss of meditation and being engrossed in other individualistic ideas and practices of the passive pre-Buddhist ascetic type. To avoid these extremes, monks should always remind themselves of the Buddha's

admonition to go forth for the welfare and happiness of the mummy, out of compassion for the world. Surprisingly enough, this period also witnesses a remarkable prevalence of animistic and superstitious beliefs and practices. including faith healing, spiritual healing, miracle working and, most notably, medium education, which point to the inadequacy of modern science and technology either in solving the current human problems or in educating the people.

This is the development of an academic in the higher secular institutes of higher education in the Pāli Sanskrit, Buddhism and general religious studies at a higher- degree a have been introduced or formed into the corresponding departments of study in the graduate schools of some universities. This is a step forward which makes these secular institutions outrank all existing systems of ecclesiastical education in southern Vietnam, form or in the academic status they can offer to their graduates, though the quality of their academic achievement in the field of specialization in comparison with that of the traditional system is still criticized.

4.10 Some difficulties of development of Khmer society in southern Vietnam

About the socio-cultural status of Khmer society in southern Vietnam. Some urgent issues in the process of industrialization - modernization of the Khmer in the Mekong Delta "by Vo Van Sen (editor) issued the report" Poverty and inequality in Vietnam". The results show that poverty of provinces in the Mekong Delta is ranked as follows:

1. In Tra Vinh, Soc Trang Provinces: ranked 25th with a poverty rate of 43%.

2. In Kien Giang, An Giang Provinces: ranked 31st with a poverty rate of 40%.

Localities with large numbers of Khmer ethnic groups often have high poverty rates. Poor Khmer households also account for a significant proportion of poor households in the provinces, and Tra Vinh province is no exception. It is possible to analyze the following reasons: Khmer people

have characteristics despite their families are difficult but they are willing to contribute money, labor to the festival, especially in the temple. In other places, the majority of Khmer people in Tra Vinh province live in remote and isolated areas, and in some ways, "the Khmer are shy, hesitant in dealing with the authorities", they lack information, lack of knowledge about the policy of the state⁷⁸. On the other hand, the life of the Khmer rural population still dominated by the teachings of Buddhism, by traditional customs and habits. This created a "closed rural society, which gave the Khmer farmers a peaceful and somewhat sluggish"⁷⁹

4.10.1 The new rural construction in association with the socio cultural status of Khmer society in southern Vietnam

As the new rural construction work in Tra Vinh province, especially in the Khmer ethnic minority area, it experiencing some difficulties. Typically, the criterion of labor structures, the ratio of commune officials to standard. In the next phase, the implementation of the national target program for new rural development should pay attention to the natural, cultural and social characteristics of ethnic minority people. On vocational training for Khmer people the causes of poverty in the rural Khmer are unskilled labor, vocational training for the Khmer is an urgent matter to be implemented. According to the criteria set for the new rural areas, the criteria of culture - society - environment require the trained labor force in the Mekong Delta (including Tra Vinh province) 20%. This requirement is quite high for rural areas where many Khmer people living. Therefore, vocational training should be given special attention. In particular, towards the opening of short-term vocational training courses. A major shortcoming of the vocational training program for labor not linked to the output, lack of linkage between vocational training units and employment units, no effective and sustainable development strategies. Therefore, the author believes that these training programs should be located in the area of Khmer ethnic minority, so that they can both learn and do not leave the field, daily work. In addition to vocational training, it

⁷⁸Phan An, **Dân tộc Khmer ở Nam Bộ**, NXB Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. (Hanoi: Khmer in the South, National Political Publishing House, 2009), p. 50.

⁷⁹Ibid, p. 60.

should be linked to the creation of rural employment as well as the output of the product. In fact, most of the compatriots are not very advanced but they are very skillful in developing the traditional profession. Therefore, the short-term vocational training should be associated with the traditional trades of the compatriots who are necessary and highly practical. This can solve the large idle labor force in rural areas. Especially the training and development of the profession should be associated with the religious establishments. For the Khmer people, the temple is not only a center for Buddhist activities but also a center for community activities. The temple is a symbol of the Khmer ethnic culture, where morality and human dignity being practiced, as well as for the Khmer youth. Monasteries play an important role in all aspects of Khmer ethnicity. The temple is not only a place associated with spiritual life, religious activities of the Khmer in Tra Vinh province countryside, but also from the ancient temple is the training of the intellectuals for Khmer, contributing greatly to the preservation and promotion of cultural traditions of the Khmer people. It is not only a place of intellectual training, a place of religious belief, a temple is also equipped with fairly complete skills that can be understood simply as a place to train the monks before the graduation. There are monks who, when they return to the lives of ordinary people, have earned themselves a career sufficient to feed themselves, the family. Even with the dynamics of many people, from the occupations learned as monks in the temple, they can do the economy and get rich with the jobs they have learned.

4.10.2 Policy support for poor Khmer households

Production support policy: Continue to support production land in accordance with Decision No. 755/2013 / QD-TTg dated 20 May 2013 of the Prime Minister approving the policy of supporting residential land, production land , water for the poor ethnic minority households and poor households in communes and villages, and Decision No. 29/2013 / QD-TTg of the Prime Minister approving the policy to support the settlement housing, employment for poor ethnic minorities in the Mekong Delta period 2013-2015.

Credit policy: flexible application of credit policies and mechanisms to create favorable conditions for the Khmer people to

approach quickly and easily with loans for production and business, step by step, improving the material and spiritual life of the people. For poor farmers without collateral, there should be organizations such as Farmers' Association, Women's Union etc. to guarantee loans to produce and create jobs for the Khmer people.

Policy on enhancing application support, technical deployment in production, creating conditions for the poor to access scientific and technical advances in production: To promote the application of science and technology in the field of agriculture , focusing on changing the structure of plants and animals to ensure quality and productivity to produce goods; To develop comprehensive, sustainable and effective agricultural development models suited to the production conditions and the practical situation of each locality, especially the areas inhabited by ethnic Khmer people.

Policy on development of traditional craft villages: The State needs to have mechanisms and policies to support the development of traditional trades (capital, vocational training, application of technical advances to improve traditional technologies). Khmer ethnic minority people like brocade weaving; carpentry (sculpture, carving, boat building, traditional musical instruments ...); woven mat; pottery; knit; cook the sugar jug; make flat nuggets....The contribute to solving employment, increasing income for a part of the poor while preserving the unique cultural values of the Khmer people.

The policy to strengthen the contingent of cadres and administrators is the Khmer ethnic group: to increase the proportion of Khmer ethnic minority cadres at all levels of government, state agencies, especially elected representatives. grant; Strengthening the training, retraining, planning and appointment of the contingent of Khmer ethnic cadres to ensure the structure, quantity and quality; To renovate and ensure adequate remuneration for the staff working in the Khmer ethnic minority, to adopt a policy of honoring the core cadres who are prestigious and devoted to local and national

4.11 Concluding remarks

What are the objectives of the establishment of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist education system Studies? What are their contributions and impacts toward Khmer society?

The Khmer Theravāda Buddhist education system studies was established with the purpose to set up a top Institute in the field of Buddhist studies of all Provincial Khmer Theravada Buddhist Association throughout in the southern Vietnam, to unify together the principles of Buddhist activities and social work of the Khmer Theravada Buddhist Associations throughout in southern Vietnam and to open Buddhist Academic studies in the Khmer medium as well as to promote cooperating friendship among the World Buddhist Organizations for development.

For such purposes, Khmer Theravāda Buddhist education system can contribute toward improving the Buddhist knowledge and world knowledge of the Khmer Buddhist learners throughout in southern Vietnam. This Buddhist Institute is regarded as a Buddhist center to provide the places for Buddhist studies and researching field as well as practice of Buddhism for the Khmer society and International scholars As well.

In sum, though the accounts cannot be found in books or in any material notes, but they can be found from the real facts practiced and known by the Khmer people in Southern Vietnam. They have known and practiced directly in accordance with the situation concerned. Therefore these ideas of the The Contribution and Impact to the Buddhist responses are the essential sources for the fulfillment of this research work.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1 Conclusion

The Buddhist education in Southern Vietnam and its contribution to Society in Southern Vietnam take the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha as their refuge for the rest of their lives. They realize that these Triple Gems are the Noble Refuges that are considered as Buddhism which brings peace, happiness and prosperity to their society. we have seen in the in the chapters 2, 3 and 4 in this research is the history of Theravāda Buddhism, its origin and development, its characteristics and the present Theravāda Buddhist education status of Theravāda Buddhism in southern Vietnam. Studying first the historical events of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam has helped us to recognize that there were two groups of Theravāda Buddhists, the Khmer Theravāda characteristics of Theravāda Buddhism in southern in Vietnam were also studied. They have been impact by both cultures, the Vietnamese and the Khmer society in southern Vietnam. The findings tell us about different periods in the Buddhist history of the two countries, Cambodia and southern in Vietnam.

The present study shows that Theravāda Buddhism was adopted by Khmer people in Southern Vietnam before this land was transferred to Vietnam. It has appened when the southern part of South Vietnam was the Kingdom of Funan. Theravāda Buddhism in Funan therefore, was traced back to the period of Emperor Asoka in which the two elder monks Sonathera and Uttarathera had come there. This happened at the same time in history when missionary monks went to Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and to Thailand. Going through the historical periods of the land, Theravāda Buddhism was practiced by the Khmer people in the southern in Vietnam. It was recorded that the land was later integrated in the general homeland of the people and became part of their culture.

The Theravāda Buddhism as practiced in Cambodia. We have seen that the progress and development of Theravāda Buddhism were clearly helped and supported by Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

As a result, Khmer Theravāda Buddhism directly received the original Theravāda tradition. This has made Theravāda followers in southern Vietnam almost all Khmers in Southern Vietnam follow Theravāda Buddhism; and what the factors are that have made an appearance of new Buddhist Religions in the Southern of Vietnam.

However, it is very hard to find documents or notes as evidence about the early establishment of Buddhism in Khmer fatherland. The historical source recorded in Samantapāsādikā, the Vinaya commentary is the only evidence to prove that Buddhism was introduced to their fatherland known as Suvannabhūmi in their prehistory and it is a sprout of Buddhism that developed within the Khmer society afterward.

The Funan period was succeeded by the Chenla period between 550 to 802 C.E., Buddhism that had been developing since the Funan period was still flourishing and practiced in the early Chenla period. This evidence has been studied through a number of inscriptions, Buddha images and historical notes of Khmer monasteries established in the Khmer Society in Southern Vietnam during this historic period. Another inscription in Sanskrit/Pāli was engraved on the back of the seventh century Buddha's image found in Wat Tuol Brea Theat, Kompong Speu province of Cambodia and thus are identified as the presence of Buddhism. However, in this historic period, there was a new movement that marked the arrival of Mahayana Buddhism for the first time into the Khmer Empire, approximately at the beginning of the 12th century B.E. (early eighth century C.E). This school of Buddhism became popular and flourished, lasting into the 13th century C.E. of the Great Angkor period.

From the thirteenth century onward, the Khmer Empire fell into a long period of upheaval that led to its eventual disintegration. There were several internal struggles for power, religious revolution and foreign interferences. Particularly, the native Khmer people not only have been cut off from the support and governance of the Cambodian Authority, but they have been placed under the Vietnamese suzerainty since that time up to

present day. Significantly, the contribution and impact of Buddhism to the Khmer community are the stable foundation of the development and the conservation of Khmer culture and civilization for a long survival. Particularly, Buddhist culture had great influence on the Khmer tradition, education, belief, moral ethics, social welfare, the ways of life, the way of thinking, language, literature, arts, architecture and so on.

Monks' Impact: In this part, we show the four aspects about the life of monks, the system of education in the Sangha, the ordination name and the way of going for alms rounds. They are similar for all heravāda monks in Theravāda countries. They are also practiced in accordance with the Pāli Vinaya and the study of the Dhamma is based on the Tipitaka. However, the system of education for the sangha is different and very weak.

In sum, after studying about Buddhism and Khmer society in the southern of Vietnam, it is evident that Buddhism is present within the Khmer society since the ancient time up to present day, and it can be evaluated as a religion which plays a crucial role in the guidance of practicing in accordance with the righteous ways of the Dhamma for peace, happiness, social harmony and freedom from all suffering.

On the other hand, The Contribution and Impact to Monastery and Khmer Community in Southern Vietnam. Buddhism fulfils another important role to benefit the Khmer people through Buddhist education the significance of the relationship between Buddhist monasteries and Khmer community in the southern of Vietnam. Based on the influence and the contribution of Buddhism to the Khmer society which is regarded as the absolutely essential aspect, it can be said that Buddhism has been strongly absorbed in the mind of all Khmer people and the two can hardly be separated. Whenever Buddhism exists, then the Khmer civilization exists too.

Therefore all Khmer people in the southern of Vietnam are encouraged to practice Buddhism as much as better. Practicing and supporting Buddhism for the development is a mean to maintain the Khmer identity and upholding the Khmer civilization to prosper.

5.2 Suggestion for the Further Research

The research work presented here is a study The Theravāda Buddhist education system in southern Vietnam and its contribution to Society in Southern Vietnam, which are recognized to have impact and contributed to the Khmer community in southern of Vietnam. Certainly, there is much more significant information and ideas related to the objective of this research work that still have not been explored.

The aim of my research work as presented in term of writing is a very important document to help everyone getting to know the Theravāda Buddhist education system in Southern Vietnam and the Contribution and Impact to Monastery and Khmer Community in Southern Vietnam the benefits of Buddhism that the Khmer people gained since the ancient time up to present day. Especially, I do believe that my research work will create interest in the readers and the researchers in cultivating more academic writing with further research.

So, the issues what I would like to suggest for research are as follows:

1. A study of Monastic Buddhist Education in Vietnam and Thailand from the 7th Century to the Present.
2. A Study of the different views of Religions in the Southern Vietnam.
3. Comparison of religious faiths in the Buddhist Religions in Southern Vietnam.
4. Comparison of the religious lifestyles of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam.
5. A Study on the reasons why almost all Khmers in Southern Vietnam follow Theravāda Buddhism; and what the factors are that have made an appearance of new Buddhist Religions in the South of Vietnamese.
6. Comparison of the religious lifestyles and education of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam.
7. Comparison of the religious lifestyles of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in southern Vietnam and Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Northeast Thailand.

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BIOGRAPHY

Name	Dao Minh Van (Paññādharo)
Date of Birth	June 24th , 1973
Birth Place	Cantho city, Vietnam
Nationality	Vietnam
Education	<p>1992 High School in Can Tho city, Vietnam</p> <p>1995–2000 Bach Khoa University in Ho Chi Minh city, Viet Nam</p> <p>2012–2018 M.A. student at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand and M.A master of Arts (International Buddhist Studies College) and (Educational Administration) Graduate School at MahaChulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Ayutthaya Province, Thailand.</p>
Experience	2007– 2012 Teacher of Khmer Theravāda Buddhist University in Cantho city
Permanent address	Wat Pothiwong 21/1 Bui The My , P. 10. Quan Tan Binh, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.
Present address	Wat Latsai, Lamsai, wangnoi, Ayutthaya, Thailand