

TRENDS CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF LIVING OF THE KHMER PEOPLE IN TRA VINH PROVINCE

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Abstract:

The Khmer ethnic group currently has 1.5 million people living for a long time in the Mekong River Delta, most of them in Soc Trang, TraVinh, KienGiang, and An Giang provinces, and is the largest ethnic group in Vietnam today. The Khmer people have their own language and script belonging to the Mon-Khmer language family. During the process of community and cultural exchanges with other ethnic groups, the Khmer people always consciously preserve their traditional culture, and at the same time contribute Khmer cultural characteristics to the general cultural appearance of the country. In TraVinh people, the Khmer people make up more than 30% of the population, with a rich and diverse belief and religious life and activities. This study is based on a philosophical point of view to consider the structure of religious and religious activities of the Khmer people, the factors affecting the religious belief life, and the value of these religious and religious activities in the spiritual life of the Khmer people.

INTRODUCTION:

Although TraVinh province is not home to many ethnic groups like other provinces, each ethnic group here has its own styles and traditions. A long history of development with many good traditions, customs, and practices in which many issues have become traditions and national identities of the ethnic community, especially for the Khmer people creating typical cultural features that are not mixed with other ethnic groups among 54 ethnic groups living in Vietnam, making an important contribution to the process of building a bold, advanced Vietnamese culture national identity momentum.

In order to survive developing and maintaining traditional culture in extremely harsh natural conditions, as a matter of course, the Khmer gathered together into residential units and organized them into communal units. Traditional self-governing associations are "phum" and "srok" (Tho, 2020). Accordingly, phum is the smallest social organization (micro), and many phum form srok, the most complete unit of the Khmer. The phum of the Khmer in the South is the residence unit of one or a group of families, but phum is also a traditional social institution of the Khmer. The traditional Khmer social management mechanism is democratic and equal, members of the community will vote and appoint the leaders (usually an old, strong, and lucid man. understanding customs, customs and prestige, voted by the people in srok as "mesrok") represents the community in the management of phum, srok (Anh, 2009).

The highlight in the culture of the Khmer in general and the Khmer in TraVinh province is one of the few Vietnamese Khmer who have their own language (language speech and writing), quite complete. In the process of existence and development, the Khmer in TraVinh province has constantly created cultural values, traditional festivals of the nation, and religion. Along with other ethnic groups in the region, on the basis of the traditional cultural features that have shaped and developed, the Khmer have had a strong process of contacting and exchanging with the Kinh, Chinese, and Cham to forming a community of Khmer people in TraVinh province with different features. Khmer people culture in TraVinh province created a form of drama Yuke, which today the Khmer in Cambodia is also known as LakhonBasac (drama of the Basac region).

Khmer people's culture is a mixture of many cultural elements and it can be said that the most unique feature in Khmer culture is the accumulation of experience and living capital of wetlands, rivers covered all year round, and conditions nature forces them to create ways to interact and exploit nature to serve them, those creations become a solid foundation of Khmer culture or culture in itself. Before Indian culture was transmitted, the Khmer people basically formed a unique culture of their own. Although influenced by Indian culture, but Khmer culture has localized that culture. With the benediction of all sentient beings, the salvation of suffering, and the salvation of people from the doldrums, Buddhist culture has been hidden inside and has become the essence of Khmer culture and today the temple is the only place spiritual coordination of the Khmer, in every phum, every srok cannot lack the imprint of the Khmer pagoda.

Folk belief activities hold an important role in the spiritual life of the Khmer in TraVinh province. Folk belief is an ancient form of faith that exists and develops when there is no religion. It is formed in the heart of society, but nature is full of mysteries to humans (Van, et al.,

2020). Each natural phenomenon is a new thing and people at that time could not explain and seek spirituality as an objective element of contemporary society (Van, 2019 & 2020), passed down from generation to generation and became cultural features are indispensable in the process of labor and production of the Khmer, etc. When life has important things such as weddings, funerals, illnesses, accidents, etc. Khmer people do not forget to pray Arak, Neakta, Teresa, etc. the gods always protected them in the early dawn of life. When satisfied, they make offerings and at the same time give thanks to those who have helped them reconcile with the gods: the priest, the midwife, Acharyuki, etc.

The notion is clear to the gods, and the Khmer believe that every profession in life such as a priest, physician, carpenter, tailor, etc. is founded by a talented person called a monk nest, is Kru. Every profession has Kru, so when doing business with good results, they must make offerings and pray to give thanks and perhaps so, the Khmer are a person who has more forms of folk beliefs than others are born live in TraVinh province (Quang, 2014). These beliefs have been and will continue to dominate in people's spiritual cultural life. It becomes a typical cultural and folk belief in Vietnamese folk beliefs. "An easy point to see is that the Khmer in TraVinh province soon selected reptiles such as crocodiles, snakes, water, etc. as their main totem. This totem belief still leaves traces in some stories, rituals, decorative motifs in the temple, or in the labor tools of the people" (Quang, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Research on Khmer beliefs has been concerned by many researchers. Many monograph studies have been carried out. There are some typical works as follows:

The book explores the ethnic cultural capital of the Khmer Southern region" by Thach Voi, (1988).The author has cited many sources about the process of forming the Khmer people in the Cuu Long River Delta; quite detailed description. Full of Khmer ethnic culture in the Mekong Delta in the fields of residence, labor, architectural arts, sculpture, painting, religious activities, the domination of the pagoda and the monks for the life and development of the Khmer ethnic group, etc. However, the author has not had a general assessment, drawing outstanding values of Khmer culture in the Mekong Delta.

The book "Ethnic issues in the Mekong Delta" by Mac Duong, Social Science Publishing House, (1991) "Some cultural characteristics of the Mekong Delta", Cultural Institute (1984),. The simulator presented an overall picture including basic features of ethnic groups in the Mekong Delta; on the role of each ethnic group, an overview of the process of ethnic formation, outstanding features of the delta. Mekong River in terms of natural conditions, climate, topography, processes in labor, production, residence and spiritual activities of the ethnic groups in the Mekong Delta.

The book "Housing, clothing, eating and drinking of ethnic groups in the Mekong Delta" by Phan Thi Yen Tuyet, (1993). The book focuses on researching and analyzing the prominent cultural characteristics of ethnic groups in the Mekong Delta, including the Khmer and the author also only mentioned ethnic cultures through daily life such as clothing, clothing. , in.

However, the author remains open and has not yet drawn out its values in the construction of the basic cultural life.

The book "Culture of the Khmer in the Mekong Delta" by Truong Luu, (editor), (1993). The authors mentioned quite comprehensively about the Khmer ethnicity and Khmer culture in the Mekong Delta. Thereby, the Khmer people and the Khmer culture in the Mekong Delta have attached and reflected the characteristics of the delta river region, reflecting the process of community and cultural exchange and acculturation among the ethnic groups living together in the Mekong Delta.

The book "Some folk customs of the Khmer in the Mekong River Delta" by Tran Van Bon, (1999). The author focuses on learning and introducing an array of cultural and spiritual life of the Khmer in the South, expressed through the life cycle rituals and some popular folk rituals of the Khmer people, etc. Performing these rituals, often combined with the association, makes life of the Khmer people both joyful, both a spiritual support and reinforcement of the bond inside and outside the community. Through the festivals, traditional cultural values are drawn out still preserved.

The thesis "Developing the spiritual life of the ethnic Khmer in the South in the current renovation" by Tran Thanh Nam, (2001) social development, including many cultural factors and factors affecting the spiritual life of contemporary Khmer The thesis is an important basis for itself to inherit in his research topic contributing to enriching the spiritual values of the Khmer people.

The book "Some features of the Khmer Southern people" by Nguyen ManhCuong. The author reflects the Khmer culture in the South, the tangible and intangible culture, customs, customs, festivals, psychology, lifestyle to pagodas, statues, musical instruments, etc. the author also set out the problem is how to maintain and promote the Khmer cultural identity in the condition that Vietnam is on the way of modernization today.

The book "Traditional festivals of the Khmer Southern people" by Son PhuocHoan (editor), Son Ngoc San, and Danh Sen (2002). The authors summarize the festivals of the Khmer and almost all festivals, big and small, are performed at the temple. These are the values that will last through time and are not influenced by the modern rhythm of life, and are valuable documents for themselves to inherit.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Traditional religions and beliefs of the Khmer people in TraVinh province:

Regarding the spiritual life, for the Khmer in the South, there are two factors that strongly govern their spiritual life: beliefs - religion and rituals and festivals. The festival is associated with religious rituals and rituals and it usually takes place in Khmer temples.

In terms of religion, at present, the majority of the Khmer in the southwestern region follow the Theravada Buddhism (Theravada Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism) and the temple is a center of cultural and spiritual activities as well as a place for cultural activities community culture, a place to store traditional Khmer culture.

Theravada Buddhism only worshiped Shakyamuni Buddha, did not worship bodhisattvas. The Khmer, whether cultivating at the temple or at home, all consider themselves the children of the Buddha. In the concept of the Khmer, cultivating is not to become a Buddha but to cultivate a person with personality and morality. Khmer sons, regardless of who they are and their social status, if they want to be considered qualified and qualified in society, must spend a period of practice and study at the temple.

Because Buddhism has important implications for the life of the Khmer, almost every village has a temple. Khmer pagodas are often built on tall, airy grounds and are often located in the center of the village and road to facilitate the travel of believers and Buddhists. Due to the characteristics of the Khmer's spiritual practice often associated with the study, in each temple, in addition to the main hall - where the Buddha is worshiped, there are other works to serve the study of the monk as well as the children in the temple. Besides, the temple is also a place for worshippers to take part in festivals as well as a place to discuss common affairs of village and road. Every Khmer person from birth to death is attached to the temple. After death, the body is cremated in the crematorium of the temple, the ashes are worshiped at the temple and thus they are permanent with the Buddha. Every year, on Don-ta festival (August 30 of the lunar calendar), Khmer people, whether near or far, return to the temple to worship Buddha and burn incense to commemorate their ancestors.

The festival is also an indispensable part of the Khmer's spiritual life because the festival is often associated with folk beliefs and religious ceremonies. The Khmer in the Southwest has about 15 festivals attracting the participation of the whole community, including major festivals in the year such as New Year (Chölchnamthmay), usually held in the middle of April early December of the Khmer; grandparents' worshipping ceremony (Don - ta) - held on 3 days from August 29 to September 1 of the lunar calendar; moon worshipping ceremony or flat nuggets ceremony (Ók Om Bok) - held on October 15th of the lunar calendar.

On the basis of identifying factors affecting the change in belief activities of Khmer people in TraVinh province, positive and negative impacts more or less will affect the religious and belief activities of Khmer people. These values can be blurred and have little effect on the spiritual life of the ethnic group, which is shown specifically as follows:

The influence of monks will gradually be limited

The renovation process of Vietnam in general and that of TraVinh province, in particular, is becoming more and more indispensable in the modern rhythm of life. Mechanization and application of scientific and technical advances in agriculture have created a foundation for Vietnam's agriculture to gradually increase output and quality, Vietnam's agricultural production is gradually moving towards the production of goods domestic and foreign markets, making Vietnam one of the world's agricultural powers. This can be said to be a great achievement of the current doimoi period and from then on also emerging new trends in the society of the Khmer in TraVinh province, as follows:

Firstly, making the speed of rural urbanization take place strongly, the urban lifestyle has crept into the Khmer family in TraVinh province, and the economic structure shift from agriculture to

translation. The crop is becoming more and more drastic in rural areas where Khmer people live, making them unable to keep up with this shift.

Second, the replacement of manual labor in agriculture with industrial machinery has made the majority of working-age Khmer out of jobs in rural areas. The small agricultural farming of the Khmer is no longer suitable for the trend of commodity production, plus the price of agricultural products is precarious, making many Khmer families into debt and the situation of gradually selling agricultural land debt service is quite strong in areas where Khmer people live. There is no land, no job at home, etc. leading to the trend of divorce among young Khmer people in TraVinh province is a new trend.

Thirdly, the country's economic development, more or less traditional customs, and traditions of the Khmer in TraVinh province are also gradually changed to suit the new context and reality. The current Khmer youth are not forced to enter the temple at the age of 20 and have to study at the temple for 3 years as before, they can enter the temple to study early or later and the time can be a few days according to holidays, from when they return home to do business, live and study. The situation in many temples, the abbot has a very young age, usually only about 30 years old, lack of monks, the number of elderly monks accounts for a low percentage, etc. is quite common in Khmer temples in TraVinh province.

The social structure will change drastically:

With the current population growth rate, in 2019, Vietnam increases an average of 2,570 people every day, resulting in an average population density of 315 people/km², an urban population rate of 35.92% (Total Department of Statistics, 2019). This will cause consequences and those consequences will weigh on the rural areas. Because the high density of the urban population and the trend of population movement from one region to another, from urban to rural areas, etc. will inevitably happen, this is also the basic cause of the urban situation rural urbanization.

The number of people increases each day, the area of agricultural land does not increase, in order to meet the needs of the development, it is inevitable that the application of high-tech agriculture will take place in rural areas. The area where the Khmer are living is no exception. In this process, there will be more rapid and more drastic changes, when the production capacity of the Khmer countryside is liberated, the labor division process will be strengthened, creating material support for the change Khmer rural society, in which social structure. This means that urban residents, religious backgrounds, all ages, social classes, occupations, education levels, etc. will change and even ethnic groups in rural Khmer living will change.

It is worth noting that the change in the structure of rural society will suggest the diversity of the social components. The homogeneity of ethnic groups and the religious and religious activities of the Khmer were broken down. In many sectors of the people, intellectuals are disseminated, high-tech agriculture will play a key role, etc. this makes the traditional belief and religious activities of the Khmer in TraVinh province will change. Especially the values belonging to ethnic traditions such as religious activities, culture, clothing, accommodation, etc. music and dancing of the ethnic group will be reduced in space and beneficiaries of rewards.

The traditional cultural values are increasingly blurred:

Traditional cultural activities of the Khmer people are house - phum, srok - temple. This relationship has firmly shaped the social life of the Khmer in TraVinh province. It is the attachment, expansion, and development of the social community from the starting point, the cell of Khmer society is still the home, a physical model of Khmer family life, followed by the community phum, srok - temples are characteristic of social life. Entering the renovation period, this traditional culture has changed, the house - family of the Khmer in TraVinh province continues to maintain the economic and social-educational functions of the Khmer family.

However, the form of the family associated with the phum structure, the traditional srok with many generations, with the same lineage will not exist. Instead, the family as a single nucleus with the Vietnamese Village type is common in the Khmer social community in TraVinh province and the life of each family as a sub-cultural Vietnamese ethnic-cultural community. Generation differences, especially in terms of thinking, lifestyle, and value choices tend to increase and sharpen, this is the basis for forming conflicts and conscious conflicts between generations in the clan modern Khmer.

The cultural environment of the Khmer in the area of TraVinh province in recent times still exists another important element connecting the ethnic group, the village culture has also crept and dominated the life of the Khmer living along the road or riverside. It is something very far away but also very close. It is so remote that it is not yet fully identified. Close enough to permeate the blood and flesh of the people born and raised in the countryside of TraVinh province.

Village culture is an important element in today's Khmer cultural environment. The factor that makes up the typical cultural value is the cohesion of the village-commune community and is expressed through the village love in the style of "dark, turn off the lights, each other" and today's Khmer people have also mentioned a lot to this concept or the saying "sell brother far away and buy close neighbors", etc.

From this change lead to the link between house - phum, srok - temple, especially phum, srok will disappear in the memory of today's young generation. Instead, a new social relations mechanism has been established, in which economic benefits are the adhesive of elements in rural society and this is also one of the changes in cultural values of the Khmer people.

CONCLUSION:

Currently, the cultural and religious activities in the Khmer ethnic minority area in TraVinh province have many changes compared to the past. However, those beliefs and religions are still pervasive and strongly linked to the community to promote the spiritual value of religion and the nation, especially since the Ordinance on Beliefs Religions, the Party, the government, the Fatherland Front and mass organizations at all levels always create favorable conditions for religions to conduct rituals in the ethnic communities in accordance with the Party's guidelines and policies and the government's law.

Many pagodas are interested in investing in facilities, repairing and building on a large scale, serving festival activities, paying attention to invest in preserving cultural relics in pagodas, salvation, actively participate in building a cultural life in residential areas in order to reduce social evils in ethnic minority areas in the spirit of "good and good life".

Cultural activities, beliefs, and religions of the Khmer ethnic minority in TraVinh province is a healthy activity, significantly contributing to the diversification of cultural activities in the community of ethnic groups in Vietnam. However, more or less, in cultural and religious activities in ethnic minority areas in general, the Khmer ethnic minority in TraVinh province in particular still has many negative forms. healthy, also has pragmatic meaning, due to the impact of the market economy, leading to cumbersome and costly rituals in worship to overwhelm the pure beliefs of believers.

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