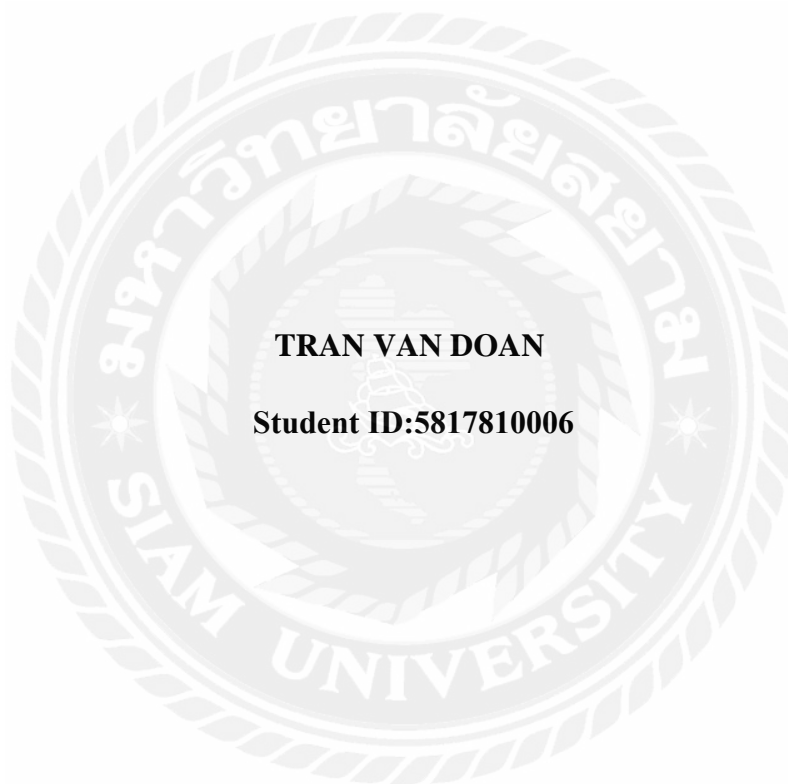




**THE ROLE OF BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN KHMER SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN TRAVINH PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN VIETNAM**



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**An Independent Study submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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**Independent Study Title** : **The Role of Buddhist Education in Khmer Social  
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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative research consisted of three objectives relevant to the role of Buddhist education for Khmer social development in the Travinh province of Southern Vietnam: (1) to study concepts and theories of such Buddhist education; (2) to analyze the role of such Buddhist education; and (3) to recommend the practice of such Buddhist education. The research applied a qualitative research methodology by using documentary research methods. The secondary data was collected from various documents, such as books, dissertations, theses, articles, unprinted documents, and other sources. The researcher analyzed all collected data using content, logical, and comparative analyses to draw research findings and conclusions, and make recommendations. This research found that Buddhist education played a crucial role in Khmer social development in the Travinh province of Southern Vietnam. The Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths, including the Four Noble Truths Action Framework, were the factors that positively impacted the Theravada Buddhist Studies Program of Travinh province. Relevant recommendations from this research and for future research were provided.

**KEYWORDS:** Buddhist Education, Role, Khmer Social Development, Southern Vietnam, Travinh Province



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## DEDICATION

This independent study is dedicated to the Triple Gem, the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, whose virtues have guided me in the right way to release my suffering internally and externally.

Additionally, this IS is dedicated to my father, Mr. Tran Set (1937-2016) and my stepfather, Mr. Tran Nu (1937-1972), who lovingly taught me the important things to save my life, and my mother, Mrs. Kien Thi Song (1938-2019), who gave me birth and loved me without condition.



## DECLARATION

I, Tran Van Doan, do hereby declare that this research is entirely my own work and that it is original unless specific acknowledgments state otherwise. I have done this independent study by myself under the close supervision of an advisor.



(.....)

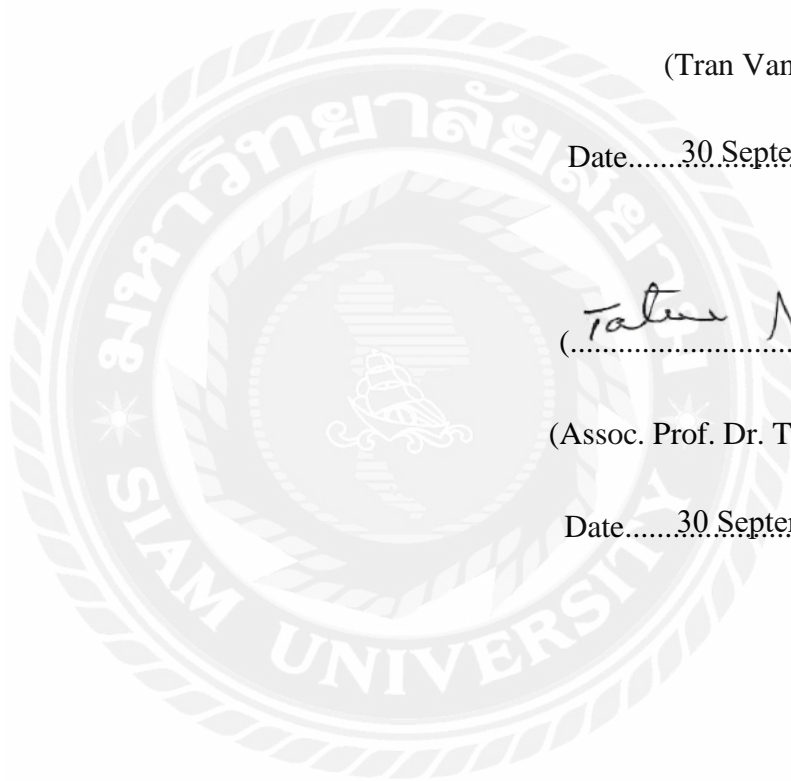
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Date.....30 September 2023.....



(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatree Nontasak)

Date.....30 September 2023.....



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSP	Buddhist Studies Program
IS	Independent Study
MAPD	Master of Arts of Peace Studies and Diplomacy
MCU	Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TBSP	Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program
UNBMST	United-loving Nation Buddhist Monk Society in Travinh Province



# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Research

Buddhist education plays a crucial role in social development of Khmer ethnic group in Travin province in Southern Vietnam. Khmer culture and tradition including their mindset and skills are affected by the Buddha's core teachings generally. Thachkeo (2020) emphasized the development strategy of the Theravāda Buddhist studies program (*Buddhikasiksa*) in a case study of the Khmer community in Travin province in Vietnam. All Khmer communities believe in Buddhism. Buddhism does not only get influenced by Khmer-born Buddhists' spirituality but also by their way of life. Buddhism always helps to create social civilization and happiness for Khmer in terms of engaged Buddhism (p. 2). It is crystal clear that the role of Buddhist education becomes the cause of this study, either the Khmer social development is the effect in this research.

Travin is a strategic place for maintaining, protecting, and propagating Theravāda Buddhism for sustainable development in the Khmer community. Nowadays, it has become the place for many Khmer Buddhist scholars to conduct their academic works. Thachkeo (2020) claimed in his dissertation that Travin is considered the land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam (p. 2). Another study indicated similar evidence, showing that Travin province is the land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism. Khmer people would be endowed with the Buddha's teachings are the potential factors in maintaining peace among the different ethnic groups of Khmer, Vietnamese and Chinese in the particular location, even if they were affected by the political and historical turmoil (Dao, 2017, p. 21). Travin is located in the Mekong Delta region which is a part of Southern Vietnam. The province had been established with an area of 2,358.2 hectares, a population of 1,045,600 inhabitants, and ten administrative units. The three ethnic groups have lived together in unity and harmony. The Khmer make up 31.63% of Travin Provincial population. In previous times, the name of the city in Khmer is Preah Trapeang, but the modern one is called Travin in Vietnamese. There are 143 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist temples. Each year, it has got 3,000 to 3,500 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks and novices conduct the three-months rainy retreat in local temples.

The priority way to educate and train Khmer children is based on Buddhist education in Khmer Theravāda temples in local places. From the past up to now, almost 143 Khmer Theravāda temples in Travin province have run a monastic school system standard for Khmer children in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam with 100% free of charge. To share for mindset and to train for skill are the crucial keys to show the Khmer complex culture. Tran (2010) wrote in his thesis, at the center of all Khmer communities in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam are the temples. By supporting the monks in the temples, the laities contribute to making and sharing communal merits. The temples, in return, serve the Khmer community in part by serving as a center of learning (p. 80). Khmer Temples and communities have joined hands together to educate and train their children under Theravāda Buddhist Studies program (TBSP) for the better lives. The accomplishments of Buddhist education have been showed with an annual result by the final examination activities of the grades 9 and 12 in Khmer Buddhist Studies (see appendix B: pictures one and two).

Furthermore, the concepts and theories of Buddhist education for the Khmer social development are commonly existed in the Buddha's core teachings, like the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths, which are called inputs for this study. For outputs, the researcher will explore the process section and show it in the last chapter of this study.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This independent study shall analyze the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam, to answer the following research questions:

1.2.1 What are concepts and theories explaining the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam?

1.2.2 What is the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam?

1.2.3 What are the recommendations on the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This independent study has the following research objectives:

1.3.1 To study concepts and theories of the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam;

1.3.2 To analyze Buddhist education for Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam;

1.3.3 To recommend the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam.

### **1.4 Scope of Research**

This research is scoped to study the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam. Time of research was limited from June of 2021 to December of 2022, and the research applied a qualitative research methodology by using documentary research methods. The researcher is going to study only in Travin Province, because Travin is the land of Theravāda Buddhism. The aspects will be treated are the way of life of Khmer communities, the activities of Theravāda Buddhist studies program (*Buddhikasiksa*) and the social development. The aspects will not be concerned are Mahayana Buddhism, Chinese and Vietnamese people, and the way of Vietnamese life. Key sources of secondary data includes the Pali Canon, Buddhist scriptures, texts, acts, regulations, rules, meeting documents, annual reports, general books, translated books, articles from the edited books, articles published in the journals, newspapers, the encyclopedia, the critic of books, theses and research report, unprinted documents and online resources. Particularly, all kinds of unprinted documents from the headquarter office of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Travin Province in Vietnam, the development strategy of the Theravāda Buddhist studies program (*Buddhikasiksa*): a case study of the Khmer community in Travin province in Vietnam, a study of the influence and contribution of Theravāda Buddhism to the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, a study of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam, and the Theravāda Buddhist education system in Southern Vietnam and its contribution to the society. They do not include Mahayana Buddhist Studies program and the development of Vietnam nation.

## 1.5 Research Methodology

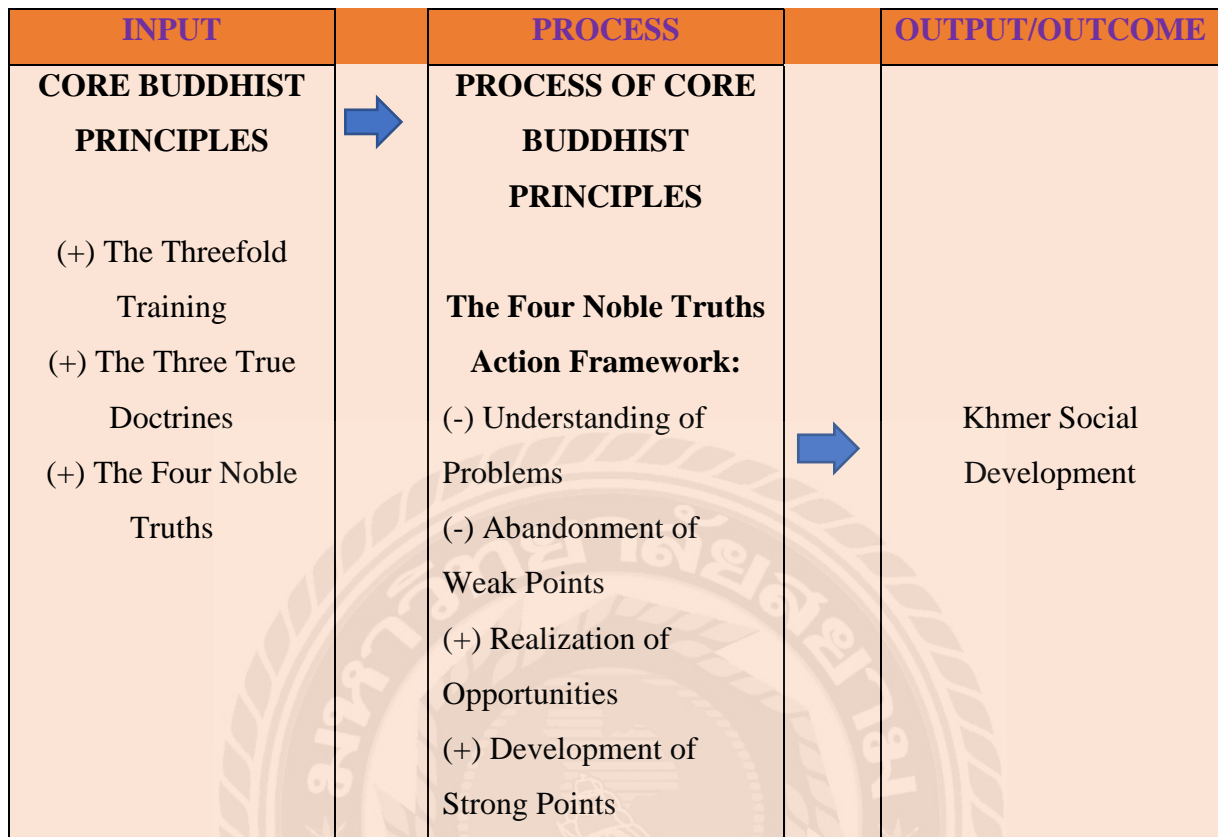
This research applies qualitative research by using documentary research methods; the secondary data is collected from various documents, such as academic books, research papers, review articles, newspapers, and official reports of Buddhist associations and international organizations. The researcher analyzes all collected data by using content analysis, logical analysis, and comparative analysis, to make the research's findings, discussion, and recommendations. The following procedure can be represented by its three objectives as follows:

**Objective One:** To study the concepts and theories of the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam, and its related research as the Buddhist strategy and Khmer way of life.

**Objective Two:** To analyze the inputs process and outputs of the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam. The key concerns are going through the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, the Four Noble Truths, and the Four Noble Truths action framework including its practice by Khmer people.

**Objective Three:** To find appropriate recommendations for the use of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam to use from this IS for futher study.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework



**Diagram 1:** Conceptual Framework of Research

The researcher analyzes the role of Buddhist education in responding to the social development need of the Khmer ethnic group in Travin province of Southern Vietnam and their way of life as shown in the above conceptual framework.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Role** refers to the purpose and influence that the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program have on the Khmer people in Travin province. It includes the character that is run by a particular committee in the Travin Provincial Society.

**Buddhist Education** refers to the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in the Buddhist monastic school system standard through the 143 Khmer Theravāda temples in the local province provided by the United-loving Nation Buddhist Monk Society of Travin



(UNBMST). It is called the “*Buddhikasiksa* program” in Khmer. It also refers to the cause in this study in short.

**Khmer Social Development** is what Khmer ethnic group in Travinh is needed. It refers to the effects of this study. It means all the outstanding results of this study for the Khmer greater mental, and the development of mindset and training of skill.

**Travinh Province** refers to a strategic place for Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Here is involved the teaching, coaching, and practicing of Buddhism are becoming common activities, limiting at the scope of the study so far.

**Buddhist Teachings** refer to the Buddha’s core teachings in this study, namely the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, the Four Noble Truths, and the Four Noble Truths action framework.

**Blue Ocean Strategy** refers to an integrated Theravāda Buddhist Studies program with modern sciences. It means Buddhism responds to the truths, and sciences are on the facts. The researcher aimed to apply both into this study if time is available.

**Four Noble Truths** refer to a new knowledge in the Buddhist strategy to help to solve all kinds of problems in the monastic school system standard. The key wordings proposed to appear are (1) understanding of problems; (2) abandonment of weak points; (3) realization of opportunities; and (4) development of strong points in Theravāda Buddhist Studies program and Khmer Society.

**Four BSP Action Framework** refers to a specific four actions framework in blue ocean strategy applied into Buddhist Studies Program, in order to search for problem solving based on the four questions terms. These questions aim to eliminate and reduce the problems and to raise and create opportunities in Khmer Society.

## **1.8 Limitations of Research**

This research was limited to the qualitative research methods, which aimed to collect all secondary data, analyze them under the contents, logical and comparative analyses and give the primary data beyond. No questionnaires, in-deep interviews, and group discussions were

explored in the study, nor the observation. The researcher was going to focus on the three research questions which bring the input, process, and output by the methods of analysis.

Time was limited. The IS has started from 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the academic year 2021 to the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2022. It is counted for one year and a half to run the proposal on the role of Buddhist education in social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam. Even the researcher faced a hard time but hopes every obstacle hereby had enough time to be solely solved.

Local research is limited in Travin province, where the secondary resources were easier to approach. The existent documents involved the dissertation and theses from Buddhist universities in Thailand and some other paper reports from the Travin Provincial Society. Either Buddhist education, the researcher aimed to study only the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travin for Khmer social development.

## **1.9 Expected Benefits of Research**

1.9.1 To find the appropriate Buddhist action framework for Khmer social problem solving.

1.9.2 To develop the strategy of Theravāda Buddhist Studies program for Khmer social development.

1.9.3 To approach the peaceful existence between Khmer, Vietnamese, Chinese and others.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

In the study of this independent study (IS) on “The Role of Buddhist Education in Khmer Social Development in TravinH Province of Southern Vietnam,” the researcher has collected all related literature and research for literature review before continuing to undertake the data collection and the data analysis, as well as research findings, conclusion and recommendations. This chapter reviews the existing literature to study concepts and theories of the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in TravinH province of Southern Vietnam, which is the first objective of this IS.

### 2.1 Concepts and Theories

#### 2.1.1 Concepts and Theories of the Role of Buddhist Education

In the concepts and theories, two main points have to be discussed as follows:

##### (1) The “Role” in Buddhist Literature

There are two meanings that the researcher has to concern about in this prior academic writing. According to Macmillan (2003), the word “role” means: (1) the purpose or influence that someone or something has, and (2) the character that is played by a particular actor in a film or play (p. 625). For the specific scenario, Buddhist education is a crucial role in developing the Khmer Society in TravinH province in Vietnam. In other words, all the Khmer culture and tradition and the way of Khmer life are influenced by Buddhist theories and practices. All in one, Theravāda Buddhist teachings have become the character of Khmer communities in the local place as well. Furthermore, this key role is limited to the role of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program (TBSP) in TravinH Province in Vietnam.

**(a) Purposes:** Thachkeo (2020) addressed in his dissertation on the development strategy of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program (Buddhikasiksa): a case study of the Khmer community in TravinH province in Vietnam, there are three purposes for TBSP of TravinH (pp. 25-26) as following:

The first purpose is to identify the character of Khmer Buddhist traditional values with Khmer children in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam;

The second purpose is to invest intangible capital in the Khmer Buddhist scholars for monks, novices, and Buddhist devotees inside and outside communist Vietnam's country;

The third purpose is to propagate the Buddha's teachings for the benefit, happiness, and peacefulness of the many.

**(b) Role:** It emphasizes the strategic development of TBSP. Thachkeo (2020) proposes that the strategic planning for TBSP indicates a guideline for Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travinh. It aims to represent a mission that TBSP is reaching right now. It concludes with 1) introduction, 2) philosophy, 3) slogan, 4) mission, 5) vision, 6) objectives, 7) goal, 8) strategic methods, and 9) headquarters office including online connection via (p. 102). These are the following:

1) Introduction: Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travinh province in Vietnam, abbreviation as TBSP, is a monastic school system standard by the Buddhist rules and law. TBSP was established in 1965 by the Provincial Society. It provides Social and Sciences Studies with 100% free of charge to Khmer children in Vietnam. The new revised core subjects are meditation and computers. Students require to spend at least seven academic years to finish seven grades.

2) Philosophy: Self-minimizing; non-self-maximizing; integration of TBSP with modern sciences; sharing for mindset and training for skill.

3) Slogan: Ways to liberation (if you want peace, just come and see).

4) Mission: A monastic school system standard with 100% free of charge.

5) Vision: An integration of TBSP with modern sciences for greater mental and socially sustainable development.

6) Objectives: To study a Buddhist way of life, approach Buddhism, build a new code of peaceful life.

7) Goal: Liberation of all kinds of life problems.

8) Strategic methods: The Four Noble Truths action framework; the Four Great Effort's application; the Four BSP actions framework; the eight principles of blue ocean strategy.

9) Headquarter office: Travin province in Vietnam; contact by via Facebook: Salakon Online.

One more important thing is noticed: This strategic development enforcement order is a step-by-step act by the Provincial Society, not by the researcher. I hope that all respondent sectors get the right understanding of this issue (Thachkeo, 2020, 102).

## (2) The Role of Buddhist Education

There are various sources on the role of Buddhist education hereby. Dao (2017) found that Buddhist education plays a very significant role in the system of education of Southern Vietnam for Khmer social development. People pay much attention to earning their primary education through the Theravāda Buddhist 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 to fulfill their thirst for knowledge. Meanwhile, responsible monks of the country have launched a systematic Buddhist educational model to teach Buddhism gradually and got the official approval to recognize its standard as equal to the general educational system of the country. The Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Studies in Southern Vietnam is referred to the study program of Dhamma Vinaya and Pali school, and Buddhist studies undergraduate school (pp. i-ii). Another study emphasized similar data, showing that the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks take the temples as the foundation centers of their work, and played crucial roles that contributed to the fulfillment and preservation of Theravāda Buddhist culture in the Khmer Society (Tran (2010, p. iii). Furthermore, there was another research considered as the classical linking source, claiming that both the Buddha's core teachings and modern sciences summarized as the truths and the facts, which play a vital role in fixing the specific problems in existence completely (Thachkeo, 2020, p. i). In addition, one more important study found the supported data to the modern sciences, addressing that the strategic management tools, essential strategic management, and blue ocean strategy play crucial roles in ensuring the Buddhist Studies program of Travin province for reevaluation and reformation (Thachkeo, 2020, p. i).

### **2.1.2 Concepts and Theories of Social Development**

For social development of the Khmer community has been discussed two turning points as follows:

#### **(1) The Social Development in Differentiated Sources**

Social is the shelter of humankind because human beings are the social species. They spend their lives in the same world. No one can live alone. And they all can be educated and trained equally. But it was to accept one serious thing: the more people live together in a society; the more problems are caused. To solve all the life problems, it is required to develop people's lives based on the right way in continuation as shown by the three important revolutions that shaped the course of history. Yuval (2015) mentioned those three things: The Cognitive Revolution kick-started history about 70,000 years ago. The Agricultural Revolution sped it up about 12,000 years ago. The Scientific Revolution, which got underway only 500 years ago, may well end history and start something completely different (p. 3). The life problems in the world are nonstop because everyone is full of ego and do everything just for themselves, at least in their minds. He explained everyone was "us", at least potentially. There was no longer "them". The first universal order to appear was economic: the monetary order. The second universal order was political: the imperial order. The third universal order was religious: the order of universal religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam (p. 172). Yuval (2015) another wording also stated that merchants, conquerors, and monks were the first people who managed to transcend the binary evolutionary division, us vs them, and to foresee the potential unity of humankind. For the merchants, the whole world was a single market and all humans were potential customers. They tried to establish an economic order that would apply to all, everywhere. For the conquerors, the entire world was a single empire, and all humans were potential subjects, and for the Buddhist monks, the entire world held a single truth and all humans were potential believers. They too tried to establish an order that would apply to everyone everywhere (p. 172).

Furthermore, the researcher approaches social learning theory, a theory stating that much learning occurs by observing others and then modeling the behaviors that lead to favorable outcomes and avoiding behaviors that lead to punishing consequences. McShane and

Glinow (2010) stated this form of learning occurs in three ways: behavior modeling, learning behavior consequences, and self-reinforcement (p. 85).

## (2) The Social Development on the Perspectives of Buddhism

According to Buddhism, society is created and developed by the human beings themselves, without God and creative things in existence here. And people are created by the four great elements, namely earth, water, fire, and wind which combine tightly. Their lives are endowed with bodies and minds. So, both are subjected to join in any training course for being a good citizen because one personality with morality, concentration, and wisdom developed is the basic family unit, a family is the basic social unit, a social is the primary national unit and a nation is a basic world qualified unit accordingly. That is to say, man is a factor for family, society, country, and world prosperity and security. Payutto (2007) compiled a section on conducting oneself as a good citizen: leading oneself and one's family to prosperity and happiness, and being a constructive member of society, by practicing the following:

- 1) Not being promiscuous or preoccupied with sex,
- 2) Not selfishly taking all the tasty morsels for oneself,
- 3) Not wasting time arguing about worthless things,
- 4) Having good conduct and discipline; being established in the five precepts,
- 5) Performing one's duties regularly and completely,
- 6) Not being heedless, but energetic at all times,
- 7) Being judicious, doing things with wisdom,
- 8) Being polite, not stubborn or arrogant; being open to the opinions of others,
- 9) Being modest; possessing a love of refinement, cleanliness, and orderliness,
- 10) Having pleasant speech; being gentle in both deeds and thoughts,
- 11) Being kind and generous to one's friends,
- 12) Sharing with and helping people in general,
- 13) Managing one's duties efficiently and effectively,
- 14) Supporting the learned and virtuous monks,
- 15) Loving truth; esteeming virtue,
- 16) Having read and heard much; thoroughly knowing one's field,
- 17) Possessing an inquiring mind, seeking ever more knowledge (p. 46).

### **2.1.3 Concepts and Theories of Khmer Social Development**

The theories and concepts of Khmer social development have been discussed for two main purposes as follows:

#### **(1) The Social Development on Khmer Contexts in Travinh**

Khmer people in Travinh are turning red. They are facing many aspects of social turmoil. From the owner of the motherland, a part of Kampuchea Krom, they lost their governors and opportunities in developing the Provincial Travinh, accepted abiding by a Vietnamese communist order. For Khmer, it covers 31.63% of Travinh Provincial population. It was estimated at 500,000 units of Khmer-Vietnamese citizens throughout Travinh. They were divided into three main groups: the first group follows a Vietnamese communist party. They call themselves Khmer communists. The second group depends on an overseas Khmer living abroad. They define themselves as loving national Khmer. The last group is those who strongly believe in Buddhism and practice Dhamma-Vinaya of the Buddha, not to do the wrong things, to do the good, and to purify one's mind; in short, they have been called Khmer Buddhist devotees. Khmer is turning deaths because they are divided. There is no justice in Khmer history. And other 20 provinces and cities in Southern Vietnam may be in more serious condition too. Most of them are confused about whom will be an authentic Khmer now. However, Khmer can accept that and try their best to change their mindset and improve their skill in equal with other citizens of the world. Yuval (2015) also agreed with the idea of "no justice in history," confirming that most people claim that their social hierarchy is natural and just, while those of other societies are based on false and ridiculous criteria. Modern Westerners are taught to scoff at the idea of racial hierarchy. They are shocked by laws prohibiting blacks for living in white hospitals. But the hierarchy of rich and poor, which mandates that rich people live in separate and more luxurious neighborhoods, study in different and more prestigious schools, and receive medical treatment in independent and better-equipped facilities, seems perfectly sensible to many Americans and Europeans. Yet it's a proven fact that most wealthy people are rich for the simple reason that they were born into a rich family, while most poor people will remain poor throughout their lives merely because they were born into a poor family (p. 137). The researcher wonders if Khmer people were simply born into Khmer families in Travinh and must accept to separate from each other in their communities. It has no answer yet. Be aware of this idea of "no justic" for Khmer, and find the solution for that!



## (2) The Social Development of Khmer Buddhist Contexts in Travinh

Dao (2017) found that from the context of the Khmer Buddhists in Travinh province of Southern Vietnam, Theravāda Buddhism is the religion of the Khmer families. Therefore, it has become the spirit of the Khmer people (p. 17). The characters of Khmer culture are focused on the Buddhist arts throughout the 143 Khmer Theravāda temples in a local place, ways of celebrating rites and rituals of the important days in Buddhism in the communities, ways they educate their children at home and temples, and ways they react the problems in daily life included the Khmer traditional clothes they wear in the special days of the ceremony. One more important thing, Khmer language also helps to identify the identity of the Khmer ethnic in Vietnam originally.

Another Khmer Buddhist context found a connection with Khmer tradition, sharing that Khmer Buddhist monks in each temple in Travinh province of Vietnam have the main responsibility to developing and maintaining the Khmer national culture, for example, Khmer literacy studies, tradition, arts, and architecture are completely supported by Buddhist monks (Dao, 2017, p. 75). It is not enough for Khmer social development, if the Buddhist monks are absent from the Society. Apart from the contribution of social and moral instruction, Khmer Buddhist monks in each temple have also taken part in schooling very actively to improve the quality of the monks and lay people in all the villages surrounding each of the 143 temples in the specific location. In sum, Khmer people in Travinh province have spent their lives depending on the Buddhist monks for almost the aspects of a difficult situation, at least potentially. Sometimes, Khmer monks and their people were greatly forced to go through the worst to get the best in life.

### **2.2 Related Research**

Thachkeo (2020) studied in a dissertation “The Development of Strategy of Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program (*Buddhikasiksa*): A Case Study of Khmer Community in Travinh Province in Vietnam” found that the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program is a monastic school system standard for Khmer children with 100% free of charge. The strategies for developing Buddhist Studies integrated Theravāda Buddhist Studies with modern sciences. The development strategy of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program represented the applications of the Four Noble Truths action framework in Buddhism and the four BSP actions framework

in the blue ocean strategy in developing from the primary strategic plan in existence to the great change under a big revolution and reformation principles. The curriculum and guidelines of the old program have been revised successfully. This is good for the Buddhist Studies strategic development and lifelong learning for the mindset and skill.

Thachkeo (2020) studied in a thematic paper “An Integration of Buddhist Studies with Modern Sciences” found that the Theravāda principles still be available to apply to Theravāda Buddhist Studies program (TBSP) to fill in the gap of the development strategy of the Buddhist Studies in the local place. Next, it was a turn of the facts of integrating Buddhist Studies with modern sciences. Both the Buddha’s core teachings and modern sciences are summarized as the truths and the facts which played a crucial role to fix the specific problem in existence completely and gave birth to the four actions framework for everyone, Buddhist and non-Buddhist countries. An integration of TBSP with modern sciences is good in management.

Thachkeo (2020) studied in the article “An Application of the Eight Principles of the Strategy of Blue Ocean to Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program in Travin Province in Vietnam” found that the strategic management tools, basic strategic management, and blue ocean strategy play a significant role in ensuring the Buddhist Studies program of Travin for revaluation and reformation. All activities are enabled to build into the blue ocean strategy and make the competition within the 143 Khmer Theravāda temples through Travin Province irrelevant. One more output finding is useful for the skillfulness and abilities in management: an application of the eight principles of the strategy of the blue ocean can be the top of an integration of Buddhist Studies with modern sciences for the greater mental and sustainable development in Khmer communities. Members of Buddhist Studies affairs are committed to hardworking with the community to educate and train all Khmer children to be protected and respected. The know-how of applications represents by the step-by-step strategic building with SWOT analysis and the four actions question. This research title is suitable for managers and administrators.

Dao (2017) studied in a thesis “The Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam and Its Contribution to the Society” and found that Theravāda Buddhism practiced by Khmer in Vietnam was highly influenced by Cambodian Theravāda Buddhism. Due to this established Buddhism, it also got a chance to integrate with other Theravāda Buddhist countries, like Thailand, Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. With its very introduction

and establishment of Buddhism, it has variously influenced Khmer in Vietnam. It also influenced the educational system of this particular area. Further, this thesis discussed the contribution and impact of Theravāda Buddhism on Khmer Society in Vietnam. It explored the significant factor of religious activities and social welfare of Khmer people such as fine art organization, schooling, Buddhist dissemination, social works, and contribution to the setup and maintenance of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism.

Kim (2014) studied in a thesis “A Comparative Study of Rites and Rituals between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam” and found that Theravāda Buddhism has two traditions as Khmer and Vietnamese Theravāda traditions. Concerning the Buddhist rites and rituals in both traditions, they follow an almost similar practice. Accepted in some cases, they use their dialects. It can be seen that those rites and rituals encourage people to do wholesome activities, and creates unity among people. Another finding, most rites and rituals related to the Mahāyāna tradition have been greatly influenced by the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition. The activities are performed both in the house and temple. The last finding is the rites and rituals of both traditions have greatly influenced Khmer and Vietnamese Societies. It makes people live harmonious life.

Tran (2010) studied in a thesis “A Study of the Influence and Contribution of Theravāda Buddhism to the Khmer Community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam” found that there are three parts. The first part is the period of Theravāda Buddhist history stretching from Funan to the fall of Angkor and the flourishing of the Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam to the present day. This first part also explores the change from the flourishing Cambodian Buddhism to the sectarian conversion of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in various reigns over the country of Khmer history. The second part is the influence of Buddhism on Khmer Society. The sources are derived from the Khmer people’s practice of Buddhist doctrines and are identified as Buddhist culture that influenced the way of life and Khmer tradition. Particularly, each aspect of Khmer culture has been influenced by Theravāda Buddhism, such as tradition, education, moral ethics, way of thinking, religious belief, language, literature, arts, architecture, and so on. Generally, Buddhism has led the Khmer civilization to prosperity from ancient times up to the present. The last part is the contribution of Theravāda Buddhism to the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. It explores the significant factors of religious activities and social welfare of Khmer people in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. This part also emphasized that the Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks taking

the temples as the foundation center of their work played crucial roles that contributed to the fulfillment and preservation of Theravāda Buddhist culture in the Khmer Society.

Huynh (2010) studies in a thesis “A Study of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam” firstly found that in the historical periods of the land of the present day, Theravāda Buddhism was practiced by the Khmer in the Mekong Delta, which is recorded to have been integrating into the homeland of Southern Vietnam. Thereby, Theravāda Buddhism came to be practiced in Vietnam. Secondly, the characteristics and practices of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam were clear to its common features and some different characteristics due to the different national cultures of the Khmer and Vietnam. The special is the same faithful traditions shared by Khmer Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam and Theravāda Buddhist countries. Thirdly, the seven different fields of the present status of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam. They are the monks and temples, education, propagation, meditation activities, Khmer and Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhism, Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism, and problems and their solutions.

This IS tells the inputs process of how the role of Buddhist education has affected Khmer social development and the way of life in Travinh of Southern Vietnam. The same thing, only the outputs of this academic work can prove everything and be evaluated clearly.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Buddhist Education for Khmer Social Development in Travinh Province of Southern Vietnam**

In this chapter, the researcher reported the findings of the documentary research results on the second objective of this research which is to analyze the input in the conceptual framework in the contexts of the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths.

#### **3.1 The Threefold Training**

Payutto (2018) defined the Threefold Training as the three divisions of training principles that are not included in the Noble Eightfold Path, but the Noble Eightfold Path is included in the three divisions of training principles. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood, these qualities are included in the division of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, these qualities are included in the division of concentration. Right view and right intention, these qualities are included in the aggregate of wisdom (pp. 990-991). Another source found a similar definition, stating that the Threefold Training is considered a complete system of practice, which encompasses the entirety of the Noble Eightfold Path and distills the essence of the path for practical application. It is thus used as the standard teaching for describing Dhamma practice. It is fair to conclude that the Noble Eightfold Path contains the full essence of Dhamma practice, and the Threefold Training expresses the entirety of Dhamma practice in a practical way. Moreover, the Threefold Training draws upon the essential principles contained in the path and elaborates upon them, providing comprehensive details of practice (Payutto, 2018, p. 991). So the Threefold Training is included in higher morality, the higher mind, and higher wisdom in the training course as follows:

##### **3.1.1 Training in the Higher Morality**

The first division is training in higher morality. This refers to behaving well concerning society, honoring a moral code, and fulfilling one's social responsibilities. One beneficially relates to society and safeguards one's environment, especially the social environment, so that it is conducive for every person to live a virtuous life and practice the path factors of right speech, right conduct, and right livelihood. Payutto (2018), according to the Buddhist

perspective, one who undertakes and trains in the various training rules is called training in higher virtue (p. 990).

### **3.1.2 Training in the Higher Mind**

The second division is training in the higher mind. It is to cultivate the quality and capability of the mind. This means making the mind strong, steady, and stable, maintaining self-restraint, and being concentrated and highly motivated. The mind becomes peaceful, bright, joyous, pure and free from agitation or defilement. It is in the most optimum state for work, for the development of the path factors of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, especially for the application of profound wisdom. Payutto (2018) expressed that one is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called the training in the higher mind (p. 990).

### **3.1.3 Training in the Higher Wisdom**

The third division is training in higher wisdom. It is to cultivate the wisdom to generate an understanding of things as they truly are, culminating in liberation, at which time the mind is perfectly free, bright, and happy; to develop the path factors of right view and right thought. In essence, this refers to cultivating pure wisdom, which clearly understands the truth and is not deceived or confused by the power of defilements, most notably ignorance and craving. Payutto (2018) confirmed that one who understands as it is: “This is suffering. This is the origin of suffering. This is the cessation of suffering. This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.” This is called the training in higher wisdom (p. 990).

Another definition in brief for the Three Training, meaning that (a) training in higher virtue: training and study on the level of conduct and in line with a moral code, to be upright in body, speech, and livelihood; (b) training in higher mind: training the mind, cultivating spiritual qualities, generating happiness, developing the state of one’s mind, and gaining proficiency at concentration; (c) training in higher wisdom: training in higher levels of wisdom, giving rise to thorough understanding, which leads to complete purification of the mind and liberation from suffering (Payutto, 2018, p. 994).

To give a complete definition of these three training one must combine an explanation of their purpose. The Threefold Training refers to the training of conduct, mind, and wisdom,

which leads to an end of all the problems of the world and true happiness and deliverance. The essence of each training in the context of this path of liberation is as follows:

(1) The essence of training in higher morality is to live in an upright way in society, supporting, protecting, and promoting a peaceful and virtuous co-existence. Moral conduct is a foundation for developing the quality of one's mind and cultivating wisdom;

(2) The essence of training in the higher mind is to develop and enhance the quality and potential of the mind, which supports living a virtuous life and is conducive to applying wisdom most optimally;

(3) The essence of training in higher wisdom is to discern and understand things according to the truth, to penetrate the nature of conditioned phenomena, so that one lives and acts with wisdom. One knows how to relate to the world correctly and shares blessings with others, endowed with a bright, independent, and joyous mind, free from suffering.

Payutto (2018) has mentioned that the essence of the Threefold Training is not confined to an individual but also has a bearing on or appeals to people's responsibilities in the context of their communities and society: establishing social systems, building institutions, arranging activities, and applying various methods for the essence of these training to be integrated into society, or for people to be grounded in the Threefold Training. In the context of the wider society, the Buddha suggested broad principles used by leaders and rulers, who should determine the details of behavior concerning their state or nation (pp. 994-995).

In sum, Thachkeo (2020) mentioned that the Khmer community is committed to leading Khmer Society for sustainable development under the first division called moral conduct in short. The second division, called concentration is a part of the philosophy of TBSP of Travin. And the last one is its goal in Buddhist Studies in Travin province in Southern Vietnam (pp. 61-62). So, the Threefold Training is a way of Buddhist education for Khmer social development in Travin province in Southern Vietnam. It helps Khmer people to restore their problem solving skill, protect their cultural values and save their nation. Furthermore, the TBSP of Travin never loses its goal because the administrators and managers always follow this Threefold Training for expanding the program and targeting the training of mindset, skill, and wisdom for Khmer children throughout Southern Vietnam. Buddhist education is exactly the Threefold Training.

## **3.2 The Three True Doctrines**

Thachkeo (2020) mentioned that the Three True Doctrines refer to the doctrines which modify the missions of Theravāda Buddhism. The response to textual and practical Buddhism leads to the highest goal in Buddhism. It is also the goal of TBSP to explore the liberation of all kinds of life problems (p. 9). Another finding is what Buddhism is all about can be summarized in the Three True Doctrines. They also modify to the Fourth Noble Truth, the Buddhist Middle Way. It has various meanings like good law; true doctrine; the doctrine of the good; essential doctrine, called “*saddhamma*” in Pāli. It consists of three features, namely (1) the textual aspect of the true doctrine, (2) the practical aspect of the true doctrine, and (3) the attainable aspect of the true doctrine (Thachekeo, 2020, p. 59).

### **3.2.1 The Textual Aspect of the True Doctrine**

The textual aspect of the true doctrine regards the Studies of the Pāli language, *Abhidhamma*, the Pali Canon. Some Buddhist scholars call textual Buddhism or theoretical Buddhism (Thachkeo, 2020, p. 59). Another finding is the first feature referring to the word of the Buddha that we study, through the Pali Canon, without which the Buddha’s teachings could never reach us. We can say that the textual aspect of the true doctrine is the result of the second feature and the third one, or the Three True Doctrines ( Payutto, 2003, p. 9). In academic study, it covers all Buddhist Principles which lead to approach the goals, the attainable aspect of the true doctrine.

### **3.2.2 The Practical Aspect of the True Doctrine**

The practical aspect of the true doctrine focuses on the meditation practice: tranquility meditation and insight meditation. It is well known as practical Buddhism or methodological Buddhism (Thachkeo, 2020, p. 59). To study Buddhism is to conduct the practical aspect of the true doctrine which helps students to enrich their knowledge of Buddhism, maintain inner peace, and prepare one’s happiness next to come. Thachkeo (2020) claimed that because of it, Khmer children in Travinh Province in Vietnam hopefully have the opportunity to approach Buddhism. In academic study, it is the Buddhist methodologies leading to approach the goals, the attainable aspect of the true doctrine.



### **3.2.3 The Attainable Aspect of the True Doctrine**

The attainable aspect of the true doctrine is the four paths, the four fruits, and the extreme peace. It is the highest goal in Buddhism. Some call *athigamasaddhamma* (Thachkeo, 2020, p. 59). In academic study, it is considered as the highest goals in Buddhism. Now we have understood the Three Doctrines in Buddhism clearly. Those are the principles, methodologies and goals. Furthermore, textual Buddhism is considered a map, and practical Buddhism is more special, like a key to open the wealth that the Buddha left for the practitioners. It is commonly well-known as the cessation of stress and conflict, and also the tools and frameworks of a task in Buddhist education (p. 59). That is to say, the teachings of the Buddha were obtained from His right practice and enlightenment. So that the Buddha becomes the founder and first leader of Buddhism. This was a living Buddha to be confirmed. In contrast to the Buddha's life, Buddhist monks and Buddhist devotees, including Khmer Buddhist people in Travinh, are introduced to Buddhism based on a process of learning, practicing, and realizing what had been taught in the Pali Canon by the Buddha Himself and they become the Buddha's followers by the Teachings and Disciplines.

In the real aspects found above, it is very crystal clear that the Three True Doctrines are either the theory or the practical tools in Buddhism which lead to the accomplishments in all systems of Buddhist education. The three processes are in existence based on the three true terms and the researcher will explain more in the next chapter. One more important thing, the Three True Doctrines show that Buddhism is a practical religion.

### **3.3 The Four Noble Truths**

The Four Noble Truths are the Buddha's core teachings in Buddhist Studies, and others are just the relative Dhamma principles. They are considered the Buddhist strategy for resolving all kinds of life problems in the world. Rahula (1978) proved that the Four Noble Truths are the heart of the Buddha's teachings which he expounded in his very first sermon to his old colleagues, the five ascetics, at Isipatana modern called Sarnath near Benares in India. In his sermon, as we have it in the original texts, these Noble Four Truths are given briefly. But there are innumerable places in the early Buddhist scriptures where they are explained repeatedly, with greater detail, and in different ways. The Four Noble Truths in the original texts are (p. 16):

- (1) The First Noble Truth is suffering,
- (2) The Second Noble Truth is the origin of suffering,
- (3) The Third Noble Truth is the cessation of suffering, and
- (4) The Fourth Noble Truth is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

### **3.3.1 The First Noble Truth**

The First Noble Truth is suffering, life problems, stress, and conflict. The five aggregates of existence are life and the original cause of life problems when people attach to it. They relate to the three characteristics of existence. If people want to understand life and the First Noble Truth, they have to comprehend the five aggregates of existence rightly. The primary case is life compounded by body and mind. Thachkeo (2020) summarized the body and mind had been summed up from the five aggregates of existence, and nothing else (p. 48). The five aggregates of existence comprise the five features and their functions below:

- (1) The 28 matters are corporeality,
- (2) *Vedanā* means sensation,
- (3) *Saññā* means perception,
- (4) The other 50 mental factors are mental formations, and
- (5) The 89 *Cittas* means consciousness.

According to the Buddha, the mind is the guiding factor that governs all human activities. It is the source of all unhappiness and happiness as well. It is the forerunner of all physical and mental phenomena. All sorts of feelings and perceptions are mind-made. People act by the dictates of the mind. It is the mind that goes at first, and the body follows afterward. If one speaks ill or performs evil and unwholesome deeds, suffering follows him, like the wheels of a cart after the oxen. On the other hand, if one speaks with loving-kindness and performs wholesome and good deeds, happiness will surely follow him, like never-failing shadows. The Buddha's teachings again are not to do all sorts of evils, but to do wholesome

deeds and to purify one's mind instead. Thera (2006) emphasized that an impure and defiled mind is like a fool to the uncontrolled senses. If the mind remains unbalanced, purification of the mind is next to impossible. With an undefiled and pure mind only, one shall not run after the sensual pleasure and sentiments (p. 278). That is the logical thinking why for the avoidance of all evils and promotion of goodness, a culture of correct training of the mind is essential. Unless the mind becomes calm and tranquil, the disciplined unfolding of the mysterious, truth is absurd, gets freedom from the attachment to life, freedom from fear, and live this life usefully.

By the way, what is the real definition of the problem? There are various meanings we should concern in priority. According to the essential dictionary for learners of English, a problem is something that causes trouble or difficulty (Macmillan, 2007, p. 568). According to Theravāda Buddhism, attachment to life is a problem. Nothing is serious and causes stress like we understand today. Being born in this world, we are going to face both problems and opportunities. No one can escape from both of them. So we do nothing except raise our readiness to observe the problems as it is, maintain our hope, and create ways to get the problem solving done because it is just the question to allow us to answer them by ourselves.

The cases herein are that people are confused about the ways to find out a resolution in life because of one's ignorance. The Buddha claims the states of the problem that birth, aging, sickness, death, associating with the unpleasant thing, dissociating from the pleasant thing, and not receiving what one desires. In brief, self-attachment is a problem, but it does not mean that everything is subjected to be the life problems. The path to getting out of the problem is to understand it rightly and to live beyond it. Thachkeo (2020) had explained in his dissertation: Two key important things are linked to this First Noble Truth we should concern. Those are the problems and the end of problems. Without seeing the problem as it is, people are no way to realize the end. At the same time, if we don't understand the real problem of Buddhist Studies, how we could issue Buddhist Studies' problems completely? It is unavailable (p. 49).

Another source founded the similar theories on suffering, claiming that all the conditional things in the world are created endowed with suffering. Suffering is ourselves. It is not others. It is becoming the most accurate (Yuval, 2018, 293). Some people wish to get only happiness and peacefulness in life, and they are constantly afraid of missing them. It doesn't suggest thinking like that. Suffering is caused by fear in mind. We understand the mind like

understanding ourselves; then the fear disappears by itself automatically. In addition, suffering is the cause of happiness, and happiness is the effect of suffering. To maintain happiness is to understand the suffering or life problems. It doesn't need to escape from it; because it is our best friend or the ultimate truth of the life of human beings for billion years. One more important thing which Yuval makes alert for the insight meditation practitioners: if we want to know the nature of life, rites, rituals, traditional values, and culture are a huge obstacle. But if we are interested in social stability and harmony, as Khmer communities are, truth is often a liability. In contrast, rites, rituals, traditional values, and culture are among our best allies (Yuval, 2018, p. 291). Nowadays, Khmer communities are strong in their own cultures and turning their back on practical Buddhism. Like they don't care about the ultimate truth in life. Therefore, it is becoming harder for them to see the First Noble Truth.

### **3.3.2 The Second Noble Truth**

The Second Noble Truth is the cause of all things with a craving that all living beings experience in various forms of life, including the ignorance of Khmer children, which need to be abandoned completely. If the cause of problems is not yet solved, it always generates other new problems until every structure has been caused ruin. Thachkeo (2020) found in the problems of Khmer Society in Travin province, most Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks are from poor families. They have faced many obstacles on their studied life. Some study hopelessly, and some follow their tradition to be monkhood and learn Buddhism. After having finished their Buddhist diploma, they decided to disrupt. It is very rare for them to stay in monkhood for the whole life. In the case of continuing their study or returning to their native temples for social welfare, they also stay in serious conditions with the limitation of knowledge and unskillfulness (p. 52). As Buddhist scholar shows that the impact of specific problems plays a role in causing the loss of faith in Khmer Buddhist followers, as the Buddha Himself clearly states that poverty is the cause of immorality and crimes (Rahula, 1978, p. 52). One more thing is serious: Thachkeo (2020) had got a good opportunity to discuss around the table with 48 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist monks who are studying in Thailand, most of whom were from TBSP of Travin, and studying at MCU from B. A degree up to a Ph.D. degree to find out the real problems they are challenged with on October 15, 2020. Unfortunately, the feedback is negative. We can sum up this group discussion into five different cases as follows: (pp. 52-53):

The first case is a self-financial crisis.

The second case is poor English.

The third case is a moral disorder in their younger-brother group.

The fourth case is poor in high technology.

The fifth case is the lack of group discussion.

To sum up, it is very serious for this session for whom wish to get success in life must abandon completely with 100 percent. It can be considered a big revolution in Buddhism to eliminate all unnecessary things and open a new chapter for other opportunities to come. The world is changing rapidly and the Second Noble Truth strongly supports it. Stopping to doing bad and turning to doing good instead are the best choice to meet our challenges and opportunities in life and at the workplace. Let's experience the following Third Noble Truth and approach its benefits for the many.

### **3.3.3 The Third Noble Truth**

The Third Noble Truth is the end of craving or the cause of suffering, including sorrow, life problems or mental anguish, social problems, and environmental problems. There is a state which transcends suffering completely according to the Buddhist perspectives, referred to as *Nibbāna*, should be realized. TBSP of the Travinh has become the first value advantage for 57 years. There is no competition, and the committees never think of competing with other schools. They follow the appointment of a chairman of the executive board and run the program for the annual academic year traditionally. So, what are the standards, strategies, and opportunities, and who are the committees? It is nothing more important than going on those segmentations one by one to send a historic message to the world citizens as the global village.

Thachsok (2018) expounded that standards are at a Buddhist monastic school. It focuses on Buddhist Textual Studies. It provides subjects of Buddhism, including the departments of Social Studies and Sciences Studies in the Khmer program. The teaching and learning are run with 100% free of charge. It educates Khmer children in a suitable Buddhist manner rather than developing for mindset and training for skill (p. 2).

The executive commission stated that the strategies could divide into two different terms. (1) The four- years strategy: It is the long-term plan. It has been ordered since 2018 by the great council in the representative of the Provincial Society in the 7<sup>th</sup> term (The Executive Commission, 2018, p. 2), and (2) The one-year strategy: It is the short-term plan. It is ordered by a chairman of the executive board, the Most Venerable Padhānājoto Thach On, to plan for the academic year 2020 (Thach-On, 2018, p. 1). In Buddhist Studies, people have abided by these two strategies to reunite their members.

Opportunities are what all Buddhist Studies members and Khmer communities are looking forward to for their children. These should give a narrative in four features as follows: (The Standing Members, 2018, p. 5);

Firstly, Theravāda Buddhism has become the religion of Khmer families in Travin in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. It is the heart and soul of Khmer communities. Khmer people learn the Buddha's teachings and apply them to their daily life for the happiness and peacefulness of themselves and others, and they love living this life fully with mindfulness practice.

Secondly, all abbots in the 143 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist temples attempt to apply the documents for requesting opening classes with 100% free of charge to monks, novices, and Khmer children in time for the annual year.

Thirdly, every year in Travin province, at least 3,000 to 3,500 monks and novices take the three-month rainy retreat and join in studying and practicing the Dhamma and Vinaya actively. This scenario has become the most colorful in the community to show the importance and significance of Khmer Buddhist characters.

Fourthly, Travin has belonged to the land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism for a very long history, and people here wish to see this land turning into a strategic place for Khmer Theravāda Buddhism and Vietnamese Mahāyāna Buddhism working for the benefit of others together.

The committees have been appointed by UNBMST and work under the commission for education and training. They consist of two levels and cooperate with the abbots of the 143

Khmer Theravāda Buddhist temples, the laity presidents of the temple board, and the standing teachers in classrooms. Those two levels are below (Thachsok, 2018, p. 5):

Level one is the Buddhist Studies committee of the Provincial.

Level two is the Buddhist Studies committee of Districts and City.

That is why Khmer Theravāda Buddhism has become the Buddhist way of life of Khmer communities in Travinh. So learning, practicing, realizing the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Buddha, and protecting Buddhism are the primary duties of Khmer monks, novices, and Khmer children in the next generation without choice. This strategic sequence right is showing either a model of Khmer traditional values or the achievement of what the Khmer people have sacrificed their lives for the Khmer nation, Buddhism, and their society under the non-stop long history of social revolution and reformation. How can TBSP educate and coach its people? Let's come and see in the Fourth Noble Truth context, and the following is the real answer.

### **3.3.4 The Fourth Noble Truth**

The Fourth Noble Truth is the noble path comprised of eight factors that are the Buddha's teachings of the middle path to attain *Nibbāna*, the noble peace, which is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. The other relative Dhamma principles, according to Theravāda Buddhism, leading to the end of stress and conflict are the Noble Eightfold Path, the Threefold Training, and the Three True Doctrines. This Fourth Noble Truth should be developed, and the life problems are waiting for being terminated. Here is also what the researcher is looking forward to seeing in the following chapters. It means the following chapter four and the last one.

Payutto (2018) regarded the Fourth Noble Truth there are two important attributes to the Buddhist way of solving problems. They are to solve problems at their source and to solve problems through human cleverness. Combining these, people are encouraged to solve problems for themselves by dealing directly with the causes and conditions which refer to internal and external problems. In light of personal responsibility, the Buddha encouraged people to focus on themselves when encountering a problem. They should not focus on external causes or solutions, like celestial forces or fate. Rather than depend on praying to a higher power or marking time waiting for destiny, people should actively engage with the cause and

conditions lying behind their difficulties (p. 1483). So, what are the eight factors of the Buddhist way of life? They are:

- (1) Right view or right understanding,
- (2) Right thought,
- (3) Right speech,
- (4) Right action,
- (5) Right livelihood,
- (6) Right effort,
- (7) Right mindfulness, and
- (8) Right concentration.

The Eightfold Path is grouped into three phases of teaching. Factor numbers three, four, and five are grouped into morality, concentration is for factor numbers six, seven, and eight, and wisdom is for factor numbers one and two. The Eightfold Path is the Fourth Noble Truth, and it is named as the Buddhist Middle Way or the Buddhist way of life, because, it is practical way for all practitioners properly, which leads to the end of all life problems or mental suffering, social and environmental problems, to liberation, to the end sorrow, to safety, and detachment of the comfort zone. The book of “the art of living” used to quote from the Buddha saying:

- (1) From the right understanding proceeds the right thought,
- (2) From the right thought proceeds the right speech,
- (3) From the right speech proceeds the right action,
- (4) From the right action proceeds the right livelihood,
- (5) From the right livelihood proceeds the right effort,



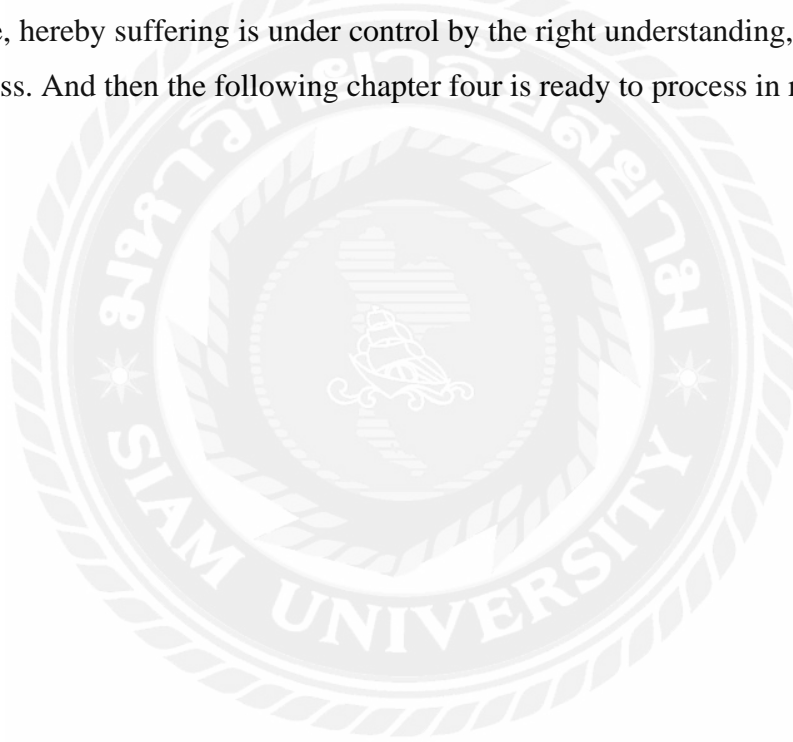
(6) From the right effort proceeds the right awareness,

(7) From the right awareness proceeds the right concentration,

(8) From the right concentration proceeds the right wisdom,

(9) From the right wisdom proceeds the right liberation (Hart, 1982, p. 129).

In conclusion, suffering or life problems is the cause of the revolution of life and society. The cause of suffering is the issue of revolution and reformation. The end of suffering is the goal. The path that proceeds to put an end to suffering is the Buddhist strategic sequence right. These strategies have to go by the Threefold Training and the Three True Doctrines. That is to summarize, hereby suffering is under control by the right understanding, right effort, and right mindfulness. And then the following chapter four is ready to process in reality.



## CHAPTER 4

### **The Role of Buddhist Education in Khmer Social Development in Travin Province of Southern Vietnam**

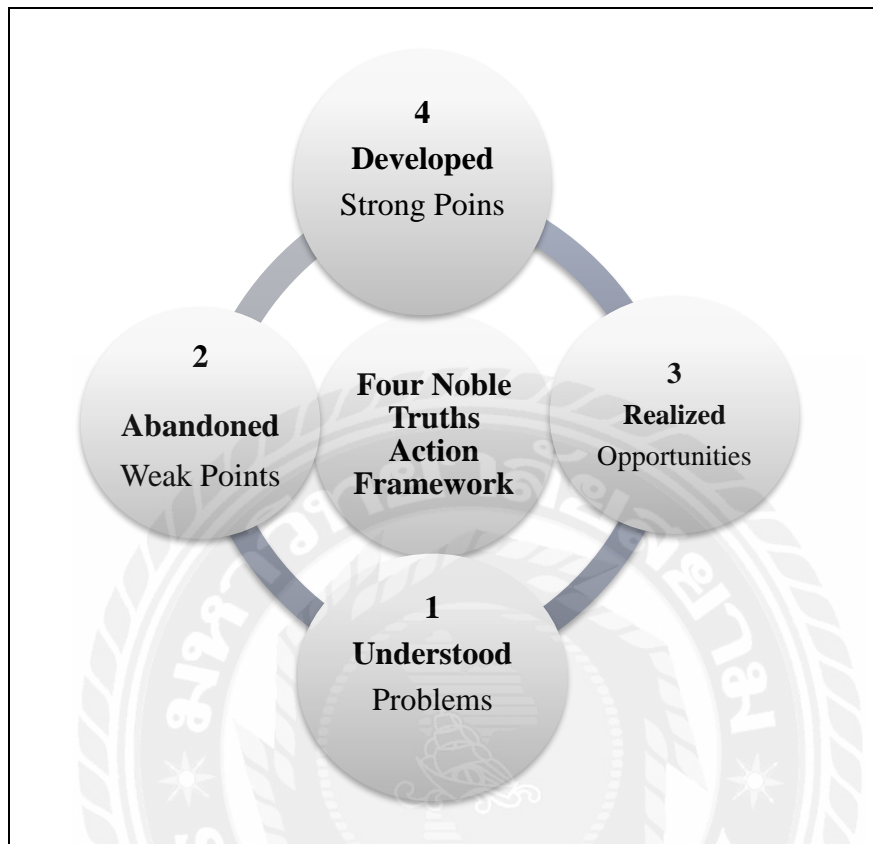
In this chapter, the researcher analyzed the findings of the documentary research results on the second objective of this research which was to analyze the process of conceptual framework in the context of the Four Noble Truths action framework.

Previously, in chapter three, the researcher showed the findings of a study that focused on the input of the Buddha's core teachings going through the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths. The key wordings were training, doctrine, and truth in theories mostly. For this chapter four, the researcher focuses on an action framework that targets the process in terms of the core teachings and other relative principles and their application in Buddhist education for Khmer social development. The related institute of this study is TBSP, and the scope of the study is Travin province of Southern Vietnam. The results of the finding was shown with the four main factors of the Four Noble Truths: (1) understanding of problems, (2) abandonment of weak points, (3) realization of opportunities, and (4) development of strong points of the Buddhist Studies program and Khmer Society in Travin province for development need.

#### **4.1 The Four Noble Truths Action Framework**

These proceeding dependencies showed that the right understanding is always important for liberation or reform system in Buddhism. According to an integration of the four actions framework expounded by Thachkeo, a former Ph.D. researcher of the development strategy of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program (*Buddhikasiksa*) in a case study of Khmer community in Travin province in Vietnam, he aimed to develop the Four Noble Truths action framework for Buddhist Studies' problem solving in particular (see diagram two). One thing is clear: TBSP of Travin needs this philosophy. Diagram two showed the Four Noble Truths in action framework into the problem solving for the Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam because number one is considered as the result of number two, which needs to get the right understanding and abandoning. Number three is the result of number four which needs to realize and develop forever. In contrast, number two is the cause of number one, and number four is the cause of number three. So, there are only two things the

researcher has to target. Those are the cause and effect, or the problems and opportunities (Thachkeo, 2020, pp. 57-58).



**Diagram 2:** The Four Noble Truths Action Framework (Thachkeo, 2020)

A lesson learned from this diagram two is sharpened: everything has appeared and disappeared in this world because of its reason and condition or cause and effect. The most important thing we have to approach is the right understanding of things in existence. The right understanding is in need, because it is a role of wisdom, and wisdom itself is the highest goal of Buddhist Studies for Khmer social civilization in Travinh province. So, the more problems people resolve, the more wisdom they attain. To resolve all kinds of life problems, wisdom is available for everyone and becomes a common choice for those who strictly follow the Buddhist Middle Way or the Eightfold Path in daily life.

#### 4.1.1 Introduction to Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program of Travin Province

Thachkeo (2020) expounded that the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travin Province of Southern Vietnam, abbreviation as TBSP, is a monastic school system standard by the Buddhist rules and law. TBSP was established in 1965 by the Provincial Society. It provides Social and Sciences Studies with 100% free of charge to Khmer children and Khmer social development in Vietnam. The revised core subjects are meditation and computers. Students are required to spend at least seven academic years to finish seven grades, and they are expected to obtain the outstanding outcomes as follows (p. 102);

(1) Philosophy: Self-minimizing; non-self maximizing; integration of TBSP with modern sciences; sharing for mindset and training for skill.

(2) Slogan: Ways to liberation.

(3) Mission: A monastic school system standard with 100% free of charge.

(4) Vision: An integration of TBSP with modern sciences for greater mental and socially sustainable development.

(5) Objectives: To study a Buddhist way of life; to approach Buddhism; to build a new code of peaceful life.

(6) Goal: Liberation of all kinds of life problems.

(7) Strategic methods: The Four Noble Truths action framework; the Four Great Effort's application; the four BSP actions framework; the eight principles of blue ocean strategy.

(8) Headquarter office: Travin Province in Vietnam; contact by via Facebook: Salakon Online.

One thing that is modernized by Thachkeo (2020) is a new revised TBSP curriculum. By driving from the eliminate-reduce-raise-create grid for TBSP, he decided to revise a new TBSP curriculum from grade 6<sup>th</sup> to grade 12<sup>th</sup>. This new revision had forced by several factors: (1) the eliminating granted factors of some subjects of Social and Sciences Studies, (2) the

reducing factors of the learning period, (3) the rising factors of subjects of Buddhism, expanding from learning period to motivating speech in classroom, high technology in management, and (4) creating factors of subjects of mediation and computers included training mind and developing wisdom methods, integration of TBSP with modern sciences, and five principles of extension of Buddhism if it was compared to the old TBSP curriculum (see appendix 1) (pp.103-105).

**Table 1:** A New Revised TBSP Curriculum (Thachkeo, 2020)

<b>1) Low Intermediate: Grade 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Khmer Language	288
2	Pali Language	288
3	Pali Chanting for Happiness and Peaceful Mind	72
4	Dhamma for Beginner	144
5	Mindfulness Practice for Beginners	72
6	Sunday Group Discussion I (Daily Routine Issues)	72
<b>2) Low Intermediate: Grade 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Khmer Reading Skill	288
2	Dhammapada Studies (Translated Vol. I, II)	288
3	Entrance to the Vinaya (Chapters 1 Up to 10)	144
4	English for Beginner	72
5	Mindfulness Practice I	144

6	Sunday Group Discussion II (Buddhist Studies Issues)	72
<b>3) Low Intermediate: Grade 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Khmer Writing Skill	288
2	Dhammapada Studies (Translated Vol. III, IV, V)	288
3	Entrance to the Vinaya (Chapters 11 Up to 22)	144
4	English Reading Skill	72
5	Mindfulness Practice II	144
6	Sunday Group Discussion III (Family Issues)	72
<b>4) Low Intermediate: Grade 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Dhammapada Studies (Translated Vol. VI, VII, VIII)	72
2	Entrance to the Vinaya (Chapters 23 up to 33)	72
3	The Story of the Buddha	72
4	The History of the 80 Disciples of the Buddha	72
5	Abhidhammatthasaṅgha Studies	72
6	English Listening Skill	72
7	Introduction to Computer	72
8	Introduction to Insight Meditation	144
9	Sunday Group Discussion IV (Social Issues)	72

<b>5) Super Intermediate: Grade 10<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Khmer Literature	72
2	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Studies (Translated Part I, II)	72
3	Bhikkhupātimokkha Studies	72
4	Vinaya Piṭaka Studies	72
5	Buddhist Philosophy	72
6	English for Dhammaduta	72
7	Computer I	144
8	Insight Meditation I	144
9	Sunday Group Discussion V (Region Village Issues)	72
<b>6) Super Intermediate: Grade 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Studies (Translated Part II, III)	72
2	Sutta Piṭaka Studies	72
3	Visuddhodimagga Studies	72
4	English for Insight Meditation	72
5	Computer II	144
6	Introduction to Modern Sciences (Buddhist Studies Strategy)	72
7	Insight Meditation II	144
8	Introduction to Field Studies	72

9	Sunday Group Discussion VI (Global Village Issues)	72
<b>7) Super Intermediate: Grade 12<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Period/year (2 hrs/period)</b>
1	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Studies (Translated Part III, IV)	72
2	Abhidhamma Piṭaka Studies	72
3	English for Travel	72
4	Computer II	72
5	Introduction to Intelligent Design	72
6	Insight Meditation III	144
7	Working for the Welfare of the World	44
8	Writing Report (Khmer and English Available)	10
9	Sunday Group Discussion VII (Comfort Zone Issues)	72

#### **4.1.2 Problems of Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program of Travin Province**

The problems of TBSP are serious issues nationwide. It has no goal, no objectives, no mission, no vision, no seal, no slogan, no email address, no site, no newsletters, no philosophy, and no everything in existence yet, except the visible evidence such as the unprinted documents, oral test, and the existed problems. Based on a reported paper of the executive committee from the Provincial Society, the researcher found two primary problems. Those are the loss of beliefs and the lack of skills and abilities in management in TBSP's administration (The Executive Commission, 2018, pp. 21-22).

According to the Buddhist belief, all problems always have their original causal. So, what are the causes of TBSP's problems so far? The main cases are clear: on the report of summary activities of the Travin Provincial Society in the 6<sup>th</sup> term (2013-2018), it quoted that, first of all, some abbots in Travin have no experience in administration. Their abilities and knowledge in Dhamma and social engagement are still limited. They are not concerned enough



to report the serious issues and make a request to the Provincial Society. Those cause obstacles in problem solving for the officers. Furthermore, they don't pay attention to educating the new monkhood and novices. They don't be interested in the temples and monks. Those are the facts that make monks easily break down the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Buddha and cause negative affecting on the belief of the Buddhists. Secondly, the executive committee of Districts and City, especially the local managers of the village, the membership is not a qualification because of the disruption of monks. The knowledge, abilities, and membership of the executive committee regarding their responsibilities, their tasks, their duties, and their accountabilities are poor. Participation in the Provincial Society is still unavailable. Thirdly, the updating news and report from the Districts to the Provincial Society are not in time. The promotion of the Buddhist rules of the Provincial Society to the membership and monks is not going smoothly. There is a lack of attention, guidance, observation, puss passion, and reminding of the rule of the officers to the local place. Finally, the education and management of monks in some temples are not standard. It is easy to cause immorality and crimes in their society accordingly (The Executive Commission, 2018, pp. 21-22).

To sum up, the lack of skills and abilities in management is caused by some abbots who are poor in managing skills, and abilities limitation of UNBMST's people existing from the bottom to the top. The gap between the member participants and the Provincial headquarter office is so large, leading to the mechanical disruption of TBSP. The belief of Khmer communities in monks is going down day by day because of the moral disorder and crimes of Khmer monks frequently. These cause the main issues to the Khmer social development. Khmer people do nothing here. They adapt to them and try to find the proper problem-solution on the weak points, which are considered the cause of suffering or problems in the Four Noble Truths. The researcher hopes that we can propose a new proper strategy to solve these problems completely. Together, we can bring the TBSP of TravinH great again in our motherland.

#### **4.1.3 Opportunities of Theravāda Buddhist Studies Program of TravinH Province**

The Standing Members reported that TBSP of TravinH has become the first value advantage for 57 years. There is no competition and the committees of TBSP never think of competing with others. They follow the appointment of a chairman of the executive board and run the program for the annual academic year. Below is the historic message which is based on

the four opportunities in existence for Buddhist Studies to all the world citizens as the global village (The Standing Member, 2018, pp. 5-6):

Firstly, Theravāda Buddhism has become a religion of Khmer families in Travin Province in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. It is the heart and soul of Khmer communities. Khmer people learn the Buddha's teachings and apply them in their daily life for happiness, peacefulness, and living this life fully with the mindfulness practice.

Secondly, all the monastic schools through Travin province provide the course with 100% free of charge, and temples are becoming the main sponsors from A to Z. All abbots in the 143 Khmer Theravāda Buddhist temples attempt to apply the documents for requesting opening classes for monks, novices and Khmer children in time for the annual year.

Thirdly, every year in Travin, there are at least 3,000 to 3,500 monks and novices taking the three-month rainy retreat and joining in studying and practicing the Dhamma and Vinaya. This scenario has become the most yellow colorful in the community.

Fourthly, Travin has belonged to the land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism for a very long time, and the governor monks here wish to see this land turning into the main strategic place for Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism working together for the benefit of others. That is why Theravāda Buddhism becomes the Buddhist way of life for Khmer communities. So learning, practicing, approaching the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Buddha, and protecting Buddhism are the main duties of Khmer monks, novices, and Khmer generations from the past up to now.

#### **4.1.4 A Comparison on Weak and Strong Points in Khmer Society of Travin Province**

A common question has been asked how the researcher would resolve these weak points? The answer must be based on the metaphor of the blue ocean strategy. Kim and Mauborgne (2015) pointed out that they keep developing the strong points by rising and creating opportunities inside TBSP and Khmer Society in continuation. They make all kinds of competition within the 143 temples and Khmer Society irrelevant and rebuild the blue ocean for Khmer social development in the local place (p. 4). This way can help TBSP as well as Khmer Society to reduce and eliminate the weak points to beat the life problems automatically

because both points are alternatives. There is an essential thing to remind the researcher how to define and explain the two terms of “red oceans and blue oceans” hereby, because the researcher used the metaphor of red oceans to capture the reality that organizations increasing face, while blue oceans captured the endless possibility that organizations could create. “Red oceans” are the known market space. It represents all the industries in existence today. In the red oceans, industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are known. Another supporting idea the researcher found in the blue ocean strategy expounds that they can create uncontested opportunities for TBSP and Khmer Society within the weak points by expanding the integrated TBSP with modern sciences and the development of strategic boundaries, including the strategic plan, the strategic development, and the day-by-day strategic set. Here is the skill and ability to change from weak points to opportunities (Kim, Mauborgne, 2015, pp. 4-5). Thachkeo (2020) again proposed that all members involved must be committed to following the TBSP strategic development, especially the philosophy of TBSP which consists of (1) self-minimizing, (2) nonself-maximizing, (3) integrated TBSP with modern sciences and (4) sharing for mindset and training for skill. The answer is in our mind and soul. No any weak point cannot resolve under the real strategy. However, before having arrived at the strong points of Khmer Society and creating opportunities for them, all levels of Khmer people have to recognize the strong and weak points which Khmer ethnic in Travin province of Southern Vietnam are experiencing as below (pp. 84-85):

**Table 2:** The Strong Points and Weak Points in Khmer Society of Travin Province

<b>(+) Strong Points</b>	<b>(-) Weak Points</b>
Long history (1965)	Old program (no amendment for 57 years)
Strong in traditional and cultural beliefs	Weak in practical Buddhism
TBSP run by Buddhist rules and law	No budget support from a communist Vietnam government
First value advantage of TBSP	No vision to expand
Became a common program in Khmer local region	Unclear goal setting

Got high expectations from Khmer communities	No formulation and execution principles for managers and leadership in management
Studies free of course	Time, risks, and expected benefits are never free by nature
Got high satisfaction rates from Khmer domestic countries and global	The known and unknown problems never put an end
Strong in theoretical Buddhism	Trapped at self-maximization
High sacrifice for Khmer local welfare	Lack of high-technology adaptation
Participated in Khmer social contribution	Lack of skills and abilities in teamwork
Loved the Khmer nation by heartfelt	Destroyed the Khmer nation by ignorance
Understood all the problems	Being afraid of solving problems strategically
Lovers of the knowledge	Never support the good learners by a scholarship provision
Big potential of moral subjects	Lack of the classical subjects that sharing for mindset and training for skill
Khmer children became dreamers	Lack of positive thinking, lack of motivated speech, no goal and plan for life, rich of self-maximization
Khmer people preferring to change in others	Never changing within themselves
Re-unified in rite and ritual ceremonies	Scared for insight meditation practice.
Khmer helps Khmer.	Khmer discrediting each other.

(Source: Thachkeo, 2020)

## 4.2 Ending Remarks

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed the findings in the context of the Four Noble Truths action framework, derived from the Buddha's core teachings. Those are the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths including the modern sciences referred to the four actions framework in blue ocean strategy. This action framework was

applied for the context analysis, concept analysis and content analysis of Khmer Society. It aimed to understand the problems, to realize opportunities, to abandon the weak points, and to develop the strong points of Buddhist education and Khmer Society under the specific field of Theravāda Buddhist Studies program for Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam. Then the researcher decided to reduce and eliminate the weak points to beat the problems of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program and Khmer Society. On another side, the researcher rose and created strong points to approach the opportunities in existence and the uncontested opportunities for Khmer social development (see diagram two).

Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travin province in Vietnam is a monastic school system standard by the Buddhist rules and law. It has been established since 1965 by the Provincial Society and provided Social and Sciences Studies with 100% free of charge to Khmer children and for Khmer social development in Southern Vietnam. Potentially, students have to spend their time at least seven years to finish the Buddhist diploma. After that, students are expected to obtain the highest goal of “liberation of all kinds of life problems” and get an understanding philosophy of self-minimizing, integration of TBSP with modern sciences, sharing for mindset and training for skill. Furthermore, students can learn and practice the Buddha’s teachings in the right way. One more important thing, an old TBSP curriculum was proposed to be replaced by a new revised one (see table one and appendix A).

It has been 57 years since the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travin was established. Naturally, it cannot avoid some mistakes so far, such as (1) the loss of belief, (2) the lack of skills and abilities in management caused by (1) the moral disorder and crimes of Khmer monks frequently, and (2) some abbots being poor in managing skills, and abilities limitation at all levels including the weak points of the Khmer Society as well. These were considered the two primary problems of TBSP of Travin, which the Buddhist scholar proposes to get the right to understand by the Four Noble Truths action framework at number one (see diagram two).

As for opportunities hereby the researcher divided into two kinds, which are the highest goal of Buddhist education for mankind: opportunities in existence and uncontested opportunities. For the TBSP of Travin, the researcher found four opportunities that had been explored. Those are: (1) TBSP is directly for Khmer children, (2) the course is 100% free of charge, (3) there are 3,000 to 3,500 novices and Buddhist monks involved in teaching and

learning the Buddhist teachings for an annual year, and (4) TBSP teaches the way of life to Khmer communities. This is considered as the opportunities in which students acquire to meet in accordance with the Four Noble Truths action framework at number three. Khmer people who see either the opportunities in existence or the uncontested opportunities can experience the benefits, peacefulness, and happiness of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program of Travinh (see diagram two).

According to the Four Noble Truths action framework at number two, the weak points of Khmer Society are the causes of primary problems which the Buddhist scholar proposes to be abandoned completely. The weak points were expounded, like an old program (having received no amendment for 57 years), weak in practical Buddhism, no budget support from a communist Vietnam government, no vision to expand, unclear goal setting, no formulation and execution principles for manager and leadership in management, time, risks and expected benefits never free by nature, the known and unknown problems never put an end, trapped at self-maximization, and lack of high technology adaptation. These are subjected to reduction and elimination as soon as possible to put an end to all kinds of life problems for Khmer social development (see diagram two and table one).

In comparison, the strong points of Khmer Society were also expounded, like the long history of TBSP (established 1965), strong traditional and cultural beliefs, TBSP run by Buddhist rules and law, approached the first value advantage, became a common program in Khmer local region, high expectation from Khmer communities, studied free 100 percent of , got high satisfaction rate from Khmer domestic countries and global, strong in theoretical Buddhism and high sacrificed for Khmer local welfare. These are the causes of opportunities in TBSP for Khmer children, and they have been raised and created in continuation to realize the existing and uncontested opportunities. At the time, these strong points of Khmer Society can make Khmer communities stronger and ready to replace all life problems. One more important thing, the Buddha's core teachings associated with the Four Noble Truths action framework are not only for the Khmer Society but also for everyone (see diagram two and table one).

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the conclusion and recommendations, which aim to answer the three research questions as reflected by the three research objectives stated in chapter one as below:

#### 5.1 Conclusions

It is interesting to study “the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province of Southern Vietnam” by using various documentary sources. The word “role” means the expected behavior pattern of TBSP and the character that is played by UNBMST in Khmer communities for socially sustainable development. At the same time, another source showed that Buddhist education played a crucial role in developing Khmer Society in Travin province in Vietnam in particular. All in all, Theravāda Buddhist activities have become the character of local Khmer communities.

There are three purposes for TBSP of Travin: (1) to identify the character of Khmer Buddhist traditional values, (2) to invest intangible capital in Khmer Buddhist scholars, and (3) to propagate the Buddha’s teachings for the benefits, happiness, and peacefulness of the many. One more important thing relating to the role of Buddhist education in Travin is emphasizing the strategic development for TBSP’s introduction, philosophy, slogan, mission, vision, objectives, goal, strategic methods, and headquarters, to attract all respondent’s sectors for Khmer social development.

There are many Peace Studies and Buddhist scholars paying attention to the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development. Other scholars claimed that Buddhist education plays a very significant role in Khmer social development in Vietnam. Another study (Tran 2010) emphasized similar information and data, showing Khmer Theravada Buddhist monks taking all 143 temples in Travin as foundation center of their work and played crucial roles in contributing to the fulfillment and preservation of Theravāda Buddhist culture in the Khmer Society. Furthermore, there is research found that the Buddha’s core teachings, the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, the Four Noble Truths, and its Four Noble Truths action framework is summarized as tools to fix all the known and unknown life problems. More

importantly, Buddhism and modern sciences are the truths and facts integrating into a term of strategic development for problem solving in short.

Society is the shelter of humankind. The more people are born, the more problems are. The potential problems are nonstop. To solve all the life problems is known to develop people's lives based on the right way in continuation, as shown in the three important revolutions that shaped the course of history. According to Buddhism, society is created and developed by human beings themselves, which indicate to their bodies and minds' responsibilities. So both body and mind are subjected to be trained for being a good citizen because one personality with morality, concentration, and wisdom developed is the basic family unit, a family is the basic socially developed unit, a social is the basic national unit and nation is the basic world qualified unit accordingly. Even all systems can be trained, and an individual is a center for Khmer social development, at least potentially.

Khmer people are accepted to be trained in mindset and developed for wisdom under the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in their local places. 500,000 Khmer units, with 31.63% of the Travin province population are Theravāda Buddhist devotees, and they had only one teacher previously. Their teacher was the Buddha. They believed in the virtues of the Triple Gem, reflection of daily activities, and so on. But nowadays they are turning red. They are divided into three main groups: the first group follows a Vietnamese communist party. The second group depends on overseas Khmer. The last group is the Khmer Buddhists. These are why the Buddha's core teachings are maintained, to make these Khmer social problems blue and united again.

In chapter three, the researcher found that Threefold Training has become the foundation of TBSP in the Travin province of Southern Vietnam and has been considered the lifelong learning philosophy for Khmer children. It consists of morality, concentration, and wisdom to balance with not doing evil, doing the good thing, and purifying one's mind by action, speech, and thought. It is the right way to understand the known and unknown problems and to put an end of the TBSP and Khmer Society problems. Buddhist education is exactly the Threefold Training. Next, the Three True Doctrines were founded, which modify the mission of Theravāda Buddhist education. It consists of three features, namely (1) the textual aspect of the true doctrine, (2) the practical aspect of the true doctrine, and (3) the attainable aspect of the true doctrine. Buddhist scholars apply these three features to the real aspect as principles,



techniques, and goals. Lastly, it is the Four Noble Truths, the core teachings in Buddhist Studies. They are considered the Buddhist sciences or Buddhist strategy for resolving all kinds of life problems, and they are also the heart of the Buddha's teachings. They are:

- (1) The suffering or life problems,
- (2) The origin of suffering,
- (3) The cessation of suffering, and
- (4) The way leading to the cessation of suffering.

Particularly, the Fourth Noble Truth, the way leading to the cessation of suffering, can be summarized into the Threefold Training. It can be called the Buddhist Middle Way in Buddhism and becoming the character of Buddhist Studies because other religions or majorities do not have this path, the path leading to beating all kinds of life problems. Later, the Four Noble Truths are created as the Four Noble Truths action framework undertaken by the Buddhist strategic development term, which focuses on the four main key works: (1) understanding of problems, meaning life problems are for understanding, (2) abandonment of the cause of problems, meaning the cause of life problems is for elimination, (3) realization of benefits or opportunities, meaning the end of life problems and it is for approaching, and (4) development of the path or the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines and other wholesome Dhamma principles, meaning the right way to put an end of life problems. Added to this point, the Buddhist education in this study is referred to the Buddha's core teachings, namely the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths in the term of inputs, and subjected to the right way leading to approach the social development for Khmer communities in Travin province in Vietnam.

In chapter four, the researcher found that the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travin province in Vietnam is a monastic school system standard by the Buddhist rules and law. It was established in 1965 by the Provincial Society and provided Social and Sciences Studies with 100% free of charge to Khmer children and for Khmer social development in Southern Vietnam. Students have to spend their time at least seven years to finish the Buddhist diploma. After having finished this program, students are expected to obtain the highest goal of "liberation of all kinds of life problems", and get an understanding philosophy of self-

minimizing, integration of TBSP with modern sciences, sharing for mindset and training for skill. Since the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program in Travinh was established, it has lasted for 57 years. So, it cannot avoid some mistakes so far, such as (1) the loss of belief, (2) the lack of skills and abilities in management caused by (1) the moral disorder and crimes of Khmer monks frequently, and (2) some abbots being poor in managing skills, and abilities limitation at all levels including the weak points as well. These were considered as the two primary problems of TBSP of Travinh, which the Buddhist scholar proposes to get the right opportunity to understand the Four Noble Truths action framework at number one. In contrast, opportunities have been established that are undisputed. For the TBSP of Travinh, the researcher found four opportunities have been explored. Those are: (1) TBSP is direct for Khmer children, (2) the course is 100% free of charge, (3) there are 3,000 to 3,500 novices and Buddhist monks involved in teaching and learning the Buddhist teachings annually, and (4) TBSP teaches the Buddhist way of life to Khmer communities. This is considered the opportunities in existence in which students acquire to meet in accordance with the Four Noble Truths action framework at number three. Khmer people who see either the opportunities in existence or the uncontested opportunities can experience the benefits, peacefulness, and happiness of the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program of Travinh.

According to the Four Noble Truths action framework at number two, the weak points of Khmer Society are the cause of primary problems which the Buddhist scholar proposes to be abandoned completely. The weak points were expounded, like an old program (no amendment for 57 years), weak in practical Buddhism, no budget support from a communist Vietnam government, no vision to expand, unclear goal setting, no formulation and execution principles for manager and leadership in management, time, risks and expected benefits never free by nature, the known and unknown problems never put an end, trapped at self-maximization, and lack of high technology adaptation. These are subjected to reduction and elimination as soon as possible to put an end of life problems for Khmer social development. In addition, the strong points of Khmer Society also expounded, like the long history of TBSP (1965), strong traditional and cultural beliefs, TBSP run by Buddhist rules and law, approached the first value advantage, became a common program in Khmer local region, got high expectation from Khmer communities, studied free with 100 percent, got high satisfaction rate from Khmer domestic countries and global, strong in theoretical Buddhism and high sacrificed for Khmer local welfare. These are the cause of opportunities in TBSP for Khmer children, and

they have been raised and created in continuation to realize the existing and uncontested opportunities. At the same, these strong points of Khmer Society can make Khmer communities stronger and ready to replace all life problems. One more important thing, the Buddha's teachings applied undertaken of the Four Noble Truths action framework are not only for the Khmer Society and TBSP's benefits but also for everyone. All in one, "the role of Buddhist education in Khmer social development in Travin province, Southern Vietnam" is needed in all aspects of life.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The research work is terminated now, even though the researcher has tried his best to complete it. But some things tell him that practice do not make perfect yet. So it has better to give the recommendations below:

### **5.2.1 Recommendations from This Research**

From the beginning of the study, the researcher would regard not only the Buddha's core teachings but also the modern sciences in the inputs of chapter three as the cause of Khmer social development. Unfortunately, time is limited. The researcher has put only Buddhist educational principles, which focus on the Threefold Training, the Three True Doctrines, and the Four Noble Truths to support the concepts and theories of the Buddhist education. For the process of inputs in chapter four, the researcher choice to apply the Four Noble Truths action framework instead of other related Buddhist principles to analyse the contexts, concepts and contents of Khmer Society and TBSP. The outcomes of this application are (1) understanding of problems, (2) abandonment of weak points, (3) realization of opportunities, and (4) development of strong points in Khmer Society. The Buddhist education leading to rid of the life problems and making Khmer communities developing and prosperous again is absolutely essential. The researcher hopes Khmer ethnic in Travin province included human beings in the world be in the life of beneficial, peacefulness, and happiness.

### **5.2.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

To keep the Buddhist education as well as the Theravāda Buddhist Studies program of Travinh moving toward progress, the researcher would ask for help from further researcher to answer the two following research questions;

(1) What are the expected benefits that TBSP students wish to obtain?

(2) Which one, between the old and the new revised curriculums of TBSP, are students satisfied most?



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## Appendix A

### An Old Curriculum of TBSP

Currently, this old curriculum of TBSP has been taught in Khmer medium through Travinh province in Vietnam even though it has been criticized for decades. However, the researcher hopes it has no longer effective for TBSP because its new revised curriculum had been proposed for lifelong learning which focuses on sharing mindset and training for skills for Khmer social development.

1) Low Intermediate: Grade 6 <sup>th</sup>		
No.	Subjects	Periods/year (3hrs./period)
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar in Usage	108
3	Khmer Writing Skill	72
4	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 6 <sup>th</sup>	108
6	Pali Grammar in Usage	144
7	Pali Khmer Vocabulary	72
8	Novice Discipline	72
9	Story of the Lord Buddha	72
10	Religious Studies Part I	72
11	English Grade 6 <sup>th</sup>	72

<b>2) Low Intermediate: Grade 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Periods/year (3hrs./period)</b>
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar in Usage	72
3	Khmer Writing Skill	72
4	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 7 <sup>th</sup>	72
6	Pali Grammar in Usage	72
7	Dhammapada Translation Vol. I, II	72
8	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72
9	The Entrance to the Vinaya Chapter 1 Up to 10	72
10	Dhammavibhāga Explanation Vol. I	72
11	History of the 80 Disciples of the Buddha	72
12	Religious Studies Part II	72
13	English Grade 7 <sup>th</sup>	72
<b>3) Low Intermediate: Grade 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Periods/year (3hrs./period)</b>
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar in Usage	72

3	Khmer Writing Skill	72
4	Khmer Reading Comprehension	72
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 8 <sup>th</sup>	72
6	Pali Grammar in Usage	72
7	Dhammapada Translation Vol. III, IV, V	72
8	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72
9	The Entrance to the Vinaya Chapter 11 Up to 22	72
10	Dhammavibhāga Explanation Vol. II	72
11	History of the 80 Disciples of the Buddha	72
12	Question and Answer on Buddhism	72
13	English Grade 8 <sup>th</sup>	72
<b>4) Low Intermediate: Grade 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Periods/year (3hrs./period)</b>
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Writing Skill	72
3	Khmer Language	72
4	Khmer Mathematics Grade 9 <sup>th</sup>	72
5	Pali Grammar in Usage	72
6	Dhammapada Translation Vol. VI, VII, VIII	72

7	Dhammapada Verse Explanation	72
8	The Entrance to the Vinaya Chapter 23 up to 33	72
9	Abhidhammatthasaṅgha	72
10	Buddhist Philosophy	72
11	Story of the Buddha's Previous Lives	72
12	English Grade 9 <sup>th</sup>	72
<b>5) Super Intermediate: Grade 10<sup>th</sup></b>		
No.	Subjects	Periods/year (3hrs./period)
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar	108
3	Khmer Poem Composing	108
4	Khmer Literature	108
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 10 <sup>th</sup>	108
6	Pali Grammar	72
7	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation Part I, II	144
8	Bhikkhupātimokkha from the Beginning Up to Saṅghadisesa	72
9	General Religion Vol. I	72
10	English Grade 10 <sup>th</sup>	72
<b>6) Super Intermediate: Grade 11<sup>th</sup></b>		

<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Periods/year (3hrs./period)</b>
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar	108
3	Khmer Poem Composing	108
4	Khmer Literature	108
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 11 <sup>th</sup>	108
6	Pali Grammar	72
7	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation Part II, III	144
8	Bhikkhupātimokkha from Aniyata Up to Nissaggiya Pācittīya	72
9	General Religion Vol. II	72
10	English Grade 11 <sup>th</sup>	72
<b>7) Super Intermediate: Grade 12<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Periods/year (3hrs./period)</b>
1	Khmer Dictation	72
2	Khmer Grammar	108
3	Khmer Poem Composing	108
4	Khmer Literature	108
5	Khmer Mathematics Grade 12 <sup>th</sup>	108

6	Pali Grammar	72
7	Maṅgalatthadīpanī Translation Part III, IV	144
8	Bhikkhupātimokkha from Sudhika Pācittīya up to Adhikarana Samatha	72
9	General Religion Vol. III	72
10	English Grade 12 <sup>th</sup>	72



## Appendix B

### Pictures from a Native Homeland Called the Land of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism



**Picture 1** An Atmosphere of the Final Exam Days of TBSP in Travinh in 2019.



**Picture 2** An Atmosphere of the Final Exam Days of TBSP in Travinh in 2020.

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