ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze and present features of Theravada (Nam tong) Buddhism for southern women’s life under gender equality approach.

Method: Authors use qualitative analysis, inductive and synthesis method combined with case study.

Result: Along with the progress and global civilization, the feminist movement is growing, the issue of gender equality is therefore being discussed and raised more and more to meet the expectations and goals of the whole people as well as the whole society: for the advancement and development of women in the 4.0 technology era. Gender equality in society and gender equality in religion are no longer new topics. However, it will and will always be a topic that needs to be studied and discussed for religions in general and Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism in particular. The South is one of the regions with strong development of Theravada Buddhism, the strong impact of Theravada Buddhism on people’s lives, especially women, is reflected deeply and boldly in many fields, areas from moral thought, lifestyle, language, literature, art, community cohesion and patriotism, customs, practices, beliefs and festivals.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the analysis of features of Theravada (Nam tong) Buddhism for southern women’s life under a gender equality approach reveals the profound and impactful influence of Theravada Buddhism on various aspects of women's lives. The growing feminist movement and discussions about gender equality highlight the importance of such studies, not only for the advancement of women in the modern era but also for the broader understanding of gender equality in both society and religion. The strong development of Theravada Buddhism in the South has resulted in significant transformations in women's roles and perspectives, shaping various cultural, social, and religious dimensions. Further research and exploration in this area are essential for a comprehensive grasp of the intricate relationship between religion, gender, and societal progress.

Keywords: Theravada, Nam Tong, Buddhism, gender equality.
THERAVADA BUDISMO (NAM TONG) PARA A VIDA DAS MULHERES DO SUL SOB A ABORDAGEM DE IGUALDADE DE GÊNERO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar e apresentar as características do budismo Theravada (Nam tong) para a vida das mulheres do sul sob a abordagem de igualdade de gênero.

Método: Os autores utilizam análise qualitativa, método indutivo e método de síntese combinado com estudo de caso.

Resultado: Junto com o progresso e a civilização global, o movimento feminista está crescendo, a questão da igualdade de gênero está, portanto, sendo discutida e levantada cada vez mais para atender às expectativas e objetivos de todo o povo e de toda a sociedade: para o avanço e desenvolvimento das mulheres na era da tecnologia 4.0. A igualdade de gênero na sociedade e a igualdade de gênero na religião já não são temas novos. No entanto, será e sempre será um tópico que precisa ser estudado e discutido para as religiões em geral e o budismo e o budismo Theravada em particular. O Sul é uma das regiões com forte desenvolvimento do Budismo Theravada, o forte impacto do Budismo Theravada na vida das pessoas, especialmente mulheres, é refletido profundamente e corajosamente em muitos campos, áreas do pensamento moral, estilo de vida, língua, literatura, arte, coesão da comunidade e patriotismo, costumes, práticas, crenças e festivais.

Conclusão: Em conclusão, a análise das características do budismo Theravada (Nam tong) para a vida das mulheres do sul sob uma abordagem de igualdade de gênero revela a profunda e impactante influência do budismo Theravada em vários aspectos da vida das mulheres. O crescente movimento feminista e as discussões sobre a igualdade de gênero destacam a importância de tais estudos, não só para o avanço das mulheres na era moderna, mas também para a compreensão mais ampla da igualdade de gênero na sociedade e na religião. O forte desenvolvimento do budismo teravada no Sul resultou em significativas transformações nos papéis e perspectivas das mulheres, moldando várias dimensões culturais, sociais e religiosas. A investigação e exploração adicionais nesta área são essenciais para uma compreensão abrangente da intrincada relação entre religião, gênero e progresso social.

Palavras-chave: Theravada, Nam Tong, Budismo, igualdade de gênero.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this century, the issue of gender equality is not only a problem of each country and nation, but also a problem of the whole of humanity. Gender equality was mentioned in all fields and became a movement for the advancement and development of human rights in law, society and religious life. As for Buddhism, as a religion was born in the 6th century BC to combat inequality in Indian society and the Brahmin caste system. The Buddha also mentioned the idea of eliminating gender stereotypes and upholding the role of women in contemporary society. When it was introduced into Vietnam from the early years of AD, in the context of the wet rice agricultural civilization of the Vietnamese people, the culture emphasized "the predominance of the female factor", respecting women, the role of women in family and social community. At Luy Lau center, Buddhism
has adapted to the local culture and quickly integrated, empowered women, implemented the idea of gender equality through building the typical image of Vietnamese Buddhism. Nam: Man Nuong Phat Mau and the system of worshiping the Four Dharma women. Vietnamese Buddhism with the thought of selflessness, altruism, "contractual contract", "depending on means", regardless of class, class, origin and gender, especially the idea of female empowerment (Pandala, C. R. N., 2023). The world has made it more and more deeply rooted, rooted and suitable for the national culture. At the same time, Vietnamese Buddhism also creates a colorful array of identity - the predominance of the female element through the images of Buddha and Goddess Avalokitesvara, Guan Yin Tong Tu, Buddha and Lady Chua Perfume,. and a the system of temples named after them: Temple of Mrs. Ngo, Ba Nah, Ba Danh, Ba Da, Ba Gia, Ba Moc, Ba Tam,. along with the integration with the Mother-worshiping belief in the worshiping system. at many temples in the North. The adoption of Northern Buddhism by the Vietnamese, Northern Buddhism by the Chinese, Theravada Buddhism of the Vietnamese and Theravada Buddhism of the Khmer. The influence and impact of Buddhism in general is particularly special. The concept of gender equality and all aspects of the life of Southern women has become more and more profound and bold, forming a unique cultural identity for this land (Bendezú, A. R., 2023).

2 METHODOLOGY

Authors mainly use qualitative analysis including analysis, synthesis and inductive methods. Another method is historical method.

Also, Case studies are used in this paper. The case study method allows a comprehensive and in-depth study and assessment of the research object.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

3.1.1 Gender equality and gender equality in religion - an inevitable trend of the times

Gender equality is an inevitable trend of the times, especially in the current context of exchange and integration, globalization and internationalization. Gender is understood as “only the characteristics, expectations, social norms, behaviors and cultures associated with women or men. Gender equality means how these factors define the relationship
between women and men, as well as the differences in power created between women
and men”. (World Bank, 2022).

Gender equality can also be understood as giving opportunities to contribute,
creating conditions for development in the community, enjoying the fruits of labor,
assessing capacity and assessing equal roles and positions among gender communities.
According to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against
Women (CEDAW), On September 3, 1981 mentioned, the essence of gender equality "is
to ensure the dignity, dignity and basic rights of human beings, as well as equal rights
between women and men" (Le Thi Quy), 2012), which builds on the common goals of
the United Nations. According to the "Law on Gender Equality" of the 11th National
Assembly, 10th session, No. 73/2006/QH11, dated November 29, 2006, affirms: "Gender
equality is the fact that men and women have positions and roles equally, are given
conditions and opportunities to develop their capacities for the development of the
community and family and equally enjoy the fruits of that development”. Gender equality
aims to “eliminate gender discrimination, create equal opportunities for men and women
in socio-economic development and human resource development, and move towards
substantive gender equality between men, women and establish and strengthen
cooperative and supportive relations between men and women in all areas of social and
family life”. For the World Bank (World Bank), in the world development report 2012,
Gender Equality and Development Overview, right in the "Preface", World Bank Group
President Robert B. Zoelick pointed out clearly identify four goals, four priority areas for
policy reform to ensure gender equality: “First, reduce gender inequality in human capital
– especially inequality in mortality and educational attainment. women's issues. The
second is to reduce gender inequality in access to economic opportunities, income and
labor productivity. The third is to reduce gender inequality in terms of voice and
mediating capacity in society. The fourth is to limit the recurrence of gender inequality
from generation to generation”. The report also points out, “First, gender equality is
already meaningful in itself, because being able to live each person's life according to his
or her own choice without suffering unreasonable deprivations is a fundamental human
right and equality between all men, whether men or women. Second, gender equality
makes sense in terms of means, because the higher gender equality is, the more economic
efficiency can be achieved and other important development goals are achieved”.

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Gender Equality Approach
Thus, gender equality is not only an area of concern in economic, cultural, social and educational life. But in religious life, gender equality also plays an important role. Michele A. Paludi and J. Harold Ellens in the book "Feminism and Religion", wrote: "In American culture, feminism has become inevitable, it has a history of about approx. 40 years ago, developed in all areas of social life. Feminist perspectives refer to different aspects of gender equality for women from family life, culture, education to spiritual life and religion”.

In the history of mankind many religious traditions, views on gender are expressed very clearly and strictly. Many religions protect patriarchy and promote the role of men, downplay the role of women, thus supporting gender discrimination. In theological doctrine, many traditional religions have discriminatory thoughts on gender, especially with contempt for women, and at the same time clearly show prejudices about in language, in views, in descriptions of women. describe women through scriptures, doctrines, canon law.. Men are always considered the norm; woman is a deviation from God's standards. For example, in the tradition of Confucianism, the idea of "respecting men and despised women" has always been promoted, which has deeply influenced and ingrained in the way of thinking, conception and social thought in China and many East Asian countries. Or in the society of many Muslim countries, the issue of gender discrimination due to the remnants of the old society and traditional conceptions is still strong, and feminism has not been really appreciated and respected. In most orthodox Muslim countries, women in submissive and reclusive roles, hanging around housework, do not have the opportunity to work in the community, to study, to participate in the community. school education or any other social activity. In some African countries, polygamy is still contested. Similarly, in the 1930s, in many Western countries, women did not have the right to vote, participate in the political system, as well as the career opportunities and their role in the family. Family is also overlooked. This, like in Indian society in the Hindu tradition.

In terms of gender equality, when talking about human rights, we must also talk about the right to freedom of belief and religion. In the International Declaration of Human Rights, abbreviated as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, in article 18, it is written: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, by conscience and freedom of religion; this right to manifest religion or belief
through teaching, practice, worship and ceremonies, either alone or with others, in public
or in private homes”.

Article 6, Law on Belief and Religion 2016 also clearly states gender equality in
the field of belief and religion from the codification of Article 24 of the 2013 Constitution,
specifically as follows: “Everyone has the right to freedom and liberty. by belief, religion,
following or not following a religion”. Clause 1, Article 6 of the 2016 Law on Belief and
Religion stipulates that subjects exercise the right to freedom of belief and religion:
“Everyone has the right to freedom of belief and religion, to follow or not to follow a
religion. ”. At the same time, the Law also stipulates that each person expresses his or her
beliefs, beliefs, religion, practices religious rituals, participates in festivals, studies and
practices religious doctrines and canons, the right to enter practice at a religious
institute, study at a religious training institution, a refresher course of a religious
organization..

Thus, gender equality is the specific regulations, regardless of gender, respecting
the rights and roles of all genders including men and women..are the same. Gender
equality in all aspects, from personal life, family life, social life and religious life. In
religious life, the issue of gender equality according to the concept of many religions,
especially traditional religions, has not been paid enough attention, especially the issues
of women's rights and women's lives. . However, in many religions, in the face of the
changing trend of modern society and the strong feminist movement in the world, the
issue of gender equality is also recognized and discussed, taking on a new color. for the
advancement of women and the sustainable development of humanity. Just like
Christianity, for Buddhism in general and Theravada Buddhism in particular, the issue of
gender equality has now attracted attention and set out goals and efforts to transform in
practice. attitudes, actions and policies.

3.1.2 The issue of gender equality in the concept of Buddhism and Theravada
Buddhism

The concept of equality is inherently one of the characteristics of Buddhism in
general and Theravada Buddhism in particular. Stemming from the perspective on the
role and status of women in society, the Buddha always had tolerant, respectful and
empathetic views towards women. In his teachings, in the Sayutta Nikāya, Chapter III,
Sauttara, the Buddha pointed out the difficulties and disadvantages of the status of
women: 1) When he was young, he went to her husband's house, without a grandmother, 2) menstruating, 3) pregnant, 4) giving birth, 5) serving her husband. All of this creates disadvantages for women. The Buddha taught: “The inclination to not be firm and the inclination to be immoral is the great harm of a woman. But this does not mean forcing them to suffer such a fate. Rather, they themselves need to be cautious and diligent, trying to overcome those divinity.” From the awareness of the weaknesses and shortcomings of women, the Buddha did not stop teaching, and showed them how to transform themselves, to achieve peace and liberation. As stated by Pham Kim Khanh: "Anyway, the Buddha pointed out the weaknesses and shortcomings of women, not to ridicule and ridicule, but he aimed at the noble goal of helping them identify the difficulties hinder their efforts to achieve their spiritual goals and encourage them to carefully train themselves to overcome the trivial desires and temptations of life”. Or as author Trinh Thi Dung (Thich Dam Thanh): "The Buddha's teachings are not meant to damage the honor and reduce the value of women. He only pointed out their weak disposition and their fragile, fragile, "weak willows digging for silk" and wanted them to realize their true self, shape their own dispositions, and modify their manners to achieve their goals. on the path of practice”. The Buddha also briefly criticized them: "The easy-going or morally unstable behavior is the defilement of a woman."

Thus, here he clearly showed sympathy and sharing, acknowledging the contribution, merit and suffering of women. Although governed and influenced by concepts in traditional Indian society, when it comes to women, the Anguttara Nikāya and Tang Nhat A Ham Sutras clearly indicate women despite their nature. inferior to men, but by their own efforts and understanding, they constantly strive to rise. The nun Soma wrote: "How can a woman's nature be considered inferior when, with her mind abiding, with clear and pure knowledge full of profound wisdom, she can lift up the veil of ignorance that surrounds them, understand the Dhamma and see their lives as they really are.”

In the Angutara Nikāyas, when talking about the capacity of women and disciples of the Buddha, Ananda also pointed out: "Venerable Buddha, does a woman have the ability to achieve success? noble living standards in the spiritual life - the four stages of holiness". And in the Anguttara Nikaya IV, 278, the Buddha answered affirmatively to Venerable Ananda that: "Women can realize liberation like men".
Although in the concept of women, for religious practice, Buddhism has an idea of women being inferior to men when in the scriptures there are many places talking about women's weaknesses. During the Buddha's time in the world, when the Buddha's aunt, Mahapajapati (Mahapajapati) asked to be ordained as a follower of the Congregation, the Buddha also hesitated, but thanks to Ananda's supplications after two years. Three times, Buddha accepted. This shows that, more or less in the opinion of the Blessed One, there is a recognition of the efforts of women and that they also have the same moral status as men. The Buddha himself also advised the king of Persia when he learned that his wife, Mallikal, was in labor and gave birth to a daughter, the king was not happy. The Blessed One said, "Great King! Even though it’s a girl, it can be better than a boy. If the virtuous and intelligent when monastic knows how to honor his parents-in-law, then the woman's child born will also be brave and resolute. Thus, the son of a father can be king and direct a country”.

As for Theravada Buddhism, although based on the direction of practice when the Buddha was in the world, he followed the precepts set forth by the Buddha when he was still alive, so there were no nuns and no nuns. Although, at present, Theravada Buddhism in some countries still exists in the form of nuns without bhikkunis. In particular, some countries that follow Theravada Buddhism with radical changes to suit contemporary society still accept Bhikkhunis (inheriting the lineage from Srilanka to China in the 5th century), such as : Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, India, etc. However, most Theravada Buddhism does not recognize the organization of the Order of Bhikkhunis in the orthodox aspect, because it is believed that after the Elder Ni Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and 500 Arhats and Nirvana entered Nirvana, which also means that the lineage of this sect has ended. Although not acknowledging the Bhikkhuni Church, Theravada Buddhism in many countries still accepts nuns, which also shows progress and notions of gender equality.

3.1.3 Gender equality in Theravada Buddhism and its impacts on the lives of Southern women

Southern Vietnam is the southern land of the country, including 19 provinces and cities: Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Tay Ninh, Ba Ria - Vung Tau, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai (in the Southeast), Long An , Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Dong Thap, An Giang, Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang and
large and small islands (in the Southwest region). The Southern region has a long history of formation with Kinh, Khmer, Hoa and Cham ethnic communities.

In the South, Theravada Buddhism developed and spread in two branches: Theravada Buddhism and Khmer Theravada Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism originated in Cambodia, brought to the South by Mr. Le Van Giang (Venerable Ho Tong), Mr. Nguyen Van Hieu and a number of Buddhists and Sanghas brought to the South since the 1930s. Currently, the number of Sangha is increasing, over 900 nuns (Bhikkhus 450, novices 90, 450 nuns), the number of pagodas is about 145 temples, including 04 nuns and 07 Zen monasteries. Theravada Buddhism was also spread and has a history of existence in the Khmer community in the South for a long time (about the IV century). Over time until the 19th and early 20th centuries, the majority of Phum (village), Soc (many hamlets) of the Khmer had pagodas to worship Buddha. As of 2018, Khmer Theravada Buddhism had 462 Khmer temples with more than 8,574 monks, concentrated mainly in 9 provinces (cities) such as Tra Vinh, Can Tho, An Giang, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang, Ca Mau. Theravada Buddhism is one of the religions that has a profound influence on the lives of the people of the South in general and the women of this land in particular.

3.1.3.1 Impact on moral thought and lifestyle of Southern women

Theravada Buddhism with its teachings upholds the equality of all sentient beings, directing people to a virtuous and blessed life. The ideas of the five precepts "don't kill, don't steal, don't commit adultery, don't lie, don't drink alcohol or use drugs" and many other precepts that Buddhists in general and women in particular must have. Compliance and preservation in each specific situation is important. Unlike men in customs and regulations, they are obliged to enter the temple to practice in order to have knowledge and virtue, and is considered a filial piety and gratitude to their parents. Young men in Khmer Theravada Buddhism at the temple have been practicing the Dharma, learning culture, letters, practicing morality, increasing knowledge and life experience. When entering the monastery, from 19 years old or younger can practice the Sadi level (keeping 10 precepts), from 20 years old can practice the monk level (227 precepts). The son can practice at any time, because it is both their duty and their honor. However, they may also refuse to participate in the practice or may wish to return to the world at any time. One person can practice many times. Women, on the other hand, are the opposite, women of
Theravada in general and Khmer Theravada women cannot go to the temple to study. However, if a woman wants to practice by observing the precepts, then it is called Cordyceps. Depending on the family situation, a woman can stay at home as usual or go to the temple to ask to keep a small cup in the temple so that she can meditate, recite sutras and do meritorious deeds. After making a vow, the ordained person shaves his hair, shaves his eyebrows, wears all white clothes, takes refuge in the Three Jewels, and presents himself to the monks in the temple. The ordained person chooses one of three levels: five precepts; eight precepts (including five precepts and three additional precepts: do not eat outside of meals - too late, do not watch dance and sing, do not use jewelry); ten precepts (including eight mandarins and two more precepts: do not occupy high chairs and soft beds, do not touch gold and silver). Anyone who wants to keep any level can.

People who receive the ordination can be at the temple or at home, however, there are 4 times in a month (8th, 15th, 23rd, 30th lunar month, 22nd month, 29th month) they have to go to the temple to receive ordination.

For Southern women, especially of the Khmer ethnic group, under the influence of Theravada Buddhism, most of them voluntarily attached their lives to the temple from birth to death. They also entrust their remains to the temple. They come to the temple, with the Sangha, participate in the recitation of sutras as a source of comfort in the present and hope to contribute good fortune for the future. The pagoda is their spiritual support, they trust the Buddha and his Dharma, therefore, in addition to voluntarily participating in the construction of the temple, they also often go to the temple on the day of the squirrel and hope to receive the Dharma. Vow to support the temple, make offerings, give food to the monks going for alms, contributing to the maintenance and development of the temple's activities.

Southern people in general and Khmer women in particular live wherever they live, they also set up temples to worship Buddha in their squirrels. Son Nam commented: "People like to invest in the next life, the temple in the squirrel is constantly repaired, when the season is right, everyone takes care of offering one or two Buddha statues made of trees or small statues wrapped in gold or silver. Khmer people who follow Theravada Buddhism do not ring bells, knock doors, and are not vegetarians. The village is poor, but the temples are very magnificent, and the monks and nuns are fully provided with material goods."
In Theravada temples, monks and nuns imbued with Buddhist thought and ethics have participated in studying and practicing religion, contributing to the development of Buddhist teachings in the community. The middle way thought, the practice of the Eightfold Path, Precepts - Concentration - Wisdom of Buddhism have created certain cultural values, with many points consistent with social ethics in general and ethics, subpar lifestyle. women in the South in particular. “Today, Khmer monks not only preach, but also preach, propagate, and encourage the implementation of the Party and State's guidelines, guidelines and policies in each village. On the other hand, many pagodas also mobilize monks and Buddhists to participate in responding to social welfare work such as: building bridges, rural roads in hamlets, adjacent communes, building houses of love and gratitude houses. , home of great unity; organize social charity activities to help and improve the lives of people in care such as mobilizing money and items to give to poor people, mobilizing doctors and nurses to provide free medical examination and treatment, providing booklets and scholarships for poor students, supporting the care of the lonely elderly and orphans, organizing vocational training to create jobs for people in the village. In particular, taking the lead in these movements must be mentioned the role of women and the Women's Union, the Fatherland Front and the authorities at all levels, always actively and closely coordinating with the Nam Tong pagoda in the temples. in many provinces in the Southern region.

The closeness and familiarity of the temple attached to the community life, the squirrels and the Southern women are everyday images that can be encountered everywhere in this land. The philosophies of Theravada Buddhism such as compassion, cultivating the mind, doing good deeds, and building good social relationships in the family, school and society have been associated with the concept of women and Southern people. The order is influenced by Buddhism such as: "Death is not the end of everything, but the end of a human life to prepare for the next life". This concept is deeply ingrained in the thoughts of mothers and mothers, they often teach their children that: do not do evil because after death will not escape, the soul will fall into the hell of Abhi. The ethical ideas of "being good, meeting good", "doing good and avoiding evil" of Theravada Buddhism always remind Southern women to live in good fortune and accumulate virtue for their children and grandchildren. Because in the tradition of the Vietnamese people, "virtue at the mother" is a view deeply rooted in the moral life of many communities. For that reason, the rituals of chanting sutras for supplication and offering rice to the spirits
in order to save them to a peaceful realm are always actively involved and cared for by mothers and grandmothers. They always believe in the things that the Buddha established while on earth. In their mind and religious life, they always believe: “The Buddha will always be with them and bring them peace. Theravada Buddhism becomes the glue that binds all members of the phum squirrel community. It is also the regulation of the whole ethnic community that all members, regardless of gender, have equal obligations and rights before the customs and rituals which are built and perfected in the spirit of Buddhism. In it, there is absolutely no caste division or separate regulations, but Buddhist ethics is to advise doing good and avoiding evil. Live actively in accordance with the law, according to the guidelines, directions, policies and laws of the Party and State, according to the motto "good life and good religion". When talking about the impact of Theravada Buddhism on the moral life and lifestyle of the people in general, and Southern women in particular, Thich Hue Dao also pointed out: "Even in the Khmer family, the wife-wife relationship is very important when talking about the impact of Theravada Buddhism on the moral life and lifestyle of the people in general and Southern women in particular. husband is also built on the foundation of Buddhist philosophy. Everyone is equal before Buddha. In which the true value of each person is assessed through good deeds or from the perspective of: mental action, thought, of each individual in the care community..

3.1.3.2 Impact on customs, beliefs and practices and festivals of Southern women

Theravada Buddhism not only orients and builds the moral foundation, loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity lifestyle for Southern women but has a strong impact on their beliefs and customs. For the ethnic communities of the South in general, Khmer women and Southern women in particular, Theravada Buddhism has mixed with their beliefs, governing their spirituality and customs. Due to the characteristics and traditional production conditions of the wet-rice agricultural culture, although polytheism was prevailed, natural gods were worshiped in people's lives. Southern women believe that “worshiping the natural gods is for the sake of living, for the benefit of the family and taking care of them, which is the driving force to help them achieve good things in life. For that reason, Theravada Buddhism, when it existed in the Southern resident communities, skillfully combined with the indigenous festivals and beliefs of the people. In the festivals that play an important role for Southern residents in general and the women here in particular, especially women of the Khmer ethnic community - most of
whom follow Khmer Theravada Buddhism have shown boldly, and clearly these cultural nuances, customs and practices. The festivals of the Khmer ethnic group in the South, in addition to the Ceremony of Worshiping Grandparents, there are two festivals closely related to agricultural rituals, bearing heavy religious imprints: New Year's Ceremony and Moon Worshiping ceremony. The New Year's Ceremony (Bund Chol Chnam Thmay) is the Khmer New Year, celebrated at the beginning of the Tet month according to the Great Calendar - Maha Sangkran, corresponding to the solar calendar on April 13 or 14. This is the time of change of seasons, the dry season ends and the rainy season begins. This ceremony has both the meaning of welcoming the new year and also the meaning of agricultural rituals to pray for the dry season to pass and the rainy season to come quickly to have water for farming. The purpose is expressed in a number of ritual activities such as the custom of building sand mountains, bathing Buddha statues and bathing monks. The custom of building sand mountains means that mountains will block clouds to accumulate water vapor into rain; The custom of bathing Buddha statues and monks is a ritual to pray for dap. All these ritual activities are held in the temple, with the participation and management of monks and the participation of a large number of women in phum soc, taking place in the Khmer community in many provinces and regions. Southern.

The ceremony of worshiping the moon (Ok Om Bok) is held on the 15th day of the 10th lunar month. This custom is associated with activities such as worshiping the moon with freshly harvested agricultural products, then feeding flat rice to children; release lights, release water, release wind lanterns, organize Ngo boat race.. These are activities aimed at celebrating a bountiful harvest, sending off the rainy season, giving thanks to the moon and welcoming the sun and light. sunshine of the dry season, wishing the crops to be always fresh and life to be full. Moon worship and Ngo boat racing are associated with the story of the Buddha and the practice of the monks in the past.

Besides, in the spiritual and spiritual life of Southern women, under the influence of Theravada Buddhism, there is always an interweaving of folk rituals, customs and festivals with Buddhist festivals. As a woman in Phum Soc, in the community and in the family, Southern women in general, especially Khmer women in particular, always realize their roles and obligations in the activities and rituals of the Vietnamese people. family, community and temple. The festivals of Buddha's birthday, entering summer, coming out, offering robes and robes are held every year and non-regular festivals such
as Kiet precepts, Buddha statue, Praying for blessings, Praying for rain, Chol Chnam Thmay traditional New Year, Festivals. Offering to Grandparents (Bund Sêne Dolta). also always attracts attention, preparation and active participation as part of their responsibilities and obligations for preserving and preserving customary values. customs, rituals and festivals for generations to come. During these festivals, the monks in the temple together with Buddhists in the Khmer community organize ceremony activities and festival activities corresponding to each ceremony such as performances, talent contests on Sa Dam bells, music. Five sounds, releasing wind lights, releasing water lights, Ngo boat racing..

In addition, Theravada Buddhism also strongly influences and dominates rituals related to the human life cycle of Southern residents in general and Southern women in particular. Important events related to the life cycle of the residents are held in a ceremony that blends elements of belief and folk law with Theravada Buddhism. For example, in the Khmer community of women, from birth, growing up, getting married and dying, these are all events of historical significance in human life, organized according to rituals and practices. community custom. In those events, there are the participation of Theravada monks to perform rituals such as: Haircut to repay the mother, Giap age ceremony, wedding, funeral, Blessing ceremony, 100-day anniversary.. etc.

3.1.3.3 Impact on the language, literature and art of Southern women

In the field of language, literature and art, Theravada Buddhism has had a great impact on the preservation and promotion of national cultural traditions in the South region and Southern women in particular. In many Theravada Buddhist communities, especially for the Khmer, pagodas are custodians and schools that teach Khmer language and writing to all sections of society, regardless of male or female. Theravada Buddhism, when imported into the culture of the Khmer people, was associated with the system of scriptures used in the Pali language system. From here: “The need to learn and understand Pali becomes very urgent and especially to recite and read Buddhist scriptures. In fact, over the centuries, Khmer people besides learning Khmer script, they also learn and use Pali regularly. Since then, Pali language has become an important factor to make the Khmer language richer and more profound, capable of expressing people's thoughts and feelings in daily life, especially expressing thoughts and feelings. profound and profound ideas of religion - Theravada Buddhism. In other words, the Khmer language has been
greatly influenced by Pali - the language family of Theravada Buddhist scriptures. Khmer language and script, especially Pali, has long been organized by most Khmer Theravada Buddhist temples to study Khmer and Pali language for teenagers, monks, including a part of women in Phum Soc. also study.

In folk songs and proverbs, Southerners and Southern women are influenced by Theravada Buddhism or used in addition to the teachings handed down by the ancients, there are also proverbs that uphold the teachings of the Buddha. That grandmothers, mothers - Southern women often remind their children and grandchildren and put in lullabies and folk songs such as: "If you want to know, you must ask Ah father. If you want to eat fruit, you have to burn the stump”; “God Brac In, please help us/ God Maha Brum come down to help/ Please pour rain on the fields/ Ha! Ha ha! Rich and long life, come to us / Buddha, our treasure, don't forget us / Buddhism has instilled in everyone / Heaven and Earth's fields / Your efforts / Ha! Ha ha! A downpour: Happiness will bring us to Nirvana".

Besides, there are other types of Brahmanism idols that are fused with Khmer thought such as Brahma called Preah Prum, Indra was called Preah In, Vishnu was called Preah Neareavy - commonly known as the Four-Faced God. The head of the statue of the god Kabil Maha Prum - Brahma has 4 faces, usually placed in the tower or the roof of the temple, symbolizing the 4 virtues of Buddha's compassion, compassion, joy, and discharge. The head symbol of Maha Horum. In addition, in Theravada temple, there are mascots in the polytheistic thinking of Brahmins such as Chan (Yeak), goddess Kayno; Reah; Hanuman monkey; Krud (bird-headed human body) is also known as Garuda- god bird, king of birds.. Especially 3 Khmer mythological mascots are Naga snake god (5, 7 or 9 fan-shaped head); Statue of Nirvana - dragon (in the Buddha's story, the Khmer think that the dragon has turned into a boat to bring the Buddha to preach the Dharma); Statue Reach Cha sei dragon head, lion body, buffalo legs is the strongest animal among animals.. In addition to architecture, sculpture, painting, it also shows the creativity of Khmer people in general and the impact. Not small for Southern women and Khmer women in the faith life and practice of Theravada Buddhism.

3.1.3.4 Impact on community cohesion, family, care and patriotism of Southern women

For women in the South, the temple, the Chu Sangha and the activities of the temple create a specific and vivid feature for the spiritual and cultural life of individuals,
families and families. The monks' practice, religious practice, and missionary activities in the temples of the Southern resident community are always closely and close to each other, familiar to everyone in Phum Soc. Every Southern resident who follows Theravada Buddhism in general, especially Khmer Theravada Buddhism in the Phum Soc villages, always voluntarily considers himself a follower of Buddhism. Women and mothers always voluntarily study religion and participate in Buddhist activities associated with the temple in their locality. They regularly offer enough food and drink to the monks on alms round, and at the same time show their absolute respect for the monks. Because, in their belief, the monk is one of the Three Jewels (Buddha - Dharma - Sangha). “Because of this respect, for the Khmer people, monks are always considered sacred characters, the bearers of the image representing the Buddha when he was still wearing the robe. “The temple is the factor that unites the community of families and caretakers, or in other words, it is the cohesion of the community through community destiny and empathy. The community life, in Phum Soc, the worship of Nirvana is considered to be the worship of the god of the gods, showing the community's community. However, since the appearance of the Khmer Theravada Buddhist temple, the temple has become the center of religious activities and beliefs for the community in Phum Soc, where people move Nirvana into the temple and set up a temple to worship. Therefore, stemming from all the spiritual activities in the temple, the pagoda is truly a sacred symbol of the whole community, linking the members of Phum Soc together.

Southern women are always proud of the Theravada Buddhist temple with their monks. Because pagodas and monks play an important role in all activities of the people's lives, especially for the Khmer. They are proud of the tradition but also proud of the history, because during the historical period of struggle to build and defend the country of the Vietnamese community and people. “Many monks and fellow Buddhists have contributed to the cause of national liberation and national construction, and have been honored by the Party and State. Currently, in many provinces and cities of the Southern region, there are many pagodas recognized as national monuments of revolutionary history, cultural history, architecture and art. Theravada Buddhist temple is also a traditional patriotic education for compatriots, Southern Buddhists in particular and Southern women in general. Historically and now, with the activities of the Association for Solidarity of Patriotic monks and nuns in many Southern provinces, it has also shown the inheritance and promotion of the tradition of patriotic activities from the anti-
American resistance war to the present day. The activities of the Association for Solidarity of Monks and Patriots have had a great impact on educating the revolutionary tradition and patriotism for the people of the South in general and the women of the South in particular. Especially today, with the spirit of national unity, harmony and socialism, Theravada Buddhism with noble humanistic ideas has created a community of ethnic groups that agree and develop. “Buddhist thought has aroused and promoted the spirit of tolerance, harmony, democracy, patriotism and love of the race, together building national unity, social consensus with the motto of good living, beautiful life. In the history of the Southern region, it has shown a long process of Khmer people living together with other ethnic groups such as Kinh, Hoa. showing the coexistence and interweaving of Khmer people with villages.

4 CONCLUSION

Today's Vietnam, after nearly 40 years of national renewal and development, under the leadership of the Party and State, people's living standards are constantly improving, socio-economic growth and sustainable development. Gender issues and gender equality are also being concerned by the whole society, at all levels and in all fields. The South is one of the regions with the strong development of Theravada Buddhism, the strong impact of Theravada Buddhism on people's lives, especially women, is reflected deeply and boldly in many fields. areas from moral thought, lifestyle, language, literature, art, community cohesion and patriotism, customs, practices, beliefs and festivals. All, forming a picture The colorful paintings show the cultural and spiritual life of the people of the South in general, and the women of the South in particular, showing bold regional culture, unity in diversity, with the dominant color being dominated by Buddhism.

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