An Analytical Study of the Views on Meritorious and Demeritorious Deeds of Theravāda Buddhism in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia

การศึกษาวิเคราะห์ทรัพยากรเกี่ยวกับการทำบุญและบาปในพระพุทธศาสนา

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Abstract

This research, "An Analytical Study of the Views on Meritorious and Demeritorious Deeds of Theravāda Buddhism in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia" consisted of the following three objectives: (1) to study the views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds in Theravāda Buddhism, (2) to study the views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds of the Buddhist community in Kampong Cham province, (3) to analyze these views in the context of the Buddhist communities at Kampong Cham province areas as manifested through different ceremonies. This work was based on two phases: a documentary research and fieldwork. The documentary research aimed to study the views of Theravāda Buddhist aspects pertaining to merits and demerits. The fieldwork phase aimed to study the concepts of Khmer people in Kampong Cham province by interviewing the target group and the findings presented with descriptive analysis.

The results of the study clearly indicated that the Buddhist views on merits (puñña) and demerits (pāpa) were generally understood by most people in the world, of Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. The Buddhist views were deemed as the great map to point out the right path for human-beings living with morality and well-being because all people in the world could not

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live together in the society without humanity or morality. Thus it was very important to know and understand Buddhist philosophy on puṇṇa (merits) and pāpa (demerits) of kamma and its result. Moreover, it is proved that only Buddhism was perfection in theory (pariyatti), practice (paññāpatti) and noble truth realization (paññañcavāda). When we comprehended well the Buddhist concepts about merits and demerits, we could straighten our life, be perfect in good conduct from the lowest level up to the highest level, and we could also make the society more progressive. In addition, the Buddha’s teaching was aimed at developing the right perception and it could enlighten all living beings in the universe without distinction or discrimination of any race and nation. As a consequence, the researcher really saw that one who ardently took the Buddha’s Dhamma or practised Buddhist ethics, one surely attained the supreme happiness of life and lived in harmony and peace with oneself and others in the society. However, without study and practice, one could not get anything from Buddhism. The sacred key to attain the Dhammic truth realization or what the Buddha discovered was to study and practise by following the Buddhist ethics in three levels of basic (The Five Precepts), medium (Ten Bases of Wholesome Actions), and high (The Noble Eightfold Path). A study of these level-views was to know critically the views of what was right and wrong, what should be done and what should not be done, and especially they could make us to perceive the right path leading to the end of all sufferings which is the supreme goal of life in Buddhism.

With regard to applying Buddhist views of merits and demerits in the Buddhist community in Kampong Cham province, the researcher found that Theravāda Buddhism was essential for the people because they really believe in Buddhism faithfully. They supported and upheld Theravāda Buddhism with their good heart because Buddhism played a very important role for them, particularly solving the daily life problems, assisting the
spiritual power, alleviating the mental problem, granting various knowledge, and moral codes of life and self-refuge of liberation. That is the reason why the people of Kampong Cham, Cambodia acknowledged Theravāda Buddhism in formal as their own spiritual concept and avowed Buddhism as the religion of the state, standing in the second order of their national motto as: Nation-Religion (Buddhism)-King. Moreover, with respect to Buddhist ceremonies in Kampong Cham province, there were mainly three ceremonies which Kampong Cham people had believed and adhered to practice. Firstly, \textit{Boon-Paccay-Buon} (the Four Offering Requisites Ceremony) was meant for their prosperous life with good health and abundant property in all existences. Secondly, \textit{Boon-Chamreoun-Preah-Jun} (the Life Promoting Ceremony) was meant for living with a long life without destruction from any accident or danger. and finally, \textit{Boon Dakkhināṇapadāṇa} (the Dead Dedication Ceremony) was meant for dedication of the merits to the departed ones for protection of their consciousness in destination of woeful abodes or any misery planes after death and so on. All these Buddhist momentous ceremonies were the most significant rituals for Kampong Cham people to perform meritorious deeds. The Buddhist monks and lay people of this province liked to celebrate these Buddhist Ceremonies very remarkably in their life because they had understood well the Buddha’s teaching of kamma and its result, especially meritorious (puṇṇa) and demeritorious deeds (pāpa).

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ 1) เพื่อศึกษาธรรมะบุญและบานในพระพุทธศาสนา
เมาวรบท 2) เพื่อศึกษาธรรมะบุญและบานของชุมชนชาวพุทธในชุมชนจังหวัดก่ำแพงงาม และ 3) เพื่อเรียนรู้ปัจจุบันเหล่านี้ (ข้อ 1-6) ในการนำไปประยุกต์ใช้ในชุมชนชาวพุทธที่จังหวัดกำแพงงามเป็นประจักษ์ผ่านพิธีกรรมที่แตกต่างกัน งานวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเอกสาร
(Documentary Research) โดยการใช้วิธีศึกษาเชิงคัดเลือกพระพุทธศาสนาต่างๆ และการศึกษาทางภาษา (Fieldwork) โดยการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มเป้าหมายผู้มีวิเคราะห์ประบกเวียนที่พื้นที่

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ทรัพยากรของพระพุทธศาสนาเกี่ยวกับเรื่องบุญและบารมีเป็นเรื่องสำคัญมากสำหรับบุคคลในโลกทั้งชาวพุทธและไม่ใช่ชาวพุทธ ทรัพยากรของพระพุทธศาสนาเหล่านี้ จะถือว่าเป็นแผนที่ที่ดีที่สุดในการจับกุมทางให้ลูกตัวสำคัญ ที่มุ่งทั้งหลายที่อาศัยหลักคือธรรมุ่ธรรม คุณธรรมและการอยู่เป็นสุขหมาย เพราะทุกคนในโลกนี้ไม่สามารถจะอยู่ร่วมกันในสังคมได้ก็โดยปราศจากบุญธรรมหรือคือธรรมรัฐดีงาม ดังนั้นจึงเป็นสิ่งสำคัญมากที่จะรู้และเข้าใจวิริยะศิลปะพระพุทธศาสนาในเรื่องสังคมบุญและบารมี หรือธรรมและหลักธรรม ดังนั้นจึงจะได้รับการพิจารณาว่ามีประโยชน์ต่อการศึกษาพระพุทธศาสนาทั้งนี้เป็นที่สมบูรณ์แบบในการทำศึกษา (วิทยานิพนธ์) ทางการปฏิบัติ และทำให้เกิดการรู้ความจริงอันสูงสุด (ปฏิบัติ) เมื่อเราเข้าใจวิธีการศึกษาพระพุทธศาสนาในเรื่องสังคมบุญและบารมี เราสามารถยึดชีวิตของการสงบสมัยบนแบบในการประพฤติคุณธรรมอันดีงามเรื่องการระดับสูงสุดและยั่งยืนสามารถที่ให้สัมชัดเจนความพึงพอใจมากขึ้นสิ่งหนึ่งที่เราต้องสนใจของพระพุทธเจ้าเป็น triturssonที่สำคัญต้องสามารถทำให้เข้าใจถึงบุคคลที่มีความเห็นติดทั้งทางโลก และทำให้คนทั่วไปในกิจกรรมมีความรับรู้ติได้ไม่ได้มีความแตกต่างหรือการแบ่งแยกการแข่งขันและประเทศชาติใดๆ ฉันจะแย้มว่า ด้วยบุคคลที่ปฏิบัติตามค่าสังคมของพระพุทธเจ้าอย่างเคร่งคัด หรือมีธรรมปฏิบัติในการปฏิบัติการระบุวัน บุคคลนั้นก็จะมีความสุขสูงสุดในชีวิตและใช้ชีวิตอยู่ในความสม่ำเสมอและความสงบสุขทั้งตัวเองและคนอื่นๆ ในการที่ต้องทำให้เห็น ถ้าบุคคลไม่มีการศึกษาและการปฏิบัติก็ไม่ได้รับประโยชน์จากพระพุทธศาสนา ที่สำคัญจะบรรลุความจริงในสังธรรม หรือในพระพุทธเจ้านั้นคือการศึกษาและการปฏิบัติตามสังธารธรรม 3 ระดับ คือ ระดับพื้นฐานหมายถึง คือ 4 ระดับกลาง หมายถึง กรุงเทพธรรม 10 และระดับสูง หมายถึง องค์ธรรม 4 การศึกษาพระพุทธศาสนาเป็นระดับหลังนี้คือ การรับรู้อย่างยิ่งต่อสิ่งที่ลึกซึ้ง และไม่ลึกซึ้งถึงที่ควรทำและสิ่งที่ไม่ควรทำมาโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งคือ ทำให้เราพร้อมสืบทอดทางที่ถูกต้องนำไปสู่การสืบคุณคุณคุณที่มีทุกอย่างเป็นเป้าหมายสูงสุดของชีวิตในพระพุทธศาสนาคือ พระพุฒาภาน

เกี่ยวกับการประยุกต์ใช้แนวความคิดของพระพุทธศาสนาเรื่อง บุญและบารมีในชุมชน
ชาวพุทธในจังหวัดกำแพง ผู้วิจัยพบว่า พระพุทธศาสนาเป็นสิ่งสำคัญมากสำหรับ
ประชาชนเพราะพวกเขามีความเชื่อตามหลักพระพุทธศาสนาอย่างมั่นคง พุทธศาสนานิกาย และสังเสริมพระพุทธศาสนาและจริยธรรมที่ริสุทธิ์ เพราะพระพุทธศาสนามีบทบาทที่
สำคัญมากกับชีวิตประจำวัน อานานั้นจึงถือว่าเป็นคติจิตวิญญาณ แก้ปัญหาทางจิต
ความรู้ดังกล่าว คือธรรมเป็นเครื่องปลดปล่อยชีวิตตนเอง นั่นคือเหตุผลที่คนของประเทศนี้ให้
การยอมรับในพระพุทธศาสนาและจริยธรรมย่อมเป็นทางการเป็นแนวคิดจิตวิญญาณของตัวเอง
และยอมรับว่า พระพุทธศาสนาเป็นศาสนาของรัฐที่ยึดอยู่ในลำดับที่สองของคติวัฒนประวัติ
ชาติศาสนา (พุทธ) พระพุทธเจ้าและคติวัฒนประวัติใน
จักรวาลกับข้อสมมุติเป็นหลักที่ผลการ ๑ ประกาศ ซึ่งเป็นคนที่กำหนดมีความเชื่อถือและยึดมั่น
ปฏิบัติต่อ ๑) บุญปัจจัยบุญ (บุญปัจจัยสัมพันธ์) มีความหมายสำหรับชีวิตที่รู้เรื่องของพวกเขามี
สุขภาพที่ดี และพวกเขามีมูลค่าในการดำรงชีวิตทุกๆ วัน ๒) บุญจริยาพระชนมายุ (บุญแต่
อาตม์วิริย) มีความหมายสำหรับชีวิตปฏิบัติปัจจัยที่ยุ่งยากไม่ถูกทำลายจากการเกิด
อุบาลฟุตหรืออันตรายต่างๆ และ ๓) บุญที่ก่อข้ามภพ (พิธีบุญอุทิศให้คนตาย)
มีความหมายสำหรับวัฏฏกุศลที่รุ่งเรืองให้คนที่ตายไปแล้ว เพื่อป้องกันภัยทางที่จิตสำนึก
ของพวกเขายังปัจจัยใจความเห็นของพวกเขาได้ทรงอยู่ในทะเลที่ชัดเจน และยังจากภาษาตะเลนเป็นคน
เพื่อการดำรงชีวิตและเพื่อการดำรงชีวิต เพื่อความสุขและจริยธรรมที่ได้รับถวายไว้กับ
ทางพระพุทธศาสนาเหล่านี้เป็นนำพิธีกรรมที่สำคัญที่สุดในชีวิตคนอย่างไรก็ตาม การตั้ง
และการทำความคิดเชื่อ ทั้งพระสงฆ์และบรรดาศิลป์ที่อยู่ในวัดวัดนี้ขอบเขียดของพระพุทธ
เจ้าได้กับเรื่องธรรมและผลของทางทางของพระพุทธเจ้านี้หรืออย่างสื่อสื่อเรื่องการพุทธ และการท้าทาย

1. Introduction

All human beings in this universe, naturally, have the same intention
or a unique wish that is ‘happiness’ and ‘peace’, and they do not like
suffering, they really hate ‘suffering’ or ‘pain’.

๑๙๔ Preah Dhammavarottama Tung Chhuon (Candavajro), Pāpaniddesa and
with a healthy physical body and a blissful mental state. In their daily life, we see that they try many ways to seek the happiness from secular materiality, luxurious things and best quality so they have to spend much time with those things in order to enjoy those things under their desires of sensuous pleasure. Every day and night we experience that not only old persons, youths or teenagers but also small babies like to enjoy those fashionable items without boring. These facts are occupied by the worldly population under the conditions of pleasant things in the common society.

Moreover, some people when they face with fears or any calamities, work hard for worshiping and praying for the happiness of Gods that existing in the heavens, forests, big trees, oceans, rivers, mountains, stupas, pagodas or some sacred idols for their refuges. And they wish asking for all Gods guard and protect them to be free from dangers both physical pains and mental sufferings. They seek for living with a prosperous life, safe life, healthy life and so forth. It is the fact that their life-span looks like a heavy burden of lacking of true refuge, poor actual happiness, no self-confidence; and no true rational knowledge of life.

With regard to the Buddhist perspective, happiness is the fruit of meritorious deeds or wholesome actions while suffering is the fruit of demeritorious deeds or sinful actions, and being endowed with abundant knowledge or wisdom is the fruit of mental development or saving much study done either in the previous existences or in this very life. In the meanwhile, the ways to get happiness of general people, some are going right and some are going wrong in their business, and some are good and some are bad owing to their ways of life. It is because they do not know well the specific ways leading them to achieve their purposes of supreme life or the final goal of life.
According to the system of reasonable idea expresses that ‘Right ways will lead to positively succeed while wrong ways will lead to failure. Good actions will produce happiness while bad actions will harvest pain. Meritorious deeds will head to be reborn in the blissful abodes while demeritorious deeds will cause to be reborn in the woeful states’. But actually, all people love happiness but their activities opposite to the path of happiness so that the sufferings often run to their life inevitably. They hate sufferings and dislike any hurts but they often build up the motives of suffering and their activities are directly partial to sufferings almost every day. Moreover, they like to expect to get good result or wonderful rewards, yet they act the down-fall actions (debaucheries) or the road to ruin, they perform evil works and commit inhumanities that are so-called ‘wrong ways’ against gaining the good fruits. So how can they receive the success of true happiness, even the celestial Gods unable to help them? They will meet only the sufferings flowing down and clinging to their life and suffer in the long Samsāra. This point the Buddhist statement runs that the cause and the effect are like a psychical mirror that is so justice reflection. If a man does the good, the power of good element will reap the good result. If a man performs the bad, the potential of bad element will yield the bad consequence to him when the time is ripened. Likewise, the mango seed must be born the mango fruit. It cannot be believed that mango seed bears jack fruit at all; if so it must be incredible, it’s wrong the actual natural law.

On the other hand, some people think that there is no merit; no sin in this world. They do not believe in any concept of the religions (atheist). So when they’re alive, they enjoy everything joyfully without being afraid of the evil deeds or its effects at all and they no need to fulfill any good action because they believe that when they die everything is also gone, all kammic results are exhausted. Nothing gives effect to the sinner or the merit-maker. It
is because the wicked ones have never believed and seen their particular bad results in present life, even though they have suffered for some cases, they always deemed that their sufferings are unfortunate thing that Gods delivered to them itself. According to the Buddhist way this thought is called ‘wrong view’. It is not correct idea as the Buddha states in Dhammapada that ‘Even an evil person may still find happiness so long as his evil deed does not bear fruit; but when his evil deed does bear fruit he will meet with evil consequences’. On the other hand, although some good persons may think that they try to fulfill meritorious deeds such as giving charities, undertaking moralities, and practice the suitable Dhamma for many times and at many places in various ways due to their tendency. But it cannot eliminate their mental doubts which are that why they’ve never seen any good result bears a special fruit to them as their wish? Concerning with this thought the Lord Buddha expresses in Dhammapada that ‘Even a good person may still meet with suffering so long as his good deed does not bear fruit; but when it does bear fruit he will reap the benefits of his good’.

Again, the world today human beings are full of illusion concomitant with ignorance, craving, conceit, and many idea of wrong views entangling in the states of human-beings’ mind. All these states are not only have in the poor, the rich or undeveloped countries, but also have much in the modern or developed countries. The world mostly finds, discovers and creates the numerous materiality both dangerous chemical substances and beneficial supplies as the world needed. These materialism services are just for the sake of short happiness or for fake sensual pleasure only as we see and enjoy those modern things today. Even though the world is plenty of modern materialism serving, but it still cannot be adequate to complete the human’s

* Dhp.V. 119.
* Dhp.V. 120.
ambitions and their desires. It seems the world is poor as Mahatma Gandhi said that ‘The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but every man’s greed’. If the problems cannot be solved, and sufferings are more increasing and they still disable to be extinguished. Then the problem is still the problem; the solution has no powerful and unhealthy. To heal these matters, therefore, Buddhism plays very important role. The Buddha resembles a great physician, his Teachings (Dhamma) resemble the sacred medicines and the Sanghas resemble the talent nurse that skillfully take care and secure all patients who are being physical suffering and mental pain in the world of Samsara.

To be a good person, we need to perform good things or do the wonderful things for the benefit of the world believe the Buddhists. As we’ve already known today not only pious Buddhists but also generous non-Buddhists mostly love to make meritorious deeds or donations in various ways such as sharing some properties to the poor, beggars, supporting Buddhist Meditation Centers, securing homeless children, or running generous organizations etc. as they can. And some ardently adhere and abide by their rites and rituals of religions, civilizations, cultures and traditions as well. It is because of the thought that all good deeds or meritorious actions that they have done well will assist them to be a good person both in the present and bearing better results more in the new existence.

In contradiction, there are also many ways of evil actions, demeritorious works or unwholesome deeds that many wicked people have done to run their living service such as doing some wrong businesses or corruption, etc., and some provoke and commit so many criminal issues in order to retard and make the world upside-down. As we’ve already learned the historical doom days of World War I, II, National War, Country-against-Country War, Civil War, Social Disputation, Political Conflicts, or Group
Arguments and so on. Likewise, Cambodia had also experienced the criminal war which is very brutal action of the world. It is known as genocidal war within the same nation during holocaust Pol Pot regime (Khmer Rouge period). This is because of the influence of wrong concepts accompanied with hatred, greedy, delusion, selfish, nepotism, wrong knowledge, less education, improper creed of religion, lack of ethical morality, discrimination, and association with the fools or selecting wrong person as a leader etc. These are the causes of war making. Where there is war or conflict, the society as well as the entire world will have no peace, no security and harmony. Sometimes, even some of good persons perform their works also with misunderstanding, lack of wisdom, and some also act their deeds with right understanding. Well, having believed in individual’s custom or austere practice, it cannot be said it is wrong or totally right either. The important thing is to perceive and pursue with right understanding (knowledge) or understand all what we ought to do or perform is better than doing something with erroneous understanding, blind belief in the dogmas or orthodox faiths.

We Buddhists should avoid wrong practices or the two extremes of indulgence in sensual pleasure and devotion to self-mortification. The Middle Path and the Four Noble Truths are very important for us to follow and faithfully do practice. In fact, we should extremely stand on wise wisdom all the time we serve faith: it means that faith or confident must be balance with the knowledge or wisdom. As human being, it is very lucky and great chance to do good much more than animal kingdom. Hence, we ought to try hard to fulfill the perfection of meritorious deeds or wholesome actions straightly and exert great effort to practice the righteous Dhammas properly.

This present thesis aims to study and understand thoroughly the Buddhist standpoints of doing meritorious deeds and demeritorious deeds
and apply its views in the Buddhist Meritorious Ceremonies of the Buddhist community in the domain of Kampong Cham province, and finally analyze its findings of advantages and disadvantages respectively. Hence, with respect to the theory of Buddhist philosophy on Ethics dealing with meritorious and demeritorious deeds or wholesome and unwholesome deeds of Theravāda Buddhism, the researcher sees that there many people who have misconceptions of these views. They sometimes believe other's cheating and perform in blind faith without knowledge of Buddhist ethics and some points of the previous exposition are still vague and controversial; they cannot clarify the doubts of the people. It seems difficult to understand and very easy to confuse when the people experience that ‘do good receives bad while do bad receive a lot of money, etc’. Moreover, the researcher thinks that from moment to moment all create the kammas with intention and non-intention and those kammas are only merits and demerits or good and bad that all cannot stop their actions or miss not to do them in the whole life. By seeing so, it is required the researcher decided steadfastly to do research on meritorious and demeritorious deeds and applying its actual facts of Buddhist concepts in Kampong Cham province in order to recompose further more with heedful diligence.

Therefore, this present thesis the researcher would like to do research and seek writing down all the relevant issues by entitling the topic as ‘An Analytical Study of the Views on Meritorious and Demeritorious Deeds of Theravāda Buddhism in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia’.

2. Objectives of research

1. To study the views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds in Theravāda Buddhism.

2. To study the views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds of the Buddhist Community in Kampong Cham Province.
3. To analyze these views in the context of the Buddhist community at Kampong Cham province and as manifested through different ceremonies.

3. The scope of the study

The study on the views of merits and demerits of Theravāda Buddhism in the domain of Kampong Cham, the researcher divided the scope of the research as follows:

1. Document Concerned

1.1 Primary source: The Pāli Canon, Commentaries, Sub-commentaries both in English and Khmer translation related to the views on merits and demerits or wholesome and unwholesome actions.

1.2 Secondary source: The various scholarly books, documentary texts, articles and research work concerning with the viewpoints of meritorious and demeritorious deeds.

2. Key Informants and Target People

2.1 Groups giving the key informant data of this present thesis are the head villagers in Kampong Cham province.

2.2 Groups of the target people of this present thesis are Buddhist monks, novices, nuns and laypeople living permanently in Kampong Cham province are cordially invited to give interview and share their valuable experiences. Total 20 persons divided into 4 groups as follows:

1. Group No.1 Senior and junior Buddhist monks 5 persons
2. Group No.2 Male lay-devotees 5 persons
3. Group No.3 Female lay-devotees 5 persons
4. Group No.4 Students or youths 5 persons.

4. Research method

This thesis research is a kind of Qualitative Research related to the views of the meritorious and demeritorious deeds of Theravāda Buddhism in
Kampong Cham province. The research method of this thesis is divided into
documentary research and fieldwork as follows.

1. Documentary research

1.1 The views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds of Theravāda
Buddhism as taught in the Pāli Canon and various common Buddhist scriptures
which are described in primary source and secondary source.

1.2 The people’s views and the Cambodian books related to the
viewpoints of merits and demerits of the Buddhist community in Kampong
Cham Province are included.

2. Fieldwork

2.1 Target People the groups of informants of this research fixed
on the domain of Kampong Cham people 20 persons are: Group: 1. Senior
and junior Buddhist monks 5 persons, Group: 2. Male lay-devotees 5 persons,
Group: 3. Female lay-devotees 5 persons, Group: 4. Students or youths 5
persons.

2.2 Tools structure used in data collection. The constructive tool
of collecting data of the qualitative research is a semi-structure of interview.

2.3 Interview structure

1. Study the views, theories, documents, charts, related
researches, and the concepts of the research relating to meritorious and
demeritorious deeds of Theravāda Buddhism presented in Kampong Cham
Province for paving the way of making interview structure.

2. Data derived from first step (1) as the points of questions
processing and submitted to supervisory editors and seeking for suggestion.

3. Interviews adjustment by following the right suggestion of
supervisory editors.
4. Bringing the adjusted interviews to the skilled 3 persons for considering accurately owing to the core topic, lucid languages and marching with the questionnaires.

5. To adjust the accurate interviews is for follow the skilled suggestion and submitted to supervisory editors to be agreed before collecting the data.

2.4 Data collection

1. Related books from Mahachulalongkorn University library and other university libraries located in Thailand and Cambodia and included certain people in Kampong Cham province for asking permission to collect the research data-interviews.

2. Making interview with the key informant people for the main purpose of collecting data.

3. Time schedule for specific interview processing of the group designs to prepare in advance and other documents preparation related to data collection.

4. Data collection processing by offering the interview forms to the groups of informants who are key informants via using the tape-recorder, jotting down, and making dialogue with the groups of informant people.

2.5 Data analysis

The researcher analyses the interview data by descriptive analysis for explaining the views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds of Theravāda Buddhism in Kampong Cham province by means of three main objectives, namely:

1. The views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds apparently manifested in Theravāda Buddhism.

2. The views of meritorious and demeritorious deeds of the Buddhist Community in Kampong Cham province.
3. Analysis of the views on meritorious and demeritorious deeds of the pious Buddhist community in Kampong Cham province.

5. Advantages of research

The researcher of this thesis firmly believes that it must be very useful for all people who wish to understand about Buddhist ways of positive and negative actions of Meritorious and Demeritorious deeds as follows:

1. To better understand the various views of the meritorious and demeritorious deeds idiosyncratically by way of Theravada Buddhism.

2. To understand clearly the important views of prominent meritorious and demeritorious deeds of Theravada Buddhist Perspective in Cambodian society with specific reference to the Buddhist Community in Kampong Cham province.

3. To better analyze distinctively the meritorious and demeritorious deeds from Theravada Buddhist points of view and relate it to the understanding of the Buddhist Community in Kampong Cham province.

6. Concluding research

This analytical study of the views on meritorious and demeritorious deeds of Theravada Buddhism in Kampong Cham province, Cambodia has found that this study is unique in conveying an understanding of meritorious and demeritorious deeds through the Buddhist point of view, the Buddhist scholars, and particularly the comprehension of the factual experiences of Buddhist people in the domain of Kampong Cham province.

1. The researcher found that studying the views of the theory of Theravada Buddhism concerning with merits and demerits well described in the Pâli Canon and commentaries is very essential guide to show our life living with a good behavior, good person, virtuous person, and better know what is good and what is bad, knowing appropriated, the law of kamma of
good and bad actions, and then focus to accumulate and motivate one’s mind to be with wholesome deeds ordering to gain the wonderful bliss both now and hereafter.

It is very notable that the performance of good actions gives rise to merit (*puñña*), a quality which purifies and cleanses the mind. If the mind is unchecked, it has the tendency to be ruled by evil tendencies, leading one to perform bad deeds and getting into trouble. Merit purifies the mind of the evil tendencies of greed, hatred and delusion. The greedy mind encourages a person to desire, accumulate and hoard; the hating mind drags him to dislike and anger; and the deluded mind makes one become entangled in greed and hatred, thinking that these evil roots are right and worthy. Demeritorious deeds give rise to more suffering and reduce the opportunities for a person to know and practise the Dhamma.

2. There are many views and concepts existing in Kampong Cham province. It is to be proud, however, of the Kampong Cham people are pious Buddhists and faithful in Theravādan Buddhism very remarkably, especially holding the Buddhist Ceremonies for making their meritorious actions. In this thesis, there are three common Buddhist Ceremonies which the researcher cited to mention are: *Boon-Paccay-Buon* (the Four Offering Requisites Ceremony), *Boon-Chamveoun-Preah-Jun* (the Life Promoting Ceremony), and *Boon Dakhinānupadāna* (the Dead Dedication Ceremony).

With regard to views of these ceremonies, the researcher found that (1) *Boon-Paccay-Buon* is represented to the four requisites, viz., robes, alms-foods, dwelling places and medicines. Making this ceremony because it is believed that giving robes receives smooth beauty, giving alms-food receives strength, giving dwelling place deserves luxurious place, and giving medicines deserves healthy and welfare. Therefore, anyone fulfilled these four requisites there will be obtained the abundance of treasures or properties, be
born as a rich person, no lack of what he/she needs, and living with happiness and prosperity both current life and next life. (2) Boon-Chamreoun-Preah-Jun is to praying the life. On seeing that, our life must be faced with some risk by accident, not always lucky. Some persons died timely (kālamaraēa) and some died untimely (akāla-maraēa) so that Kampong Cham Buddhists required performing this ceremony in order to recall the Buddha’s Dhamma and to protect life free from any danger in advance. (3) Boon Dakkhināṇupadāna is very common and easy merit to do due to one’s own ability. Ideally, this ceremony is done for transferring the meritorious element towards the deceased ones only, significantly for grateful persons made it for their beloved ones or virtuous persons.

It is concluded that the first aforesaid ceremony is run for the benefit of both living person and dead person, the second ceremony is arranged for salvation only the living person, whereas the last ceremony is run for help the departed person only, not for a living being. In actual fact, even they have a bit different purposes, but owner of the ceremonies can carry out them altogether in the figure of huge ceremony at the same occasion and a single day on account of their wealth and ability.

7. Suggestions

7.1 General

The researcher would like to suggest that all the people in Kampong Cham province and around the world both Buddhists and non-Buddhists should make an attempt to know and understand that is right and wrong, what is good and bad, what is suitable and unsuitable, what is moral conduct and immoral conduct, what is merit and what is demerit and then should set one’s great effort to avoid all bad things and perform the right work for the benefit of many, oneself, society, and the whole world.
7.2 Suggestion for further research:

My recommendations for further study are:

1) A comparative study of the Buddhist ceremonies between Cambodia and Thailand, or with any Buddhist country.

2) A comparative study of the merits and demerits with reference to Buddhist perspective and other religions.

There is more interesting information about Theravāda Buddhism in the Kingdom of Cambodia available for research. The Kingdom of Cambodia is a fully original Theravāda Buddhist country which passed through many difficult times, but Buddhism has never disappeared from this country. It is always in the heart of Cambodian people. Proudly we can express that Cambodia and Buddhism are closely connected and firmly interrelated to each other like a beloved couple. They both cannot be absent or separated from each other just like body and spiritual consciousness. Therefore, the research can haughtily prove that Buddhism is a mainspring of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

My utmost wish is that may this dissertation stimulate and encourage its readers into pursuing such further aspects as meritorious and demeritorious deeds of puñña and pāpa.

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