

## The General Concepts of Educational Philosophy in the Khmer Literature

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### Abstract

The objective of the research article was: to present the general concepts of educational philosophy in the Khmer literature. This research methodology was conducted by documentary research, and extracted from the applied educational philosophy in the framework of the Khmer literary theory from ancient until the present time. Therefore, this educational concept through literature was found as follows: a) The spirit of national unity. b) Ethics or social values in the Khmer society context. c) Colorful perspectives/ aesthetics in the societal framework. d) Given the way of critical thinking using. e) The folktales stories of Buddhism and Khmer traditional folktales are combined into one Khmer spirituality.

**Keywords:** Khmer Literature

### Introduction

The literature is the identification of each ethnic group, and through literature studies, one can assess the history and influence of various societies. Generally, developed countries also have a history associated with the development of literature from the past, because literature is a mirror of human society.

At a glance, Khmer literature is valuable and very important in daily life. A clear understanding of literature is about valuing oneself and society. In doing so, Khmer literature is not just about writing on paper, it includes art in many different forms and with different criteria.

On the other hand, all corners of the world always have own their values and literature to present what the people think and speak, and also how to behave in the wide sector approaches in conformity with its cultural perspectives. In doing so, meanwhile, technology advances globally and facilitates human life, Khmer literature plays an increasingly significant role in educating local people about lifestyle and everyday life and contributing to the development of Khmer society. The social value mindset in literature theory contributes to improving the quality of human characteristics and creating practical human capital for society. According to Khmer literature's theory, there are four

main functions of literature to provide wisdom, education, practical aspects, and aesthetic or artistic functions. The literature is closely related to social and scientific progress.

In addition to Khmer literature, scholars regarded "Khmer literature" to be the art form of using language to create imaginative and imaginative experiences of people, including poetry, fact series, novels, plays, and creative ideas. (Vutha, 2014 : 1 - 3)

The Khmer literature, therefore, took part in the educational functions of literature in society. In addition, literature has other educational values, depending on how people learn from it. However, a closer look at the actual function of the literature reflects the realities of Khmer life. As for the aesthetic or artistic function, the literature demonstrates the skill of using words, and phrases, in addition to art in various ways, making the reader happy, sad, and excited respectively. Moreover, to enhance the Khmer literature in the framework of educational philosophy, it needs to diversify from various sources, not only it coming from one source. (Dy, 2007 : 508)

### **The Sources of Khmer Literature**

According to the research of many scholars, literature has existed for a long time. Since birth, people have been inventing productive devices, and their physical, mental, and emotional well-being has improved, and their lives have become more complex. There are so many that it is very difficult to study the sources of literature. However, it was observed that philosophers have expressed different views on the problem of the source of this literature, the four sources are as follows (KHsearch.com, 2019):

#### **a) Literature is sourced from nature**

According to this view, when people go through fatigue, they instinctively want to entertain themselves to get rid of boredom. Instinctively tired of life and nature, but sometimes they understand that hunting and fishing is not labor, but fun because these jobs require us to use gentle and lively gestures. Seeing this aspect, it is understood that entertainment is the source of literature.

#### **b) Literature originates from subconscious or imitation instincts**

In this point of view, the subconscious is an imitation of a copy of an existing work of literature and art to describe, illustrate, and re-engrave. On the other hand, literature and the arts are considered to be mere subdivisions in the pattern of natural reality in life. This is the view that people living in nature must imitate nature, leading people to create this literature.

#### **c) Literature originates from religion or magic (វិគីភីឌាភាសាខ្មែរ សូមស្វាគមន៍, 2023)**

The concept of religion is a form of mindfulness that occupies the role of controlling and pioneering human society for a long time. From ancient times to the present day, some countries still hold the role of religion to control the destiny of all mankind. On the other hand, it is understood that in ancient times people were afraid and exposed to natural threats, which led people to believe in supernatural powers or supernatural objects. They understand that only deities or supernatural

beings have power over nature, which is why they create literature and art to pray, sing, plead, or recite to soften the deities or supernatural objects to help them all.

d) Literature comes from labor

Literature does not come from entertainment, subconscious, imitation religion, or magic.

If we analyze and summarize the three points mentioned above, we see that:

1. People need entertainment when they work hard.
2. Human activity and nature are laborers.
3. People need religion or magic when labor encounters obstacles.

Labor leads people to be different from animals, especially to build competent qualities and be able to create new and unique things that no animal can compare to. On the other hand, labor requires human-to-human communication, the need for this communication leads to people making efforts to create language both verbal and writing for communicational purposes in any means. (វិទ្យាស្ថានមនុស្សសាស្ត្រនិងវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គម, 2020) Language is an important element in the formation of literature and art. Labor makes people prosperous and has a lot of living needs and makes people creative, and create works, especially this literary work. Based on the above analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that literature is truly a source of labor.

### The Objective of Research

The research objective is to present the concepts of educational philosophy in the Khmer literature.

### Methodology

This research was conducted by documentary, which emphasizes documents. Its research methodology can be divided into two stages as the following:

1. Collecting the materials from primary sources, texts/books, and research papers, thesis, dissertation, academic papers, and other sources in which all the information and data concerned with the concepts of the educational philosophy in Khmer Literature.
2. Giving conclusions and suggestions for a further research study on the concepts of educational philosophy in Khmer literature, which can be beneficial for anyone interested in the academic field.

### Results

#### The New Knowledge of the Khmer Literature

After the study of the Khmer Literature, the paper found the results of the study or so-called new knowledge coming from the study relevant to the Khmer literature and found within the concept of philosophy in the educational sector as follows.

a) To cultivate the spirit of national unity under the Khmer literature studies, because the literature provides more knowledge to shape a good faith in the national interest, and a good worldview, especially the literature telling about how strong you are.

b) To cultivate ethics or social values for the sake of national manners and individual manners, and literature provides a new more considerable knowledge relevant to a good societal norm based on Buddhist perspectives, including cultivating loving-kindness as well.

c) To cultivate more colorful perspectives/ aesthetics in the societal framework of both physical and mental factors of the nation, especially how to use hospitality manners to the foreigners who coming to the country without a biased approach.

d) To cultivate critical thinking/logic in terms of the character of any literature's plot, and more giving clear comprehensive knowledge in the Khmer literature.

e) Folktales-based strategy both the Buddhist folktale and Khmer traditional folktale as well. In summary of result after research study, found a new knowledge from the concept of educational philosophy in the Khmer literature as bellows:



Figure 1 The New Knowledge of the Khmer Literature

### The Evolution of Khmer Literature

There are many evolutions of Khmer literature in Cambodia, especially since the 13th century, all Khmer young people got their educational philosophy from the monasteries around the country (Dy, 2007 : 16). According to many documents researched, it showed that the is divided into three periods of time as below: (មាគមអ្នកអក្សរសិល្ប៍កម្ពុជា, 2023)

A) Khmer Literature in Ancient Times (from 1<sup>st</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> c.) (Edu-Cambodia, 2018), refers to:

- Pre-Angkor Kingdoms era (from 1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> c.)
- Funan /Nokor Phnom era (from 1<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c.)

- Zhenla era (from 6<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> c.)
- Angkor era (from 9<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> c.)

**B) Khmer Literature in Medieval Times (from 15<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> c.), refers to:**

- Longvek era (from 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> c.)
- Udong era (from 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> c.)

**C) Khmer Literature in Modern Times (from 1863-Present), refers to:**

- The French Colonialism (1863-1953)
- The People's Socialist Community or Sangkum Reastr Niyum (1953-1970)
- The Khmer Republic (1970-1975)
- The Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)
- The People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-Present)

**What are objectives of the literature?**

If studying the subject matter of literature, it also needs to study what literature reflects. The Literature reflects a global and complex social reality, in particular, it reflects human destiny, human character, human life issues, and natural issues. All these reflections cultivate the mindset and encourage patriotism and love of the people because they describe the reality of human society and nature by embedding the author's good educational ideas to people and society. Moreover, some scholars said that "Literature is the study of people,"

For example, the folktale of the lizard and the ant, the folktale of the wolf and the lamb, the folktale of the butterfly and the worm, the folktale of the cat and the sparrow, the folktale of the lizard and the fish ... are all mentioned and relevant to the lives of all people.

The difference between a person in the framework of literature and a person in the framework of science is that psychologists study and pay attention to human neurological problems, while physiotherapists pay attention to the innate shape of the body of people.

On the contrary, people in the framework of literature are not seen as human beings under the guise of biology, but as human beings in all aspects. Natural scientists study humans individually in the laboratory, while writers and artists describe human life in the most complex and complex situations.

The objectives of literature, therefore, are not stable and unchanging, but it is constantly changing, and in line with the changes in the reality of society, what kind of society is that kind of literature, literature is a mirror of social reality.

**The General Concepts of Educational Philosophy in Literature**

The paper found that there are seven strengths of Khmer literature studies contributing to the promotion of the concepts of educational philosophy, which is a crucial mechanism for helping scholars and readers gain a considerable understanding of the literary aspects and knowledge based

on the value of literature. The briefing below shows the significant mechanism of literature theory to equip the person who studied the subject of literature studies following:

1) Literature helps people become proficient in reading: reading is very valuable in everyday life. Literary reading habits help individuals to become proficient in reading or reading, as well as to pronounce vocabulary well and read quickly. The quality of reading from literature helps the reader to quickly understand the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences and also affects the quality of writing. Proficiency in reading helps people to enjoy reading and develop reading habits as a way of life.

2) Literature helps develop communication skills: problems, solutions, and communication methods can arise through the content of literary texts. People who have a lot of experience reading literature always have a good relationship with nature and the people around them. Sometimes solutions through literary texts can help people come up with new ideas and dare to build new relationships or maintain existing ones for the better. Literature gives people the art of good communication, which is a genius that helps people create many positive points and improve their quality of life.

3) Literature teaches people to understand living situations: Literature is a mirror that reflects society. Whatever the nature of society, literature is in a similar situation. Literary texts teach about the living behavior of people in society. Through the author, one can easily understand the political mindset, education, morals, and culture of the people in the society. At the same time, all of the author's characters, such as humans, animals, gods, and objects, represent human beings and human society.

4) Literature teaches people to be emotional: Readers can be angry, happy, and sad and can suffer immediate emotional pain with the characters in the story, and this is an emotion that readers often experience every time they start reading any literature or novel. One. Emotions from literature influence people's lives through consideration of the aspects encountered. Individuals begin to give love to each other, individuals are quick to understand the feelings of others, and individuals are quick to understand the social needs of people, it is through ideas derived from literary influences.

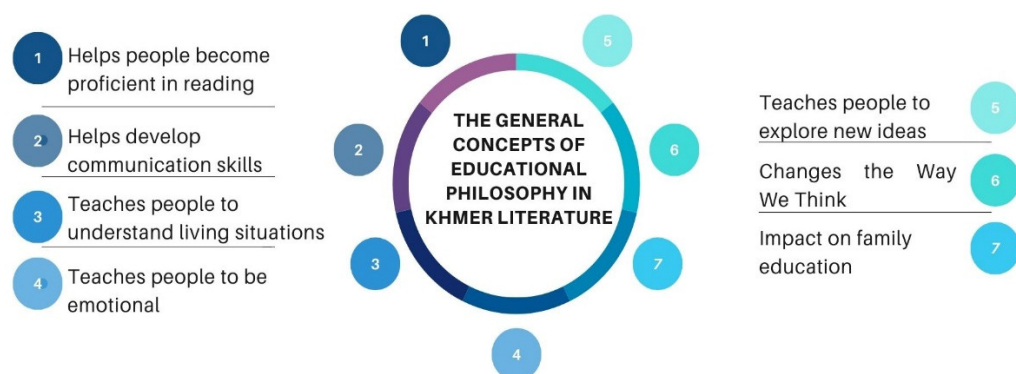
5) Literature teaches people to explore new ideas: According to the study of literature, an "author" is a person in high society. This means that writers always have new educational ideas or good educational ideas already thought of before incorporating them into their essays. So every time someone starts reading a literary work, they always get a new idea, which is the philosophy of life education from the author. Clearly, there is no denying that the author intends or does not intend to incorporate his educational ideas, but those intentions are at the discretion of the reader and the decision of the reader.

6) Literature Changes the Way We Think: Literature Changes the Way We Think. Each person has their own ideas or ideas for educating their own lives. Sometimes people do not know

how to behave. What is your attitude? How selfish you are, or have a very positive mindset to the point of forgetfulness, but through more reading experiences, more writers, and more understanding of people's hearts, individuals will be able to easily change their mindset. Sometimes people is not easy to accept other people's ideas, but through literature, people can use silence to solve personal problems is acceptable.

7) Literature has an impact on family education: Parents who think long-term about their children often provide education and role models for their children. One of the role models parents can help their children become the social capital of society is to help their children get the right education from an early age. Parents who have a lot of reading habits, whether it is reading books or novels or reading information, as long as reading habits regularly, and reading activities will become a model for children. The Khmer Literature influences early childhood education framework. At the same time, parents can engage in reading with their children and cultivate good reading habits for their children in terms of improving knowledge from reading approach as well.

In short, the table below shows the significance general concepts of educational philosophy in the Khmer literature or so-called the advantages of Khmer literature:



**Figure 2** The General Concepts of Educational Philosophy the Khmer Literature

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Discussion

The Khmer Literature plays a crucial role in imparting knowledge to readers and scholars, helping them understand the life of people and human society in any era. The concept of "studying literature is learning from people for people" suggests that literature is the science that proves and solves the problems of people in society according to the art of the author. The study of literature aims to educate people at all levels, benefiting society as a whole.

The subject of literature is the study of people and human society, bringing up problems in a certain era, showcasing and reflecting as real people in society. For example, the story of Tum

Teav, which was studied during the Longvek period, shows the sacrifices made by characters Tum and Teav to achieve their aspirations under dictatorship. The poet demands freedom of choice for the characters, highlighting the sacrifices made by Tum and Teav to achieve their aspirations.

The story of Reamker also highlights the human problem of greed and the consequences of breaking up families. The aim of literature is to educate everyone to be tolerant of each other, demonstrating the importance of understanding and addressing the problems faced by people in any era

### Conclusion

Based on this article, found that the Khmer Literary texts contain a profound knowledge of the realities of real life, and those texts also reflect the phenomena that exist in Khmer society both ancient and present times, especially in accordance with the value norm of social progress. More importantly, the literature gave the knowledge of life, and human issues related to traditions, geography, history, and so on.

In this regard, Khmer literature has its own crucial role-play functions to get a more prosperous society and individuals in progressive manners, in terms of the literature role play as a giver the knowledge to Khmer people, educational philosophy, art of living, entertainment, logic, and aesthetics as well.

On the other hand, reading the poem that describes the beauty of nature can lead the reader to fall in love explore nature, and have a view to protect nature, and refers to protect the natural environment.

In a nutshell, the Khmer literature has contributed many benefits to society from ancient times to the present, such as related to human issues, love, litigation, war, religion, conquest, beliefs, customs, traditions, living through the study of literary works.

Also, the Khmer literature to cultivate morality such as helps to educate morality, personality, people know good and evil, believe in karma, merit, peace, know how to live together, and have unity, know how to understand, tolerate, help each other, do not discriminate, know how to defend the country, make sacrifices as well.

Significantly, the literature gave more comprehensive knowledge related to the real situation in society is not only focused on the knowledge, but the literature pushes to cultivate ideas or perspectives to analyze social problems intuitively, know how to solve social problems properly, and according to the circumstances and also gave key the general concepts of compare national and international literature both the region and the globe.

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