



Analyze moral lessons in Cambodian short stories

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Abstract

Short story is a kind of work which is imaginative narrative on events and characters and it has no basis in fact, but it contains the moral value inside it. The researcher chooses the qualitative descriptive method and uses convenience sampling for choosing data, analyzing and interpreting morality in two selected short stories called "Two women and a baby" and "the brave fisherman". In the first story, it provides readers and next researcher with worthwhile and useful moral values such as: "*Be parents with high accountability and with pure love*", "*Be avoiding to lie someone*", "*Be learning not to quickly trust on someone.*", "*and be smart to solve every situation by using wide wisdom with deep and critical thinking*". And the second one is it contributes the moral lessons to readers like "*Be parents with high accountability and with pure love*" as the same moral to the first story and the second moral from this story is "*living rightly*". These studies also correlate to the real life, like learning to behave and think well and to Buddhism theory, such as: "*The things that you do with your pure physical, mind and speech, those will bring good things to you back*", "*The things that you do with your bad physical, mind and speech, then those will bring bad things to you*" ,and the last is using wisdom wisely and speaking, working and living rightly".

Keywords: Literature; Moral; Short story

Introduction

Literature shows about the way of writing with creative ideas for making artistic imaginal works like poetry, fiction, nonfiction and drama so on. Literature contains three components such as prose, poetry and drama. (Risdianto, 2011:5). In addition, it is one of the important role for taking part in human life; it can give them with motivation, relaxing, knowledge, morality, value and etc. According to H.E .Dr. Hang Choun Naron who is the leader mastering the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in Cambodia, (2014) mentioned that Foreign Language like English or French is a subject for communication, research, work, critical thinking development and creativity in response to changing society and rapid development of science and regional and global technology. Foreign Languages are widely useful for studies, work and daily living. The goals of the study of Foreign Languages ensure that learners are able to communicate in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and become the good human with creativity and confidence. So in order to improve all of these skills of the second language, it is the obligation for every stakeholder in the education field, such as the ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the school head masters, educators" etc. to find ways for improving human resources with good attitude, knowledge, behavior and value. So I, the research has to consider one of the best materials for pushing learners with one of these education visions, is about educate learners about morality included in short stories in the textbook for teaching.

(Churchill, 1982) mentioned that “Morals refer to human behavior where morality is the practical activity”. In addition, “The objective of moral education lies in the fact that it can develop shared feelings with others, and makes one committed to one’s own personal responsibilities and actions” (Campbell, 2008). Furthermore, Moral is the term which comes from Latin “mos” (Moris) and its meaning refers to custom, habitual, values, and role of life.(Bertens,2005:4).He added more that, when morality is developed in human life, so it can make them think about justice, sameness, and collaboration. Moreover, Jacobs (2002:4) said that moral theories focus on practice, about what people should do and not do and how they judge someone. According to (Syahada N.U, et al) said that “moral as relating to dealing with or capable of making the distinction between right or wrong conducting principles, standards habits with respect to right or wrong in conduct. Values as the social principles, goals or standards held or accepted by an individual, a class, a society, etc. In short, moral value is the relation of belief, behavior and attitude of each individual” (as cited in Schwartz and Boenke 2004:230-255).

On the other hand, the term short story is a kind of work which is imaginative narrative on events and characters and it has no basis in fact. Moreover, its form focus on a fiction work that is written in prose, and in narrative format often. We note that short story is also popular in all countries and also in Khmer folktale or traditional legend. It is a kind of short stories which is spread from one generation to one generation. Likewise, it is difficult to find the particular authors of Khmer folktale because it is told repeatedly from one to another based on what they have remembered. There are not exact form of structure for using it. It is often started to tell the story by simple structure such as “Once a pond a time” or “long time ago”, etc. And the characters described in the stories can be human and animals which representative to human as well. The final of the story is usually ended with happiness, sadness, or with moral or proverb. Furthermore, the role of story is taken for practicing in education and tell about Khmer culture, social value, morality, philosophy and religious belief “Dhamma, and the laws of karma” etc.

Base on the previous study, I the analyzer see that (Syahada N.U, et al, 2020) used descriptive qualitative to analyze the moral in the short story entitled “The Last Leaf” by using sociological theory. And the researchers found the moral values in this kind of story such as tolerance, justice, trust, kindness, honesty, responsibility. So in this story it give readers or learners moral value in the society is try to think things positively and avoid to think pessimistically, so it will come to us in positive way as well.

One more relevant research is from Estefanía Ons Paz (2014) raised up about “The moral value of slavery as represented in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin” in the novel. In this story, it shows me the next researcher that the role of women are very crucial and have a special moral power_ the moral power of women in the context of slavery. It will look into how important it was for society to understand a mother’s struggle and the role that women played in that period. Slaves are not valued as a human being by the wealthy people and they order the slaves to collect their profit for

them. So the author who constructed this novel by arguing with the human discrimination by showing that slaves are also human with the same right as the white people. And the author displayed the role ladies behave importantly in human capacity and religion.

The last previous study is about "Learning from Fables: Moral Values in three selected English stories". This study got from Mukhlash Abrar (2016). The researcher chooses three selected stories, such as the Rabbit and the Turtle, The Fox and the Goat, and The Monkey and the Crocodile. The author uses descriptive analysis qualitative research for providing in-depth and comprehensive of data explanation. In the first story, the rabbit and the turtle, it shows about the negative attitude cause us to be arrogant, however keep working and moving on the progress is the key to reach the point. And the second one, The Fox and the Goat is about the moral "Look before leap". And the third one, The Monkey and the Crocodile show me that be smart to solve every situation you meet and be honest to build trust and good relationship. These three fable stories have many diversities and fruitful moral lessons - They are linked to Islamic context and the real life.

In short, based on what I have observed from every studies, I, the researcher investigate that every story show about the morality for every learner to learn and take them into consideration about what to do and what not to do in the real situation. And the gap of the study that I get from researcher- Mukhlash Abrar (2016) recommend for me, the next future researcher is that the stories that he analyzed were too general, so it is good to choose a particular regional story, so the result might be more specific . Indeed, I, the researcher has to consider and find what kind of moral lessons used in Cambodian short stories which are provided in the grade 10 students „books published by MoEYS.

Research Methodology

In this study, descriptive qualitative research was used in form of writing in words with clear explanation. Based on Kuni Sa'Adah mentioned that qualitative research used in this study did not need statistic procedure for analyzing the data (as cited from Moleong on Zuriah, 2007:92). According to Marshall & Rossman (1999), the intention of doing qualitative research, historically is "to explore, explain, or describe the phenomenon of interest". So the researcher had to analyze and interpret the stories about the phrases or structure that refer to moralities. I, the investigator chose only two specific Khmer short stories from the book entitled "English for Cambodia" in grade 10 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) to figure out the moral lessons inside it. And the sample Method was used the convenience sampling which was used for choosing appropriate short stories which are made by unknown Khmer authors and they are the acceptable short stories provided by MOEYS. The main objectives of this research is to find out the moral lessons of the selected stories by correlating them with real situation and Buddhism theories. The way of collecting data and analyze the data was adopted and adapted from Mukhlash Abra (2016):

“(1). Choose appropriate short stories which are provided by Khmer authors from the learning book in grade 10, (2). Find out whether the stories are written in narrative for regional stories (3). Read the stories telling cautiously and recurrently to take much effort on meaning comprehension. (4). Mark the vocabularies, structures or phrases so on, for indicating the morality in the story. (5).Analyzing the findings and discussing them by presenting comprehensive explanation and description and, if possible, relating the messages to the social life and Buddhism perspectives and the last step was (6). Concluding the analysis of the results.”

Findings and Discussion

Findings

There are two selected short stories- one is a kind of Khmer folktale entitle “Two women and a baby” and the second one is a kind of narrative short story is “The brave fisherman” which were chosen to discuss in this paper. The author had to investigate the moral values in the chosen stories. It means that there is at least one moral given in the story. And the findings in these stories can be raised the same moral value, but there is at least one is different from another one. Moral lessons in these short stories are departed into clear section by showing lines in each paragraph that showed the readers about morality correlate to the concept in the real life and in the religion. On the other hand, there is only one research question for both stories that the researcher had to take into consideration and made marking, analyzing, interpreting, giving discussion is to find out whether there are any moral ethics given by the Khmer authors in English teaching book and Here are the following moral lessons in the stories after marking the specific lines in the paragraph.

Table 1. Findings

No.	Title	Moral Lesson (s)
1	Two women and a baby	1. “ Be parents with high accountability and with pure love” 2. “Be avoiding to lie someone “ 3. “Be learning not to quickly trust on someone.” 4. “Be smart to solve every situation with wide wisdom by thinking deeply and critically”.
2	The brave fisherman	1. “ Be parents with high accountability and with pure love” 2. “Living rightly”

This table above shows about findings of general overview of the main points of moral value lessons in the selected stories. The moral lessons in the first story- Two women and a baby are 1. “Be parents with high accountability and with pure love”, 2. “Be avoiding to lie someone “, 3. “Be learning not to quickly trust on someone.” 4. “Be smart to solve every situation with wide wisdom by thinking deeply and critically”. And the second story- The brave fisherman are 1. “Be parents with high accountability and with pure love” which has the same moral lesson to the first story and 2. “Living rightly”. These two chosen short stories are explained in detail through the contents, quotes, and discussion as the following.

Story 1

Two women and a baby

Once upon a time, there was a woman who bore no child and desired to have one. She wandered from place to place and, one day, she met a woman carrying a baby. She said to the young mother, "You have a very beautiful baby. May I hold her?" The mother replied, "Of course you may," as she handed her child to the woman stranger. The woman held, hugged, kissed and played with the baby with joy. Then she tried to sneak away with the child. The mother shouted after her, "Hey! Don't take my baby away. Please give her back to me." "What? Are you crazy? This baby is mine," claimed the woman. The two disputed and went to the community court but no court in the country could find a justice decision. Thus the case was sent to the King. The King looked at both women and said: "You both seem to love the baby very much and it is very hard for me to make a decision. But I have something for you to do. I will put the baby in the middle of the field and you both have to race fast to grab her. If the baby is yours, you will make all effort to get the baby first." The women agreed.

As they saw the baby being laid in the middle of the field, the two women ran the fastest possible toward the baby. In seconds, both women got to the child at the same time. One quickly grabbed her right arm and the other got her left arm. Each tried to pull the baby away from the other; however, one lady decided to let the baby go once she saw the other woman was too aggressive and too harsh trying to grab the baby away from her.

After seeing the woman's behavior, the king asked the woman who released the child, "Why did you let the baby go?" She explained, "She is my flesh, my heart and soul!!! I love her dearly. It hurts me deeply to see her getting torn apart by the physical struggle of the two adults." The King empathize with the mother's feeling and judge the baby in favor of the biological mother.

Story 2

The brave fisherman

In a village in Koh Kong, there lived a brave fisherman called Piseth. He was a very good fisherman, who caught a considerable number of fish every day but he still couldn't earn enough money because he had a large family with a lot of children.

One day, while preparing to go to sea, Piseth saw his friend, Thun. "Be careful, my friend." said Thun. "Don't go out to sea today. The weather's not good." Having seen the black clouds in the sky, Piseth felt some concern, but he replied, "I know it's likely that a storm will blow up but what can I do? I have a family to think of". Then, having got ready, Piseth climbed on board his boat and went out to sea.

While fishing, Piseth noticed that the weather was getting more and more windy.

Finally, the storm broke and the small boat was thrown up and down like a ball, but Piseth succeeded in controlling it while fighting the storm. He didn't know where he was, but he didn't panic. Great waves rose out of the sea over Piseth's head and crashed against some dangerous, large, black rocks not from the coast. As quickly as the storm rose, it died down and Piseth was able to return home safely that evening. While searching for his friend, Thun suddenly saw Piseth with his boat on the beach. Thun ran towards him shouting, "Here comes Piseth, the bravest fisherman in the whole of Cambodia!"

Discussion 1

After analyzing the story carefully, the researcher, found out four crucial moral principles in each part of the first story "Two women and a baby"

The first moral value was from baby's mother's side, which was "**Being parents with high accountability and with pure love**". The researcher got this after reading the whole story; and, the first clue can obviously be seen in the lines. (lines14 paragraph2 & in line 16-17, paragraph 3)

".....*One lady decided to let the baby go once she saw the other woman was too aggressive and too harsh trying to grab the baby away from her.*" lines14 in paragraph2

...The king asked the woman “why did you let baby go” She explained “She is my flesh, my heart and soul” line 16-17, paragraph 3

These quotes mean that being a mother cannot let her baby or child being hurt by someone, if she can, she willing to get suffering instead of her baby. She can sacrifice herself for everything to see her child in a better condition. As this situation, it is similar to one more Cambodian short story called “the brave fisherman” already mentioned in the second story. In that story, Piseth is one of the fathers in the world who can take his life into dangerous adventure, it may lead him to death. He is about to die because of the storm during fishing near the Koh Rong Island. He knew that the weather is not going well, but he still went to fish because he thought that there are many people who need food at home. So he decides to fight with this bad condition. We can see in this in the second story in (line5-7 of the second paragraph).

“...The weather’s not good.” Having seen the black clouds in the sky, Piseth felt some concern, but he replied, “I know it’s likely that a storm will blow up but what can I do? I have a family to think of”. Then, having got ready, Piseth climbed on board his boat and went out to sea.” line5-7 in paragraph 2).

This situation could be seen in the real life that, all mothers and fathers in the world, always take care, treat good behavior, take big responsibility and love their children from their heart, they can touch their children heart about what they feel, what they need and they do not want to expect something back from their children but seeing happiness and succeed inside their children. So base on the story of “two women and a baby” and “the brave man” can be related to Buddhism theory on good deed. When you do good thing from your heart and mind, good things will come to you, for example the lady can get justice for getting back her baby.

Let see the Buddhism theory in quote below:

“កុសលកម្មគឺជានិមិត្តរូប”

ឬទ្ធជនដែលនាំមុខលទ្ធផលប្រយោជន៍នៃកម្មនីមួយៗ តាមផ្លូវ កាយនៃចិត្តកុសលនិងកាយកម្មនីមួយៗ តាមផ្លូវ វិចិត្តនៃចិត្តកុសលនិងកាយកម្មនីមួយៗ ចិត្តនៃចិត្តកុសលនិងកាយកម្មនីមួយៗ”

“The things that you do with your pure physical, mind and speech, then those will bring good things to you back” (Chhun Kim Ean, 2016, p53)

The second and the third moral values in the folktale was from bad attitude within the negative side of the woman who wants to get a baby belongs to other. It is about “**Be avoiding telling lie to someone**” and from the positive side of the baby’s mother was “**Learn not to quickly trust on someone**”. The clues can clearly be seen in the lines 1-5 & line 8 in paragraph 1 and line 20 in paragraph 3 of the folktale.

The fake mother said to the real mother that, “You have a very beautiful baby. May I hold her?” The mother replied, “Of course you may,” as she handed her child to the woman stranger. The woman held, hugged, kissed and played with the baby with joy. Then she tried to sneak away with the child. The mother shouted after her, “Hey! Don’t take my baby away. Please give her back to me.” “What? Are you crazy? This baby is mine,” claimed the woman.” lines 1-5 & line 8 in paragraph 1

.... “Thus the case was sent to the King” and..... “The King empathize with the mother’s feeling and judge the baby in favor of the biological mother.” line 20 in paragraph 3

Because she wanted to fill her life happiness, she decided to rob someone baby and acted as herself as the mother of that child by lying everyone and arguing to the truth from the real mother. And the real mother herself felt seriously disappointed because of her trust on unknown person quickly. But the result she got from the judge –King was giving baby back to the real mother.

So in the lines in these parts of the story showed the readers that we, the people in the world always want ourselves full of happiness, but the happiness should not harm someone feeling or property or get it by telling lies to someone. Because this happiness cannot be last longer, when it is time, everyone knows and you will become the hated man and living with regret ever and after in life. And one more things that we learn from the real mother is not to learn to build trust on someone

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Discussion 2

After analyzing the second story “the bravest fisherman” the researcher found out two crucial moral principles in each part of the story-the first moral “Be mothers and fathers with high accountability and with pure love” which was already mentioned in discussion 1.It has the same moral value as compared to the first story entitled “Two women and a baby”. And let see the second value as following.

Base on the pity character Piseth in the selected line in each paragraph showed that the first moral value in the second story was about “Living rightly”. The clues can clearly be seen in the lines 1-3 in paragraph 1; in line 5-7 in paragraph 2; in line 12 of paragraph 3.

“In a village in Koh Kong, there lived a brave fisherman called Piseth. He was a very good fisherman, who caught a considerable number of fish every day but he still couldn’t earn enough money because he had a large family with a lot of children” .line 1-3 in paragraph 1

“Finally, the storm broke and the small boat was thrown up and down like a ball, but Piseth succeeded in controlling it while fighting the storm. He didn’t know where he was, but he didn’t panic....” line 5-7 in paragraph 2

“As quickly as the storm rose, it died down and Piseth was able to return home safely that evening” line 12 in paragraph 3.

In these situation displayed the readers that even though his work had to struggle with the very bad situation or condition, he still did his job with being patience and honest without stealing or cheating someone property .Then, the result that he got from his action is safety and providing his family happiness.

It also happens in the real life. When we treat our job in the right place, the right time with the right people, we will not get harm and we can get peace in our life. In contrast, if we want to complete our happiness by stealing someone property, we will get punishment from the law in the country like putting in jail or punishing by paying money regarding to the case that we treat.

We can see the theory from Buddha as below:

Buddha	also	said	that	‘អរយម្មត្តប្បដ្ឋ រូ
ប្រករងោយអ្នកប្រាជ្ញ បានបញ្ជាក់ទុកនូវសេចក្តីសម្រេចចិត្តរបស់ខ្លួនដល់អ្នកដទៃ ដោយស្មោះត្រង់ និងត្រឹមត្រូវ				
និទាន	មានដូចជា	សម្តែង	សម្តែង	និទាន
និទាន	មានដូចជា	សម្តែង	សម្តែង	និទាន

It means that “The eight things of Buddhaghosa are divided into three parts-the first called morality, or virtue which consist of speaking rightly, working rightly, and living rightly, the second part is meditation or mind which focuses on working hard, try to organize and collect memory rightly, and concentrate on mind and mediation rightly and the last part is about wisdom which consist of deep understanding and think to reflect on something critically.” (Chhun Kim Ean, 2016, p 45-46).

So base on this theory, I the analyzer could take one of eight things of Buddhaghosa is “speaking rightly, working rightly, and living rightly”

According to what I, the researcher has analyzed these two stories above, I could see that there are similarities of moral lessons from the previous, as we can the finding from Mukhlash Abrar (2016).He found the moral of the Monkey and the Crocodile is “smart to solve the trouble you meet and be honest to build trust and good relationship”. So these morals are similar to the morality in the first story- two women and a baby. They are “Be learning not to quickly trust on someone.” And “Be smart to solve every situation with wide wisdom with thinking deeply and critically” .In addition, the writer also raise up the differences of moralities from found short stories such as the first story “Be parents with high accountability and with pure love”, “Be avoiding to lie someone “, And the second story- the moral diversity of The brave fisherman story is “Living rightly”.

Conclusion

After I have comprehended and analyzed the data in each story-the first one entitled “Two

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women and a baby”, it provides me the readers with useful and meaningful moral lessons such as

learn to love family with pure love and strong responsibility, learn to be truthful human, learn not to quickly believe in someone, create wisdom to solve the problem with thinking deeply and critically". And the second one is "**The brave fisherman**". It contributes the moral lessons to readers like "Be mothers and fathers with high accountability and with pure love" as the same moral to the first story and the second moral from this story is "living rightly"

And these moralities in these short stories, are also related to Buddhism context such as the good things come back to you when you treat well and if you treat bad deed, the bad also come back to you, learn to speak, work and live rightly, try to think everything fairly ,deeply and critically. And the last is creating wisdom for solving the bad situation that you will struggle with. So according to what have been mentioned above, if we follow what moralities and the theories guide us, we will behave and think well in the rest of our lives.

Suggestion

I, the researcher hope that this study will provide good moral values from the story for everyone practice in the real lives. They are kind of Khmer national short stories. So I recommend the next researchers should analyze more national short stories to find out more moral values which are fit to your own religious theory, and the real life.

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