

Cambodian Student Association in Japan

Essay Competition 2008

Finalists' Essays



- 1. What are the main problems in your village/ city? And what can you contribute to solve them?*
- 2. What do you think of the women's role in the Cambodian society?*
- 3. How should we protect Cambodia's cultural and natural resources?*

Topic: What do you think of women's role in the
Cambodian society?

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在日カンボジア留学生協会

Abstract

Two historical records have shown that one prince, name Indradevi, and one queen, name Liv Yi, used to be the great leaders which helped Cambodia to become the empire state in that period. At that time, they were respected as the great women in the nation. Of course, the gender concept is not new for Cambodia people so nowadays women still significantly play important role in society through agriculture, garment factory, child influencer, and family & society.

As we have know, Cambodia economic growth depend on agriculture which all most of women are farmers. They work in the rice field as men's co-worker. They participate actively in rising rice productivities. Of course, as result of their work, all money, that comes from selling rice, is supported their families' needs such as foods, sending their children to school, and any expenditures. Beside women work as farmers, most of young women working in garment factories. This sector, all its products are exported in the large amount. Then, the whole country gain benefits from that large exportation of because women workforces. Moreover, some parts of their salary are sent back to families that need to support life. Thus, not only helping their family but also they are reducing poverty.

After giving birth of their children, women spend most of their time take care their babies. This is an important role because women are the first teacher that needs to teach their children to become a good, high morality person. Thus, society is bad or good depending on women.

In family, women generally are housewives; they have duty to manage house properties, money in order to support family's needs. One Khmer proverb say that "...wealthy because of women saving, big house because of good wife". And in the society, women have involved in politics, culture, and private sector. I notice that now number of women working above sectors is creasing such as lawmakers, NGOs presidents, politicians so on.

In conclusion, to develop country we need all human resources which include women. Men can not develop country with women's help. At that time, women need to upgrade their abilities as well.

Topic: “What do you think of the women’s role in Cambodia Society?”

In the period of Angkor ancient time, women played an important role in society until Cambodia was called as the empire state or golden state. Women were not only farmers but also worked as doctors, teachers, judges. For instance, one prince was characterized as the cement of country, the prince Indradevi, king Jayvaraman VII’s wife. She was not only a great assistance of her husband but also her duty played a definitive role in politics and arts. At that time, Cambodian people gave the respectful to her duty, even though Indradevi is a woman. Besides, in Norkor Phnom time, one woman was a symbolic leader of the country. She was the first queen of our state, name Liv Yi. The queen Liv Yi led Cambodia as the mother-crazy which she let women as valuable sex comparing to men and awarded equal rights to solve family or nation problems. As we have known Cambodia history, it shows that gender idea is not the new concept for Cambodia but this ideology had since previous times. Now women still play significant role and they are also development catalyst through agriculture, garment factory, children influencer and family & society.

Women and Agriculture

Most of the Cambodia’s economic growth depend agriculture sector, so the majority population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Of course, Khmer women have a major role in agriculture productivity. They have worked as co-workers with men in the rice fields for cultivation. They need to get up early in the morning for leaving home to fields in order to work. Consequently, their agricultural duty contributes to improve food productivity and reducing poverty. All money that come from sell rice, they spend it to support family’s needs such as foods, house properties. Especially, they can send their children to school. It makes their family’s life better from one day to one day. Hence, women are the backbone of economic growth.

Women and Garment factory

Through garment sector, the vast majority of young Khmer women are the key of Cambodia development. Since 1990s, lots of foreign investors practice their business in garment factories which absorb young women living in rural areas to leave their home to find jobs as garment workers in the city or town. Consequently, a part of their salaries are sent back in the purpose of supporting family which need to spend on basic needs such as foods, house expenditure, especially, send their little children to public school. If we look this duty seem to be simple; but if we think deeply this duty is reducing poverty indirectly through their brothers or sisters education. Importantly, the garment productivities are exported to world trade in the large of amount because of women's workforce. Thus, without garment sector, which have lots of women working there, our economic can not grow rapidly.

Children influencer

After giving birth of their children, women spend most of their time for taking care babies. Of course, children seem to be white silk which they do not know anything. In the name of mother, women are the first influencer of these children. They have duty to teach their child with morality, importantly, to become a valuable person in the society. One Khmer proverb says that "To persevere even at the risk of father death, not let mother death". This meaning of this proverb shows that women have more important role than men in feeding children. They can give good conditions with harmony; women stay closely and always advice their children. Her influence affects to society which wants all citizens to become good person. Variety of good cells will form a good society with high development. Thus, children are good or bad depends mostly on mothers.

Women and Family & Society

In Khmer family, women are the fundamental cells for Khmer society development which vital duty as house wife and mother. To be house wife and good mother are not easy job. They need to get up in the early morning and do house works, washing clothes, cleaning house. Importantly, they have to manage money or save for their expenditure. That's why, women are gradually respected because they are the key player for making family to have happiness, and stability like one Khmer proverb says

that “...wealthy because of women’s saving, big house because of good wife”. This meaning full proverb means that women are very important in the family, all house’s properties are stable because of women conscientious, saving money, managing in family; and big house with happiness because of women. Thus, family’s reputation, happiness depend on house wife’s ability and clever.

Not only as house wife, but women also participate actively in political, economic, and cultural sector. According to Cambodian constitution 2003 stipulate that men and women have same right, and women can participate in politic, economic and culture. In addition, it stipulates that both men and women have right to choose jobs base on their capacities. Because of our society’s encouragement for women, I notice that the number of women in politics are increasing very year. Most majority political party understand how important of women’s role are; those political parties list women as lawmaker candidates, priminister candidate (FUNCINPEC party). Moreover, we see that nowadays women are working as lawmakers in term. Besides, in executive branch and NGOs, women are working such as ministers, secretary of states, under-secretary of states, local governors, ambassadors and president of NGO so on. Thus, women play directly in country’s development.

In conclusion, men can not develop country without women’s intelligent participation. They are on the same boat; if both men and women row the boat, our economy will increase rapidly. Through women’s role, they participate significantly in agriculture, garment factories, children influencer and family & society in order to advance our nation. Especially, all women need to build up their capacity in turn their voice in society through education. In addition, women can not work lonely to turn their voice; they need to cooperate with men, especially, and government’s encouragement. In the last, no one help them if they do not help themselves firstly.

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Schedule for CSAJ Essay Competition 2008

Mar 1, 2008 – CSAJ Essay Competition 2008 launched

Jul 1, 2008 – Deadline for submissions

Jul 30, 2008 – Finalists announced

Aug 30, 2008 – Final Jury in Phnom Penh

Aug 30, 2008 – Award Ceremony

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Essay Competition 2008

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All the finalists' essays can be downloaded at

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