

RICE-RELATED BELIEFS OF SOME ETHNIC GROUPS BELONGING TO THE MON-KHMER FAMILY LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The ethnic groups belonging to the Mon-Khmer family languages believe in polytheism. With the concept of animism, they believe that the universe in general and rice in particular has body and soul; then, they develop the belief about the life cycle of rice. The performance of different rituals that mark important moments in the rice growing cycle (such as soil selection for cultivation, seed sowing, rice production regime when rice stalks are shooting up, harvesting...) aims to beg the spirits for good weather and a prosperous life. In addition, it reflects the people's indigenous knowledge of crop cultivation, and most importantly, their behavior with respect to the natural environment. Therefore, dealing with spirits means dealing with the community, and this is a good way for people to educate their children to appreciate those who help themselves.

Key words: Rice plants, ethnic group, Mon-Khmer, belief, worship.

Ethnic minorities belonging to the Mon - Khmer language group includes 21 ethnic groups with the total population of about 2 million people, living scattered in the areas to the West and Southwest of the current territory of Vietnam. Namely, they are the Mảng people which live scattered in the area of the intersection of the Northwest border; the Khomu, Khang, Xinh-mun, and Odu people which live together with the Thai people in Son La, Lai Chau and in the West of Nghe An; the Bru - Van Kieu, Co Tu, Ta Oi, Co, Hre which live along Truong Son mountain; the Gie-Trieng, Bahnar, Sedang, Brau and Romam people which live in the west highlands; the Mnong, Ma and Coho people which live in the South; the Khmer people which live in the Mekong Delta; the Xtieng and Choro people which live in the low hills in Southeast (Chu Thai Son, 2005).

So far, there have been different researches of the ethnic minorities belonging to the Mon - Khmer language group from socio-economic and cultural perspectives, among which there is research addressing agricultural aspects (Be Viet Dang, 1982; Institute of Ethnology, 1984; Nguyen Quoc Loc, 1984; Ngo Duc Thinh, 1993; Nguyen Van Huy, 1997; Nguyen Minh San, 1998; Nguyen Xuan Hong, 1998; Khong Dien, 1999; Tran Binh, 1999; Pham Van Duong, 1999; Ro Cham Oanh, 2002; Bui Minh Dao, Vu Thi Hong, 2003, etc.). In this paper, examination of the belief related to rice plant among some ethnic groups belonging to the Mon - Khmer is carried out mainly through literature review of the above works.

Beliefs related to agriculture in general

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and to rice plant in particular among ethnic minorities belonging to the Mon – Khmer appeared together with the process of exploring the land and conquering the nature. Being people that consider agricultural activities to be their main livelihood and as agricultural activities are very dependent on natural phenomena, people of ethnic minorities belonging to the Mon – Khmer language group have been closely associated with the weather and gods. They have to face unpredicted risks of the nature. Therefore, in old time, the belief that there were supernatural forces which could dominate the nature, crop and people life appeared. This was the basis for the formation of beliefs related to agriculture. Over thousand years of history, these beliefs have not remained the same as at the beginning but have changed considerably. Nevertheless, their vitality, role and strong expansion in communities has remained. In order to contribute to investigating relationship among people in the community and relationship between people with the nature through the beliefs related to rice plant, this research focus on these beliefs among five ethnic minorities which are the Bahnar, Kho-mu, Mngong, Mang and Ma people.

1. Viewpoint of rice spirit, rice mother and rituals of worshipping rice spirit

In traditional society, ethnic minorities belonging to the Mon – Khmer language group earn their living by cultivating on hill fields. The land is cleared, burned and rice is cultivated there. As such, rice fields are sacred places. Rice seeds obtained from the

fields are believed to be the gift granted by the gods for people's life. Among different gods, rice god is considered to be among the most important ones, at the same level with water god, mountain god, and plant god.

From the belief that everything has two parts – the material part and spiritual part, ethnic minority people believe that like all other plants, rice plant has its own spirit. The rice spirit determines the growth and reproduction of the plant, bringing vitality, helping the plant grow fast and giving firm rice seeds; if the spirit leaves, the plant will die. The rice spirit and its vitality has been incarnated into a woman. Some researchers explain about this by stating that women have the function of reproduction to maintain the race. And the same is true to rice plant. Therefore, woman herself is the sacred symbol of the rice spirit (Ngo Van Doanh, Vu Quang Thien, 1997). Another opinion is that due to the fact that the main economy of Southeast people is cultivation where women play an important role in gathering and cultivation, women have been honoured through the formation of matriarchy, therefore, the symbol of rice spirit is woman (Tran Binh Minh, 2000, p. 23).

In each ethnic group, rice spirit is called with a different name - rice god and rice mother. During all the period of cultivation, ethnic minority people carry out different rituals related to life cycle of rice plant, the moment of cultivation and harvesting with the willing that gods will help so that the weather is favorable, the rice grows fast and brings good harvest. Special rituals are the

worship to keep the rice spirit and invite the rice spirit home. Each ethnic group has their own ritual for keeping the rice spirit and inviting rice spirit. However, a common point is that in these rituals, the woman - head of the family - plays the role of the rice spirit, rice mother or rice god and takes lead in worshipping rice plant in the field, throwing the first rice seeds into holes, watering the rice; and when the rice is ripened, she is the person to gather the first rice branch and the last rice branch.

For the Khomu people, right from early morning, the woman-host, playing the role of mother rice, puts on traditional clothes and goes to the rice field. During the whole process of throwing rice seeds into holes, the rice mother has to follow many taboos so that the rice spirit can get into the rice plant and grow well. These taboos include living in isolation for three days when she plays the role of rice mother and keeps silent all the time. For the whole year, she has to follow certain rules during the days when there are thunders because rice mother could die; rice mother should be respected by other people, if someone offends rice mother, that person's reproductive organs will be hurt, treatment for which is to put an object symbolizing Yin and Yang into a branch of rice in order to increase the rice spirit's power. When the harvest comes, on the way from rice field to the house, the rice mother repeatedly calls the rice spirit (*hmal ngo*): "The rice field is harvested, rice has been brought to the village, rice spirit please come home" (Hoang Hoa Toan, 1999, pp. 62-67).

Among the Bahnar people, the rice god (*yang xori*) plays a very important role. The rice spirit (*pongol sri*) should be protected carefully on rice fields so that rice in the barn is abundant and harvest is good. The eldest woman in the family is also the symbol of rice spirit and is respected by all. From this belief, the Bahnar people organized many festivals related to life cycle of the rice plant: the ritual praying for cultivating rice (*somah zmul ba*), the ritual praying for the rice spirit to come (*somah kwai*), the ritual of the new rice (*samok*). At the same time, they follow many other taboos to avoid offend the rice god: when rice is gathered in rice fields, it is important to stretch a rope to guide and bring rice spirit home; if on the way home there is a spring, people should make a bridge to help the rice spirit cross it; in the intersection of roads, people should put wipe flower to show rice spirit the right way home; as it is believed that rice plant does have spirit, it is not allowed to used sharp objects to cut rice branches. Rather, people should use their hand to take the rice branches; only women are allowed to go to barns to take rice for everyday use. It is believed that only women know how to take care of rice plant, from the moment it is still in the field until the time when it is brought into kitchens as rice plant brings in it the symbol of woman. Therefore, the Bahnar people has the following rules: man prays for the thunder god (*bok glaih*), woman prays for the rice god (*yang xori*) (Trung Thi Thu Thuy, 2009).

If the Bahnar people carry out rituals

worshipping rice spirit in the seventh or eighth month according to the lunar calendar, then the Mang people carry out these rituals (*pac nhuy*) in the tenth month according to the lunar calendar; the rice mother (*ma lam*) – the host of the house – gets up early in the morning and goes to the rice field, bringing with her two *taleo* sticks, one will be put at the edge of the rice field and the other will be put in the rice basket in the middle of the field (Hoang Hoa Toan, 1999). Offerings for the ritual worshipping rice spirit include a handful of sticky rice, the tail of a grilled fish (or boiled chicken or eggs) and all this is placed on a small bamboo tray (*ca taa*). The rice mother selects a three-branch rice plant with the best rice seeds, screws the rice plant into each other from the roots to the top, then cuts out the end with rice seeds and puts them on the tray, the top of rice branches heading towards east – the direction of sunrise. After that, she takes the sacred stone and puts it besides the screwed rice branch. She worships the rice spirit, inviting it to eat the sticky rice and fish (or meat, egg) while reading: “The rice spirit please come into here, stay here, do not go away, do not go away with the bird, do not go away with the locust, do not go away with the crab”. When harvesting the rice, people should harvest from the point where the ritual of worshipping rice spirit has been carried out before, towards the field edge. During the process of harvesting, the rice mother should keep silent, if she has to go out of the rice field, she has to lift up the stone which has been put on top of the rice

branches before and puts it aside. It is not allowed to cut to the last branch of rice. Rather, people should leave several rice branches at the field edge, besides the path home as it is believed that if there is no rice branch left, rice spirit will go home with people and might be lost, causing bad harvest the next year (Viet Hoang, 2012).

As believed by the Mng people, rice god or rice spirit (*rang ba*) is a beautiful but giddy girl. If the rice spirit is allowed to go anywhere rather than be brought home, the harvest might be bad. Therefore, after all the rice has been harvested, the Mng people carry out rituals to guide rice spirit home and keep it in a big calabash hang by the foot of the rice barn staircase. To guide the way for the rice spirit, women make ropes from bamboo, ratan or dried banana skin. On the way home – from the field to the village – women with baskets of rice on their back hold the rope from the field to their village, then to each person’s rice barn, as a way of guiding rice spirit. As the rice spirit has been invited to the village that way, they organize the worship ritual. During the ritual of inviting rice spirit to the village, they use only musical instruments made from stone or bamboo. Copper gongs are not used because it is believed that the gongs create noise which might frighten away rice spirit (Ngo Duc Thinh, 1993, pp. 120, 122).

As such, the belief that rice spirit leaves in the rice god or rice mother as well as the custom of worshipping rice god was derived from the personification of plants. Each ethnic group has their specific rituals related to the

worship of rice god and rice mother with unique features, creating diversity in beliefs related to agriculture.

2. Rituals related to life cycle of rice plant

Rituals are understood as behaviours of people to express their religious belief. Being residents earning their living mainly by cultivating on cut-and-cleared fields, thus agricultural rituals of ethnic groups in the Mon – Khmer language group are closely associated with life cycle of rice plant, from the moment of clearing the field, throwing seeds into holes to rice growing, blooming and harvesting. These rituals play an important role in their life. It is strongly believed that thanks to their sincere rituals, rice god and rice mother support them, bring them food as well as well-being and good harvest. In these rituals, humans, the community and rice are three subjects closely related with each other before the god.

Though each ethnic group has their specific rituals, there are certain similarities, for example, there is clear division of offerings to be offered to the god and part of food prepared for the meals together after the ritual. Only animals to be offered to the god are killed by stabbing a knife into its neck, animals which are used for the meal after the ritual are beaten to death.

Rituals associated with life cycle of rice plant among different ethnic groups are diverse. However, they can be divided into three main groups: 1) Rituals associated with selecting the land and cultivating rice; 2) Rituals associated with taking care of the rice; and 3) Rituals associated with harvesting.

2.1. Rituals associated with selecting land and cultivating rice

2.1.1. Rituals for selecting land for rice field

As it is believed that there is a supernatural world dominating and having influence on human life, when selecting a piece of land for cultivating rice, ethnic groups belonging to the Mon – Khmer language group strictly follow certain rituals and taboos. A main principle in selecting land is to avoid pieces of land at far deep in the jungle because it is believed this is the land of gods. The eldest woman's (who is also the host of the house and symbol of mother rice) dream is considered to be very important. They believe that dream is a way through which gods foretell them about their good luck and bad luck, therefore, land for rice field will be selected based on dreams. During the period of preparing the land, the whole village has to follow the rule of "no getting in or out". Cases of violation will be fined, the extent of punishment depends on the extent of violation.

In the ritual for clearing and burning fields among the Mông people, besides pigs, chickens, ducks and wine, there also need to have a stick called the New Year pole put upright on the field. As it is believed, the New Year pole is the place where spirit of the rice god and other gods reside. Therefore, in the morning of the cultivating day, the house host puts the pole on the field, then prays to invite rice god and other gods such as forest god, spring god, vegetable god and ancestors to come to have meals of blood, heart and liver of the offered animal. This is believed to bring

them good luck, good harvest, and preventing pest from destroying the harvest. After the worship ritual, the host takes a root called “*bi ki nam*”, brings home and puts it in front of the house. The Mnông people believe that their house god resides in this type of root. Therefore, when this root is put in front of the house, other negative gods such as Krăch god and Ndu god will keep away, strong wind and storms will not come to their field and animals won’t destroy the field.

Among the Bahnar people, before the cultivation season, they organize a festival called *somah kocham* which falls in the period between February - March. In the festival, villagers inform gods of the upcoming activities/tasks they are going to do within the year, praying for the gods’ support so that they have good luck: favorable weather, plants grow fast and without disasters or pest; people and animals have good health; and good harvest. In the annual cutting and clearing fields, before cutting down big trees which are believed to have gods residing inside, the Bahnar people use tricks to ask the gods to go away by scattering dog blood around the tree stump so that the god goes away by himself because of the dirt (Nguyen Kinh Chi and Nguyen Dong Chi, 2011, p. 241). During *somah kocham* ritual, animal meat is equally divided among village members as a sign of equality.

For the Mạ people, before the new cut-and-clear season starts, the whole village gathers at the village head’s (*chau quang bon*) house to carry out a ritual called *nhu bo dap* (which means the first ritual in the

field cycle). After this ritual at the village head’s house, each household takes a small branch of plant from the piece of land selected to be the field and brings home for the worship ritual at one’s own house. After the ritual, that branch is put on the altar. The next ritual is *nhu duh sob* ritual (worshipping fire god) in the rice field which is carried out when fields have been cut and cleared. It is prayed that the fire god burns everything so that the family does not have to clear the field again. During the time of clearing fields, people should follow certain taboos. If during the process of clearing fields, a weasel jumps down from a tree, they should leave that field. If they meet snakes, monkeys, *r’su* bird (similar to crow but with long tail) they also have to leave that piece of land and choose another one. Even if they meet a dead snake they also have to leave the field. If they meet these animals in the field when rice plants have grown, they should carry out worship rituals. If there is some birth in the household, whether it is a woman, a pig, a buffalo, people in that household are not allowed to come to forests or to rice fields (Boulbet, 1999, pp.72, 88).

2.1.2. Rituals of cultivating rice seeds

The ritual of throwing rice seeds (also called the ritual praying for harvest) of ethnic groups belonging to the Mon-Khmer language group is usually carried out before the period of cutting and clearing the field or before throwing rice seeds into holes. The common point in this ritual among different ethnic groups is expression of the hope of a good harvest and peaceful life.

During the ritual for cultivating rice seeds (also called the ritual praying for good harvest, called *pa sum*) among the Khomu people, rice mother puts on traditional clothes and puts the tray of offerings on quite a flat piece of land in the field. The offerings, besides sticky rice, wine and salt, should also include a boiled roaster – a kind of roaster with black feathers. The rice mother prays sky god and land god to support them so that the weather is favorable and plants grow fast, rice plants not to be destroyed by pest or animals. After the ritual, rice mother uses a stick to make three holes, throwing rice seeds into these holes and then other people follow her in cultivating rice. As the task is completed, rice mother reminds people of washing their hands and sticks with water. Then, rice mother takes a tube with water and goes around the rice barn in the field, watering around it and prays: “Water for the rice to grow well and fast, for the rice plants to be big, for the rice seeds to be firm...” (Hoang Hoa Toan, 1999, p.51).

The cultivating ritual of the Bahnar people (also called the ritual praying for cultivating rice - *somah zmul ba*) is carried out on the first day when the whole village goes and cultivates rice on fields. Objective of the ritual is to inform ancestors and gods such as *yang kong* (mountain god), *yang dak* (water god) about the rice cultivation, and pray for their support so that during the whole process of growing, the rice “will not be spoilt, rice plants grow from every hole, ants will not take rice seeds away, during the day rice branch is as big as lemon grass,

during night it is as big as banyan tree, all the rice seeds are firm, rice seeds fill the whole rice barn...” (Doan Tuan Anh, 2013, pp.102, 135).

Besides rituals “Praying land to clear field”, “Worship ritual for burning the field”, “Worship ritual for restricting the field”, the Mnông people also carry out the ritual “worship when cultivating rice” (*Pot ba tuch*). On that day, the host comes to the rice field, put a small New Year Pole to be the shelter for the rice spirit and at the same time puts a basket of rice seeds to be cultivated around the foot of the pole. After that, she takes fresh water to water the rice grain, uses blood of the sacrificed animal to mix with wine and sticky rice and prays: “Today we cultivate, pray for the rice to grow from all the holes, the barn is full of rice, the rice branch is as big as a fishing basket, the rice plant as big as a bamboo tree” (Nguyen Quoc Loc, 1984; Ngo Duc Thinh, 1993). After the ritual is completed, the work of cultivation starts.

2.2. Rituals associated with taking care of rice

In the beliefs of the Bahnar people, from the moment of throwing rice seeds into holes to the moment of harvesting, it is important to follow certain taboos towards the rice plant, rice spirit, and rice god. Namely, not to provide fertilize to avoid making the land dirty and the rice god might leave, causing bad harvest; not to use sickle to cut rice to avoid hurting the rice god; when the harvest comes, field owners use a rope to connect fields with the guard observatory, thus guiding rice spirit home.

If a stranger unintentionally breaks the rope, he/she will be fined by the village; and the year that follows, if the harvest is bad, he/she is also the person to be blamed; strangers are not allowed to go into the rice barn as it is believed that the rice spirit might be frightened and leaves, causing bad harvest; villagers even are not allowed to eat deers in rice fields as it might be assumed that they are not satisfied with rice in the field. In the festival praying for rain, the Bahnar people also use acts of magic nature such as using a bamboo stick to beat onto the water surface to tease the thunder god, put a small fish into a big fish, etc. It is believed that these unusual behaviours will tease the god so that he provides rain for rice (Trung Thi Thu Thuy, 2012, pp. 24-25).

As the rice starts growing, the Ma people organize *nhu tam xonom* ritual in rice fields, praying for the rice not to be spoilt by the weather and pests. They also scatter spells (*xonom*) on rice plants. In this ritual, it is agreed with the rice field god that “we have cultivated rice, please protect it so that rice grows well”. As the rice starts to have spikes, villagers carry out *nhu dunh* ritual, praying for rice seeds ripen at the same time. In the field, the pole with the height of about 5-6 meters are put as the shelter for the rice spirit. The pole is decorated nicely and is kept in the field until all the rice has been harvested. Then it will be taken home and put besides the rice barn. In old time, during *nhu dunh* ritual, the whole village has to follow certain rules for 7 days: not to do anything in the fields, not to cross the territory of other villages (Nguyen Dinh, 1983).

2.3. Rituals associated with rice harvesting

Among the Ma and Bahnar people, several generations share a still long house. Each nuclear family living in the house has their own kitchen. The number of kitchens in the house depends on the number of households living there. Kitchens are arranged in a line in the middle of the house. Before the harvest season, small barns are set up besides the house. Each barn belongs to one couple with their single children. Living together in the long house, every group of several households has another small barn and group members contribute rice to this barn according to the amount of rice they get from the field so as to please gods. By the foot of the rice barn, villagers use a bamboo or banana trunk to make a ladder step for rice spirit to get into the barn. After all the rice has been harvested, the host will put the ladder upside down so that rice spirit stays inside the barn. When harvesting rice, they select several branches with firm seeds to bring them home and put under the roof in the house; then households use a rope to stretch from the field to the rice barn, guiding rice spirit to come home. If there is a spring, it is necessary to make a bridge for rice spirit; if there is an intersection of road, villagers put a branch of wipe to guide rice spirit the way home.

As the rice is ripened, the ritual of new rice is carried out. Because rice ripens at different time, the time each ethnic group organize this ritual is different. Still, in general it takes place during the period of the eighth or ninth month according to the lunar calendar. The new rice ritual of people in the Mon – Khmer language group

is to express gratitudes towards gods for their support so that weather is favorable, fields are not destroyed by animals, rice grows well and harvest is good. During the ritual process, it is also prayed for a good harvest the next year.

The ritual of new rice is carried out as follows. All the tools are cleaned and then a tray with rice and meat is offered to these tools as a thanks-giving act. Wine and roaster blood is used to be applied to the surface of the rice barn and at the same time people pray, express gratitudes towards gods for their support so that they have a good harvest. After praying, the host puts rice and meat on banana leaves and invites their guests to have meals together.

To prove respect towards gods, before cultivating rice, the Bahnar people select a small piece of fertile land (called the sacred land) and cultivate their the best rice seeds there. During the whole process of cultivating and taking care of rice, only the host (rice mother) is allowed to get into that piece of land. When the rice ripens, rice mother uses a backpack which she has made by herself to bring rice from that field home. As it is believed that rice also has spirit, the Bahnar people use only hands to take rice branches, avoiding the use of sharp objects as sharp objects might hurt rice plant/spirit. Since the time rice seeds are cultivated until the rice is harvested, dried, made into rice grains and cooked for offerings, rice should always be put on a clean surface/place to avoid losing the sacredness.

Besides rice, food to be offered includes wine in pot called rice wine (*ruou can*),

wild animal meat, chicken and pork. When carrying out the ritual, the shaman kneels on the ground, carefully holding the bowl with new rice at the level of his chest, looking up at the sky. He invites rice mother to come and take the offering, then prays: "Please God! Rice god, water god, mountain god. Thank you all for giving us rice with abundant firm seeds... Please tell mice and birds so that they cannot eat our rice. Please tell rice spirit that she does not have to be scared. Please tell her come home..." After the worship ritual, each member of the family holds a small branch of leaves, dips it into wine and then waters wine on each other, on the rice field, the fire inside the house, rice barn, ladder, etc. to wish good luck to each other and enjoy what God has given them (Doan Anh Tuan, 2013, pp.122, 135).

During the ritual of new rice among the Ma people, the ritual of worshipping rice basket is organized in the rice barn of each family. During the festival, people use blood of the sacrificed animal and mix it with the skin of banyan tree, turmeric root and land termite (these things have been grounded before) and apply this mixture onto the rice basket, door of the rice barn, other doors and windows in the house. Family members and guests will also have this mixture applied on their chest or forehead for good luck. After the ritual, people have meals together and take turn, in order of the eldest person in the community to the youngest, from female to male, drink traditional wine - *ruou can*. They drink and have chat or sing for the

whole day and night (Tran Binh Minh, 2000, p. 102). The new rice festival takes place from house to house, until every house in the village has organized it. And as the festival ends, people prepare for the new season of rice cultivating.

Among the Mnong people, after putting wine, rice, and meat for offering to God in the field, they take a handful of ripened rice to bring home later and put it into the rice basket with the meaning of bringing rice spirit home. The host pours wine for guest as a thanksgiving gesture, then all have meals of wine and grilled meat together around the fire in the middle of the yard. As everyone is full, they start beating gongs for dancing and singing overnight. The rice harvested is divided in three portions – for eating until the next harvest, for selling and use the money obtained to buy things in the house, for buffalos and other animals which have also contributed to the process of producing rice (Ngo Duc Thinh, 1993, p. 128).

3. Comments

Ethnic groups in the Mon – Khmer family languages believe in polytheism, believe that everything around us, including rice, has two parts – the material body and spirit. From this belief, there have appeared rituals related to the life cycle of rice plant. In the lifeway, rice plant is considered a sacred plant which plays really an important role. During rituals, they always pray so that rice spirit stays with rice plant as rice spirit keeps the plant alive, dominates the growth and reproduction of the plant. The creation of sacred objects, personalization of rice plant, the fact that rice spirit in

brought into the image of a woman-host of each family come from this belief. Before cultivating or harvesting, the woman-host is the person who cultivates the first seeds, takes of the first ripened rice branch and is the head of all other rituals related to life cycle of the rice.

It can be seen that rituals related to life cycle of rice plant among ethnic groups in the Mon – Khmer language group demonstrate strong community coherence: every community member follows the rituals proactively and seriously as required by the community. Behind the rituals, taboos and worship towards gods, they seriously follow other rules as they believe that violation might bring unlucky or even dangers to the community.

Implementation of rituals mark an important milestones in the cycle of rice cultivation such as selecting land for fields, cultivating rice seeds, taking care of rice plant, and harvesting. Besides the meaning of asking for support from gods so that harvest is good, rituals also keep in them local knowledge of the process of rice cultivation and the way to treat natural environment with its threats to harvest and even human life. With the belief that gods will support only if humans obey rules, know to appreciate rice grains which are obtained with much labor and sweet, and not to forget gods, people give offerings to gods to express their gratitudes. On the contrary, if humans do not behave, they will be punished. Therefore, how to behave towards gods is also they way of behaving towards community. And each person is the mirror for younger generations.

Besides positive and human meanings in the rituals among ethnic groups in the Mon - Khmer language group, there are still quite a lot of taboos and activities of magic nature which are difficult to explain. This more or less confine people within superstitious behaviours which require cultural subjects and different management levels to have appropriate way of dealing with it.

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