

The Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE)



BACKGROUND

The Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE) is a Cambodian organization that involves monks from all 23 provinces/municipalities in Cambodia working to strengthen the Sangha (the community of Buddhist monks, nuns, and lay people) in its efforts to protect the environment.

ABE was founded in Phnom Penh at a General Assembly on 9th March 2005 in the presence of His Holiness Samdech Preah Maha Sangharaja Bour Kry. It was, and still is, supported by the UK-based Alliance of Religion and Conservation (www.arcworld.org), acting as a consultant to the World Bank's Asia Faiths and Forests initiative. Conservation NGO Mlup Baltong gave, and gives, technical help for workshops.

PURPOSE

The main goal of ABE is to promote a cleaner and healthier environment and to preserve natural resources, forestry, wildlife and aquatic resources.

ABE is working to strengthen the voice of the Cambodian Buddhist monks in conservation at both a grassroots and national level. Our role is to build monks' capacity so that they may create a model temple, start environmental projects and spread environmental awareness in their communities around pagodas.



PROJECT UNDERWAY IN PAGODAS LINKING BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS



ABE has provided training on environmental knowledge and practices to Buddhist monks so that they can teach and raise this awareness in local communities. Training focuses on general environment issues in Cambodia:

forest, wildlife, water, waste and pollutions. Based on the prestige monks carry in the community, they can play a key part in guiding the behavior of local people towards the environment.

TREE ORDINATION



Traditionally the ordination ceremony was undertaken for men to signify their entry into the monkhood. However, in recent times it has been adapted to sanctify trees. The purpose of the ceremony is to inspire local

people to protect the environment surrounding their communities, and to promote understanding of the relationship between Buddhism, human well-being and nature, and to stop trees from being cut down.

COMPOSTING



ABE trained monks how to produce liquid and dry compost from degradable waste and demonstrated its important use in tree planting and germinating. Compost making is a means to reduce the waste in pagodas and communities; it is the

key to waste management. Compost is a natural fertilizer and it is not harmful to the environment.

DHAMMIETRA (PEACE WALKS)



The dhammyietra entails a procession of monks walking between villages providing messages of compassion to living creatures, harmony between villagers and blessings to individuals and families.

ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN BOARDS



Some environmental guidance, drawings, pictures, or posters as well as some slogans were posted on the boards in pagodas. These involve environment awareness, natural resource management and improvement, and conservation. We encourage monks to draw pictures and participate in writing messages to put on the boards.

TREE NURSERY AND PLANTING



ABE provides technical assistance and some materials to pagodas to establish tree nurseries. Many kinds of seedling have been germinated by monks and these seedlings have been planted in the pagoda compounds and

distributed to local people around the pagodas, as well as planted in community forests.

VEGETABLE GARDENING IN PAGODAS



Vegetable gardens have been established in the pagodas, which have become model gardens that provide enough vegetables and fruit to be used by the monks. In addition, the model garden is an important learning place to

demonstrate to villagers how they can do it themselves.

VIDEO SHOWING AND AUDIO BROADCASTING



Video is another way to raise environmental awareness. The villagers can understand easily, particularly the villagers with low literacy skills. Villagers enjoy watching videos. Topics such as wildlife and conservation

of the forest have been shown to the villagers around the target pagodas.

FOREST FIRES



Forest fires usually happen in target areas around Kangrey mountain in Kampong Leang district of Kampong Chhnang province every year. Putting out fires has been mainly done by monks from ABE'S target pagodas

and local villagers around the pagodas.