



## Mother Goddess Worship and its Influence on the Spiritual and Cultural Life in Vietnam Today

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### ABSTRACT

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The belief in Mother Goddess worship (also known as Goddess worship) is a cultural and spiritual product of Vietnamese people in relation to nature and society. This is a typical form of belief and plays an increasingly important role in the cultural and spiritual life of Vietnamese residents, especially in the Red River Delta. Within the scope of the article, the author focuses on analyzing the content of Mother Goddess worship and its influence on cultural and spiritual life in various aspects; from there, some solutions are proposed to promote the positive effects and limit the shortcomings that the Mother Goddess religion brings.

### KEYWORDS:

Mother's worship, cultural and spiritual life, Vietnam

### INTRODUCTIONS

With the influence of wet-rice agriculture, the Vietnamese tradition is to worship women and mothers, and consider mothers as patrons for the survival and development of humans and nature. As a result, the belief in Mother Goddesses appeared to clearly reflect the characteristics of folklore, strengthen the sense of community connection and uphold the role of women.... Today, the belief of Mother Goddesses continues. Customs have a strong influence on the spiritual and cultural activities of the Vietnamese people. Therefore, the correct awareness of the belief in Mother Goddess worship will have the necessary theoretical and practical significance for today's society.

#### 1. A little about Mother Goddess worship

Vietnam is a country with a long history of formation and development. Accordingly, the Mother Goddess religion in particular and other beliefs in general appeared in Vietnam from a very long time ago. It was formed along with the formation of ethnic groups. The birth of the mother-worshipping creed confirmed people's belief in the supreme power of the Mother. With the philosophy that all things are born from the mother, nurtured and proliferated by the mother, the mother worshipping religion attaches special

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importance to the image of the mother and always believes that she is the supernatural force that protects all beings. Most beliefs and religions aim for liberation when going to the afterlife, while the Mother-worshipping belief raises the issue of liberation right in the world. Relying on the Mother's Gate, believers pray to achieve health, fame, career... for the present life. This is the existential point of view and the positive outlook on life of Mother Goddess worship. This has brought the absolute faith and devotion of the followers to the Holy Mother.

During the process of existence and development, the Mother Goddess religion has exchanged, contacted and influenced by many other religions and beliefs such as Buddhism, Cao Dai, Ancestor Worship, Village Thanh Hoang...; Therefore, the rituals of Mother Goddess worship are very diverse and rich. Not to mention the festivals such as the Dong Bang temple festival, the Phu Day festival... and the rituals such as the highland ceremony, the incense bowl ceremony, the bronze presentation ceremony, the advancement ceremony, the palace opening ceremony, the ancestors' genealogy ceremony. ... All those festivals and rituals have different meanings, but they all have a common purpose, which is to express the believers' belief in the sacred. The rituals of the Mother-worshipping beliefs both reflect the diversity and richness; both reflect the specificity in the traditional cultural activities of the nation; Therefore, researchers have affirmed that the belief of Mother Goddess worship is the traditional belief of the Vietnamese nation. The tradition is most clearly shown by "the custom of worshipping

the Mother in Vietnam is very evident, developing to the extent that it is almost a Kinh religion" [4, p.8].

When studying the belief in Mother Goddesses, most researchers believe that Mother Goddess worship is a type of folk belief; because "the image of the Mother Goddess is completely the product of folk beliefs, not an orthodox religion. The current tendency of some individuals to turn Mother into the orthodox religion is against the law and incompatible with the development process" [6, pp.53-54] and at the same time, "it (Mother's cult) lacks a philosophy to become a complete religion" [3, p.276]. In fact, up to now, in our country, the belief of Mother Goddess has not been recognized as a religion but is only a folk belief, originating from the custom of worshipping goddesses, worshipping women, and promoting strength. Mom's super. Although under the influence of exchanges and integration with other religions and beliefs and has undergone many changes to suit the current socio-historical conditions, the Mother Goddess worship still retains its original identity. the original version is fertility worship with the philosophy that heaven is father, earth is mother; Face up is the vast sky, bottom face down is the ground. The human being born by the mother, growing up and then dying will return to the earth, which is also the mother. Therefore, the worship of Mother and Mother of Mother worship has become very close to the spiritual and cultural life of the Vietnamese people and is familiarly called the Mother of God by the people. In which, "Tao" is the way, the way to bring people to believe in the Divine Mother" [5, p.17].

## **2. The influence of Mother Goddess worship on cultural and spiritual life in Vietnam today**

As a part of the superstructure, religion and belief always have a negative impact on the actual basis that produced it. That impact creates positive and negative influences on spiritual and cultural life; because to some extent, religion has met human aspirations. The Communist Party of Vietnam has affirmed that "belief and religion are the spiritual needs of a part of the people. , unity of religion and among religions" [1, p.78]. This proves that the Party and State recognize the influence of religion on many areas of social life.

### **2.1. About spiritual activities**

With the belief that it will bring a good life to the incense and disciples right in the present life on earth, the worship of Mother Goddesses has attracted a large number of people to participate. In the worshipping activities of Mother Goddesses, people perform rituals and rituals to pray for peace, wealth and prosperity. Coming to the Mother, the incense, the disciples believe that they are protected and helped; it will make you more holy. Therefore, they all pay their respects to pray for peace for themselves and their families.

Through typical rituals, mediums and mediums organize witchcraft sessions to connect spiritually between

the two worlds: the divine and the earthly; at the same time, integrate the contents and rules to teach the incense and disciples to obey the right, pure customs and traditions and live a good life; thereby, directing them to a peaceful and happy life.

Most of the people who follow Mother Goddess beliefs are between 18 and 50 years old. This force is tending to be rejuvenated due to early access to Mother Goddess beliefs and increasingly deep belief in Mother Goddesses. This has proved that Mother Goddess worship has partly met the wishes of the people. Each person comes to the Model door for many different purposes. Elderly people come to Mother Goddess worship to find purity and pray for health and peace for themselves and their families. Young people go to Mass to pray for business, fame and career success. Going to Mass on the full moon, the first day, New Year's Day, feast months such as "August for Father's death anniversary, March for Mother's death anniversary (Mother)", or feast days (birthday, birthday) of saints... has become a habit of incense and disciples. Thanks to that, those who follow the beliefs of Mother Goddesses have formed quite serious rules in spiritual life such as: going to Mass, following the teachings of the Council of Saints, etc.

The belief in Mother Goddess worship is clearly present in the customs and habits of the people. When sick, sick, getting married, building a new house...; they all invite "teacher" (copper rods) to pray for peace; or in important ceremonies such as worshipping, anniversaries, unloading graves, etc., people also invite the copper bar to perform the ceremony with the desire to have good luck and peace. In these cases, the belief in Mother Goddess worship has contributed to strengthening the belief so that people have enough strength to overcome the difficulties and obstacles of life. On festival days, the place of worship has become a cultural place, attracting a large number of believers to participate, creating the glue, the cohesion of the community between believers and among believers. with the community.

Although it has created positive influences, like other beliefs and religions, the belief in Mother Goddess worship is steeped in mystical idealism, separate from the real land. This has made the incense and disciples not come from the reality of life to solve the problems posed by life itself. On the contrary, they only go into the individual mind, without paying attention to improving social reality. In other words, the belief in Mother Goddesses has created a nihilistic worldview, a utopian belief, showing the helplessness of people. As a result, it has bound people, tarnished their personal image and personality development; has negatively affected the process of building a new cultural life. In addition, the absoluteization of Mother's supernatural power has been taken advantage of by many forces to take advantage of the blind trust of believers and disciples for their own benefit. That is the cause of the phenomenon of superstition, which has serious consequences for society.

### **2.2. About lifestyle**

The influence of Mother Goddess beliefs on people's lifestyle is reflected in many different aspects. In addition to the openness and generosity that reflect the human desire for happiness and peace, we can find community cohesion through the patriotic tradition, the ethnic spirit of the Mother religion. Most of the content in religious activities is aimed at praising the good traditional values of the nation. Therefore, when the children and disciples come to the Mother Gate and interact with the Saints, they will be educated about the love of their homeland, the country, and the spirit of fighting against foreign invaders from the Saints. This is a strong pervasive influence of Mother Goddess worship on the ethnic community. In that spirit, when the incense and disciples turn to Mother, they always carry with them faith, national spirit, love for the homeland, gratitude and respect to the saints and national heroes. This proves the sacredness of the Mothers and Saints, and enriches and enriches the cultural and spiritual life of the nation.

The influence of Mother Goddess worship on people's lives has brought positive values when it satisfies the aspirations of a happy and prosperous life in the world, helping people to understand the philosophies. human life to be able to shed evil and move towards truth - good - beauty. However, certain limitations cannot be denied. Today's society has witnessed the degradation of moral values, lifestyles, there have been many disciples, the mother's bronze bars... have taken advantage of religious beliefs to make illicit profits and cause harm. causing confusion, doubts and losing the image of this age-old folk belief. Negative manifestations such as a loose lifestyle, not respecting rules and ethics, greed for fame, and self-interest... have begun to creep inside the Mother's Gate, making the Mother Goddess's beliefs cloudy.

### **2.3. Perform rituals**

The practice of rituals has a cross-cutting effect in the formation and development of the Mother Goddess religion. Practicing beliefs (rituals) is the way to connect the Mothers and Saints with a large number of incense, disciples and followers. Rituals are conducted for the purpose of approaching the Mother, enjoying her privileges. Through special rituals, they have shown respect and undying belief that they will overcome the immediate difficulties and achieve happiness in the future. When performing rituals, the way to conduct rituals, rules, decoration and arrangement of the Mother Goddess religion is quite suitable for daily life; therefore, they become close and easily accepted by the people. Thanks to that, the belief in Mother Goddesses has penetrated deeply into the subconscious of the disciples in particular and the majority of the people in general. Although very close and easily accepted, the rules, rituals and practices of Mother's beliefs are quite strict, not everyone can meet them. There are many mediums and mediums who have been taught about etiquette and etiquette from a very early age

before they can become workers for the Mother and for the Saint.

Over the centuries of existence and development, although the belief in Mother Goddesses has interference with many different religions and beliefs, most of the rituals have always been preserved, almost intact. During that process, Mother Goddess worship has received and innovated from other religions and beliefs to diversify and enrich its rituals. A person, when entering the Mother's door, needs to learn to know the rituals and rules of the holy house. After being imbued with the belief of Mother Goddess worship, they need to conduct the "burning incense" ritual to become true disciples of the holy house. Until the level of understanding is full, they continue to practice the ritual to "open the dong dong" to officially become children of the holy house (medium, medium). In order to be worthy of being a saint's worker, he must continue to cultivate the morality, manners, rituals and rules of the holy house and develop the Temple, the palace...

However, nowadays, under the negative influence of the market economy, the rituals of the Mother-worshipping belief are gradually changing compared to the original. Today's spiritual lands tend to become cultural centers and tourism development. Hau dong from a sacred activity has become a "performer" to earn money. The opening of the overflowing forest is considered a "business to earn rice" of the mediums and women. In addition, the pursuit of economic benefits is also evident through the purchase of many ceremonial items, foreign sacrifices, taking advantage of the solemnity of the ritual to practice superstitions for profit... The above activities have caused a bad influence in the worship of Mother Goddesses.

## **3. Some solutions to promote the positive influence of Mother Goddess worship on cultural and spiritual life in Vietnam today**

### **3.1. Strengthen the leadership of the Party and State**

Currently, the impact of the market economy has penetrated into all areas of social life, including spiritual life. It has led to the deterioration of social morality, the appearance of superstition and the phenomenon of taking advantage of beliefs and religions to "trade in gods and semi-divine"... happening more and more. Therefore, strengthening the leadership of the Party and State in the management of religion and belief is extremely necessary. In addition to promulgating specific guidelines and policies and laws of the Party and State, beliefs and religions themselves (here, Mother-worshipping beliefs) also need to come up with specific measures to manage them. their religious activities.

In order for the leadership of the Party and State to be effective, it is first necessary to raise awareness among cadres and civil servants about the Party's viewpoints and the State's policies on religion and belief work; coordinate with the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations to effectively participate in the propaganda, mobilization and

promotion of the strength of the great unity bloc of the whole people among religious compatriots and dignitaries; conduct preliminary review and effective assessment of the implementation of policies on religion and belief in order to promptly remove obstacles; strengthen inspection and supervision of the observance of the law on religion and belief; create conditions for belief and religious organizations to operate in accordance with their charter and charter and in accordance with law; promptly and thoroughly settle disputes and conflicts related to beliefs and religions. At the same time, strictly punish superstitious activities, take advantage of religion and beliefs to carry out economic and political intrigues, etc. to disrupt social order and security, distort policies and guidelines. policies of the Party and State, against the cause of national construction and defense.

### **3.2. Improving the material and spiritual life of the people in general and of believers in particular**

When facing difficulties in material and spiritual life, most believers look to religions and beliefs for comfort and comfort. Therefore, the solution to improve the material and spiritual life of the people in general and of believers in particular is decisive in solving religious and belief issues, protecting the people from harm. used in religious activities. This solution includes taking care of economic life, satisfying people's cultural and spiritual needs, strengthening their belief in socio-political institutions... Economic development needs to be combined with building a progressive and healthy cultural environment, satisfying the people's needs in the current conditions of market economic development; Because if "lack of a progressive and healthy spiritual foundation, not paying attention to the relationship between economic development and social progress and justice, sustainable socio-economic development cannot be achieved. " [2, p. 64-65].

### **3.3. Promote advocacy, education and propaganda to raise awareness of believers**

The work of mobilizing, educating and propagandizing believers needs to pay attention to both sides: Firstly, educate the knowledge of Mother worship beliefs, help them understand doctrines, operation methods, and practice rituals. suspect; Second, Educating and propagating the viewpoints, guidelines and policies of the Party and the State's laws on religion and belief; thereby helping people and believers well implement the guidelines and policies of the Party and the laws of the State; participate in the task of socio-economic development in the locality, live a "good life and a good religion", uphold the spirit of entering the world; building a block of great national unity, with the same goal: "Rich people, strong country, fair, democratic and civilized society".

Only through education and propaganda can people and believers understand the nature, as well as the values and limitations of the Mother Goddess religion; from there they will be more conscious in performing their own religious acts.

When people and believers have the right awareness, a healthy environment will be created so that the Mother Goddess religion can return to its true place in the spiritual life of Vietnamese people, without being exploited or injured. commercialize and promote its positive values.

In order to do that, the people themselves, disciples and those who directly practice the rituals of Mother Goddess worship must always have a sense of constantly learning to improve their knowledge of beliefs and religions; absolutely avoid the situation of blindly practicing religious beliefs and being taken advantage of by evil forces for other economic and political intrigues. At the same time, the followers of the Mother Mother must also know how to promote moral values, preserve and promote the cultural values of beliefs and religions in particular and the traditional cultural values of the nation in general.

## **CONCLUDE**

During the process of existence, development, attachment and companionship with the nation's history, the belief in Mother Goddesses has contributed to nurturing the love of the motherland and country of the Vietnamese people, fostering the soul of each person. Vietnamese people. Thanks to that, Mother Goddess worship has affirmed its eternal vitality in the hearts of the nation. Thorough research on Mother Goddess worship has brought profound theoretical and practical significance; because theoretically, it has helped us to be properly aware of the influence of Mother Goddess worship on many different aspects of spiritual and cultural life in Vietnam today; and in practical terms, it offers solutions to promote and nurture good values, contribute to the diversity and richness of cultural and belief activities and limit the existence of beliefs worshipping model.

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