Religious Movements in Some Southeast Asian Countries at The Beginning of the 20th Century

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Abstract

Southeast Asia is an economic and culturally rich hub, one of the cradles of human history where diverse and vibrant cultures converge. Particularly, the religious landscape in Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the 20th century vividly manifested in the movements against colonialism and imperialistic invasions by various nations. Class conflicts within society, coupled with unresolved contradictions, and the hardships of life in a tumultuous social context, led people to turn to religion. The study analyzes the characteristics of religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century, thereby drawing some conclusions about religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century. In the process of approaching the problem, the author uses research methods such as text analysis, logic-history, unity between synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and analysis-synthesis... These research methods are applied by the author in a consistent dialectical manner to provide a comprehensive and specific research approach suitable to the current task. Developing humanistic values in religion will play an important role in preventing all personality corruption and helping people adjust their behavior and social relationships, contributing to stabilizing social order and safety. Religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early twentieth century contributed to spreading noble humanistic values in religion.

Keywords: *Religious Movements, Religious Movements in Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian Religious Movements at The Beginning of the 20th Century*

INTRODUCTION

Religion is one of the manifestations of social consciousness, reflecting the existence of society. As a social phenomenon, religion always has certain influences on the cultural, ethical, spiritual, and political aspects of many communities worldwide. Throughout its development and global dissemination, religion not only conveys human beliefs but also plays a social role and function in each specific historical period. It contributes to helping communities of believers strive for self-improvement, self-mastery, behavioral adjustment, and ethical living in line with societal development trends.

Studying the religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century holds both theoretical and practical significance. On one hand, it provides an objective view of the essential trends in the integration process and the evolution of religious movements. On the other hand, it reveals the characteristics, roles, and functions of religion in the struggle for national liberation in Southeast Asian countries. It also sheds light on the indispensable presence of religious movements throughout history in general and in some Southeast Asian countries in particular.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regarding the topic of the article, there are notable works such as "Religion and Modern Life." In this work, scholars of religion have shown deep interest in the religions of Southeast Asian countries from a political perspective. The work provides an overview of the formation history of major religions in Southeast Asia such as Brahmanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity; their introduction, development, and influence on the life of Southeast Asian countries. The information and materials provided by the work contribute to clarifying the religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries in the 20th century (Quyen, 2001).

"10 Religions of the World" has analyzed the formation history, doctrines, precepts, and development trends of the ten major religions in the world. From there, the work helps provide a colorful picture of the world's

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major religions, equipping a theoretical basis for the article to delve into demonstrating the introduction and adaptation of the world's major religions into the communities of Southeast Asian countries (Xuyen, 2012).

The work "Four Major Religions in Southeast Asia" has studied the major religions in the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Catholicism - the four religions with the most profound influence in Southeast Asia. From the perspective of religious studies and cultural studies, the author explains the process of introduction and development trends of these four religions in the communities of Southeast Asian countries. It also analyzes the relationship between missionary activities and secularization in the cultural environment of the four major religions in Southeast Asia in various fields such as language, literature, art, sculpture, and architecture. This contributes to clarifying the changes in local cultures through different historical periods.

However, up to now, due to various reasons, many aspects of the religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century have not been extensively researched, especially philosophical issues. Therefore, this article contributes to the study of the "religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century" to clarify more deeply and comprehensively on an academic level. This forms a systematic theoretical foundation about religion in general and the religions of Southeast Asian countries in particular.

Research Methods

The religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century have been a subject of significant scholarly interest, investigated from various perspectives such as ethnology, cultural studies, and sociology. In this work, the author relies on the scientific worldview and the methodologies of dialectical materialism and historical materialism to delve into the historical research on the subject. Simultaneously, specific research methods such as analysis and synthesis, interpretation and summarization, logic, and historical investigation are employed to study and present the issues at hand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Religious Movements in Some Southeast Asian Countries in the Early 20th Century

The landscape of religion in Southeast Asia is immensely diverse, and distinctive, and encompasses various forms, amalgamating the ideological consciousness of both the East and the West. Major world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam made their way into Southeast Asia through various avenues. The influence of these religions in Southeast Asian countries varies significantly based on economic and social conditions, psychological characteristics, and the traditions of each ethnic community.

For example, Buddhism has deeply impacted countries like Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (in the Theravada Buddhist tradition), and Vietnam (in both Theravada and Mahayana traditions). On the other hand, Christianity has a strong influence in the Philippines, while Islam exerts its strength in the communities of Malaysia and Indonesia. Throughout the process of assimilation, adaptation, and development, major religions have made substantial contributions to the progress of each Southeast Asian nation. Particularly, amid the wave of anti-colonial struggles, religions played a crucial role in shaping widespread religious movements.

The religious movements in Southeast Asian countries originated from the colonial domination by imperialist powers. In the late 16th century, European colonial powers expanded their territories into new lands. In 1565, Spain occupied the Philippines. In 1602, the Netherlands invaded Indonesia. Following prolonged wars in 1824-1835, 1853, and 1855, Myanmar succumbed to British rule. French aggression against Vietnam began in Da Nang in 1858. In 1819, the British forcefully took over Singapore and by 1876, Malaysia was under British control. The Southeast Asian region only had the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand) maintaining a form of "semi-independent" status. (Hung, 2010, p.183-184). The process of colonial occupation by imperialist powers strongly fueled religious movements in Southeast Asian countries, notably in Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Religious Movements in Some Southeast Asian Countries in the Early 20th Century exhibit the following key characteristics:

First, the religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the 20th century are closely tied to the process of introduction and assimilation of major religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism into the communities of these nations.

During this process of introduction and assimilation, some major religions deeply rooted themselves in the spiritual lives of a significant portion of Southeast Asian populations, playing a powerful role in the struggle for national independence. The flexibility and adaptability of these religions to local traditions are attributed to their widespread influence. For instance, Islam quickly gained an advantage in island nations of Southeast Asia due to its tolerance, flexibility, and compatibility with local customs and beliefs. The mystical elements within Islam were embraced by Southeast Asian communities and contributed to expediting the process of religious conversion in the region without resorting to violence against established beliefs.

The religious ideologies of Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Hinduism deeply influenced and positively contributed to the preservation and promotion of the cultural traditions of the ethnic communities in Southeast Asian countries. Religion often became a national institution and played a guiding role in governing the country. While directly influencing the peace and stability of the region, the influence of foreign religions in Southeast Asia remained more lenient and less tense. This phenomenon can be explained by the adaptability and flexibility of these religions, allowing them to integrate with the external civilization of Southeast Asian indigenous cultures.

For example, despite the strict rules of global Catholicism, when introduced to Southeast Asia, it changed and took on a more humane and ethnic character due to the strong vitality of local cultural traditions. "The Catholic faith accepts the worship of ancestors according to the customs of Eastern countries" (Van, 2012, p.221). This transformation aligns perfectly with the tradition of respecting ancestors in Eastern countries. Similarly, when the Virgin Mary was introduced into a country, she took on the appearance of a woman from that national ethnicity. For instance, the African Virgin Mary must resemble an African woman, and the Vietnamese Virgin Mary must resemble a Vietnamese woman.

Furthermore, Catholicism, when introduced into Cambodia, experimented with traditional burial practices, or "scholars when propagating in Vietnam name themselves in Vietnamese, most scholars who come to Laos all know how to eat sticky rice, blow the trumpet, and live in stilt houses" (Quyen, et al., 2001, p.231-232)...

The spread of Islam beyond its borders is often associated with the "holy war under the banner of religion." However, when introduced into Southeast Asian countries, Islam became more "harmonious" as it followed peaceful trade routes, representing a difference. Islam's propagation to Southeast Asia gradually underwent importation, cultural mixing, and adaptation to local customs and beliefs, demonstrating the "inclusive" tendency of the religion with the indigenous population. The idea of "inclusiveness" has long existed in religious teachings, manifested through content such as equality, democracy, and respect for women... Particularly, Southeast Asian women are highly respected, not discriminated against, and treated differently from Arab women. They enjoy all freedoms, democracy, and equality in life and relationships within Southeast Asian societies. For example, Muslim women must cover their faces, but in Malaysia, they no longer cover their faces. Furthermore, when Islam was introduced into Vietnam, it adapted to be suitable for the cultural identity of the Vietnamese people, still acknowledging the ancestral worship beliefs of the indigenous people.

Similarly, Buddhism, when introduced into some ethnic countries, has undergone adaptation and blending to fit with the local culture, for example, Buddhism considers humans as the core and does not advocate absolute worship of deities, but when introduced to other countries, it adapts and accepts the existence of deities. In addition, Indian Buddhas appeared with male bodies, but when introduced to some countries, they transformed into female bodies, appearing as "Buddha - Goddess". For example, in Vietnam, Quan The Am Bo Tat is the "deity" that helps the people, also known as Quan Am Nam Hai. Besides, the Vietnamese also have their own "Buddha - Goddess" such as Man Nuong Phat Mau, and Quan Am Thi Kinh.

In conclusion, the religious movements in Southeast Asian countries during the early 20th century were marked by a dynamic and adaptive interaction between major religions and local cultures, contributing to the rich tapestry of spiritual and cultural diversity in the region.

Second, the religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century aligned with the nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The nationalist movements in Asia, Europe, and Latin America played a catalytic role in strengthening the struggle for national liberation in colonial territories. Specifically, after World War I, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, there was a simultaneous rise of movements striving for national independence. These movements were powerful, particularly influenced by the non-cooperation movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi in India, which had a significant impact on Southeast Asian nations.

In tandem with the vibrant atmosphere of the struggle for national liberation in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, religious movements in Southeast Asian countries also emerged. However, these movements predominantly took on religious colors, attracting a significant number of believers to join the nationalist cause. For example, in Myanmar, youth associations, Buddhist women's associations, and some patriotic organizations united to form the General Council of Buddhism Associations (G.O.B.A) to demand administrative reforms similar to those in India from the British government, but the British government remained indifferent. Consequently, the wave of the struggle for national independence in Myanmar intensified, drawing the participation of many monks (Hung, 2010, p.80).

During Malaysia's colonial period, which spanned from 1511 when the Portuguese invaded Melaka until 1957 when the British handed over political independence, there were efforts by the Portuguese to impose their religion and laws on the local population. However, these attempts were unsuccessful and met with strong resistance from the Muslim Malays. Despite the Portuguese's endeavors, Christianity could not penetrate Malay society due to the profound influence of Islam on all aspects of the spiritual and material life of the local people, making it the indigenous religion of the Malays. Alongside language and culture, Islam became a symbol of the Malay people. For them, as long as the language and religion exist, the nation persists. Moreover, Christianity was associated with the invaders, and the war against foreign aggression was seen as a defense of the country and the survival of the nation, making Islam an effective rallying point for resistance.

Third, the religious movements in some Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the 20th century played a role in promoting the revolutionary movement for national liberation in countries colored by religious influences.

The formation of religious movements worldwide, and specifically in Southeast Asia, stems from the historical context of the struggle for national independence, intense class conflicts, and unresolvable societal disputes at the time. Faced with the challenges of the era, new religions emerged and spread within the communities of various ethnic groups, meeting the spiritual needs of a segment of the population at that time.

For instance, under the rule of the French colonial government, the people of Cambodia continuously rose to resist invasion. Among these struggles were initiatives led by Buddhist followers but were suppressed. During World War II (1939-1945), Acha Hemchieu, a prominent monk in Cambodia, was arrested and deported by the French authorities for advocating patriotism. This event sparked a wave of opposition from the Cambodian people. Both the general population and Buddhist followers conducted protests in Phnom Penh, demanding the release of the monk Acha Hemchieu (Hung, 2010, p.88).

Looking at the form of resistance, the history of the national movement in Myanmar under British rule was intertwined with the Buddhist movement. The Myanmar people borrowed the Buddhist movement to foster the national spirit and achieve their goals in the struggle. The disdain of the British for Myanmar temples and their policies towards Buddhism fueled resentment among the Myanmar people and led to a revival of the Buddhist movement. Many Buddhist associations were established as a means of activism. The most significant was the Young Men's Buddhist Association, which played a crucial role in the demand for self-determination for the Myanmar people in 1919. From 1919, the national movement separated from Buddhism and Buddhist associations, taking a more overtly political form. Notably, the leaders of the Young Men's Buddhist Association led that national movement. There Ottama, for example, embodied the spirit of patriotism, advocating that the country could only be liberated if the entire population unified its goals and actions. He called for monks not to confine themselves to monasteries but to actively engage in the struggle for Buddhism.

Fourth, some major religions entered Southeast Asian countries following the footsteps of Western imperialism and colonialism. Therefore, the religious movements in Southeast Asian countries are closely associated with the process of Western imperialism and domination in the region.

In the mid-19th century, most European and North American countries had completed the bourgeois revolutions and were aggressively expanding their influence, colonizing territories. Meanwhile, in most Southeast Asian countries, feudal regimes still held dominant positions, leading to prolonged political, economic, and social crises. Additionally, Southeast Asia, being strategically located and rich in resources, presented an opportunity for Western colonial powers to expand and gradually invade the region. The invasion of Southeast Asian countries by Western imperialists originated from the desire to broaden the boundaries of Western nations.

From the latter half of the 19th century, Western capitalism intensified its invasion of Southeast Asia: England occupied Malaysia and Myanmar; France took control of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; Spain and the United States seized the Philippines; the Netherlands and Portugal took Indonesia. Thailand remained the only country in Southeast Asia that maintained independence but became a "buffer zone" for British and French capitalism. Alongside the imperialist invasion, the spread of Christianity deeply influenced the spiritual life of Southeast Asian countries. Through the process of Western imperialism, the religious movements in Southeast Asian countries successively arose, promoting the development of the national liberation struggle in these nations.

For example, the spread of Catholicism in Southeast Asia was closely linked to the Western imperialist invasion, and many missionaries took advantage of the alliance with the authorities to suppress other religions. As a result, Catholicism was accused of collaborating with the Western invaders, causing internal divisions among the people between believers and non-believers, creating a pretext for French aggression in the countries of Indochina in the 19th century. Catholicism also became a target of opposition for many dynasties, religions, and movements in countries such as the Islamic movements in the Philippines and Indonesia, the Van Than movement in Vietnam, etc. "Catholicism is also one of the direct or indirect causes leading to historical disruptions, such as the migrations in 1954, the displacement in 1974 in Vietnam, or the upheavals in Indonesia in 1996 - 1997 between Catholic and Muslim communities" (Quyen, 2001, p.239). It is through the intrusion of Western nations that the banner of the religiously colored struggle of the inhabitants of Southeast Asian countries has been raised.

Fifth, within the societies of Southeast Asian countries, religious conflicts continue to emerge. The cause lies in the interplay of various social conflicts, conflicts between ethnic groups, and religious differences. Religious conflicts are always a significant factor leading to political instability, hindering the development of a country. Globally, major historical religious conflicts have been recorded, and their impact is still evident today. In Southeast Asia, religious conflicts are particularly complex.

In some countries such as Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, conflicts arise between followers of Islam and Buddhism, and between Muslims and Christians. In Myanmar, religious conflicts between the majority Buddhists and the minority Muslims have resulted in numerous violent incidents and loss of lives over the years. In Thailand, religious conflicts in the southern provinces between the Muslim minority and the majority Buddhist population have created a tense situation. Malaysia experiences conflicts between Muslims and Christians, as well as radical Muslims against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, leading to the burning and destruction of many religious sites and causing periods of heightened violence. In Indonesia, intense conflicts between Muslims and Christians have also occurred, causing certain consequences for this archipelagic nation (Anh, 2014).

Some Remarks on Religious Movements in Southeast Asian Countries in the Early 20th Century

The emergence of religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century is closely linked to the laws of the dynamics and development of religions and plays a certain role in carrying out psychological, economic, political, and cultural functions.

Firstly, the emergence of religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century contributed to fulfilling psychological functions, providing solace, and soothing the wounds of individuals who felt powerless in their real lives, turning to religion for comfort.

In terms of functionality and role, Marxist theorists identified religion as a creation of humans to compensate for the misery of earthly existence, where individuals, facing hardships in reality, sought solace and support in religion. Marx stated, "That state, that society, produces religion, which is an inverted world consciousness because they are an inverted world" (Marx & Engels, 1995, p.569); "The poverty of religion is both a manifestation of real poverty and a protest against that real poverty. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. Religion is the opium of the people..." (Marx & Engels, 1995, p.570). The oppressed creature's sigh is reflected in religion. Religion is the heart of a heartless world, meaning that religion is love for humanity. Each religion has a different way of "loving humanity." Religion is the opium of the people because it consoles individuals, allowing them to immerse themselves in illusions without daring to resist the oppressive society. Comparing religion to opium in the early 20th century, in the context of a society where individuals were stripped of their essence, when opium was used as a miraculous remedy to alleviate the pain of physical suffering, in surgeries, and to reduce the agony of the body, it signifies the fundamental function of religion: alleviating spiritual pain in a world full of the sufferings of human life.

Secondly, the emergence of religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century played a role in fulfilling economic functions. It not only satisfied spiritual needs but also addressed the existential and developmental needs of the followers.

Low levels of production and challenging material living conditions were causes of human stagnation in society. A vulnerable portion of society sought refuge in religion, fostering a psychological expectation for a change in life, a happier life in the next existence. This demand provided fertile ground for the emergence of religious movements. Therefore, from an economic perspective, religious movements in Southeast Asia in the early 20th century also brought practical values. Religions aim not only to fulfill the spiritual needs of believers but also to participate in economic activities and production to satisfy the survival and development needs of religious organizations, congregations, and believers themselves.

For instance, Catholic doctrine emphasizes labor, recognizing human needs for "daily bread" and not always idealizing "spiritual food." Labor is seen as an obedient act to God, as Jesus also labored with hands at the carpenter's workshop of Saint Joseph. Accordingly, labor brings material wealth and a fulfilling life, serving as an effective tool against poverty. The Bible teaches, "He who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys; the harvest is a crown for the wise, but a curse for the land without it" (Proverbs 10:4-5) (Bible, 2011, p.1297).

Today, some religious organizations also use religion as a business entity and engage in economic activities, seeking economic benefits from religion. There are various forms of producing goods and religious products to serve the religious needs of the people. Participation in religious activities forms the basis for the connection and collaboration of religious communities, fostering mutual assistance and providing economic information and employment opportunities. Ethical standards stipulated in religion guide individuals in economic activities, contributing to the formation of ethical business standards. Additionally, the people and economic organizations trust in the providence of the divine for all their business activities.

Thirdly, the Political Function of Religion in Southeast Asian Countries in the Early 20th Century: From a political perspective, religious movements were manifested through the participation of religious organizations in socio-political activities to contribute to societal transformation. Political involvement was specifically evident through the engagement of believers in the struggle for national liberation, proposing suggestions for administrative reform, participating in ritualistic activities, charitable and social activities, and environmental protection.

For example, Catholic doctrine places significant emphasis on environmental issues. The Church advocates for the development of a distinct theological trend called Ecotheology, based on the foundation of Macarian

theology, the theology of the Three Persons, and the theology of the people of God. The Catholic Bible states from the beginning: "*God created all things, and they exist because God wills it. Therefore, humans must bear responsibility before God for their relationship, dependence on Him, and their relationship with the natural environment. They are also responsible before God for their role as 'stewards of the Earth.' If humans dominate, exploit nature, or disrupt the ecological balance, they must be accountable to God because "God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it"* (Genesis 2:15) (Bible, 2011, p.33).

Fourthly, the Cultural Function of Religious Movements in Southeast Asia in the Early 20th Century: From a cultural perspective, religious movements deeply influenced the spiritual and cultural aspects of life, shaping the lifestyles of the population. As a social factor and a consciousness influencer, religion brought unique expressions to a region, a nation, or an ethnic group, evident in behavior, way of life, customs, traditions, as well as material and spiritual cultural elements. In the essence of religion, goodness remains predominant. In any religion, teachings promote virtuous conduct. Therefore, the principles and doctrines of religion have a powerful impact on the moral education of believers, guiding and directing them to cultivate and practice ethical values, continually striving for self-improvement following the teachings of their faith.

For example, Buddhist philosophy on the interconnected relationship between humans and the external world (the natural realm), known as "Karma," signifies that every being is born or perishes due to karmic relationships. Through this, Buddhism advises all beings that every action results in inevitable consequences, whether immediately or in the future, affecting the individual's being. Therefore, Buddhist teachings encourage people to sow goodness and reap the benefits, as sowing the wind will reap the storm (Hien, 2017, p.162).

Catholicism places significant emphasis on family issues and relationships such as husband-wife, and parent-child. Marriage and marital love are considered a plan, a creation, and a masterpiece of God, as "What God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6) (The Bible, 2011, p.2168). Unhappy marriages or cases where a spouse abandons the other are viewed as forms of penance in this life, and finding joy in charitable work leads to true happiness in the afterlife.

Some Directional Solutions for Religious Work in the Current Period

Firstly, those engaged in religious work must be conscious that resolving racial and religious conflicts is extremely complex and prolonged. This complexity arises from the diverse levels of awareness, customs and traditions, needs, preferences, and religious beliefs of each believer. If not handled skillfully, the resolution of religious conflicts can lead to frustration, escalating conflicts, and even ethnic or religious wars.

The practical resolution of racial and religious conflicts in Southeast Asian countries has revealed the flawed policies of previous governments. Attempts to homogenize religions for the sake of building a unified national identity have often prioritized the development of certain religions while neglecting others. Additionally, some Southeast Asian countries overly exploit natural resources, especially fertile land and minerals, without implementing effective policies for investment, educational development, and economic efficiency. This has resulted in profound social disparities between communities with and without religious beliefs, leading to grievances and resistance from the people.

Therefore, it is crucial to choose appropriate measures to address ethnic and religious conflicts. The Philippine experience demonstrates that using force and violence to resolve conflicts with Muslim movements has not yielded the desired results. Hence, the Philippine government shifted from military measures to peaceful resolutions, negotiations, and prioritizing economic, cultural, and social development to improve the living standards of minority ethnic groups in conflict-prone areas.

To achieve success in resolving ethnic, racial, and religious issues, Southeast Asian governments must persistently address ethnic and religious conflicts, adjust ethnic policies, and prioritize national interests over narrow ethnic interests. National unity in a multiethnic and multireligious country can only be maintained through deep understanding, inclusive policies, and mutual respect among different ethnicities and religions.

Secondly, the solution to improving the material and spiritual life of followers is to enhance both aspects. Improving the material and spiritual life of followers means creating conditions for them to comfortably

increase their production, promote economic development, and provide opportunities for those facing difficulties to rise out of poverty. Simultaneously, governments of respective countries also create conditions to enhance the spiritual well-being of the followers.

To contribute to improving the material life of fellow believers, the governments of Southeast Asian countries need to support the effective implementation of programs aimed at eradicating hunger and reducing poverty. This assistance helps believers facing difficulties to stabilize their lives. For instance, reviewing and closely monitoring the actual situation of impoverished households at the local level can help believers realize that poverty and hunger are sources of suffering and unhappiness. They must strive to overcome these challenges through their efforts, self-reliance, and the resilience of their families.

Thirdly, leveraging the human values of religions is proposed as a solution. Religions with a positive orientation inherently contain high human values that meet the needs of a portion of believers. These human values inspire believers to maintain their faith in the virtuous path, serving as a driving force to help them overcome challenges with an optimistic and life-affirming attitude.

The foundation of this solution stems from the objective laws of society, the laws of motion, and the development of religions. Values are what religions aim for, especially human values. Southeast Asian religions, to sustain their existence, must establish a profound system of human values. This is because the path that humanity has, is, and will take is a journey toward human values and their realization in practice. It is a system of beliefs that express love for humanity, respect for dignity, consideration for the developmental rights of individuals, and evaluation of social relations based on human interests. Essentially, it praises and honors the "Human" values of individuals. Therefore, in Southeast Asian countries, every doctrine, legal system, guiding principle, and religious worship practice must embody high human values, aiming for the development and perfection of human beings.

To enhance human values in religions in Southeast Asian countries, the following points should be considered:

Deep and extensive education on love for humanity within the community of believers. Strengthening education on patriotism, promoting the tradition of "helping the needy," and cultivating a righteous, forgiving, compassionate, and mutually supportive lifestyle among believers.

Elevating the attitude of respect, emphasizing human beings and the inherent good values in them. This solution is steeped in the spirit of humanism, always placing human beings at the center. Respecting individuals is also reflected in caring for their interests. Developing a standardized lifestyle, maintaining moral integrity in all circumstances, exemplifying the highest value in human values - the love for the country, being ready to sacrifice for the happiness of fellow citizens today and in the future.

CONCLUSION

The religious movements in Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the 20th century were closely linked to the process of integration and adaptation of major religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism into the communities of Southeast Asian nations. During the process of integration and adaptation, some major religions deeply rooted themselves in the spiritual life of a significant portion of Southeast Asian residents and exerted a strong influence in the struggle for national independence. The religious movements in Southeast Asian countries in the early 20th century contributed to spreading high moral values within religious practices.

In a context where people are actively pursuing the temptations of materialistic interests, acts of kindness, compassion, selflessness, a spirit of humanity, filial piety within families, and assisting fellow beings in times of hardship are admirable gestures that deserve appreciation. Therefore, maintaining and developing humanistic values within religious beliefs play a crucial role in resisting the degradation of human character. Simultaneously, it contributes to guiding individuals to align their behavior and social relationships with the ethical standards of society, thus helping to maintain social order and safety.

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