

## THE KHMER "GHE NGO" SYMBOL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

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**Abstract:** *The Khmer are members of the ethnic community living in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Together with those who live in Cambodia (the Central Khmer), Thailand (the Northern Khmer or Surin Khmer) and a small group in Laos, the Khmer in Vietnam form a large and crowded community in Southeast Asia. Common values shared by the Khmer community and between them with other ethnic groups living in the same area form a bridge to connect different territories and countries in the region. This matter is significant in the context in which countries in the Lower Mekong sub-region and the Greater Mekong sub-region are cooperating to resolve common problems, especially those related to environment and water, food security and ethnic cultural identity.*

*Based on the theoretical perspective of symbolism, in this article, we examine the symbolism of ghe ngo (longboat) in the life of the Khmer. Through this, we can reflect on a process taking place within the broader landscape of the Mekong sub-culture, in which exogenous cultural elements have been absorbed into the culture of the Khmer group in the Mekong Delta. Values that have been refined and shared from the past to the present is the fulcrum and starting point for future cooperation, not only in the field of culture but also in economic, political and social domains.*

**Keywords:** *Symbol, cultural dynamics, ghe ngo, Khmer.*