

## **Abstract**

This MA thesis deals with the topic of the cult of Mother Goddesses in Vietnam with special reference to South Vietnam. The subject is discussed from the point of view of cultural anthropology and special attention is paid to some specific aspects, which differentiate this popular belief from other religions. The cult of Mother Goddesses is characterised in greater detail on the basis of certain hypotheses and is viewed through the prism of various ethnologically oriented paradigms. The first part of the work describes the development of this cult, its Vietnamese specifics and its position in the context of the local religious milieu. Furthermore, the work discusses the characters of the individual Mother Goddesses and the collected theoretical knowledge is compared with the results of empirical research. On the background of the example of Mother Goddess Bà Chúa Xứ, the work elucidates certain topics, which are related to the cult of Mother Goddesses, but are considerably differentiated regionally. It is therefore necessary to present these aspects by way of concrete examples and to see them in the cultural-historical context. The second part of the work is based especially on the analyses of the results of the field research and it attempts to clarify the extent of the public knowledge about this cult by way of the quantitative method. The aim of the work is to characterise the cult of Mother Goddesses from various points of view and to establish, what this popular belief represents for the Vietnamese population. With regard to the fact that the popularity of the cult of Mother Goddesses keeps growing and the number of its sympathisers increases, this topic may at present be considered very much up-to-date.

**Key words:** Vietnam, religion, popular belief, cult of Mother Goddesses, Đạo Mẫu, ritual, Goddess, Mother Goddesses, Holy Mothers