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Communities & Cultural Exchanges of Champa:
the Art of the Chams in Central and Southern Vietnam

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Art History

by

My Ket Chau

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Communities & Cultural Exchanges of Champa:
the Art of the Chams in Central and Southern Vietnam

by

My Ket Chau

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History
University of California, Los Angeles, 2020
Professor Robert L. Brown, Chair

The art and architecture of Champa, an ancient linguistic and cultural civilization located in modern-day central and southern Vietnam, reflects an interregional artistic koine of Indic culture, a commonality of shared iconography, religion, and the sacred language of Sanskrit. Cham art is related to Hindu and Buddhist art from neighboring Cambodia and most of ancient Southeast Asia. Unique within Southeast Asian art, four extant colossal Cham pedestal-shrines are examined from four archaeological sites of Mỹ Sơn, Trà Kiệu, Đồng Dương, and Vân Trạch Hòa. What objects were placed on the pedestals is not known and interpretations of the imagery carved on the pedestal-shrines are still heavily debated. My dissertation attempts to clarify some of the arguments in current scholarship, holistically across the fields of art history, archaeology, and epigraphical studies, which have been independently analyzed and at times, contradictory. This dissertation explores artistic cultural exchanges and community interactions between Champa and neighboring regions through close analysis of Cham visual culture, including style,

scale, iconographies, and patterns. I argue that although the independent entities of Champa were scattered across the coastal areas of modern-day southern Vietnam, the Chams were largely united as visible communities through the combination of colossal image making and written inscriptions. The Chams constructed temple, courtly, and local visual culture to gain economic and social status as itinerant seafarers and trade mediators in the international maritime network of Indian Ocean trade in the 9th-12th centuries. Visual culture became a strategy of economic, religious, and social power for the communities of the Chams.

This dissertation of My Ket Chau is approved.

George E. Dutton

Hui-shu Lee

Robert L. Brown, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

To my parents, who lived through the Vietnam War

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgments	xviii
Introduction: Historiography of Cham Studies	1
Chapter One: “The Colossal Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal-shrine: the Artistic Relationship between the Chams and the Khmers”	25
Chapter Two: The <i>Ramayana</i> and the Colossal Trà Kiệu Pedestal-shrine	61
Chapter Three: Metalworks from the West and South Asia: Imports in India and Vietnam	97
Chapter Four: Two Colossal Pedestal-shrines of Đồng Dương	133
Chapter Five: The Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal-shrine: Mobility and the Alignment of the Planetary Deities, the Directional Guardians, and the Constellations	181
Conclusion: Contemporary Art: the Legacy of the Chams	221
Appendices	231

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Mỹ Sơn E1, Author's Photograph

Figure 2. An Xa Towers, 9th century, Museum of Quảng Trị, Đông Hà, Vietnam, Author's Photograph

Figure 3. Miniature *Linga* 1, 7th century, rock crystal, Vọng Thê, Thoại Sơn district, Vietnam

Figure 4. A silver model of a sanctuary tower, Champasak, Vat Phou Museum

Figure 5. Throne, Mauryan period, 3rd – 6th century, Bodh Gaya, India

Figure 6. Visnu Anantasayana, 8th century, Mỹ Sơn E1, Champa

Figure 7. Visnu Anantasayana, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 8. Mỹ Sơn E1, detail, Author's Photograph

Figure 9. Sambor Prei Kuk Detail, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 10. Pillar, 7th century, Sri Thep, Thailand, Photograph of Robert L. Brown

Figure 11. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia

Figure 12. Khmer lintel, 7th century Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia

Figure 13. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia and Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 14. Kompong Preah round platform, 8th century, Cambodia

Figure 15. Kompong Preah round platform, 8th century, Cambodia

Figure 16. *Lingodhavamurtri* Myth and a king's Consecration, detail, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 17. Sambor Prei Kuk, N-17, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 18. Line drawing of Khmer temple, Cambodia

Figure 19. Khmer lintel depicting *Lingodhavamurtri* Myth and a king's Consecration, 7th century

Figure 20. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 21. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

- Figure 22. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 23. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 24. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 25. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Musical Artists: Drummers, Harpists, and Flute Players, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 26. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 27. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Human and Animal Dancers, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 28. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 29. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Worshippers, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 30. Dancing Siva, Mỹ Sơn C1, Housed in D1, 8th century, Champa
- Figure 31. Pottery Sherd, Kiên Giang Museum, 7th century, Vietnam
- Figure 32. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Author's Photograph
- Figure 33. Marble Mountains, 2015, Vietnam, Author's Photograph
- Figure 34. Marble Mountains, Vietnam, old photograph
- Figure 35. Dvarapala at Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 36. Dvarapala, 7th century, China
- Figure 37. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, detail, Champa
- Figure 38. Mỹ Sơn F1 Temple, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 39. Đồng Dương Temple, Pedestal of *Ravanamugraha*, 9th century, Author's Photograph
- Figure 40. Bronze kneeling worshipper, 7th century, Champa
- Figure 41. Mỹ Sơn A Group, Champa
- Figure 42. Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia
- Figure 43. Northern Gallery, Banteay Chhmar, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 44. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 45. Tourane Park, 1915-1916, before the construction of Cham museum

Figure 46. Tourane Park, 1915-1916, before the construction of Cham museum

Figure 47. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, detail, Champa

Figure 48. Lotus Pedestal, Hà Trung, Champa, 7th century

Figure 49. Pedestal in Inscription (C. 97), Champa, 7th century

Figure 50. Trà Kiệu Pedestal in Cham Museum, EFEO_VIE00786

Figure 51. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 52. Prasat Trapeang Phong, 9th century, Cambodia

Figure 53. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 54. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 55. Prasat Trapeang Phong, Khmer, 9th century, Cambodia

Figure 56. Thailand, EFEO_GROB00877

Figure 57. Khmer Dedicatory Plaque, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 58. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 59. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 60. Inverted Fleurons, Khmer temples, 10th century, Cambodia

Figure 61. Polo Players, 10th century, Champa

Figure 62. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, Detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 63. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 64. Rama at sea, Stone, 9th century, Prambanan, Java

Figure 65. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 66. Southern wall of Papanatha Temple, c. 680, India

- Figure 67. Visnu on Garuda, Uttar Pradesh, India, Gupta, 5th century, Brooklyn Museum
- Figure 68. Rama and Lakshmana, 400-500, Uttar Pradesh, India, Asia Society
- Figure 69. Ravana, Sita and Jatayus, and King of Vultures, 400-500, Uttar Pradesh, India, Asian Art Museum
- Figure 70. Visnu under Naga, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 71. Visnu under Naga detail, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 72. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 73. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 74. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 75. Ramayana Reliefs, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph
- Figure 76. Wrestlers, Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 77. Relief of Sita, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 78. Trà Kiệu, 10th century, Champa, Museum of Quảng Trị, courtyard, Vietnam
- Figure 79. Sita, East Java, Panatran, 1323-47
- Figure 80. Visnu flanked by Naga, 10th century
- Figure 81. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Author's Photograph
- Figure 82. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 83. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 84. Lakshmana and Surpanakha, Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 85. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 86. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 87. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 88. Khương Mỹ, detail, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 89. Khương Mỹ, Ramayana Reliefs, 10th century, Champa

Figure 90. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 91. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 92. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 93. Trà Kiệu, 10th century, Champa

Figure 94. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 95. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 96. Royal Scene, 10th century, Champa

Figure 97. Chánh Lộ Reliefs, 11th century, Champa

Figure 98. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 99. Hunting Scene, Champa

Figure 100. Bình Định, 10th century, Champa

Figure 101. Mỹ Sơn F1, Ravana, 10th century, Champa

Figure 102. Ravana, Đồng Dương Temple, 9th century, Champa

Figure 103. Ramayana Bowl, Java, 10th century

Figure 104. Equestrian Hunting Scene, 8th century, MET

Figure 105. Equestrian Hunting Scene, detail, 8th century, MET

Figure 106. Khương Mỹ Temple, 10th century, Champa

Figure 107. Mỹ Sơn F1, Ravana, 10th century, Champa

Figure 108. Bhuta Messenger with Candi (Ramayana Reliefs), Pantaran temple, 1323-47, Java

Figure 109. Ravana defends himself with magical powers, Pantaran temple, 1323-47, Java

Figure 110. Kulu vase, British Museum

Figure 111. Line drawing of Kulu vase

Figure 112. Terracotta Medallion, Indian Museum, Kolkata, Bhita, Allahabad

Figure 113. Terracotta medallion, late 2nd–early 3rd century A.D. Roman, MET

Figure 114. Bronze bowl, Kaho Sam Kaeo, Thailand

Figure 115. Bronze bowl, Khao Jamook, Thailand

Figure 116. Bronze bowl, Ban Don Ta Phet, Thailand

Figure 117. Bowl found at Khao sam Kaeo on the southeast coast peninsula, detail, Suthi Ratana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK 525

Figure 118. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 119. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 120. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 121. Gauttila *jataka* Footed Bowl, Bronze, Malaysia, MET

Figure 122. Gauttila *jataka*, 1070 AD West Hepetliek, Myanmar

Figure 123. Pawaya, 5th century, Gupta period

Figure 124. Bronze Ewer with Elephant Spout, Ashmolean Museum, London

Figure 125. Bronze Ewer with Elephant Spout, detail, Ashmolean Museum, London

Figure 126. Vase of plenty, 5th century, Champa

Figure 127. Nagarjunikonda, Vase of plenty, 3rd century

Figure 128. Nagarjunikonda, Depiction of elephant pot, 3rd century

Figure 129. Bronze Dish with Musicians, found in Lâm Đồng province, Vietnam

Figure 130. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Detail, Champa

Figure 131. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Human and Animal Dancers, Champa

Figure 132. Roman cameo, Klau Nok, Ranong, Thailand

Figure 133. Silver Dish, Tibet

Figure 134. Ewer, Li Xian (557- 581), China

Figure 135. Equestrian Hunting Scene, MET

Figure 136. Equestrian Hunting Scene, detail, MET

Figure 137. Khương Mỹ temple, 10th century, Champa

Figure 138. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 9th century, Champa

Figure 139. Plate with a Scene of Revelry, 400s 320-647, Silver with alloy of tin and lead with traces of gilding, Northwestern Gupta Period, India

Figure 140. Back. Plate with a Scene of Revelry, 400s 320-647, Silver with alloy of tin and lead with traces of gilding, Northwestern Gupta Period, India

Figure 141. Fragment of Box, Elephant Bronze, 5th century, MET

Figure 142. Bronze Chinese Buddha, 9th century, found in Champa

Figure 143. Bronze Sri Lankan Buddha, 9th century, found in Champa

Figure 144. Plan of 9th century Đồng Dương temple, Champa

Figure 145. Buddha Bronze Statue, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 146. The Goddess Nana seated on a lion. 2nd century

Figure 147. Unidentified goddess, 2nd century, Gandhara

Figure 148. Animal-headed goddess with wine cup

Figure 149. Statue of King Vima Kadphises, 2nd century, Mathura

Figure 150. Seated Kubera. 3rd- 4th century, Late Kusana period, probably Kausambu

Figure 151. Kubera and Hariti

<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=50008;type=101> Pakisan, Gandhara region, South Asia.

Figure 152. Hariti with children

Figure 153. Hariti with children

Figure 154. Standing Hariti, Chandigarh Museum. Early 2nd century CE. Skarah-dheri, Peshawar.

Figure 155. Sandstone figure of the seated Buddha, 5th century, Sarnath Gupta Period, Eastern India,

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/s/sandstone_figure_of_the_buddha.aspx

Figure 156. Seated Figure with base of goddess, 200 CE

Figure 157. Relief of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 158. Relief of Queen Maya Lumbini Garden, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 159. Seated Figure, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 160. Photograph of Seated Figure. Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 161. Relief of child holding mother, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 162. Mara Riding on Elephant, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 163. Relief of Siddhartha Cutting Off His Hair, Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 164. Relief of Queen Mahprajapati Gautami. Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 165. Relief of the Marriage of Siddhartha and Yasodhara. Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 166. Relief of Naga Princess. Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 167. Relief of Mara's Daughters. Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa

Figure 168. Map of Pedestal Shrine of Vân Trạch Hòa, Author's Diagram

Figure 169. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal-Shrine, Author's Photograph

Figure 170. Mohenjo-Daro Cylinder Seal, 1st century BCE

Figure 171. Mohenjo-Daro Cylinder Seal, 1st century BCE

Figure 172 *Navagraha*, Worcester Art Museum, MA c. 500 -575

Figure 173. *Navagraha*, San Diego Museum of Art, c. 950-1000

Figure 174. Mother Goddesses, Ellora, c. 600

Figure 175. Mother Goddesses, LACMA, c. 800- 899

Figure 176. *Navagrahas*, 7th -8th century, Aihole, India

- Figure 177. *Navagrahas*, 7th-8th century, Cleveland Art Museum, India
- Figure 178. *Navagrahas*, Madhya Pradesh, Mrtangesvara Temple India, 8th century
- Figure 179. *Navagraha*, State Museum, Sikarra Khera, Bharatpur, 8th century
- Figure 180. Gauri with Sadyojata. Museum of Indian Art. Berlin, Inventory 10109
- Figure 181. Marici with Rahu, 9th century, Museum of Indian Art, Berlin
- Figure 182. Temple no. 2. Bhutesvara temple, Madhya Pradesh, India, 775-800
- Figure 183. Madhya Pradesh, 9th century, Asian Civilization Museum, Singapore
- Figure 184. *Navagraha*, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, EFEO_CAM12248
- Figure 185. *Navagraha*, Baphuon, 1000-1100, Cambodia, Asian Art Museum
- Figure 186. Nine Deities, Asian Art Museum, 900-1100, The Avery Brundage Collection
- Figure 187. National Museum Mahaverawongsa, Nakon ratchasima province, Thailand
- Figure 188. *Navagraha*, 10th century, HCMC Museum of History, Vietnam
- Figure 189. Seven *Linga* Pedestal, Mĩ Son, 10th century, Champa
- Figure 190. Brahmanical Stele, second half of the 7th century. Eastern Cambodia
- Figure 191. Five Deities with Spout, Cambodia, Norton Simon Museum, 9th-10th century
- Figure 192. Ta Keo, Cambodia EFEO_CAM 19725_3, ca. 1000
- Figure 193. *Navagraha*, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia
- Figure 194. *Navagraha*, Details, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia
- Figure 195. *Navagraha*, Details, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia
- Figure 196. Surya, Art Institute of Chicago, 12th century, Cambodia
- Figure 197. *Mandala*, Koh Ker period (928-944), Cambodia
- Figure 198. Chandra *Mandala*, Angkor Vat style, 12th century
- Figure 199. Vân Trạch Hòa, 12th century, Champa

Figure 200. Bronze Mandala, Cambodia, 12th century, Yothin Collection, Bangkok

Figure 201. Vân Trạch Hòa, 12th century, details, Divine goddesses, Champa

Figure 202. Female Goddesses on Vân Trạch Hòa, Đồng Dương temple, 9th century, Champa

Figure 203. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 204. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 205. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, free-standing *navagraha*, 12th century, Champa

Figure 206. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 207. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 208. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, detail, Champa

Figure 209. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, detail, Champa

Figure 210. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 211. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal drawing

Figure 212. Polonnaruwa, Pabalu Stupa, 12th century, Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Figure 213. Pedestal deposit stone, Preah Khan, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 214. Pre Rup, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 215. Ganesha, Go 2A, Gold Deposit 1, Cát Tiên

Figure 216. Goddess, Go 1 A, Gold Deposit 2, Cát Tiên

Figure 217. Gold Deposit 3, Cát Tiên

Figure 218. Gold Deposit 4, Cát Tiên

Figure 219. Dikpala Images, Go 1 A, Gold Deposit 5, Cát Tiên

Figure 220. Gold Deposit 6, Cát Tiên

Figure 221. Gold Deposit 7, Cát Tiên

Figure 222. Gold Deposits Gold Deposit 8, Cát Tiên

Figure 223. Dedicatory Plaque drawing, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 224. Dedicatory Plaque, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 225. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 226. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 227. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 228. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 229. Tem bưu chính, Postage Stamps, Vietnam, 1987

Figure 230. Tem bưu chính, Postage Stamps, Vietnam, 1987

Figure 231. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 232. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 233. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 234. Mỹ Sơn Temple, 2015, Author's Photograph

Figure 235. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 236. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Champa

Figure 237. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 238. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 239. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Champa

Figure 240. Trần Hữu Chát, detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 241. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 242. Trần Hữu Chát, *Untitled*, 1991

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INTRODUCTION:

Historiography of Cham Studies

My dissertation explores the sculptural art of the Chams, relating to the sculpture of Hindu and Buddhist art from neighboring Cambodia and much of ancient Southeast Asia.¹ The Chams, who once dominated the region of modern southern Vietnam are an ethnic group with historical records dating from the 5th century CE and created some of the most exquisite art and architecture found in Southeast Asia. It is thought that the Chams are closely associated to Austronesian populations, specifically from southwest Borneo before their settlement in southern Vietnam.² Their origins remain undetermined, but for over a millennium, the Chams created political states from the Mekong Delta north, that include much of modern Vietnam. The Vietnamese, part of the commandery of China for most of the 1st millennium CE, occupied the far north. The Vietnamese moved south over the centuries, finally by the 16th century occupying what is today the country of Vietnam.

The legacy of the Chams includes the production of temple and courtly culture, reflecting an interregional artistic koine of Indic culture in Southeast Asia, defined as a shared commonality of Hindu and Buddhist artistic iconography, Sanskrit inscriptions, and religious texts. The art is related to the art from neighboring Cambodia and Thailand, and more broadly to other states in India and Southeast Asia. The pedestal-shrines of Champa range in date from the 7th—9th centuries, with three built as part of Hindu temples, and the latest as part of a Buddhist temple. What objects were originally placed on the pedestals is not known, and the

¹ The Chams/Champa have variant spellings including Kiams/Kiampa, Cams/Campa, and Tiam/Tiampa. I use the first in accordance to modern art historical scholarship.

² Min-Sheng Peng, Huy Ho Quang, Khoa Pham Dang, An U Trieu, Hua-Wei Wang, Yong-Gang Yao, Qing-Peng Kong, Ya-Ping Zhang. “Tracing the Austronesian Footprint in Mainland Southeast Asia: A Perspective from Mitochondrial DNA,” *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 27 (10) 2010, 2417-2430.

interpretations of the relief sculptures on the pedestal is still heavily debated. My dissertation argues that although Champa consisted of independent states scattered across modern-day southern Vietnam, the Chams were largely united through colossal image making and written inscriptions. The Chams specifically constructed temple, courtly, and local visual culture to gain economic, religious, and social power as middlemen and commercial intermediaries in the international maritime network of Indian Ocean trade in the 9th-12th centuries. The production of visual culture was a strategy for economic, social, and political endurance of Cham communities.

Scholarship on Cham history and culture is predominantly French colonial studies, the study of Cham epigraphy, and more recently, archaeological reports by Vietnamese scholars. My dissertation contributes to current scholarship, combining textual, archaeological, and art historical evidence to achieve a deeper understanding about the movement and development of Buddhist and Hindu religion, ideas, and material culture in South and Southeast Asia. The region of Champa is analyzed as a Southeast Asian coastal contact and transit zone, involving interaction and interchange among religious, artistic, and trading communities and their uses and interpretation of temple monuments and portable objects. Visible artistic exchanges in Champa reflected the Chams' oscillating relations at different times in history as allies, vassals, or enemies with China, Cambodia, Thailand, and Java. The Chams intersected with the movement of monks, brahmins, and merchants on long-distance maritime, regional, and local trading routes.

II. Literature Review

The art and architecture of Champa, a significant area of Southeast Asian epigraphy, history, archaeology, and art history, remain understudied, due in part to the Vietnam War, which made scholarly research difficult. Only now is Cham art being once again intensely researched, and is the focus of increasing interest for both Vietnamese and foreign scholars.

Cham studies has undergone many changes since the French interest that began in the 1870s.³ Etienne Aymonier and Abel Bergaigne's book, *Inscriptions Sanscrites de Campa et du Cambodge* (1893) was one of the first French translations of Sanskrit inscriptions of Champa. More recently, Karl-Heinz Golzio (2004) published a revised edition of the translations by Aymonier and Bergaigne, along with other French translations by Louis Finot, R.C. Majumar, and Edouard Hubert. Since 2009, Arlo Griffith of Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient has directed the *Corpus of Cham Inscriptions* program, which maintains and updates the inscriptions of Champa and its French and English translations. Organized by the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, this project is currently available online.

In 1915, the Museum of Cham Sculpture (Đà Nẵng) was established to collect and preserve Cham sculpture. French scholars, including Louis Finot, Henri Parmentier, George Maspero, Philippe Stern, and Jean Boisselier, published survey books and articles on the inscriptions, art, and architecture of Champa.⁴ During the early 1900s, scholars were only beginning to understand Champa, and most thought the region was a colony of India, due its strong artistic and cultural associations to Indian art. For example, Phanindranath Bose in *The Indian Colony of Champa* (1926), asks "whence these colonists come to Champa? At such a juncture in the political history of India, these colonists went over to Champa and made settlements there."⁵ During this time, scholarship about the art of Champa was understood as a direct extension of Indian culture abroad. Scholars today recognize that there was no Indian

³ Ethnic group referred in scholarship in variant spellings: Tsiams, Kiams, Cams, Chams, and Kambia, Campa, Champa. I use the spelling of Champa and Chams in accordance to art historical scholarship.

⁴See Louis Finot's *Notes d'epigraphie: Deux nouvelles inscriptions de Bhadravarman I, roi de Champa* (1902), Henri Parmentier's *Les Sculptures Chames Au Musee de Tourane* (1922), George Maspero's *Le Royaume de Champa* (1928), Philippe Stern's *L'art du Champa, ancien Annam, et son evolution* (1942), Jean Boisselier's *La Statuaire du Champa: recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie* (1963)

⁵ Phanindra N Bose, *The Indian Colony of Champa* (Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Pub. House, 1926), 21.

immigration or military dominance, and continue to debate the nature of the close relationship between Cham and Indian culture. In addition to English sources, the French publications provided one of the first extensive historical overviews with detailed photographs and descriptions of Cham art.⁶ In the 1940s, there were French efforts to restore Cham architecture, such as the Mỹ Sơn towers and the Trà Kiệu temple. In the late 1960s-1970s, the Vietnam War halted the restoration projects and excavations of Cham archaeological sites. The site of Mỹ Sơn became a battleground and many of the Cham temples were either demolished or damaged by bombing.

In the 1980s, the Center for Restoration of Cultural Properties and the Ministry of Cultural and Information of Vietnam began to restore the monuments of Champa.⁷ Historian Ian Mabbett (1986) published one of the first in-depth discussions on Buddhism in Champa. He concluded that Champa's "religious culture was synthetic and eclectic. Mahayana, Hinayana, tantra and Hindu devotion were mingled together in the religious life of the pious Chams."⁸ In addition, Champa Buddhism also "accommodated cults of ancestors, including female ancestors."⁹ The male and female realm shaped the worldview of the Chams, which may explain why the feminized 5th-century Buddha image resonated within the Cham community.¹⁰

⁶ Bruce M. Lockhart, "Colonial and Post-Colonial Constructions of Champa," in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*. Eds. Trần Kỳ Phương and Bruce M. Lockhart (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 5.

⁷ Trần Kỳ Phương. *Vestiges of Champa Civilization* (Hanoi, Thế Giới Publishers, 2004), 25.

⁸ Ian W. Mabbett, "Buddhism in Champa," in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, Eds. David Marr and Anthony Milner (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 306.

⁹ Ibid, 306.

¹⁰ See Robert L Brown, "The Feminization of the Sarnath Gupta-Period Images," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, vol. 16 (2006), 165-179.

Mabbett's discussion on the cosmopolitan nature of Cham Buddhism is a major contribution to the field.

From the 1990s to the present, excavations at archaeological sites such as Trà Kiệu and Khương Mỹ continued and Vietnamese and English excavation reports were available. New art historical and contextual scholarship followed. A decade later, scholars working in France, Vietnam, India, and the United States placed attention on the epigraphy, architecture, and archaeology of Champa. These scholars include Pierre Baptiste (EFEO), Pierre-Yves Manguin (NUS), Anne-Valerie Schweyer (CNRS), Arlo Griffins (EFEO), Lê Thị Liên (Institute of Archaeology), Nancy Tingley (independent scholar), Trần Kỳ Phương (independent scholar), John Guy (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Bruce Lockhart (NUS), Dhar Pandya Parul (University of Delhi), and William Southworth (Rijksmuseum).¹¹

In addition, three articles written by Nancy Tingley (2006), John Guy (2011), Trần Kỳ Phương, and Rie Nakamura (2012) are crucial to the study of the image-pedestals of Champa within the larger political, social, and economic environment of southern Vietnam. First, Nancy Tingley introduced two different types of pedestals, which include a seat for the gods (*pitha*) and a platform for food offerings to Hindu guardian deities (*bali pitha*).¹² Tingley argued that multivalent meanings could be possible for the interpretation of the pedestal of Vân Trạch Hòa. Besides the interpretation of the eight guardian deities, she also provided an alternative reading of the nine planets carved on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. She suggested “to see the eight figures seated around the top of the upper section [as] both *dikpalas* and *navagraha*, the ninth figure of the latter group supplied by the ninth figure seated below Kubera. Certainly the two groups, with

¹¹ A conference on new research in historical Champa studies took place June 12-19, 2012 in Paris, France.

¹² Nancy Tingley. “Pedestals of Champa,” *Arts of Asia*, vol. 39, no. 6 (November-December 2006), 104.

their shared figures and *vahanas*, lend themselves to multivalent interpretations.”¹³ While there is still no scholarly consensus on the identification of the characters, Tingley’s overview of the pedestals serves as a springboard to probe further research questions.

Second, John Guy (2011) published an article about pan-Asian Buddhism in Champa and the cult worship of Avalokitesvara. He argued for the popularity of the cult of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara in Buddhism in Southeast Asia. It was practiced in royal households of Champa and contributed to the interest of pan-Asian Buddhism in the 9th–10th centuries.¹⁴ Furthermore, Guy suggested that the “development in Buddhism was occurring in a climate of pan-Asian internationalism, encouraged by a rising wave of trade wealth. The circulation of spices, aromatics, resins, pearls, and cotton textiles all stimulated the wealth of the region and furthered the consolidation of emerging states.”¹⁵ Indravarman II’s devotion to Buddhism placed Champa in the Buddhist international sphere of Asia. This is the first time that Cham rulers supported syncretism with official royal construction of Hindu and Buddhist arts and architecture.

Third, scholars Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura (2012) co-authored an article about the dualist cult of Cham society. The authors revealed that two sanctuaries, Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar, “reflect certain characteristics of the cosmological dualism.”¹⁶ This cosmological dualist cult is defined as a Cham male and female dichotomy. Inscriptions and icons found at the two sites suggest that Mỹ Sơn was dedicated to the God Bhadresvara (Siva) and Pô Nagar was

¹³Ibid, 111.

¹⁴ John Guy, “Pan-Asian Buddhism and the Bodhisattva Cult in Champa,” in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*. Eds. Trần Kỳ Phương & Bruce M. Lockhart (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 319.

¹⁵ Ibid, 309.

¹⁶ Trần Kỳ Phương & Rie Nakamura, “Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam),” in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende, (Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. 2012), 208.

dedicated to the Goddess Bhagavati.¹⁷ Based on Cham legends, two clans, Areca, the male clan and Coconut, the female clan controlled Champa. Another Cham legend cites the division of *Ahier* and *Awal*, which translates from Arabic to English as *back* and *front*. Cham contemporary communities in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận (central Vietnam) have regarded *Ahier* as the male realm and *Awal* as the female realm.¹⁸ Trần and Nakamura suggested that the Mỹ Sơn temple represented the female realm and the Pô Nagar temple represented the male realm, forming an integral emphasis of cosmological dualism.

The research on the Chams has continued with publications on Cham studies. The most recent research on Champa are completed dissertations from SOAS, University of London, which include William Southworth's 2001 dissertation, "The Origins of Champa in Central Vietnam: a preliminary review," and Julian Richard's 2013 dissertation, "The field of ancient Cham art in France: a 20th-century creation: a study of museological and colonial contexts from the late 19th century to the present." Ashley Thompson's *Engendering the Buddhist State* (2016), uses post-modern and psychoanalytical theory to examine the Angkorian period in Cambodian history. A chapter, "Sculptural Foundations: on the linga and yoni" discusses the *linga-yoni* and male-female visual construction of the pedestal in Champa and Cambodia.¹⁹

A recent book, *Vibrancy in Stone: Masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture* (2018), is a catalogue of one hundred objects from the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture with fourteen essays on the history and culture of Champa. The essays argue for an inclusive understanding of Champa with other neighboring regions and new research regarding

¹⁷ Ibid, 266.

¹⁸ Trần Kỳ Phương & Rie Nakamura, "Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam)," in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende (Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. 2012), 276.

¹⁹ Ashley Thompson, "Sculptural Foundations: on the linga and yoni," in *Engendering the Buddhist State: Reconstructions of Cambodian History* (New York: Routledge 2016), 71-110.

interactions between the Khmers and the Chams in the 12th century. In 2019, the newest book, *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, edited by Arlo Griffiths, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade was published. Contributions in the book including seminal articles from Stephen Murphy and Parul Pandya Dhar have argued for necessity to fully understand Champa through a global lens, studying the cultural interactions among Champa, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.

Contributing to the current scholarship, I use methodological and theoretical frameworks of cultural contact studies and diplomatic network analysis, studying objects of different sizes to understand the interrelationships between cultures from local, regional, and transregional perspectives. Instead of focusing on India's artistic and cultural influences in Southeast Asia, the emphasis is placed on characteristics of connecting cultures throughout Asia. Cultural exchanges and artistic interactions are investigated through the breakdown of Cham visual culture, such as scale, technologies, iconographies, motif patterns, and forms.

III. Overview of Chapters

My dissertation argues that although Champa consisted of independent states scattered across coastal areas of modern southern Vietnam, the Chams were largely united as communities through image-making and written inscriptions. Marian Feldman has argued that “art is a catalyst and glue for community identity; social communities are thus made by the artworks themselves. As one principal way in which art objects do their work is through style, as it is produced, consumed, and appreciated through shared human practices.”²⁰ The dissertation analyzes the aesthetic choices of 7th- 10th-centuries colossal pedestals of Champa within their temple architecture to better understand the formation of Cham communities, both Buddhist and Hindu,

²⁰ Marian H Feldman, *Communities of Style: Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 177.

the relationship between art and architecture of Champa, and the trans-regional exchanges of religious artistic production and cultures across South and Southeast Asia. The narrative begins with a close analysis of the four extant pedestal-shrines unique to the region of Champa. The colossal Cham pedestals carved with Buddhist and Hindu imagery were discovered at the archaeological sites of modern-day southern and central Vietnam: Mỹ Sơn, Trà Kiệu, Vân Trạch Hòa, and Đồng Dương.

Chapter one: *The Colossal Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal-shrine: the Artistic Relationship between the Chams and the Khmers* discusses the 7th-8th-century Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal-shrine as a *vimana*. I argue that the pedestal is a flying seat or throne, intersecting spiritual and earthly realms, a performative aspect inherited in its chosen construction and imagery. The pedestal-shrine is decorated with carved reliefs, entirely of male figures. The performing male worshippers, dancers, instrumentalists, and religious specialists represent various groups of people who participated in ritual spaces taking place in relation to the temple platform. The performative figures were later standardized during the 10th century, re-emerging on Cham temple foundation walls and outside of royal spaces such as temple caves in mountains. There is little direct stylistic borrowing among Southeast Asian regions as seen in later extant Cham art, although the interaction between the Khmers and the Chams continue. The 7th century marks the beginning of a highly visible social community of the Chams, building art and architecture related to the visual culture of Southeast Asia.

Chapter two, *The Ramayana and the Colossal Trà Kiệu Pedestal-shrine* reconsiders the previous scholarship of 10th-century Trà Kiệu pedestal to shift the current discussion beyond dating and identification. Using inscription, visual analysis, recent excavations, and previous scholarship, I suggest that the 10th-century Trà Kiệu pedestal-shrine from Champa was not

originally intended to be worshipped, but served as a symbol for courtly culture. I offer a revised interpretation of the Trà Kiệu pedestal as a local depiction of the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, inspired predominately by an oral narrative tradition. Based on stylistic analysis, I suggest that the pedestal is dated to the 10th century. The Trà Kiệu pedestal is one of the first depiction of a king with human weaponry, bow and arrow, which inspired secular images of courtly culture associated to performative battle, hunting, and action scenes in later Cham art.

Chapter three, *Metalworks from the West and South Asia: Imports in India and Vietnam*, investigates decorated bowls discovered in India and Southeast Asia as a collective group. Some of the bowls, dishes, and vases have been analyzed independently as ritual objects associated to Buddhism or funerary objects in a burial context. The discussion focuses on five bronze objects: the Kulu vase, the Gauttila *jataka* Footed Bowl, the Ewer with Spout of Elephant Head, the Dish with Musicians and Dancers, and the Footed Dish with Equestrian Hunting Scene. The imported bowls in Vietnam are closely related to bowls from Greco-Bactrian, Sogdian, and Indian culture. I offer an alternative reading from scholarship to show the motifs and iconography's connection to a shared courtly and military culture among the luxury vessels, utilizing a visual language of common iconography which includes performing animals, dancers, and musicians. The secular images of courtly culture were intertwined with the visual imagery carved on the sacred Cham colossal sandstone pedestals of Mỹ Sơn and Trà Kiệu as the standard representation for courtly culture widely appreciated and accepted in the canon of Southeast Asian artistic traditions.

Chapter four, *Two Colossal Pedestal-Shrines of Đồng Dương* examines the Đồng Dương Buddhist pedestal dated to the 9th century. The archaeology of Champa consists of a majority of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominate religion. With visual and inscriptional evidence, I argue that the colossal pedestal was originally

carved in the structure of a *linga-yoni* pedestal, but changed to a Buddhist monument during the reign of Indravarman II. He was the first Cham ruler to actively support Buddhism in Champa. Although the pedestal is Buddhist, there are local and Hindu elements that are still embedded into the pedestal. The female iconography on the pedestal was an early development in the visual arts to reinforce female and male cosmological dualism, still a significant ideology in modern Cham society today.

Chapter five, *Mobility and the Alignment of the Planetary Deities, the Directional Guardians, and the Constellations* analyzes the pedestal of Vân Trạch Hòa, which depicts personified planets and directional deities combined with the local divine feminine in a three-dimensional cosmic mandala. I explore how the artistic imagery on the pedestal-shrine were visually connected to gold deposits plaques, often hidden under temples. Both monumental and small size images were visual representations that linked the human body to astronomical concepts, particularly zodiac signs and constellations within the cosmic mandala.

Lastly, the epilogue *Contemporary Art: the Legacy of the Chams* explores two Vietnamese artists, Nguyễn Trinh Thi and Trần Hữu Chát. Each artist depicts a unique representation of the Chams as ethnic minorities among the fifty-four ethnic groups in Vietnam. Champa is a region that presents the empowered divine feminine, an important aspect in the local culture of the Chams. Film maker and artist, Nguyễn Trinh Thi collaborated with the Cham community, using the image of the woman and the feminine divine to represent a post-colonialized Champa in photographs and video art. In contrast, Vietnamese lacquer artist, Trần Hữu Chát creates engraved lacquer paintings of Cham women and temple festivals. The chapter explores how the image of the female body is used to symbolize the Cham community, the memory of Champa, and the formation of Vietnam as a post-colonial nation.

From sacred to secular spaces and from monumental pedestal-shrines to small-scale precious objects, an examination of individual themes includes stylistic and iconographic transfer, courtly culture, female agency, and visual re-translations. At the apex of international cultural exchanges during the 9th-10th centuries in South and Southeast Asia, the art and architecture of the Chams is a true amalgamation of cultural styles and iconography related to the cultures of Cambodia, Java, China, India, and the West. In summary, this dissertation examines Champa as a Southeast Asian coastal contact and transit zone and the Chams as migrant seafarers and trade mediators in Indian Ocean trade. The visual culture of Champa was unified through a coherent artistic practice, comprised of art and architecture that enhanced the performative experience through inscriptions and image symbols.

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CHAPTER ONE:

The Colossal M̃y Son E1 Pedestal-shrine: the Artistic Relationships among Cham, Khmer, and Dvaravati Culture

The M̃y Son E1 colossal pedestal-shrine is one of the earliest extant examples of Cham art closely connected to the style and iconography of Dvaravati and Khmer art in the 7th - 8th centuries. The M̃y Son E1 pedestal is decorated with carved reliefs, entirely of male figures. The figures included performing male worshippers, dancers, instrumentalists, and religious specialists, representing the power of brahmins and its Hindu worshippers who participated in ritual spaces taking place in relation to the temple pedestal. In an extension of previous studies, I argue, first, that the M̃y Son E1 pedestal is a colossal pedestal-shrine, the home for the gods that intersects both the divine and earthly realms. The Khmers interchanged the visual image of the pedestal and the king's throne, a visualization for both Cham and Khmer traditions. The images of performative male figures on the M̃y Son E1 pedestal symbolically animated the seat and the brahmanical rituals related to the king's consecration focused on it. Second, the performing figures were repeated and standardized, re-emerging on later 10th-century Cham temple foundation walls and outside royal spaces such as mountain caves. Thirdly, the pedestal's iconography of male performers is viewed in the context of the M̃y Son site as a sacred realm using imagery of both male and female musicians and dancers. There is little direct stylistic borrowing among Southeast Asian regions as seen in the later extant Cham art, with a shift towards the development of a Cham style within a political and social community.

I. Introduction, Terminology & Literature Review

Mỹ Sơn is a sacred archaeological site in Champa where the Chams once built more than seventy Hindu temples, and is located near the modern province of Quảng Nam in central Vietnam. Henri Parmentier first surveyed the site in 1899, and he assigned each temple group in the site complex a letter, running from A to H and then a separate Group K. The pedestal of Mỹ Sơn E1 derives from the temple E of the first group. In the French excavation of 1903-1904, fifteen elaborately decorated blocks were excavated at the temple of Mỹ Sơn E1. Epigraphic studies explain that the shape of the syllables date to the 7th-8th centuries, reaffirming Jean Boisselier's stylistic dating of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal in 1956.²¹

When the decorated blocks were transferred to the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture in 1918, Henri Parmentier noted that one block was missing. Another block from the original fifteen later disappeared, leaving thirteen existing blocks currently on display in the museum. Each block was labeled and engraved with an isolated syllable (*aksaras*) on the upper surface (*ka, k̄a, ki, k̄i*, etc). Hidden by a superimposed architectural layer, the engravings would have not been visible to the viewer in the original arrangement. While the simplified writing style of the isolated syllables are not identical to the style of contemporary 7th-century inscriptions, the two styles appear to be of the same 7th-century date. It has been suggested that the difference in style developed because the letters on the blocks were not meant to be seen, in contrast to the royal inscriptions on stone.²²

²¹ Jean Boisselier. "Arts du Champa et du Cambodge preangkorien. La Date de Mi-son," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 19 No. 3/4 (1956), 197- 212.

²² Arlo Griffiths, *Văn khắc Chămpa tại Bảo tàng Điêu khắc Chăm - Đà Nẵng = The inscriptions of Campā at the Museum of Cham Sculpture in Đà Nẵng* (Ho Chi Minh: VNUHCM Publishing House, 2012), 278.

There are two colossal sandstone sculptures extant from the temple of Mỹ Sơn E1—the pedestal and lintel, now housed in the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture in central Vietnam. The discussion of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal that follows below stresses the pedestal’s function and meaning in terms of the general context of South and Southeast Asian art. The evidence shows that the visual culture of Champa in Mỹ Sơn is interconnected with that of India in terms of religion, but also through a shared identity of courtly and religious culture of Southeast Asia, closely related to 7th-8th-century Khmer and Dvaravati culture in modern day Cambodia and Thailand. Using visual and inscriptional evidence, the 7th-century Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal and lintel will be examined in the context of Khmer culture. This chapter discusses the larger sacred site of Mỹ Sơn in relation to the Mỹ Sơn E1 temple and role of the imagery of musicians and dancers on the pedestal. The form of the pedestal-shrine and the performing figures re-appeared on the foundation walls of later Cham temples during the 9th-10th centuries, outside of royal spaces such as caves of the Marble Mountains to accommodate both royal and private devotees.

The pedestal is constructed of sandstone, but there are few scientific studies on the specific type of sandstones from the site of Mỹ Sơn E1, so it is not clear if such stone is similar to that used in Khmer and Dvaravati sculptures. Scientific studies have shown that for Khmer sculpture,

The stone used for the images of deities placed inside the sanctuaries continued to be different from building and decorative stone material also during the Angkorian period. During the early stages of the Angkor empire, sculptures in the styles of Kulen (800–875), Preah Ko (875–900), and Bakheng (900–925) were carved from the same graywacke as was used during the pre-Angkor period, while

some sculptures in the style of Banteay Srei (ca. 976) were carved from a peculiar green to bluish graywacke.²³

However, sandstone was the chosen material for architecture building because “the entire corpus of pre-Angkor sculptures (ca. seventh–ca. ninth century), characterized by a diversity of styles and iconographies, is unified by similar stone materials.”²⁴ This would probably be similar for the sandstone sculpture in Champa, following the traditional Khmer artistry. There have not, however, been technical studies on the stone used for Cham sculpture and architecture. Nevertheless, based on technical studies of Khmer stone sculpture and building, we might expect the stone types to be consistent throughout the early period of the 7th-9th centuries. Likewise, a differentiation between stone used for free standing sculpture and for architectural reliefs, as found in Khmer art, may hold for the Cham art of this timeframe as well.

The stone blocks of Mỹ Sơn E1 form a square foundation of 270 x 271 cm (fig 1). A similar comparison to the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal was discovered at the bottom of the An Xa Towers dated to the 9th century (fig. 2), now located in the courtyard of the Museum of Quảng Trị (Đông Hà, Vietnam). Although the style and iconography of the blocks discovered in Quảng Trị are less decorated with smaller dimensions than those of Mỹ Sơn E1, both pedestals were cut into stone blocks to form the *cella*, the inner chamber of a larger Cham temple (*garbha-griha*).²⁵ The pedestal of Mỹ Sơn E1 served as the enclosure for the huge *linga* that was located at the

²³ Federico Carò, "From Quarry to Sculpture: Understanding Provenance, Typologies, and Uses of Khmer Stones." New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–, <http://www.metmuseum.org/research/conservation-and-scientific-research/scientific-research/khmer-stones> (June 2009, updated January 2014)

²⁴ Ibid, 1.

²⁵ A *cella* (from Latin for smaller chamber) or *naos* (Greek for temple).

center of the Mý Son E1 temple.²⁶ The Mý Son E1 pedestal, as with other pedestals in this study, were in part considered metaphors for a mountain. The idea of a shrine within a mountain is the basic notion of a Hindu temple, with the *garbha-griha* in which the deity is housed like a cave inside the temple, which is likened to a mountain. Thus, the pedestal is rich with Hindu temple symbolism. Indeed, a 10th-century Cham shrine was built within a cave at the Marble Mountains. Furthering the pedestal as a temple for the worship of Siva is the performative male figures carved on the shrine. These figures, including brahmins, ascetics, musicians, and worshippers, would mimic and reinforce the actual people who performed ritual practices at the site of the pedestal. The veneration of Siva in his form of the *linga* was presumably the focus of worship. The form that the *linga* took introduces one of the themes of this study, that is the interplay of movable and permanent art objects, objects of varying sizes and of varying materials, in the art tradition of Champa.

The veneration of Siva can be practiced with colossal and miniature forms of the deity. The Mý Son E1 shrine was a colossal and permanent ritual space for engaged worshippers.²⁷ Miniature *lingas* for private veneration were also produced in the 7th century (fig. 3). In addition to small *lingas*, there were also portable miniature shrines used by a single owner. For example, in the Mekong region, a silver model of a sanctuary tower was discovered by a local fisherman (fig. 4). Christine Hawixbrock describes that the tower “contains a moulded pedestal with a spout and with two opposing sharp points welded on the upper border. Pierced with a circular hole, it

²⁶ Emmanuel Guillon, *Cham Art: Treasures of the Đà Nẵng Museum, Vietnam* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 73.

²⁷ This is further explored below in the dissertation in a discussion of a 10th-century Cham shrine found in a cave-temple inside the Marble Mountains in modern-day Đà Nẵng. This chapter contributes to scholarship directed to a more nuanced understanding about the movement of Buddhist and Hindu religion, ideas, and material culture in Southeast Asia. This does not necessary reflect the artistic influence from India to Southeast Asia, but interregional and trans-local elements developing inside Southeast Asia without direct contact with India.

must have been intended for a *linga*.”²⁸ In addition, a foundation deposit was found in the model tower, suggesting the practice of placing consecration deposits under actual temples.²⁹ Pedestals were often associated with consecration ceremonies and deposits have been excavated with foundation bricks in Cambodia and Champa. *Linga* worship was reinforced in colossal and miniature forms for collective and individual users.

Current scholarship discusses the stylistic exchanges between Cham and Khmer art and possible interpretations of the M̃y S̃on E1 pedestal-shrine. For example, Jean Boisselier argues that Cham art was developed from an imported Khmer style and both artistic traditions rapidly became localized after the 8th century. Robert L. Brown suggests that Cham art is a visual product from the diffusion of ‘brahminization’ via Cambodia.³⁰ This argument has yet to be explored in any detail using visual and inscriptional evidence. If Brown’s conclusion is correct, then the Indian-related art and architecture of Champa has no direct historical connection with India that we can identify. Beyond Khmer and Cham stylistic similarities, the artistic style of Dvaravati art is related to the style of Khmer art, which suggests that the M̃y S̃on E1 pedestal is interconnected with an artistic Khmer-Dvaravati-Cham style developed in the 7th-8th centuries, the international artistic koine of Southeast Asia. While it has been argued in scholarship that the art of Champa derives from a Pallava style from Indian culture, there is little visual evidence of such stylistic influence.

In an extension of previous studies, I argue, first, that the M̃y S̃on E1 pedestal is a

²⁸ Christine Hawixbrock, “The Vat Phou Museum and the archaeological collections of Champasak,” *BEFEO* Paris, EFEO vol. 97-98 (2013), 271-315.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 30.

³⁰ Robert L Brown, *The Dvāravatī Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of South East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 52.

vimana, a flying seat or throne for the divine that intersects both the divine and earthly realms.³¹ The Khmers interchanged the visual image of the pedestal and the king's throne, a tradition for both Champa and Cambodia. The images of performative male figures on the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal symbolically animated the throne's presence and the brahmanical rituals related to the king's consecration focused on it. Second, the performing figures were repeated and standardized, re-emerging on later 10th-century Cham temple foundation walls and outside royal spaces such as mountain caves. Thirdly, the iconography reinforced a performative interaction between the visual object and the viewer to accommodate a growing community in the sacred and secular world. There is little direct stylistic borrowing among Southeast Asian regions as seen in the later extant Cham art, with a shift towards the development of a local Cham style and artistic community.

A brief discussion about the role of pedestals and seats in Indic culture is necessary before proceeding. There are at least two types of representations for pedestals or seats. One is the footed pedestal, which resembles a chair or bench and the other is a solid slab or platform with no legs. The earliest examples of a pedestal or seat are stone platforms or sacred seats from Sri Lanka. This type was originally thought to be a grinding stone, but a platform was found buried as an offering under the Yatala stupa, in Sri Lanka, suggesting that it had some specific Buddhist significance. There is an undeciphered Brahmi inscription carved on the top of the seat. Another grinding stone found on the Godavaya shipwreck includes carvings of the Buddhist triratna symbol carved on the seat. The same type of bench has been found in Mathura and Taxila, but more elaborate in carved decoration. The same prototype of "seated bench/stool" is found on 10th-11th-century Cham reliefs of kingly figures seated on similar benches discussed

³¹ Sachchidanand Sahai argues Sambor Prei Kuk is a flying palace. See Sachchidanand Sahai, "Archaeology of Soft Power in ASEAN-India Cultural Contexts," in *Cultural and Civilisational Links Between India and Southeast Asia: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 241-252.

later in chapter two. The kingly figures seated on this bench with legs is different from the altar-pedestal throne featured on the Sambor Prei Kuk lintel, indicating perhaps a political rulership separate from Cambodia.

The earliest use of pedestals of Indian culture can be traced to the Mauryan period in India.³² Fredrick M. Asher has written about a polished sandstone slab that was found in Bodhi Gaya, India (fig. 5). Asher states that the slab was used as the top surface of the altar inside the temple. The slab symbolizes a “vajrasana or adamantine throne.”³³ The iconography of hamsa and palemtes is also depicted on the top edge of the throne, a feature also seen on Mauryan columns. In addition, the top slab is completely covered with geometric designs. During the Gupta-period, the slab was provided with a brick base decorated with added stucco images. The stucco images reveal four alternating panels, “two recessed with each a lion, and two projecting each with a pot-bellied dwarf.”³⁴ Based on the style, Asher dated the stucco figures to the 6th century. This is the first time that decorative figures appeared in a panel on the outside of a throne. Furthermore, the pot-bellied dwarfs with their hands raised to support the horizontal column rendered on the throne are similar to sculptural figures with the same gesture found in Champa. In Cham and Khmer culture, the figures are flying while carrying the pedestal-shrine, thereby animating the object as a flying pedestal.

Although not specifically writing about Cham art, Marian Feldman offers relevant discussions about styles interact among portable art objects in the book, *Communities of style:*

³² There are numerous carvings of the Buddha’s throne on 1st century reliefs found at Sanchi, Gandhara, and Kanaganahalli. I specific cite physical seats rather than carvings of them.

³³ Frederick M Asher. *The Art of Eastern India: 300-800* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009)

³⁴ Ibid, 27.

portable luxury arts, identity, and collective memory in the Iron Age Levant.³⁵ Also applicable to Southeast Asian art, style among Khmer, Dvaravati, and Cham sculpture is similar indicates similarities of their cultural and religious identities. Marian Feldman (2014) considers Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice to redefine style, where "style [is] understood here as the minutiae of visual forms."³⁶ It is the miniature details of the object seen as a whole that contribute to the style of a visual culture, and thus should not be overlooked, but underscored. Furthermore, she suggests that the "production of stylistic minutiae be viewed within processes of social practice that connects people into communities of shared identity."³⁷ John Bains (1994) argues that "stylistic standardization points to administrative centralization."³⁸ The shared style and religious practices contributed to a newly emerging collective artistic community among the Khmers, the Chams, and the Mons that developed in the 7th-8th centuries.³⁹

Nancy Tingley and Pierre Baptiste are the first scholars to conduct research regarding the meaning of the Cham pedestals. Nancy Tingley (2003) has argued that the M̃y Son E1 pedestal is a seat for the divine, designed to resemble Mt. Kailasa, home of the Hindu god, Siva. She writes, "if the intention was to illustrate Mt. Kailasa, we can surmise the priest/architect was aware of the text such as the *Prapana-sara-samgraha*, which notes the inclusion of Mt. Kailasa in the

³⁵ Marian Feldman, *Communities of style: portable luxury arts, identity, and collective memory in the Iron Age Levant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 95.

³⁶ Ibid, 95.

³⁷ Ibid, 95.

³⁸ Ibid, 79.

³⁹ A study shows that "Comparing the Chams with other Southeast Asian populations reveals that the Chams had closer affinity with the Mon-Khmer population in MSEA than with the Austronesian populations from Island Southeast Asia (ISEA). The origin of the Cham was likely a process of assimilation of massive local Mon-Khmer populations accompanied with language shift, thus indicating that the Austronesian diffusion in MSEA was mainly mediated by cultural diffusion, at least from the matrilineal genetic perspective." p. 1, See Peng's "Tracing the Austronesian Footprint: A Perspective from Mitochondrial DNA."

puja contemplating the *pitha* which was believed to contain that mountain.”⁴⁰ Based on textual references from the Indian text, *Silpashastras*, Baptiste (2005) also posits that the Chams followed faithfully the tradition of placing importance on the seat of the god. The meaning to a larger art historical narrative with comparisons to Khmer and Dvaravati culture has yet to be understood.⁴¹

Stylistic evidence shows that the Khmers and the Chams maintained a special relationship demonstrated with a shared artistic style and a historical connection from a marriage alliance in the 7th-8th centuries. Compared with Champa and India’s connection through similar culture and iconography, Cham and Khmer art shares a more historical and stylistic relationship. Artistic exchanges between Champa and Khmer culture can be documented from historical contacts rather than copying lost or surviving prototypes. An inscription found in Champa dated to 653 CE describes the genealogy of the king and reveals a marriage alliance between Champa and Cambodia. The inscription reads,

Then Sri Jagaddharma, of mighty prowess, went to the town called Bhava (Cambodia) on the account of certain circumstances. There was a daughter of the king of serpents called, Soma, who founded a family in this world. She was taken as a wife by the excellent Brahmana Kaundinya. Sri Jagaddharma begot from that Sri Sarvani, chaste, and born in the family of Soma, a favorite son of remarkable prowess.⁴²

⁴⁰ Nancy Tingley, “The Pedestals of Champa,” *Arts of Asia*. Vol. 39, No. 6, (2009), 106.

⁴¹ Pierre Baptiste has discussed Khmer and Cham artistic connections at the MET Symposium in 2014.

⁴² Karl-Heinz Golzio. *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 20.

The inscription reveals that King Sri Prakradharma, the son of the king of Sambor Prei Kuk (Sri Jagaddharma) was raised in Cambodia and later, he relocated to Champa to take over its throne. The Cham king records his Khmer ancestral connections, with both cultures shaping his personal memory and religious beliefs. Jean Boisselier suggests that during the marriage alliance, the king brought Khmer artists to Champa.⁴³ Martin Polkinghorne states that temple makers were a part of a complex network of suppliers and producers which included architects, builders, painters, tool fabricators, brick and ceramic manufacturers, and quarry laborers.⁴⁴ It is assumed that the king brought his administration, including temple artisans from Cambodia to Champa.

There are overland routes connecting Cambodia and Champa, but the many rivers and extensive sea coast also allowed easy connections using boats. Travel from Cambodia to Champa is possible via the Tonle Sap River, which connects to the Mekong River. In addition, because of the annual monsoon cycles, the Tonle Sap River flows six months a year South-east (Mekong) to North-west and six months a year in the opposite direction. It would be more convenient to travel from Cambodia to Champa, flowing downstream via the Tonle Sap River to the Mekong River than to flow upstream. The Mekong River breaks into several branches that flow into the South China Sea in what is today Vietnam. Trần Kỳ Phương (2017) has identified three important tributaries of the Mekong River, which includes Sekong, Sesean, and Sre Pok Rivers.⁴⁵ The Cham sites were scattered along the coast of Vietnam and travelers would have continued by

⁴³ Jean Boisselier. Trans. Robert L Brown & Natasha Eilenberg. *Studies on the art of ancient Cambodia: ten articles by Jean Boisselier* (Phnom Penh: Reyum Publishing, 2008).

⁴⁴ Martin Polkinghorne, *Makers and models: decorative lintel of Khmer temples, 7th to 11th centuries*. (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2008), 47.

⁴⁵ Trần Kỳ Phương. “The Overland Trading Route Between Khmer Empire and the Champa Kingdom,” ISEAS-Yusok Ishak Institute, 2017. These are modern rivers, as the contour of rivers may would have been very different in 7th-8th centuries, the route between Cambodia to Champa is possible by rivers without having to travel to the sea and then sailing up the coast of Vietnam.

boat along the coast to reach the site of Mỹ Sơn.

A 12th century Chinese text mentions that a Cham envoy advised China, which reads, [Champa] extends to the great ocean on the east, and from there we send out ships to various countries: to the south, we border the country of Cambodia and it is a one-month journey. It is better to proceed by the water route, whereby the south one will reach the port of the country of Cambodia in 18 days. To the northwest of the country, Jiao-zhou (northern Vietnam) is a forty-day journey, but this is by the route through the mountains. The water route only requires 17 days. [We] have 105 places, and we dispatch people to govern and protect these places, much like the prefectures and countries (under the Song).⁴⁶

While this document was written five centuries later than the cultural exchanges that took place between the Chams and the Khmers in the 7th-8th centuries, the account does suggest that shipping routes to Cambodia were readily possible.

In 1956, Jean Boisselier compared two 7th-century lintels of Visnu Anantasayana and the birth of Brahma, one from Cambodia and the other from Champa (figs. 6-7).⁴⁷ The Cham lintel would have been arranged on the temple doorway of the Mỹ Sơn E1 temple that housed the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal. The two lintels show striking similarities of style and iconography that clearly link them. The artistic evidence shows that the model for Cham sculpture is that of the Khmer style sculptures. Boisselier argues that it is the Khmer sculpture type that was quickly adopted and modified in a particular Cham artistic style that was spread in Champa. This observation

⁴⁶ Geoff Wade, "The Ming shi Account of Champa," *Working paper Series*, No. 3, Asia Research Institute (June 2003), 20.

⁴⁷ Jean Boisselier, "Arts du Champa et Cambodge préangkorien: La date de Mi-Son E-I," *Artibus Asiae* vol. XIX, 3/4, (1956b), 198-207.

contradicts art historical theories that stylistic development occurs over a long period of time; instead it suggests that artistic changes can rapidly occur. Both the lintels' subject matter, iconography, and style are closely related, but also include translocal elements. For example, the position of the body of Visnu lying under the *naga* king with his two feet are rendered in identical position in both lintels. The Cham version renders Visnu with two arms, instead of the Khmer version that depicts Visnu with four arms. The Cham lintel, containing an image of a brahmin behind Visnu, with his hands raised, perhaps to evoke and communicate with the deity. Similar to the Mý Son E1 lintel, the Mý Son E1 pedestal also has direct visual connections with Khmer art.

II. Sambor Prei Kuk: the Temple of N17, S2 and the Mý Son E1 Pedestal

Sambor Prei Kuk, an archaeological site located in Kompong Thom province, in Cambodia has archaeological and artistic connections with the holy site of Mý Son. Sambor Prei Kuk is divided into three groups by French archaeologists, Group C (Central), Group N (North) and Group S (South) with over 150 temples dated to the 7th-9th centuries. There is a direct dimensional relationship between the Khmer temples N17 and S2 at Sambor Prei Kuk and the Mý Son E1 pedestal.⁴⁸ Trần Kỳ Phương mentions in a footnote that the size of the Mý Son E1 pedestal corresponds in size to the foundation of the temples S2 and N17.⁴⁹ The brick foundation of N17 has a similar dimensions to the size of the pedestal of Mý Son E1.⁵⁰ The Mý Son E1 pedestal is the foundation base, but it has been enlarged to the same size as a Khmer temple.

⁴⁸ Pierre Baptiste has also worked on the Cham-Khmer artistic connections. See his presentation at the MET's Lost Kingdom Symposium and essay in catalogue, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia*. John Guy; Pierre Baptiste; Lawrence Becker; Bérénice Bellina; Robert L Brown. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Yale University Press, 2014).

⁴⁹ A silver Nandi, Siva's vehicle was found inside N17 and S2.

⁵⁰ Trần Kỳ Phương, *Vestiges of Champa Civilization* (Thế Giới Publishers, Hanoi, 2004), 60.

The exact measurements of Khmer shrines are documented in inscriptions, specifically shrine S1. Isanavarman's 7th-century inscription describes how the temple mirrors the realm of Siva,

I shall indicate the measure in height and circumference of the Linga on Lingadri and of the mountains of Lingapura. The Linga measures fifteen fathoms and a half [25 m] in height and fifty-eight fathoms [92 m] in circumference. From the base of the Linga on the ground of the plain to the mountain top, it measures two thousand seven hundred and twenty fathoms [4,350 m]. From the town named Girisa to the mountain[top], it measures one thousand seven hundred and twenty-six [fathoms 2,760 m]. The three sacred waterfalls, attended by a legion of Sages, imitate the triple current of the Ganga at all times. The two dimensions of the esplanade at the top of this mountain are twenty-two fathoms [35m] wide and thirty fathoms [48 m] long (K441 vv. 1-6).⁵¹

The inscription meticulously documents the dimensions of the shrine, which is how architects were able to produce the same size temple in Champa.

Temple S2 is another larger brick structure with iconography comparable to N-17 and artistic connections to the M^ỹ Son E1 pedestal (figs. 8-9). The foundation base of Temple S2 features iconography of figures inside an architectural temple. The position of the figures, who cross their legs with the right leg bent and left leg over the right knee is similar to the figures depicted on the M^ỹ Son E1 pedestal (fig. 8). Cham and Khmer artists shared the iconographical feature with single figures within an architectural frame that possibly reflect individual

⁵¹ Daniel Michon. "Digital Modeling of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Temples Along the Pacific Rim: the Saivite Temples of Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia," (June 1, 2008), 17. https://www.academia.edu/701743/Digital_Modeling_of_Tangible_and_Intangible_Cultural_Heritage_of_Temples_Alone_the_Pacific_Rim_The_%C5%9Aaivite_Temples_of_Sambor_Prei_Kuk_Cambodia

worshippers in real life. While contemporary Cham temples are big enough for a few people, the space is ideal for one worshipper at a time. This suggests the inner core of the temple as the most sacred place for the single worshipper (*garbha-griha*). The iconography of a figure inside an architectural temple is related to the arts of Dvaravati, the region of an area in what is modern-day Thailand

Found in Sri Thep, Thailand, a 7th-century pillar surrounded by a raised pedestal includes images of repeating architectural temples (fig. 10). The two pilasters are decorated with geometric motifs which compare to the designs found at Sambor Prei Kuk. The iconography of the architectural temple points to shared sources, but there is no figural imagery on the raised platform at Sri Thep. I suggest that the figural imagery is related to the importance of performing worship and the desire for a literal visual representation that is emphasized in Khmer and Cham culture. The Khmer and Cham architectural temples are closely related to those found in Dvaravati art, but the Cham artists altered the relief by adding worshipping figures. Marian Feldman writes about the existence of a “shared cultural arena in which the various communities nonetheless competed with one another in negotiation of emerging identities” in the context of the ancient Near East.⁵² This observation is applicable to studies in Southeast Asia where we see that stylistic development and distinction between the art of the Khmer and the Cham allowed the artistic production to emerge as different community identities.

Robert L. Brown has demonstrated a strong artistic relationship between the arts of the Khmer and the Dvaravati. One historical link between the Dvaravati and Khmer is based on the U Thong copper plate inscription (K 964). There is scholarly speculation that the Dvaravati king, mentioned in the inscription has royal blood ties to Cambodia. Brown argues that “we cannot

⁵² Marian Feldman, *Communities of style: portable luxury arts, identity, and collective memory in the Iron Age Levant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 136.

prove that Isanavarman of U Thong Inscription is Isanavarman I of Cambodia, none of the arguments against such an identification is particularly persuasive while the circumstantial evidence for it is quite strong.”⁵³ The arts of the 7th century in Cham, Khmer, and Dvaravati culture reinforced close royal family ties between the Khmer and Cham rulers during the 7th century. These relationships would place the Khmer at the center of the distribution of artistic and cultural distribution. While the kings have blood ties to particular cultures, at the same time the artistic production rapidly became localized to establish each king’s artistic identity of his region. This also indicates the king’s individual desire to quickly become independent and regionally different from their familial blood ties.

A 7th-century Khmer lintel from Sambor Prei Kuk prominently depicts performing male musicians (figs. 11-12).⁵⁴ The central dancing figure is possibly Siva. There are four male musicians, two on each side of the central dancer. Each figure plays a different instrument, including a drum, harp, lute, and cymbals. In addition, the two males on each end are blowing on a conch trumpet. Two snake kings (*nagarajas*) at the ends of the lintel flank the outside the entire scene. John Guy states that "the asymmetrical ear jewelry worn by the *nagarajas* is uniquely associated with Siva, serving to indicate his bisexual nature, the disk type (ear plug) denoting his female alignment and the pendant type, the male.”⁵⁵ One thing of particular interest is that there are only depictions of male musicians and dancers in the religious context of evolving Siva in 7th-century Khmer and Cham culture, which is different from Indian culture. If this ear plug

⁵³ Robert L Brown, *The Dvāravatī Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of South East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 52.

⁵⁴ John Guy mentions a similar harp player carved on a relief from Champasak. See *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Yale University Press, 2014), 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 44.

represented female alignment, perhaps the feminine quality is already inherent in ritual space, thus there is no need for the representation of female dancers.

In particular, the Khmers and the Chams shared close relationships visible in their art productions. For example, there are two Khmer round pedestals discovered at Kompong Preah dated to the 8th century comparable to the M̃y Son E1 pedestal (figs. 14-15). The Khmer pedestals are decorated with repeated lions and the second pedestal depicts a repeated figure sitting on a pedestal.⁵⁶ They both have similar figures seated on some type of seat. The pedestals were to indicate some structure to climb up on. One of the pedestals has a polished portion of the top remaining. The pedestal would function similarly to a seat on which a figure (or kingly figure) would sit. At Sambor Prei Kuk, there are also pedestals with intricately carved designs used to mount an icon above the ground. The surface of the Khmer pedestals is decorated with horizontal bands of concave and convex decoration that can be plain or carry designs. In addition, there are flat bands with spaces for figures carved in relief that are separated by pilasters. The decorative flat bands and pilasters are also found depicted on the M̃y Son E1 pedestal. Here I want to emphasize that while the depictions on Khmer pedestals and M̃y Son E1 pedestal are not identical, iconography was carefully selected within an international artistic koine of Southeast Asia.

III. The Visual Altar Within Temple on Mountain

An important 7th-century Khmer lintel shows a king's coronation (*abhisheka*). The seated Khmer king is under an open pavilion, rendered similarly to the Khmer temple structures of N17 and S2 (figs. 16-19). The lintel relief depicts the front of the temple, showing two pillars and a two-tiered roof with a round decorated motif at the center. This representation of an open

⁵⁶ This kind of lion echoes the lion found on the 6th-century throne base found in Bodh Gaya, but the Mauryan lion is damaged and a visual comparison cannot be made (fig. 6).

pavilion replicates contemporary Khmer temples, built with the same motif designs and two-layered roof. The lintel shows two groups of specialized priests, ascetics, and brahmins pouring ritual water on both sides of the seated king. He is depicted in a squat-position on a recognizable illustrated altar-pedestal.⁵⁷ The artist also illustrates the top and bottom of the pedestal larger than the middle, with a simple design of a small rectangle to distinguish the center.

The altar carved on the lintel has a form identical to contemporary altar-pedestals found in Cambodia and Champa. The king is seated on an altar-pedestal, and not a throne, as a statement of his divine nature (figs. 16 & 19). The Khmer king also has a royal association because his hair is fashioned in a crown-like coiffure, which parallels the pointed crenulations along the roof. His hair is made to look like he is wearing a crown. John Guy states that the crenulations are typical of Sambor Prei Kuk monuments.⁵⁸ Sculptors followed the same iconographic style of Cham and Khmer altar-pedestals and temple architecture.

The Wat Luong Kau inscription stele dated to the 5th-century records that King Devanika travels to Champasaak (Vat Phou, Laos), which is a former Khmer region. He travels from a distant place and describes the purpose of his visit: to “install in supreme royal power by the auspicious Sri Lingaparvata [mountain representing Siva], honoured since antiquity.”⁵⁹ He traveled to receive his authority confirmed and enhanced by the performance of the royal consecration ceremony (*abhisheka*) after which he assumed the honorific of *maharajardhiraja*, “the king of kings.”⁶⁰ The inscription also records that King Devanika constructed a holy bathing

⁵⁷ John Guy, Pierre Baptiste, Lawrence Becker, Bérénice Bellina, Robert L. Brown, Federico Carò, Pattaratom Chirapavati, et al, *Lost kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist sculpture of early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 165.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 166.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 133.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 133.

tank in honor of Siva (Kuruksetra), named after the tank near Delhi found in the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*.⁶¹

There are various debates about which region King Devanika came from. George Coedes has suggested that he came from Champa. In contrast, Michael Vickery suggests it was a local chiefdom in the Dangrek mountain range.⁶² John Guy has suggested that King Devanika was likely from Champa because he had knowledge of Hindu texts and ritual practices. John Guy also suggests that the image of the seated king on the Khmer lintel might represent the consecration of King Devanika at Champasak, southern Laos, in the 5th century.⁶³ The artistic relationship between Champa and Khmer in the late 7th century indicates that the Chams would have known about the king's consecration ceremony and Champasak would have been one of the places kings traveled in order to receive consecration on a mountain. This also explains why the Khmer king is depicted seated on an altar-pedestal, symbolic of a mountain top. The Khmer king is seated in the center of the lintel, symbolic to the *axis mundi*, the center of the world.⁶⁴ Thus, the Khmer king is also symbolically seated on top of a mountain.⁶⁵ This refers to the earthly and heavenly realms. The earth appearing like an hourglass is connected to the heavens. Heaven is a symbol used in Buddhism placed as a harmica on a stupa. It is also used as the seat of one of the earliest Buddha images at Mathura in the Indian context.

The visual concept of the temple within the temple-mountain can be seen on the Khmer lintel, visual symbolism also shared by Cham artists. The aniconic form of Siva is illustrated

⁶¹ Ibid, 133.

⁶² Ibid, 133.

⁶³ Ibid, 133.

⁶⁴ As suggested by Lakshika Gamage, UCLA.

⁶⁵ UCLA graduate seminar with Professor Robert L. Brown, 2014.

directly above the king, suggesting that after the coronation, the king rules under the guidance of the divine Siva.⁶⁶ The Khmer king seated under an open temple is directly within a larger temple. The concept of the temple within a temple, or temple within a mountain is also reinforced in the Cham tradition. The conceptual image of the altar within a temple on a mountain is compressed on a lintel as well as expanded with the actual execution of the temple, it suggests that artists worked conceptually and literally, both in large and small forms.

Three inscriptions found in Champa reveal the importance of mountains in reference to a temple. For example, one inscription engraved on a rock reads,

...to the east, the Sulaha mountain, to the south the Great Mountain, to the West, Kucaka mountain, to the north the Great River.⁶⁷

The inscription is dated to the reign of Bhadravarman in the 5th century and was discovered in Quảng-nam province, Vietnam. Another inscription dated to the 6th century mentions,

Again, the land, with its people, which was given as perpetual (endowment) by the king Bhadravarman is bounded by the Sulaha mountain in the east, the Great mountain in the south, Kucaka mountain in the west, tenth part is to be given by the people who live in the land...⁶⁸

The third inscription discovered in Champa, the Mĩ Son Stele Inscription of

⁶⁶ John Guy, Pierre Baptiste, Lawrence Becker, Bérénice Bellina, Robert L. Brown, Federico Carò, Pattaratorn Chirapravati, et al, *Lost kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 133.

⁶⁷ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

Vikranatavarman (732 CE) also reflects the association of altars to mountains. For example, it states,

Sri Naravahanavarman covered (that altar) of stone with gold and silver on the outside as Brahma made the peak of Meru. Moreover this altar, of gold and silver supporting Laksmi...shines like the peak of Himalaya. By him was made this great altar, difficult for the previous kings...how wonderful.⁶⁹

The inscription continues,

Sri Vikrantavarman, whose great glory is well-known, and whose high fame is due to the grace of the lotus-feet of the primordial God Sri Isana and his [the king's father]...by whom Laksmi, born in the Kailasa mountain, was again installed on such an altar.⁷⁰

The inscription suggests that the altar supported icons such as the goddess Laksmi. In addition, the inscription records the importance of altars with reference to mountains.⁷¹ The Khmers and the Chams had a strong tradition of shared artistic production and both regions reinforced the visual concept of the altar within the temple on a mountain.

IV. Performing Cham Male Figures

There are three major types of male figures reoccurring on all four-sides of the M̃y Son E1 pedestal. The first group is performing religious specialists, which include clean-shaven court Brahmans and ascetics (*acaryas*) with long beards (figs. 20-22). The second group is performing

⁶⁹ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

⁷¹ Nancy Tingley also mentions the significance of this inscription in her article, "The Pedestals of Champa." *Arts of Asia*. Vol. 39, No. 6, (2009), 104-111.

male artists, such as musicians (*gayana*), dancers (*nartaka*), and instrumentalists (*vadaka*). The final group is performing worshippers (figs. 23-26). The entire cast of figures are important for the king's coronation in Cambodia and Champa. The same figures are carved on a Khmer lintel that shows the king's coronation. In addition, while there are no images depicting a Cham king's coronation ceremony, we know that the king Sri Prakradharma had a coronation that implies court participants recorded in an inscription which reads, "He, the illustrious king of Campa, Maharaja Sir Prakasadharma, who took the name of Sri Vikrantavarman at the time of coronation."⁷² In order for the coronation to be properly performed, the king with brahmins, ascetics, and musicians must be present. The king's most important advisors are depicted on the pedestal of M̃y Son E1. The figures on the four sides of the pedestal create a visual community of participants stressing the king's rule in all four directions. The performing images animate the foundation and renew the religious activities needed for the king to have a successful reign.

The brahmins are visually recognizable because they are clean-shaven (fig. 20). Brahmins carry wisdom beads and are often rendered with a distinctive hairstyle. They often sit with their legs in a particular manner, the right knee bent and left leg crossed. This type of leg position is also similar to sitting figures found on Khmer lintels in the 7th century. Brahmins are featured as active beings through their movement of the entire body or vocal performances such as chanting, singing, or speaking. The 7th century is the first time visual depictions of brahmins appear, which suggests they were highly revered and held immense power in the royal court.⁷³

The second figure type of priests are the ascetics (fig. 21). They are depicted with long

⁷² Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 20.

⁷³ A brahmin is also represented on the M̃y Son E1 lintel, showing the sleeping Visnu.

beards, and are also actively performing religious activities. For example, a kneeling brahmin is depicted pouring water on a *linga* pedestal, the act of *linga-puja*. The third group, dancers and musicians, animate the pedestal, playing perpetual music from harps, drums, and flutes (fig. 25). The figures create a lively environment with continuous music. The presence of musicians and dancers evokes the presence of the dancing Siva, in a religious space among brahmins and ascetics. This can be confirmed in a lintel from M̃y Son C1 dated to the 7th century, which shows Siva dancing on an altar-pedestal (fig. 30). There are various worshippers and musicians also seated on altar-pedestals. The male musicians are within the sacred realm of Siva. The M̃y Son E1 pedestal shows animated animals hopping around, as they too, seemed to be happily dancing to the music (fig. 27). The third group, pious worshippers is depicted throughout the M̃y Son E1 pedestal. The Khmer lintel of the king's coronation and the M̃y Son E1 pedestal illustrate the performative images of brahmins, ascetics, musicians, dancers, animals, and worshippers to animate the pedestal and evoke the dancing Siva.⁷⁴

There is evidence in Buddhist texts that brahmins and ascetics participated in music, dancing, and singing. For example, in the *Brahmajala Sutra*, there was a division between brahmins and Buddhist monks in the practice of music, stating ‘whereas some ascetics and [b]rahmins...remain addicted to attending such shows as dancing, singing, music, displays, recitations, hand-music, cymbals and drums, fairy-shows, acrobats and conjuring tricks, combats of elephants, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks, and quails, fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, parades, manoeuvres and military reviews, the ascetic Gotama [Gautama] refrains from attending such displays.’⁷⁵ This suggests that brahmins, ascetics, and monks

⁷⁴ Phnom Thma Doh, EFEO_CAM00843 from Khmer culture draws a similar parallel.

⁷⁵ Bo Lawergren, “Buddha as Musician: An Illustration of a Jataka Story,” *Artibus Asiae*. (Vol 54, No. ¾ 1994), 233.

participated were well-known for their role as participants in popular entertainments such as music and dancing.

The musician with a harp carved on the Mỹ Sơn pedestal is similar to two other small-scale objects with harp players found in Champa. The first example is a ceramic pottery shard with decorated sculptural carvings from the Kiên Giang Museum (fig. 31). The harp player is seated with her legs stretched out. She holds her harp with two arms, allowing the instrument to rest on her lap. The three strings of the instrument appear to go behind her back. Her coiffure is arranged to one side, showing three-fourths of her face. Beside her, the second seated figure has a belt around her legs, while she shakes unidentified objects. Six round dots carved as decorative motifs separate this scene from the rest of the imagery carved on the pottery fragment.⁷⁶ A second example is a gold plaque from Óc Eo culture, which shows a woman playing a harp. One of her legs is also stretched out, while her other leg is bent and tucked underneath. This type of string harp from Champa is parallel to the harps depicted on reliefs from Khmer and Burmese culture, but specifically with the harp player carved on the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal.⁷⁷

VI. More Male Performing Figures: the Cave Temple in the Marble Mountains

The archaeological site of Mỹ Sơn is about 53 kilometers from the Marble Mountains. The Marble Mountains (Ngũ Hành Sơn) are located in Đà Nẵng, Vietnam consisting of a cluster of five marble and limestone mountains. The site was once occupied by the Chams, as evident in their extant material culture found inside the cave. To reach the top of the mountains and enter into the five cave-temples, visitors must climb 156 steep stairs. Trần Kỳ Phương has argued that the region of Champa was established on the basis of five geomantical elements: the Holy Mountain, River, Estuary, City, and Sea. The five mountains at Ngũ Hành Sơn represent the five

⁷⁶ This pottery shard is similar to the pottery shard found at Chansen, Thailand.

⁷⁷ Inscriptions musicians from Burma were sent to the Tang court in 802 CE.

elements: metal, wood, fire, earth and water. There are additional Cham pedestals found inside the Marble Mountains that were been added at a later date. Although we are uncertain about the earliest date of Cham occupancy at the Marble Mountains, there is evidence of a Cham pedestal with stylistic features dated to the 10th century. Here is another context in which a pedestal is inside of a temple on a mountain. The Chams reinforced the concept with a literal creation because the temples do not sit on metaphorical mountains, but rather occupy cave temples inside of actual mountains.

One Cham pedestal still used in worship by local people inside the Tang Chón Cave within the Marble Mountains, is related to the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal. The huge pedestal was discovered *in situ* and first published by A. Sallet in 1924. The huge pedestal cannot be moved because it is carved from the rock of the mountain. Anne Valerie Schweyer has described that the entrance includes a massive balustrade of carved stone, divided in the center by a small stairway.⁷⁸ The architectural prototype bears resemblance to the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal, but this time, there are no figures carved on the stone of the pedestal in relief inside the temple structure. The pedestal is less decorative than the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal (fig. 32).

There is another piece of stone slab with the depiction of two identical male guardians or *dvarapala* each framed in a squared niche (figs. 33-34). The guardians are enclosed in a square niche with a carved border with a decorative pattern (fig. 34). The identical figure holds a weapon in his hand and wears a thick waist belt. The figures' hands are placed on his waists and bodily stance artistically bear some similarities to the gigantic statues of the *dvarapala* in the 9th century Đổng Dương temple (fig. 35). The *dvarapala* found in the Marble Mountain is completely transformed in the Cham style, unlike the style of the *dvarapala* at Đổng Dương that

⁷⁸ Anne-Valerie Schweyer, *Ancient Vietnam: history, art and archaeology* (Bangkok: River Books, 2011), 168.

has connections with Chinese *dvarapalas* from the Tang Dynasty (fig. 36). An imported 6th-7th-century gilded bronze Dvarapala statue has been found in Kampong Cham province, Cambodia, which is the earliest representation of door guardians with connections to Chinese culture.⁷⁹ The Đổng Dương *dvarapalas* trampling on buffaloes were also worshipped like the Tang examples and served as protective deities at entrance ways. Similarly, the *dvarapala* depicted at the Marble Mountains were worshipped and followed a strong Cham style. We do not know if the upper portion of the pedestal was installed at a later date or what the original icon worshipped here was. There is no imagery depicted behind the pedestal. Furthermore, images are not clearly visible without a torch because of the lack of natural light inside the cave. Trần Kỳ Phương has suggested that the visual imagery became simpler because they were not meant to be visible in the open-air like the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal.⁸⁰ The literal concept of the cave temple within an actual larger mountain (Marble Mountains) parallels the construction of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal, which symbolically represents an altar-temple within a mountain.⁸¹

VII. Pedestals & Foundation Walls of Later Temples

The Khmers and the Chams shared artistic and religious practices in the 7th-8th centuries, which greatly shaped the visual production between the two regions. The shared Khmer-Cham style diverged to form distinctive artistic traditions, which flourished and were distinctively modified in Champa and Cambodia. This indicates that artistic traditions can change dramatically within one century.⁸² The Cham style was established through replication,

⁷⁹ Imports will be discussed in Chapter Three.

⁸⁰ See Trần Kỳ Phương's article regarding this matter.

⁸¹ The pedestal is always open-air. Schweyer writes that natural stalagmites were possibly worshipped as symbolic representations of the Siva *linga*.

⁸² Jean Boisselier, Trans. Robert L. Brown, and Natasha Eilenberg. *Studies on the Art of Ancient Cambodia: Ten Articles by Jean Boisselier* (Phnom Penh: Reyum, 2008).

reference, and repetition of specific iconography. For example, the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal has four directional stairs, each consisting of a single step. Carved above the step on the wall of each pedestal are three figures holding a cloth (fig. 37). Scholars have referred to this object as a scarf, but the cloth is used for a person to perform a ritual trance to enter into the sacred world. The central figure extends his right leg forward with his left leg bent at the knee and both hands are raised as if he is lifting the pedestal, leaving the material world into the spiritual world.⁸³ Two other figures, one on each side of the central figure imitate the same bodily position and hand gestures. The same two figures flank the larger central figure, all bending their heads back to look up at the higher realm. The upper register shows three figures again, but this time we see the central figure from the back view. Still bent on one knee with the other leg extended forward, the central character places the ritual cloth into the air. Two of the figures who flank the central figure are rendered in profile and they carry bowls. It is not certain if these three figures are meant to represent the same three figures on the register below, or three different figures.

Male figures similar in body posture to the central figure on the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal also appear as a 6th-century free-standing bronze Cham sculpture and carved on the foundation bricks of the 10th-century Mỹ Sơn F1 temple (figs. 37-38). Furthermore, Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka also takes the position as seen on a relief carving from the 9th-century Đổng Dương temple (fig. 39).⁸⁴ The Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal resonates with the temple of Mỹ Sơn F1 with images of a figure in the same bodily position and gestures of the arms replicated on the foundation. A similar figure is also repeated in relief on 10th-century Mỹ Sơn Temple Group A (fig. 41). Thus, the iconography of this figure in motion that is rendered on the pedestal has visual connections to

⁸³ Robert L. Brown suggests this figure is flying, which is possible. We see this exact bodily position, with left leg forward and other leg bent depicted at the 9th century Đổng Dương pedestal.

⁸⁴ There is debate about the identity of this figure.

later temples.

The base of a Cham temple, of which a pedestal like M̃y Son E1 can be a part, is symbolically and structurally the most revered part of a temple's architecture. Furthermore, the use of repetition standardized the distinctive Cham style, spanning many decades. There is special relationship between Khmer lintels and temples, with images on Khmer lintels to reference contemporary temples. This is unlike Cham culture, with later foundation of temples replicating similar images found on Cham pedestals. Thus, Khmer images of temples on lintels copy temple types that are chronologically the same as the lintels themselves, whereas Cham images of temples that occur on pedestal are of a consistent type that reference early examples. Furthermore, different from Khmer culture, the colossal Cham pedestals, such as the pedestal of M̃y Son E1, were positioned in the open-air and visually connect to foundation bases of actual Cham temples.

Angkor Wat, dated to the 12th century, demonstrates how radically different the Khmer style became (fig. 42). The movement of Khmer art to copy temple styles of the periods of the lintels, a kind of stylistic naturalism or realism, is well seen in Khmer representations of people. For instance, a low relief carving at the temple shows King Suryavarman II seated on his mountain throne (Mt. Sivapada) while his four generals take a blood oath, another water-related ceremony. Robert L. Brown identifies two types of priests, specifically brahmins and ascetics.⁸⁵ Viewers can distinguish between the two groups of priest because of their hairstyles. Brown states, "the group on the proper right are ascetics with their matted hair in high cones (possibly the acaryas). Those on the left wear their hair in elaborate twists and lops (possibly the

⁸⁵ Robert L. Brown, "Ritual and Image at Angkor Wat," on *Image in Asian Religions: Text and Contexts*. Ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (UBC Press, Vancouver Toronto, 2004), 356.

brahmins).”⁸⁶ He also notes that the prominent figures of brahmins, ascetics, musicians, and dancers that appear in the 7th century on the Khmer lintel, showing the king’s coronation as well as on the 12th-century relief at Angkor Wat.

To add to this list, similar figures are also depicted on the M̃ Son E1 pedestal. The M̃ Son E1 pedestal is similar to 12th-century Khmer artistry through iconography and culture, but no longer by style. Swati Chemburkar has argued for the important role of “*pasupata* ascetics not only in the purely religious sphere but also in the royal” based on textual, literacy, and inscriptions in Cambodia. Thus, the images of ascetics could be understood as the depiction of Pasupata ascetics.⁸⁷ John Guy has recently argued Pasupata ascetics are likely depicted on the Wat Eng Khna lintel of the king’s consecration from Cambodia.⁸⁸ The Cham style began from a Khmer-inspired tradition, but the art became standardized through repeated repetition in other art mediums. Whatever the connection between Khmer and Cham artists in the 7th-8th centuries, there is little direct artistic borrowing as seen in the extant art today.

On the relief from the Northern Gallery at the 12th-century Banteay Chhmar, Peter Sharrock has identified “a brahmin with bearded ascetic top-knot [venerating] a linga in a crowded mountain shrine.”⁸⁹ The figures identified by Robert L. Brown in the Angkor Wat relief belong with the same group of priests with “top-knot,” and “matted hair with high cones” also depicted on the relief at Banteay Chhmar. The reliefs at Banteay Chhmar with depictions of

⁸⁶ Ibid, 354.

⁸⁷ Swati Chemburkar & Shivani Kapoor, “The Pasupata Sect in Ancient Cambodia and Champa,” in *Vibrancy in Stone: Masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*. Eds Trần, Kỳ Phương, Võ Văn Thắng, and Peter D. Sharrock (Thailand: River Books, 2018), 45-56.

⁸⁸ John Guy, “Shiva’s Land Understanding the Religious Landscape of Early Southeast Asia,” in *Cultural and Civilisational Links between India and Southeast Asia: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions*, ed. Saran, Shyam (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 265.

⁸⁹ Peter Sharrock, Claude Jacques, Swati Chemburkar, John Sanday, Julia Killmer, and Pīammētāwat Phaisān. *Banteay Chhmar: Garrison-temple of the Khmer Empire* (Thailand: River Books, 2015), 87.

priests give viewers some context in how mountain *lingas* shrines, like the M̃y Son E1 pedestal and the mountain shrine found inside the Marble Mountains would have been worshipped (figs. 43-44). For example, on the relief at Banteay Chhmar in Cambodia, two priests kneel before the pedestal on each side. The *linga* pedestal is enclosed with an open architectural structure.⁹⁰

To the left of this scene, Peter Sharrock states, ‘the king, carried in a palanquin, arrives under coconut palms and banana trees and points to a fairly determined look at the temple with *linga* where Brahmins are officating. The king’s pointing at the Sivalinga in a shrine filled with bearded Brahmins could suggest he has reached M̃y Son, the great Cham temple complex set in the mountain above the port of modern port Hoi An.’⁹¹ While we do not know if this site was indeed meant to represent M̃y Son, the image reflects on the shared construction of a *linga/yonī* pedestal, which is what the M̃y Son E1 pedestal looked like. This suggests that this construction of M̃y Son E1 pedestal elevated and designated the region of Champa as a site of sacred worship for foreigners and natives. From this relief, the king and brahmins actively used the colossal pedestal and marked the designated place as a sign for worshippers to travel and venerate Siva.

VIII. Conclusions

The 7th-century M̃y Son E1 pedestal is one of four existing Hindu and Buddhist pedestal-shrines found in Champa. The M̃y Son E1 pedestal have been interpreted as symbolizing a giant *pitha*, the central seat for the divine. Images of performing male figures such as brahmins, ascetics, musicians, and worshippers are carved in high relief on four-sides. The performing figures could represent participants in the rituals taking place in relation to the pedestal. In addition, the male figures symbolically animated the pedestal and the performances focused on

⁹⁰ We also see this depicted on the 7th-century Khmer coronation lintel.

⁹¹ Peter Sharrrock, Claude Jacques, Swati Chemburkar, John Sanday, Julia Killmer, and Pīammēttāwat Phaisān. *Banteay Chhmar: Garrison-temple of the Khmer Empire* (Thailand: River Books, 2015), 87.

it.

The 7th-8th-century art of the Chams in M̃y Son had close connections to Khmer and Dvaravati culture. The artistic connections reinforced the development of building social communities and maintaining relationships between other regions in Southeast Asia. In particular, the Khmers and the Chams demonstrated strong stylistic and iconographical features and historical connections with a royal marriage alliance. Whether or not the M̃y Son E1 pedestal was created before or after the Khmer and Cham marriage alliance, kinship was recorded through inscriptions and the visual arts. The majority of Cham art was developed with knowledge of the Khmer and Dvaravati style, aligned with Indian related art and iconography.

The M̃y Son E1 pedestal had artistic connections to Khmer and Dvaravati culture in the 7th century. There is a direct spatial relationship between the M̃y Son E1 pedestal and the foundation of Khmer temples N17 and S2 at Sambor Prei Kuk. In addition, there are similar iconographical and stylistic features found on temple N17, temple S2, and the M̃y Son E1 pedestal. The iconography of the architectural temple is also found at Sri Thep in Thailand. Unlike the pedestals in Khmer and Dvaravati culture, the colossal pedestals of Champa were positioned in the open-air with visual connections to foundations of temples. For example, the central image of the M̃y Son E1 pedestal has identical iconography to carved images on the foundation walls of the 10th-century temple M̃y Son F1. This visually associates the M̃y Son E1 pedestal to wall foundations outside of later temples such as those located at the Marble Mountains.

The Chams and the Khmers were engaged in continuous warfare, leading to a large battle on the sea in the 12th -13th centuries. At times, it was uncertain whether Champa was a vassal or an equal to Cambodia. Stylistic localization was a strategic artistic choice that distinguished

themselves artistically as a region of administrative and political power. There is very little visual evidence for Indian and Chinese stylistic influence on the Cham Hindu arts, with no imports from India, except for a dozen Chinese-related Buddhist objects and coin pendants of imitated Roman portraits dated to the 6th-7th centuries. Chinese influence appeared most prominently on the Cham Buddhist arts in the 9th century.

Artistic change occurred rapidly in the 7th-8th centuries, which parallel with possible political instability, changes in administration, and attempts to develop a stronger administration. In addition, it has often been assumed that the network of trade was one of the major reasons for the spread of Indian-related culture. For the region of Champa, it is possible that marriage alliances and familial blood ties between the two regions also had a significant impact on international artistic exchanges. Champa was never a single kingdom, but functioned as a number of independent entities along the coast of southern Vietnam. The Chams united themselves through a coherent set of stylistic practices that created a sense of community, despite not being politically unified. The growth of brahmin power, one significant marriage alliance, and travels on the Mekong and the Tonle Sap River profoundly affected the stylistic development of the art and architecture of Champa in the 7th-8th centuries.

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CHAPTER TWO:

The *Ramayana* and the Colossal Trà Kiệu Pedestal-shrine

This chapter reviews the scholarship on the colossal Trà Kiệu Ramayana pedestal from Champa in the context of the Ramayana from Khmer and Javanese culture during the 9th-10th centuries. Using textual sources, visual evidence, recent excavations, and new scholarship, I suggest that the Trà Kiệu platform was not originally intended as the mount for a linga. The visual evidence including the Ramayana reliefs from the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture, bas reliefs from the temples of Chiên Đàn, Khương Mỹ, Chánh Lộ, and portable bowls depicts imagery related to the Trà Kiệu platform. The evidence shows three iconographic elements, including archers with bows, architectural features, and dancing apsaras, that I interpret as reinforcing military and courtly culture. The polities of Champa were not politically united, but the Chams lived in a highly distinctive temple and courtly culture that emerges from their inscriptions and image making. In this chapter, I explore how the textual and visual evidence from Trà Kiệu and later Cham art promoted a courtly culture of Champa with close relationships to those of Cambodia, East Java, and China.

I. Introduction

The independent polities of Champa along the coast of central Vietnam were not politically united, but the Chams appear to participate in a linked temple and courtly culture, as can be seen through their inscriptions and image making. The earliest Western accounts of the customs of Champa mention five courtly festivals held annually by the Cham king, including activities of feasts, plays, public races, and celebrations of elephant and tiger hunts.⁹² In addition, Chinese histories describe the Cham kings performing public processions with elephants, parasols, drums, and conches. The observations indicate an Indic related public display that reveals the Cham polities sharing political and cultural expressions of power and religion.⁹³ This chapter explores the extent to which the Chams incorporated themselves into the international political and economic sphere in the 9th-10th centuries by projecting a complex and creative military and courtly culture.⁹⁴

One of the most well-known sacred epics in South and Southeast Asia is the *Ramayana*, the life story of Rama, an avatar of Visnu. The chapter analyzes the colossal Trà Kiệu platform within the context of the *Ramayana* from Khmer and Javanese culture during the 9th-10th centuries using visual and textual sources. Visual evidence includes the *Ramayana* sandstone reliefs from the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture and imagery from three central Vietnam

⁹² George Bryan Souza & Jeffrey S Turley, “An Account of the Customs of the kingdom of Champa,” in *The Boxer codex: transcription and translation of an illustrated late sixteenth-century Spanish manuscript concerning the geography, ethnography and history of the Pacific, Southeast Asia and East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 677-680.

⁹³ *Cefu yuangui*, 959.11288; *Taiping yulan* (Encyclopedia Assembled for Imperial Inspection during the Taiping Era) (983; Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1980), 786.3611.

⁹⁴ I am indebted to the work of Julie Romain for her 2015 dissertation, “Courtly Culture and Visual Art in India: *Ramāyāna* Reliefs on Hindu Temples of the Sixth to Eighth Century.” She also offered advice and encouragement from the first time I met her in 2011 and throughout my graduate studies at UCLA in 2012-2017. In Julie Romain’s dissertation, she argues that the *Ramāyāna* reliefs in Hindu temples were a reflection of “secular, courtly culture.” The images of Rāma emphasize an honorific function, which highlights his role as a courtly hero. In addition, I thank Robert L. Brown and Peter Sharrock for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

archaeological sites, Khương Mỹ, Chiên Đàn, and Chánh Lộ. The visual evidence shows three shared iconographic elements, including archers with bows, architectural features, and dancing *apsarases* found in Champa, East Java, and Cambodia. Most scholars have argued that the Trà Kiệu platform once was topped by a *linga* and thus was focused on the worship of Siva. Using textual sources, visual evidence, and recent scholarship, I suggest that the *Ramayana* reliefs indicate that the platform promoted courtly culture with close relationship to the art and cultures of Cambodia, East Java, and China in the 9th-10th centuries. Courtly culture here is defined as ceremonial, celebratory, and martial activities with emphasis on characteristics of identifications, processions, hierarchy, and etiquette for political motivations. The stone Trà Kiệu platform commemorates royal-divine interactions through the narrative of the *Ramayana*.⁹⁵

II. History of the Trà Kiệu *Ramayana* Pedestal

The colossal Trà Kiệu platform and the *linga-yoni* were discovered during the 19th century in Trà Kiệu village of Quảng Nam province in central Vietnam. Not scientifically excavated, the original archaeological context of the objects is unknown.⁹⁶ The first images of the Trà Kiệu *Ramayana* platform was published in 1894 by French Resident Charles Lemire in an excursion report to Tourane, now modern-day Đà Nẵng, Vietnam. We do not know what sculptures were placed on the platform over time. During the colonial period, several different icons were put on the platform at different times. I assume that these changes were due to archaeological and museum considerations, and not due to any attempts to produce a place for

⁹⁵ Peter Sharrock importantly notes that stone was normally a material reserved only for the gods (personal communication, 2019). In addition to religious motives, I suggest that the 10th-century Trà Kiệu platform's imagery has political implications as well.

⁹⁶ The earliest record which documents the Trà Kiệu platform's transfer to Tourane is written by E.L. Lajonquière in *Atlas Archéologique de l'Indochine: monuments du Champa et du Cambodge*. Paris: EFEO, 1901

worship.⁹⁷ For example, Lemire's report shows a statue of a female goddess seated on the Trà Kiệu platform (fig. 45).⁹⁸ The French also arranged a gigantic *linga-yoni* on top of the platform in the Tourane outdoor garden. The decorated *yoni* with doubled lotus petals is placed on a separate base. In a third instance, the doubled lotus petals *yoni* was not paired with the *linga*, but with a sandstone sculpture of Siva's vehicle, Nandi (fig. 46).

The Trà Kiệu platform with the *linga-yoni* is still assembled together in the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture and documented repeatedly by photographs in publications (fig. 47). The sculpture of the *linga-yoni* was not originally placed together with the *Ramayana* platform, but was a modern arrangement by French archaeologists in the 1930s. Early photographs connect the Trà Kiệu platform and *linga-yoni* together and the entire structure is often referred to as an altar-pedestal, or simply a 'pedestal.' Other terms such as altar, base, or block could be used, but as we do not know for what the structures were intended, 'pedestal' is the most general term. The term 'pedestal' is used for the four extant large Cham constructions,⁹⁹ including the Trà Kiệu structure. The assumption is that these structures were intended to support some important object or objects placed on top of the structure, as a seat of the divine, the *pitha* or offering pedestal, the *balipitha*.¹⁰⁰ To avoid only cultic implications with the term pedestal, or altar-pedestal, I refer to the base of Trà Kiệu structure as a platform. A second type of object, of which Cham art has many examples, are bases with spouts for funneling off liquids used to anoint the object it

⁹⁷ Regardless of the reasons behind the arrangement, local and foreign visitors still continue to pray and worship Cham objects in the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture (2015).

⁹⁸ This statue may be identified as the goddess Lakṣmī who is represented seated with her legs crossed and hands resting on both of her thighs. Lakṣmī is often flanked by two elephants which are not represented here, suggesting that she can also be a local Cham goddess.

⁹⁹ The four large Cham structures referred as pedestals were found in the archaeological sites of Mỹ Sơn, Trà Kiệu, Đồng Dương and Vân Trạch Hòa.

¹⁰⁰ Nancy Tinley, "The Pedestals of Champa," *Arts of Asia*, Vol. 39, No. 6, 2009, 106.

supports. I use the term *yoni* for these objects, although they do not always support only *lingas* or spouts. The Trà Kiệu platform must be studied independently from the *linga-yoni*.

There has been extensive discussion about the interpretation of narrative scenes and the identity of the characters carved on the four sides of the Trà Kiệu platform with conflicting ideas about how to interpret the imagery. Scholars have proposed a variety of theories about the meaning of the reliefs on the platform. All of the theories connect the scenes to a narrative of a myth or a text. For example, Jean Przyluski (1929) suggests that the platform depicts the legend of Kaundinya, the king of Funan. George Coedes (1931) proposes a different interpretation, arguing that the imagery reflects life scenes of Krishna from the Hindu text, the *Bhagavatapurana*. Jean Boisselier (1963) expands on George Coedes' hypothesis, providing an in-depth description of the scenes.

Trần Kỳ Phương has argued that the platform depicts the wedding of Sita and Ramaa from the epic, the *Ramayana*.¹⁰¹ Phạm Hữu Mỹ has suggested that the images reflected the royal family of Bhārata from the *Mahabharata*.¹⁰² Some of the figures can be confidently identified as related to Indian texts, but many cannot. This analysis would impose an identification of figures or writing a visual narrative that does not exist. Without a clear visual narrative that connects to a text or a myth, I will not attempt to argue for any one interpretation based on a unified story line. Rather I will argue that we should look at the Trà Kiệu platform and its reliefs not as creating a connected story narrative, but instead as much as reinforcing royal or court identifications. The circulation of the narrative may be predominantly based on an oral tradition that uses various

¹⁰¹ Trần Kỳ Phương. "The Wedding of Sita: A Theme from the Ramayana Represented on the Tra Kieu Pedestal," in *Narrative Sculpture and Literary Traditions in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Marijke J. Klokke (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 51-58.

¹⁰² Phạm Hữu Mỹ. "Đọc lại nội dung đài thờ Trà Kiệu ký hiệu 22.2 tại Bảo tàng Chăm," *Khảo cổ học*. (1995), 84-88.

heroes to tell local stories. The reliefs display a disjointed series of excerpts from sacred narratives to modern audiences, but the narrative scenes were understood by the Chams on their local terms.

James Scott argues that “in the case of oral histories and narratives, the concept of ‘the original’ simply does not make sense. Oral culture exists and is sustained only through each unique performance at a particular time and place for an interested audience.”¹⁰³ Thus, locating the original or a single story for the carvings on the Trà Kiệu platform is impossible. Using Indian texts to comprehend Southeast Asian art occurs in most interpretations, but how it was understood in Southeast Asia is not certain. Even if there was some certainty about the identification of a group of characters in terms of a specific text, we cannot know if the local interpretation was consistent with the Indic textual one. Based on inscriptions and other visual arts related to the *Ramayana* in Champa, there is sufficient visual evidence to suggest that the Trà Kiệu platform depicts characters from the *Ramayana*, but the specific stories and scenes remain debatable.

In addition to conflicting interpretations about the story carved on the Trà Kiệu *Ramayana* platform, the scholarship is not conclusive about the date. There are two dates in the literature for the platform, which is divided between an early 7th-century date, or one that is much later, closer to the 10th century. For example, although scholars, Henri Parmentier and Trần Kỳ Phương date the platform to the 7th- 8th century, another group of scholars including Jean Boisselier, Emmanuel Guillon, and Anne-Valérie Schweyer, place the platform in the 10th century. In light of new scholarship, archaeological findings, and careful visual analysis, I will argue that the Trà Kiệu platform dates closer to the latter.

¹⁰³ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 230.

III. Dating of the Linga-Yoni and the Trà Kiệu Platform

It is possible that the large *linga-yoni* still paired with the Trà Kiệu platform in the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture is dated earlier than the platform itself. Trần Kỳ Phương argues that a 7th-century *yoni* from Hà Trung is similar to the form of the *linga-yoni* on top of the Trà Kiệu *Ramayana* platform.¹⁰⁴ The Hà Trung *yoni* is elaborately decorated with two rows of petals (fig. 48). The first row includes four-leaf petals with an inverted fleuron at the center. The petals are separated between another inverted fleuron carved on the top rim. This fleuron motif also appears on the Trà Kiệu *Ramayana* platform. On the bottom of the Hà Trung *yoni*, there are additional carvings of floral, leaf, and spiral decorations.

A second, round *yoni* with the inscription of Prakasadharmā (C. 97) is also comparable stylistically to the *linga-yoni* of Trà Kiệu.¹⁰⁵ The *yoni* is carved with an inscription on the center of its body, which dates to the 7th century (fig. 49). The inscription states, “this [kosa] for [the linga of] Vamesvara, installed by Sri Vikrantavarman, the lion among kings, will endure as long as the world exists.”¹⁰⁶ The *kosa*, a metal cover for the *linga* can be added and removed, and is thought to be installed as an offering after lustration rituals.¹⁰⁷ This informs us that various things

¹⁰⁴ Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng. Eds. *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture* (River Books, 2018), 128.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 128.

¹⁰⁶ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 29.

¹⁰⁷ John Guy, “The Kosa Masks of Champa: New Evidence,” in *Southeast Asian Archaeology, 1998: Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologist, Berlin, 31 August – 4 September 1998*, eds. Wibe Lobo and Stephanie Reiman, 51-60 and John Guy, “Saiva Ritual: Lingakosa and Mukhakosa in Champa” in *Vibrancy in Stone: Masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*, eds. Trần Kỳ Phương, Võ Văn Thắng and Peter Sharrock (River Books, 2018), 89-95.

were also placed on *lingas* and the placement of objects can also change over time.¹⁰⁸ Except for stylistic connections, there is little evidence that the inscription of Prakasadharmā is related to the Trà Kiệu platform and *linga-yoni*. The base of the *yoni* with the Prakasadharmā inscription has decorative designs of lotus petals, with one large single petal alternating with two doubled petals around the rim. Trần argues that the “round-shaped *yoni* decorated with large doubled lotus petals was introduced as a new art form in the late seventh century.”¹⁰⁹ *Linga-yonis* were constructed in different shapes and sizes with varying decorative motifs from the 7th to the 9th centuries. Without the *linga*, however, the *Ramayana* square platform is an autonomous object, and there is no other Cham *yoni* with images from the *Ramayana*.

As stated above, scholars have differed on the date of the Trà Kiệu platform and I suggest that it should be considered separate from the *linga-yoni*. A 9th-10th-century date is the most likely as the subject and decoration of the reliefs can be compared to prominent 10th-century artworks related to the *Ramayana* in Java, Cambodia, and Champa.¹¹⁰ During a 2001 excavation in Quảng Nam province of central Vietnam, archaeologists discovered narrative reliefs depicting the *Ramayana* on the foundations of a 10th-century southern temple, one of three temples at the archaeological site of Khương Mỹ. Cecelia Levin argues that the narrative reliefs from the Khương Mỹ temple have artistic connections to the *Ramayana* reliefs in South India and Java.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ This is true for sculptures of different cultures including Greece, India, and China, where the original objects may be clothed, painted, or surrounded by flowers among other things for its intended purpose.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng. Eds. *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture* (River Books, 2018), 128.

¹¹⁰ Unlike the modular 7th century Mỹ Sơn pedestal, comprised of several small blocks that form a small cella inside a temple, it is highly distinctive from the 10th century Trà Kiệu platform, a single raised platform with elaborate figurative scenes. Excavation reports show that the platform was found split in two parts, and it was put back together in the Tourane outdoor garden and the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture.

¹¹¹ The *Ramāyāna* in South India is beyond the scope of this paper. See Julie Romain’s 2015 UCLA dissertation on the latest scholarship regarding the *Ramāyāna* in early India and publications of Sheldon Pollock.

The foundation bases from the Khương Mỹ temples include scenes of the sighting and pursuit of the golden deer, the abduction of Sita, and the confrontation of Ravana and Sita.¹¹²

Levin sees architectural connections between Cham and Javanese temples. Levin states, “the assignation of Khương Mỹ to the early Classical phase of Cham art [10th century] was made on the overall basis of architectural ornamentation and particular stylistic links shared with Classical Javanese monuments.”¹¹³ She observes an association between Champa’s matrilineal society and Sītā seen as powerful at Khương Mỹ, rejecting Ravana’s advances. Her observation of the importance of the matrilineal is further explained in Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura’s article about the dualist cult of Cham society. The work of the two scholars reveals that two sanctuaries, Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar “reflect certain characteristics of the cosmological dualism,” defined as a Cham male and female dichotomy.¹¹⁴

Inscriptions and icons found at two Cham sites suggest that Mỹ Sơn was built for the God Bhadresvara (Siva/Mountain/Father) and Pô Nagar for Goddess Bhagavati (Pô Nagar/Sea/Mother) from the 8th-13th centuries.¹¹⁵ The authors conclude that Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar symbolized the female and male realm, an integral emphasis of Cham cosmological dualism. Roy E. Jordaan discusses the possibility for the representation of Sita as Ravana’s

¹¹² Cecelia. Levin, “Recasting the Sacred Heroes: “A New Discovery of Sculptural Epic Narration from Ancient Champa,” in *Interpreting Southeast Asia’s Past: Monument, Image and Text: Selected Papers from the 10th International Conference of European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, Volume, 2*. Eds. Elisabeth A. Bacus, Ian C. Glover, and Peter D. Sharrock (NUS Press, 2008), 88.

¹¹³ Ibid, 90.

¹¹⁴ Trần Kỳ Phương & Rie Nakamura, “Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam),” in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende, Monash Asia Institute (Monash University, 2012), 267-280.

¹¹⁵ Trần Kỳ Phương & Rie Nakamura, “Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam),” in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende, Monash Asia Institute (Monash University, 2012), 274

daughter at Candi Prambanan. What is clear is that both cultures in Java and Champa had local interests with an emphasis on lineage, kinship, and parentage, which is a practiced Southeast Asian tradition in the 9th -10th centuries. In addition, Levin's artistic connections include similar temple foliage forms found in Champa and Java, which may have a common origin in China.¹¹⁶ Following these suggestions, the artistic relationships to consider between Champa and related cultures would include Cambodia and China, as well as Java.

IV. Inscriptions and Historical Records

The interaction between Champa and Java is mentioned in inscriptions, which record Java's sea attack against the Chams in the 8th century. For example, one inscription dated to 787/88 CE reads,

Then owing to the excess of faults in the Kali Age it (the temple) was burned by the army of Java coming by means of ships, and became empty, in the year of the Sakas, denoted by nine, ambara, adri.¹¹⁷

Peter Sharrock has noted that the relationship between the Chams and the Khmers "has too often been characterized as continuous warfare. A close look shows a succession of friendships, and military, economic and cultural alliances."¹¹⁸ Similar to the interaction between Champa and Cambodia, there is little detailed history of the nature and dating of relationships between the Chams and the Javanese. However, there is evidence of contact, both military and economic.

¹¹⁶ Grace Chiao-Hui Tu, "Sinitic Transfers Into Cham Art," in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture*, Eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books, 2018), 84.

¹¹⁷ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 43.

¹¹⁸ Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng. Eds. *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture* (River Books, 2018), 111.

Arlo Griffiths states that “the ancient name of the island of Java, and its identifiability with various similar-sounding names known from ancient Southeast Asian, Chinese and Arab sources, is an old problem, compounded by the fact that similar-sounding and obviously related names in some modern mainland Southeast Asian languages.”¹¹⁹ He suggests that Khmer inscriptions refer to the island of Java. Griffiths concludes that there were “international political relations between Khmer, [Cham] and Javanese polities in the late 8th and early 9th century of our era.”¹²⁰ The visual and textual evidence has not been comprehensively analyzed, but both sources will shed light on the warfare exchanges between the Chams and the Javanese, but also less explored areas such as similarities between their military and courtly cultures.

Intriguing evidence for peaceful diplomatic interchange is in the 10th-century Nhan Biều inscription from Champa that records the historical connection between Java and Champa of a royal officer’s expedition to Java on two occasions. The inscription states,

He was a favorite captain of the king Sri Jayasimhavarman and had riches equal to his desires. He was named Pov Klun Pilih Rajadvara. At the command of the king he went to the capital of Yavadvipa on a diplomatic mission and obtained credit by the success of his undertaking... Again, at the command of the king he went to Yavadvipa a second time and was successful in his undertaking.¹²¹

Under the request of the king, the official traveled to Java on two diplomatic journeys. While we do not know exactly the goals of the journeys, they were considered successful, and must be

¹¹⁹ Arlo Griffiths, “The Problem of the Ancient Name Java and the Role of Satyavarman in Southeast Asian International Relations Around the Turn of the Ninth Century CE,” *Archipel*, vol. 85, (2013), 49.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 76.

¹²¹ Karl-Heinz Golzio. *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 113.

assumed would have introduced new cultural and religious knowledge to the Javanese and Cham courts.

Chinese historical records indicate that the Chams exchanged Javanese textiles with China. For example, textual sources documented that in 963 CE, an envoy from Champa brought to China different types of Javanese textiles, listing them with specific names such as “*gu* thin silk from the country of Ma-li-yan-luan in Java,” and “*gu* thin silk from Sha-wan in Java.”¹²² Whether or not these were actual Javanese textiles cannot be verified, but the Chinese accepted the textiles as Javanese. The documents indicated that the Chams, the Chinese, and the Javanese operated within the international circle, either directly or indirectly during the 9th–10th centuries. The Chams presented Javanese textiles among other trade objects to China, which were possibly exchanged for military weapons and horses.¹²³

Faxian’s account of sea passage from India to China in *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (399-414) indicated travels to Java-dvipa (Java). His passage reads, “After proceeding...more than ninety days, they arrive at a country called Java-dvipa, where various forms of error and Brahmanism are flourishing, while Buddhism is not worth speaking of. After staying there for five months, Faxian again embarked in another large merchantman, which also had on board more than 200 men. They carried provisions for fifty days, sailing on the 16th of April, 414.”¹²⁴ Here, the ship stopped in Java and they remained for over five months to correspond to the change of winds in the monsoon season. While Faxian’s stay in Java was due to storm that drove

¹²² Geoff Wade, “The ‘Account of Champa’ in the Song Huiyao Jigao,” in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society, and Art*. Eds. Lockhart, Bruce M. F, and Trần Kỳ Phương (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 161.

¹²³ Ibid, 11, Chinese refer to these as tribute, but the Chams received items in return, particularly goods and other textiles.

¹²⁴ James Legge & Faxian. “A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms: Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hsien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.d. 399-414,” in *Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline* (New York: Paragon Book, 1965), 113.

his ship to stop there, it was soon that Java and Sumatra became destinations for Chinese monks in the 6th and 7th centuries to stay on their voyages to India and study Buddhist texts and learn Sanskrit. The doors were open wide for cultural interchange.

Furthermore, Champa and Java are connected through their cultural appreciation and shared artistic iconography for the sacred epic, the *Ramayana*. The visual and textual material in the *Ramayana* reinforces kingship and “the development of the notions of political authority of Southeast Asia, most notable in the ancient, and eminently ‘Southeast Asian’—conception of the King as a ‘man of prowess’ endowed with superhuman abilities and worshipped by his entourage in terms of *bhakti* relationships.”¹²⁵ There is ample evidence that the *Ramayana* was celebrated in Champa. A Cham inscription dated to the 7th century reveals the worship and divine nature of Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*. The inscription reads,

The king Prakasadharmā, destroyer of all hordes of enemies, possessing the qualities of wisdom, power, patience, fortune, glory and firmness, desired in the world, after the enemy having vanished in autumn (?), accomplished here the place of veneration for the best poets and great Rsi Valmiki whom he honored full of sorrow with the Brahma-Sloka, he, who is the human form of the old male Visnu...his temple...was built again.¹²⁶

In the inscription, Valmiki, the poet is also honoured as a sage and the ancient male version of Visnu.

¹²⁵ Andrea Acri, “Local vs Cosmopolitan in the Study of Premodern Southeast Asia,” *Suvannabhumi*, vol. 9, No. 1 (June 2017), 10.

¹²⁶ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 12.

In another inscription dated to the 7th century, from the Mý Son Stele Inscription of Prakasadharmā, 658 CE, the king describes himself as

...constantly devoted to the Brahmanas, the gods among men, (he was) gracefully attended by enemies subdued by his own prowess; (he was) the cause of Laksmi's pride; Laksmi's pride; Sri Laksmi, in the fond hope that he was Rama, son of king Dasaratha, dutifully followed him, and this was very worthy of her indeed.¹²⁷

Here, the inscription places the Cham king on the same level as Rama from the *Ramayana*. The position of the king was often held by usurpers with military prowess. Thus, the heroic Rama, who was able to defeat all his enemies and rivals, was an ideal role model in Cham society. The kings often made written references of the ideal leader, comparable to the heroic prince, Rama. A 12th-century Khmer inscription compares the Cham king to Ravana, the defeated enemy of Rama. The inscription reads, "Sri Jaya Indravarman, king of Champa, arrogant as Ravana... having an army led by chariots, went to the country of Kambu equal to the heavens in order to fight."¹²⁸ Both Khmer and Cham inscriptions indicate that the *Ramayana* was well known by the 7th century and continue to be mentioned in later inscriptions.

V. Military and Temple Culture

Besides textual evidence, the Trà Kiệu platform is contemporary to 9th-10th-century arts from Champa that promote military culture. Military culture includes organized labor of people for martial activities including battles and horse-riding to express notions of political power and dominance. Scholars indicate that the horse carved in high relief on the Trà Kiệu platform is stylistically similar to the two horses on a 10th-century relief showing two polo players (fig. 61).

¹²⁷ Ibid, 20.

¹²⁸ Ashley Thompson, *Engendering the Buddhist State: Reconstructions of Cambodian History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 130.

Polo games are connected to military training which prepares players for “speed, skill, stamina, and bravery.”¹²⁹ The necklace with round bells around the horse, hanging from the collar is similar in both reliefs. Furthermore, the horse hoof is rendered in the same realistic style. Another likeness includes the polo player’s hairdo with a large, round bun tied behind the head, which echoes the hair of the figures illustrated on the Trà Kiệu platform. This is the only surviving example of polo playing depicted in Southeast Asian art. Polo games are commonly associated with the horse-riding cultures of the Asian steps, a region with few trees, forests, and large areas of open space, but were also popular in Tang China.¹³⁰ The Chams were also accomplished horsemen and even reached Angkor by horse-chariots in 1177 CE.¹³¹ The image of two polo players on the balustrade of a Cham temple informs viewers about its significance in elite culture, specifically to the royal court, emphasizing some characteristics of Sinitic courtly culture in Champa.

Four lions carved on each corner of the Trà Kiệu platform may have associations to Sinitic and Khmer culture, but there is little visible Chinese stylistic influences on the imagery (fig. 53).¹³² The lions on the Trà Kiệu platform have two of its rear paws upraised, in the position

¹²⁹ Virginia Bower & Mackenzie, Golin. “Polo: the Emperor of Games,” in *Asian games: the art of Contest*, Eds. Colin Mackenzie & Irving Finkel (New York: Asia Society, 2004), 283.

¹³⁰ Nguyễn Hoàng Hương Duyên, “Polo Players,” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*, Eds. Sharrock, Peter, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books, 2018), 206-209.

¹³¹ Ashley Thompson, *Engendering the Buddhist State: Reconstructions of Cambodian History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 6, Peter Sharrock, personal communication, 2019

¹³² Khmer platforms also show an animal or figure on the four corners, with the motif of a garuda or flying celestial goddess. At Trà Kiệu, there are roof tiles constructed entirely in the Han Chinese style, which reveal a deliberate connection to court culture and architecture of China and Đại Việt. For Sinitic connections, see Grace Chiao-Hui Tu’s “Sinitic Transfers into Cham Art,” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*, Eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books, 2018), 79-88.

of attack, similar to sculptural lions with the same posture found at sanctuaries of Trà Kiệu.¹³³ Sinitic influences on Cham art has been discussed in scholarship, particularly reaching its apex in the 9th-10th centuries at the Đồng Dương temple, contemporary to the date of the Trà Kiệu platform.¹³⁴ For example, the large sculptures of fierce door guardians, *dvarapalas* at the Đồng Dương temple share a similar powerful stance and arm postures to Chinese door guardians, *lishi* from the Tang Dynasty.¹³⁵

Constructed with local features, the unique Đồng Dương guardians hold their daggers with one arm pulled back while trampling on buffaloes, stressing their authority and control while taming a strong animal. While the body positions of the Cham door guardians are parallel to the Tang tradition, the iconography of trampling on buffaloes is an Indic tradition.¹³⁶ An expression of aggression or fear, the Cham door guardians reveal their teeth, a similar characteristic for the representation of wrestlers and monkeys in Champa discussed later.¹³⁷ The shared commonality of the guardian figures is not unexpected, but it reveals how by the 9th century a widespread vocabulary of religious and courtly culture was fully developed. The intentionally crafted expressions of power to include some Chinese court characteristics can be interpreted as a proclamation of Champa as a player in the international political sphere, sharing a courtly worldview comparable to China and Đại Việt (northern Vietnam).

¹³³ Thierry Zéphir, “Cornerpieces: rearing and rampant lions.” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*, eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books 2018), 189-190.

¹³⁴ Grace Chiao-Hui Tu, “Sinitic Transfers Into Cham Art,” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture*, Eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books, 2018), 79-86.

¹³⁵ Pierre Baptiste, “*Dvārapālas* or *Dharmapālas*?” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham*, Eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng. *Sculpture* (River Books, 2018), 181.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 180-181.

¹³⁷ Nguyễn Hoàng Hương Duyên, “Polo Players,” in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture* Eds. Peter Sharrock, Trần Kỳ Phương & Võ Văn Thắng (River Books, 2018), 213.

Discovered in the *vihara* of the Đổng Dương temple, is a sandstone block carved in the round, showing a multi-headed figure with eight arms in sculptural relief. Scholars have interpreted that this piece is either a stool for the deity's feet, an elevated seat for the deity (pedestal), or an offering table in the Buddhist context (fig. 102).¹³⁸ As with the Trà Kiệu platform, what object or icons were originally placed on top of the block is unknown. The frontal figure has been identified as either Mara or Ravana.¹³⁹ It has been argued that the figure is the demon Mara, who distracts the Buddha by shaking earth and awakening the *nagas* on the two sides.¹⁴⁰ A second interpretation is that the figure is possibly Ravana, the demon-king and enemy of Rama, who shakes Mount Kailasa, while Siva and his cohort sit above the mountain.¹⁴¹

The figure depicted on the block is comparable to a 10th-century Cham lintel from Mỹ Sơn F1 showing Ravana shaking Mount Kailasa. The demon-king Ravana stands next to a miniature temple, along with the presence of Ganesha and Siva's vehicle, the bull (fig. 107).¹⁴² Parul Pandya Dhar has identified the different components of the depicted Cham miniature temple with major characteristics to include a stair-way banister, wall with plaster, and trident on

¹³⁸ Pierre Baptiste, "Đổng Dương Temple Iconography: Study of a Pedestal with Māra," in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 350.

¹³⁹ The figure also echoes the generic figure who can fly from earth to spiritual realms and vice-versa, featured on the central image of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal.

¹⁴⁰ Pierre Baptiste, "Đổng Dương Temple Iconography: Study of a Pedestal with Māra," in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 343.

¹⁴¹ Māra depicted with multiple heads and arms is uncommon. Henry Parmentier identifies the figure as a monster. See Pierre Baptiste's discussion in "Đổng Dương Temple Iconography: Study of a Pedestal with Māra."

¹⁴² Parul Pandya Dhar, "Pride and Penitence of an Anti-Hero: Rāvaṇānugraha as Motif and Metaphor in India and Campa," in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 367.

pedestal for the roof.¹⁴³ The trident on the pedestal highlights the importance of ritual practices with actual temples and pedestals in Champa. On the Mỹ Sơn F1 lintel, Siva is partially visible seated above the mountain. Most representations depict Ravana shaking the mountain placed at the bottom under the enormous Siva temple that is rock cut into the mountain. The mountain itself is a metaphor for the home of Siva and Parvati, gods who both live on the mountain. In addition, the temple itself is symbolized as the sacred mountain that is the home of the gods, the *pitha*. At the rock-cut Kailasa Temple at Ellora in India, Ravana is depicted at the base of the temple carved into a deep cavity.¹⁴⁴ The temple is literally carved out of the mountain itself, so that the mountain and temple are one. Ravana is placed as if under the temple, trying to shake it, indicating its identification as Mount Kailasa on which Siva and Parvati live. The temple is the mountain on which Siva and all of the gods live, thus the *pitha*. The gods can also descend from the metaphorical mountain to the physical Cham temple, the seat of the divine. Therefore, the figure from Đòng Dương is a symbol of the nature of the pedestal and the sacred *pitha*, not of any specific narrative. Pierre Baptiste has discussed the importance of the *pitha* in texts from the *Silpashastras*.¹⁴⁵ This also indicates that various gods and its home, whether it may be Buddhist, Hindu, or local beliefs, were integrated and revered in the highly developed Cham temple culture during the 9th-10th centuries.

¹⁴³ Trần Kỳ Phương, Võ Văn Thắng and Peter Sharrock Eds, *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture* (River Books, 2018), 61.

¹⁴⁴ Parul Pandya Dhar, “Pride and Penitence of an Anti-Hero: Rāvaṇānugraha as Motif and Metaphor in India and Campa,” in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. *Études thématiques*, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 364.

¹⁴⁵ Pierre Baptiste, “Les Piedestaux et les soubassements dan l’art Cham Hindou: une specificite?” *Tresors d’art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa V-XV siecles*. Eds. Pierre Baptiste et Thierry Zephir. Paris: Reunion des musee nationaux, (Paris: Musee des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2005), 109.

The identity of the carved figure on the Đổng Dương block remains unknown, but Parul Pandya Dhar argues that “what is certain, however, is the deliberate adaptation of a well-known Saivite iconographic formula, namely the *Ravananugrahamurti*, at the predominately Buddhist site of Đổng Dương.”¹⁴⁶ The unidentified figure’s iconographical features are intertwined with the attributes of Ravana, an attestment to the popularity of the *Ramayana* during the 9th-10th centuries in a Buddhist or Hindu context. These features include the multiple heads and arms, with his body tilted back and legs bent, which creates energy and movement in the Cham relief.¹⁴⁷ With eight arms spread out, the figure could also be flying from the earthly realm to the spiritual world or vice-versa.¹⁴⁸

Attention has been placed on the carved imagery on the block, but focus on the back is also significant. On the back side of this object is carved as an elevated seat or pedestal associated with similar seats for kingly figures rendered on the Trà Kiệu platform and later royal court scenes found in the archaeological sites of Mỹ Sơn and Chánh Lộ. The legs of the seat form a hollow space under the block, with *nagas* visible on both sides, which I interpret as highlighting the concept of the *naga-king*. The top edges of the block are decorated with elaborate alternating bands of geometric, lotus, and floral designs. It may be possible that the imagery of the multi-headed figure with eight arms is the back of the block.¹⁴⁹ Baptiste suggests that the block is an offering table (*bali-pitha*) because the size of the block is too small for an

¹⁴⁶ Parul Pandya Dhar, “Pride and Penitence of an Anti-Hero: Rāvaṇānugraha as Motif and Metaphor in India and Campa” in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 372.

¹⁴⁷ In addition to the sculpture of Laksmi discovered at Trà Kiệu, a lintel showing Laksmi, illustrated by elephants has also been found at the Đổng Dương temple, a goddess prominent in both the Buddhist and Hindu context.

¹⁴⁸ This was first suggested by Robert L. Brown in 2015.

¹⁴⁹ Henri Parmentier, *Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments Cams de l'Annam. Tome I. Description des monuments* (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, Ernest Leroux. 1909), 502.

actual seat, the *pitha*.¹⁵⁰ The elevated pedestal, whether a seat or table is a divine object which reinforces the divine home, and the metaphorical seat for the god is also the seat for a kingly figure. We do not know the original function of the sandstone block, but I believe it reinforces royal-divine identifications. In addition, it is associated with contemporary reliefs seen on the Trà Kiệu platform and other later Cham art showing kingly figures seated on a similar elevated structure. The 7th-century Khmer lintel from Wat Eng Khna shows the Khmer king seated on a different type of pedestal during his coronation ceremony. While we do not know what the Khmer king's actual throne looked like, the sacred power of the pedestal is associated with both the divine and the king.

In addition to a highly distinctive temple culture in Champa, there are political implications as well. Dhar interprets the presence of Ravana as “a demon-king or anti-hero,” and a metaphor for the enemy-king, which once again, highlights the character of the opponent and necessity for military protection.¹⁵¹ As Dhar argues, “available evidence, though fragmentary, reveals an ingenious adaption of this narrative in a manner that was steeped in the concerns and predilections of the elite cultures of [Champa].”¹⁵² If the Trà Kiệu platform is examined further and placed alongside contemporary 9th-10th-century arts, three common iconographic elements from Champa related to Javanese and Khmer courtly culture emerge. Stephen Murphy calls for the important distinction “between shared motifs resulting from the common iconographic

¹⁵⁰ Pierre Baptiste, “Đông Dương Temple Iconography: Study of a Pedestal with Māra,” in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 350.

¹⁵¹ The Đông Dương temple is predominately Buddhist, but there are local and Hindu elements incorporated at the site, that requires further research.

¹⁵² Parul Pandya Dhar, “Pride and Penitence of an Anti-Hero: Rāvaṇānugraha as Motif and Metaphor in India and Campa,” In *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 373.

vocabulary originating from India, and patterns stemming from intra-regional links.”¹⁵³ This reinforces what many scholars have argued regarding the significance of localized iconography in different cultures.¹⁵⁴ Following a Southeast Asian tradition in the 9th-10th centuries, the iconography includes archers with bows, architectural features, and dancing *apsarases*.

VI. Archers with Bows

The iconography of the archer with bow is essential for the identification of the figure as Rama on the Trà Kiệu platform (fig. 73). The frontal Rama is shown as an archer who lunges, with his left leg slightly bent and extended forward and right leg bent at the knee, a pose known as *pratyaldhasana*.¹⁵⁵ In his left hand, he holds his bow and his right arm is pulled back to launch the arrow. In the narrative, king Janaka agrees to give his daughter, Sita as wife to anyone who could bend his sacred bow, but Rama breaks it in front of the king and his court. Depicted on the Trà Kiệu platform, Rama’s broken bow is bent on the top, revealing his military strength. Furthermore, Rama is also carved in a similar position to a 9th-century Javanese relief in the Prambanan temple, showing Rama who defeats various creatures at sea (fig. 64). Characters in poses close to *pratyaldhasana* also appears in other 10th-century arts of Champa. Extant examples include two male figures wrestling each other. The two opponents place their hands on each partner’s thigh with arm raised, carved in high relief on the staircase of the 10th-century

¹⁵³ Stephen Murphy, “Cultural Connections and Shared Origins between Campā and Dvāravatī: A Comparison of Common Artistic and Architectural Motifs, ca 7th -10th Centuries CE,” In *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, Eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. Études thématiques, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, 2019), 303.

¹⁵⁴ Robert L. Brown, *The Dvāravatī Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of South East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) & O W Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. Ithaca, (N.Y: Southeast Asia Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), Originally published the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore, 1982)

¹⁵⁵ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 2015

Khương Mỹ temple (fig. 75). In a second example, a 10th-century relief also illustrates two defeated figures and a standing monkey with an inscription that reads, “army of monkeys in the middle of the city of Lanka...hurling” (fig. 75).¹⁵⁶ With their teeth exposed, the monkey stands in a position similar to Rama and the two wrestlers, a posture that indicates physical strength and stamina.

The image of the archer in *pratyalidhasana*, with the iconography of the arched bow is shared between Javanese and Cham artistic conventions. In 2001, archaeologists found sculptural reliefs depicting the major events from the *Ramayana* at the foundation of the Khương Mỹ southern temple. Scholars have found that the foundation bases also include captions, but most of them are illegible. One inscription mentions characters from the *Ramayana* such as Laksmana and Surpanakha written in Cham.¹⁵⁷ The Cham language consists of borrowed words from Sanskrit and the inscription is written in the same style as the two bas-reliefs from the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture. Thus, scholars suggested the reliefs from Khương Mỹ and the two *Ramayana* bas-reliefs are dated to the 10th century.¹⁵⁸ A foundation base at Khương Mỹ depicts Rama shooting an arched arrow from his bow to capture the golden deer (fig. 85). The deer stands in front of a large tree with the arrow pierced through its body. The position of the bow in his left hand and the rendering of the bow in profile echoes the image of Rama holding Rudra’s bow on the Trà Kiệu platform.

¹⁵⁶ Arlo Griffiths, “The Problem of the Ancient Name Java and the Role of Satyavarman in Southeast Asian International Relations Around the Turn of the Ninth Century CE.” *Archipel*, vol. 85, (2013), 238.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 239.

¹⁵⁸ Arlo Griffiths, Amandine Lepoutre, William A Southworth, Thanh Phan. *Văn Khắc Chămpa Tại Bảo Tàng Điêu Khắc Chăm - Đà Nẵng =: The Inscriptions of Campā at the Museum of Cham Sculpture in Đà Nẵng* (Hà Chí Minh: VNUHCM Publ. House, 2012), 239.

The movement of artistic motifs across geographical and cultural boundaries was often documented in terms of decorative objects. Metal dishes travelled easily across borders due to their diminutive size and to their lack of esoteric iconographic and religious meanings. One example is a 9th-century imported dish found in Champa, which illustrates three mounted horse riders holding either a spear or an arched bow, alternating between elephants and trees (figs. 104-105). The mounted archer with bow shoots a leaping animal from behind a tree. The archer is depicted similar to the archer on the foundation bases at Khương Mỹ, as well as resonating with the iconography of Rama's bow on the Trà Kiệu platform (fig. 104). The bow is carved in the same way on the dish and the relief at Khương Mỹ, showing the arch of the bow slightly bent on the edges with the archer's hand firmly gripping the center of the bow. A relief from Candi Penataran depicts Indrajit, the son of Ravana, attacking Hanuman with a bow, reflecting the same iconography of the mounted archer with bow (fig. 105). The sculptor highlights a thick bow arched on the ends similar to a flying boomerang. I suggest that the archer with bow is a visual representation of the king's perceived military stability in Champa and Java. Even more generally, the archer with a bow shows that the male hero, both human and divine, was a symbol of power, bravery, and victory.

VII. Architectural Features

The image of the open-air pavilion on the Khương Mỹ relief reveals a continuing shared Cham-Khmer artistic tradition. The roof of the Cham pavilion includes pointed crenellations, a typical motif first seen in the 7th century at Wat Eng Khna. The Khmer lintel shows the *Lingodbhavamurti* myth and a king's consecration seated under an open-air pavilion with similar

crenellations¹⁵⁹ (fig. 16). Khmer temples with extant pointed crenellations on the roof include the 11th-century temple of Preah Vihear and 12th-century reliefs from Banteay Chhmar. The crenellations have not been found on actual Cham temples. The Cham reliefs express an emphasis on martial symbols, as the crenellations reflected a defensive wall from which to launch arrows similar to the carved imagery of Rama's arrows. Cecelia Levin suggests that the open pavilion has Javanese, Chinese, and Malay architectural links, but another possibility is that this stems from a local Cham-Khmer creation.¹⁶⁰ I interpret the crenellations as an artistic convention shared between Khmer and Cham, reflecting similarities in military culture.

Iconographical analysis beyond the region of Champa connects the art production to Cambodia and Java during the 9th-10th centuries. One iconographic element featured on the Trà Kiệu platform is the hanging fleuron from the upper border above the kneeling female (fig. 59). Not used as a decorative border as designated in Khmer lintels, the motif marks the central character in the Trà Kiệu relief panel. Martin Polkinghorne identified the inverted fleuron as a common motif found on Khmer temple lintels and representative of a tenth-century workshop in Cambodia (fig. 60).¹⁶¹ The inclusion of the motif suggests a shared artistry between Cambodia and Champa in 10th century.

While the Chams share artistic connections with the Khmers through similar architectural features such as the inverted fleuron and roof crenellations, another architectural feature linking

¹⁵⁹ John Guy, Pierre Baptiste, Lawrence Becker, Bérénice Bellina, Robert L. Brown, Federico Carò, Pattaratorn Chirapravati, et al, *Lost kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 165.

¹⁶⁰ Cecelia Levin, Recasting the Sacred Heroes: "A New Discovery of Sculptural Epic Narration from Ancient Champa," in *Interpreting Southeast Asia's Past: Monument, Image and Text: Selected Papers from the 10th International Conference of European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, Volume, 2*. Eds. Elisabeth A. Bacus, Ian C. Glover, and Peter D. Sharrock (NUS Press, 2008), 99.

¹⁶¹ Martin Polkinghorne, *Makers and Models: decorative lintels of Khmer temples, 7th-11th centuries*. (PhD Diss., University of Sydney, 2007), 226.

the Javanese and the Chams is the representation of a miniature temple, accompanied by an active figure. This highlights temple culture and ensures religious activity surrounded inside and around the temple. As mentioned earlier, a 10th-century lintel from M̃y Sơn F1 depicts Ravana shaking Mount Kailasa (fig. 101). In *pratyalidhasana* and other positions, the multi-headed and twenty-armed Ravana is rendered beside a miniature temple. A Javanese relief from the *Ramayana* at Candi Penataran shows a Bhuta messenger next to a temple reminiscent to the carved miniature temple found in M̃y Sơn F1 (figs. 101 & 108). His movement is reinforced by bending one of his legs to the temple. The representation of a temple with an active figure such as Ravana and the messenger on an actual temple relief links temple culture with people. The illustration of the miniature temple is a reflection of contemporary Javanese temples such as the smaller dated temple in the Penataran complex.

VIII. Dancing Apsarases

The female celestial dancer is common in South and Southeast Asia, and there is some specific iconography to the *apsarases* in Cambodia, Java, and Champa. One of the four sides of the Trà Kiệu platform depicts a row of eleven dancing *apsarases*. In the relief, the dancer's two legs are bent outward at the knees and cross or almost cross at the ankles, creating a lively rhythm across the relief. Furthermore, their hands complement the position of their legs, bringing additional movement to the scene. The repetition of dancing *apsarases* on the platform of Trà Kiệu reflect an important component of royal culture and served as an artistic inspiration for later Cham secular art (fig. 93). While Pierre Baptiste does not focus on the narrative reliefs of the colossal Trà Kiệu platform, he makes the distinction between a pedestal and the foundation base of Cham temples. Baptiste argues that another object found in Trà Kiệu, the so-called 'dancer' pedestal of Trà Kiệu is not a pedestal, but the decorated high-relief foundation from the Trà Kiệu

tower. This relief is by art historical consensus contemporary with the Trà Kiệu platform. The dancer's head is tilted with one hand close to her head, while she softly twists and curves her upper body and legs in the relief, reflecting the super-human abilities of the feminine.

More recently, 11th-century sandstone bas-reliefs on the foundation walls of three Chiên Đàn temples reveal close similarities to the narrative reliefs of Trà Kiệu (fig. 92). The architects of the Chiên Đàn temples may have copied the images from the Trà Kiệu platform.¹⁶² The dancing figures reflect resemblances to Cham and Khmer lintels, representing Siva dancing on an altar-pedestal in this position. In Java, Caṇḍi Prambanan also depicts 9th-century reliefs of female dancers to evoke the spiritual realm. In the foundation reliefs of the Chiên Đàn towers of Champa, there are dancers with the same dance position, resonating with the scene from the Trà Kiệu platform (figs. 92-93). The images on the Chiên Đàn temples are less refined, with forms much thicker than the forms of early dancing figures, but still echo the imagery from the sophisticated Trà Kiệu platform.

A sculptural relief from Mỹ Sơn dated to the 11th century depicts a royal figure seated on an elevated pedestal carrying a sword in his left hand (fig. 96). His posture is reminiscent of the kingly figure from the Trà Kiệu panel with one leg positioned to one side of his seat (fig. 94 & 58). In this later relief, the seated figure's head is also frontal, but his body is turned to his side to display his long weapon. Two attendants hold umbrellas on both sides of him to indicate his royal authority. A third attendant carries a flywhisk on his right side. Besides the attendant with the flywhisk, there are a total of eleven dancers and musicians, in parallel to the eleven *apsarases* from the Trà Kiệu pedestal. In addition, on the right, there are two female dancers with flexed

¹⁶²Anne-Valerie Schweyer, *Ancient Vietnam: history, art and archaeology*. (Bangkok: ACC Distribution, 2011), 145.

legs and three musicians, playing the drums, cymbals, and a horn instrument. On the left of the central figure shows a seated figure with a bell and two pairs of dancers and musicians.¹⁶³

Echoing a similar fleuron displayed on the Trà Kiệu platform, an inverted fleuron also hangs beside the attendant and the dancer. This scene illustrates the dancers in the royal court, but also expresses the military strength of the court administration with the presence of a weapon.

Another 11th-century relief found in the archaeological site of Chánh Lộ, in Quảng Ngãi, Vietnam depicts a similar composition with the same theme, namely a central royal figure seated on an elevated pedestal carrying a sword, and surrounded by eleven dancers and musicians on both sides (fig. 95). This court scene is repeated to spread the visual ideals of courtly culture with the inclusion of celestial dancers and courtiers, a scene first carved on the Trà Kiệu platform.

A shared common visual characteristic among representations of the feminine in Javanese and Cham culture is the rendering of the woman's arm. Cham *apsarases* are rendered with "one arm bent with elbow inside in a forward curve."¹⁶⁴ There are variations for the placement of the arms in this special gesture, which includes the second hand clasping the elbow or the second arm depicted freely.¹⁶⁵ The modern Javanese term for this highly flexed arm

¹⁶³ Swati Chemburkar, "Royal Court Dance Lintel," in *Vibrancy in Stone: masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*, Eds., Trần Kỳ Phương, Võ Văn Thắng and Peter Sharrock (River Books, 2018), 220.

¹⁶⁴ Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Ornaments with Meaningful Motifs: The Necessity of Genital Protection," in *Gold in Early Southeast Asia: Selected Papers from the Symposium Gold in Southeast Asia*, Yale University Art Gallery, 13-14 May 2011, Eds. Ruth Barnes, Emma Natalya Stein, and Benjamin Diebold (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 2011), 113.

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Murphy identifies the gesture in the context of Champa and Dvaravati culture appearing as early as the 7th century, describing the posture as, "left arm straight, left palm down, right hand clasping left on or above or in some examples underneath the elbow" (Murphy 2019: 311). However, the left arm is not completely straight; it is bent in a curve. The "arm bent with elbow inside in a forward curve" is shared between Javanese, Cham, and Dvaravati cultures. In the context of Thai culture, Murphy argues that the gesture, which clasps the elbow is known as *prakhong* to indicate politeness in a ritual context. The culture of Dvāravatī is beyond the scope of this paper. See Murphy's article for his discussion.

position is *ndhengklang*.¹⁶⁶ Scheurleer suggests that this arm position designates elegant, amicable women, while Lohuizen posits the women are in love and Lydia Kieven states it is a convention for women's love-yearning.¹⁶⁷ In addition, the bent arms and finger is performed in dance, and it is considered attractive of female beauty.¹⁶⁸ Regardless of the differences in interpretations, it indicates a shared artistic practice for the etiquette of court women and celestial dancers.

An image of a royal couple seated on two pedestals carved on a 9th-10th-century Trà Liên pediment from Cham culture is currently displayed in the courtyard of the Museum of Quảng Trị in Đông Hà, central Vietnam (fig. 78). The lintel depicts a king and queen seated underneath an enormous tree. Stephen Murphy notes the elaborate jewelry worn by the couple, which indicates their status as royal figures. He has also suggested that the two figures could represent the deities, Siva and Parvati.¹⁶⁹ The identity of the two figures would be impossible to discern without an inscription, but nevertheless they are courtly or royal figures. Separated by a single tree trunk, the growing leaves of the tree become an umbrella over the two figures, forming two elite realms of the male and female. The visual composition reflects the cosmological dualism of the Cham world.

The tree carved on the Trà Liên pediment gives some cultural context to the identification

¹⁶⁶ Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Ornaments with Meaningful Motifs: The Necessity of Genital Protection," in *Gold in Early Southeast Asia: Selected Papers from the Symposium Gold in Southeast Asia*, Yale University Art Gallery, 13-14 May 2011, Eds. Ruth Barnes, Emma Natalya Stein, and Benjamin Diebold (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 2011), 122.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 122.

¹⁶⁸ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 2019

¹⁶⁹ Stephen Murphy, "Cultural Connections and Shared Origins between Campā and Dvāravatī: A Comparison of Common Artistic and Architectural Motifs, ca 7th -10th Centuries CE." in *Champa: Territories and Networks of a Southeast Asian Kingdom*, eds. Griffiths, Arlo, Andrew Hardy, and Geoff Wade. *Études thématiques*, 31 (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2019), 314.

of the woman as possibly Sita with her consort, Rama. The seated woman carved on the Trà Liên pediment is depicted with the gesture of the arm in a forward curve, holding her elbow.¹⁷⁰ Examples of the curved arm include the 10th-century sculpture of the dancing *apsara* from Trà Kiệu and another Trà Kiệu relief of a seated woman on a pedestal (fig. 77). Jean Boisselier has identified this 10th-century image as Sita. Moreover, East Javanese reliefs at Candi Penataran illustrate Sita's arm rendered with the inverted elbow (fig. 79). The interpretation is not conclusive and requires further research, but the imagery also reflects visual similarities of reliefs from 9th-century Candi Penataran showing Sita seated on a large pedestal behind a tree in Javanese culture (fig. 79). The super-human feminine, akin to the super-human king, was a major component of courtly culture or elite gestures, which represented a Southeast Asian artistic tradition and contributed to the standardization of later Cham art.

IX. Conclusions

The 10th-century platform of Trà Kiệu paired with a large sculptural *linga-yoni* installed on the top is a modern curatorial arrangement. I argue that the *linga-yoni* was unlikely to be originally paired with the platform based on the carved images. The *linga-yoni* has little connection to the imagery carved on the Trà Kiệu platform, and may be dated earlier than the platform. Inscriptional evidence indicate that the *Ramayana* was well known in Champa and illustrated on the foundation reliefs of the 10th-century Khương Mỹ temples. This chapter moves the study of the platform beyond dating and identification and connects the object to a larger corpus of Cham, Khmer, and Javanese art in the 9th- 10th centuries.

The imagery of the Trà Kiệu platform documents the artistic exchange of Java and Khmer culture in the 9th–10th centuries. There are three iconographic elements, including archers

¹⁷⁰Ibid, 316.

with bows, architectural features, and dancing *apsarases*, that I interpret as reinforcing courtly culture, which scholars have shown to have some Sinitic links. The Trà Kiệu platform is the first time carved images reflected battle and hunting scenes, which foreshadowed the growing number of images related to combat scenes with bows and arrows, horse-chariots, and warriors. The 11th-century foundation bases at the Chiên Đàn temples and reliefs from Chánh Lộ and Mỹ Sơn also echo the imagery on the Trà Kiệu platform. There was an increased artistic production of hunting and royal scenes, which were not religious, but reflected the courtly culture of Champa in the 10th century.

Images reveal attention to military expansion, courtly kingship, and artistic alliance among the independent entities of Champa through symbols and characters, alongside other contemporary cultures in the regions of Cambodia and Java. I offer an alternative reading, suggesting that the Trà Kiệu platform was not intended to be the mount for a *linga-yoni* veneration in altar-pedestal form, the *pitha* of Siva. Rather, the platform represents a colossal monument, commemorating royal-divine characters for a so far unidentified context with secular and sacred meanings. In conjunction with highlighting royal and sacred relationships in the *Ramayana*, the textual and visual evidence from Trà Kiệu and later Cham art emphasize a Cham courtly culture with close relationships to Cambodian, East Javanese, and Chinese iconography. In the 9th-10th centuries, influence from the south occurred in Champa, although it was not directly from India, but reflected a courtly and military ethos shared across the southern seas by Champa, Cambodia, Java, and China.

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CHAPTER THREE:

Metalworks from the West and South Asia: Imports and Exports in India and Vietnam

Decorated metalworks from the West and South Asia discovered in India and Southeast Asia are examined as a collective group in this chapter. Luxurious bronze bowls, dishes, vases, jewelry, and icons have been analyzed independently in previous scholarship. To review the export and import objects within the context of all metalworks, bronze works discovered in India and Vietnam will be examined. Some metalworks are stylistically related to bowls from the West, particularly Greco-Bactrian, Sogdian, and Roman culture. Beyond discussions of origins, which often remain inconclusive, I investigate the significance of the material and iconography in connection to a shared courtly and military culture among prestige objects in South and Southeast Asia, with a common visual language of iconography including performing animals, dancers, and musicians. The secular images of portable luxury objects were intertwined with the visual imagery carved on the sacred Cham colossal sandstone pedestal-shrines of Mỹ Sơn and Trà Kiệu. The standard representation for courtly culture were appreciated and accepted in the canon of Southeast Asian artistic traditions.

I. Introduction

Artistic and cultural exchanges across different regions were often documented by the distribution and finds of portable luxury objects. Metalworks travelled easily due to their small size and to their lack of esoteric iconographic and religious meanings. Recent underwater excavations from shipwrecks have shed light on the small-scale objects that were circulated between regions across Asia from the west to east.¹⁷¹ This chapter re-evaluates the material, form, imagery, and date of the extant metalworks discovered in Vietnam and Cambodia. At least three types of imported objects, including decorated containers, coin pendants, and religious icons were discovered in the Mekong Delta. The circulation of bronze objects ranges from 6th-9th centuries CE, and there is little evidence for the early 1st-3rd century dates proposed by some scholars. I argue that the Chams participated in the acquisition and distribution of imported and exported prestigious goods with other regions in India and Southeast Asia. Involvement with mercantilism enabled them to negotiate and display their status as courtly and powerful leaders at the height of international exchange in the 9th-10th centuries.

Imported Containers: Bowls, Plates, and Ewers

II. The Kulu vase from the British Museum

The first part of this chapter compares early bronze containers in India and Thailand to the later bronzes discovered in the Mekong Delta. The Kulu vase is one of the earliest bronze vessels found in India that displays visual features of courtly culture (figs. 110-111). The vessel received the name 'Kulu' because the object was discovered by Major William Edmund Hay in

¹⁷¹ Tang shipwreck (Belitung Island, Indonesia), the Chau Tan Shipwreck (Vietnam), and the Phanom Surin shipwreck (Thailand), 1st century, Godavaya Shipwreck (Sri Lanka)

1857, while he was a political agent in the town of Kulu.¹⁷² The fifteen centimeters tall vase was discovered in a horde of mixed metals from a vaulted chamber in the Gandla Buddhist monastery near Lahul and Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh, India. The bronze vase shaped as a round goblet has intricate imagery carved on its body, stylistically dated to the 1st century CE.¹⁷³ The date of this vase, however, remains unresolved because there are no extant bronze objects for similar comparisons.¹⁷⁴ However, there are globular terracotta pots carved with elaborate narratives dated to the 1st century CE in the region of Chandrakethgarh, Bengal of India, which are similar to the shape of the bronze vase.

Resources of bronze, tin, and copper alloy were limited in India.¹⁷⁵ Vidya Dehejia states that 9th-century Chola bronzes are ninety percent copper, yet no copper could be extracted in Tamil Nadu, India.¹⁷⁶ In addition, Robert L. Brown has argued that few metal icons in India were produced until the late 6th century CE and metal icons of the Buddha from India produced in high quantities date to the 6th-7th centuries.¹⁷⁷ Early metal bowls from India are also rare and the low production of metal bowls correlates to the low production of metal icons before the 6th century. The limited supply of metals contributed to the prestige status of imported bowls from foreign

¹⁷² The discovery of the Kulu vase may not be the actual excavation spot of the object, which would be transferred in modern times.

¹⁷³ See Robert L. Brown's "The Nature and Use of Bodily Relics of the Buddha in Gandhara" in *Gandharan Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, and Texts*. Eds. Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014.

¹⁷⁴ Other vessels shaped in round goblets are reliquaries and cosmetic boxes from Gandhara and Tilya Tepe.

¹⁷⁵ Anna Bennett, "Decorated High Tin Bronze Bowls from Thailand's Pre-history," in *Southeast Asian Archaeology 1990: Proceeding of the Third Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologist*. (Hull, England. Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Hull University, 1992).

¹⁷⁶ The Sixty-Fifth A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts: The Thief Who Stole My Heart: The Material Life of Chola Bronzes from South India, c. 855–1280, Part 1: Gods on Parade: Sacred Forms of Copper

¹⁷⁷ Robert L. Brown, *Carrying Buddhism: The Role of Metal Icons in the Spread and Development of Buddhism*. (Amsterdam: J. Gonda Foundation of the KNAW 2014).

lands. Furthermore, places with copper could supply metal that was not available in India. Copper deposits are located in the regions of Yunnan and Indonesia,¹⁷⁸ and the Thai-Malay Peninsula contains one of the largest deposits of tin in the world.¹⁷⁹

Carved on the bronze Kulu vase, royal couples ride on elephants and horses with large umbrellas and long staffs with the pointed arrows on the end. Four horses pull a chariot with three people under a royal umbrella. A man is flanked by two women, which is suggestive of Surva who is often flanked by two females, the dawn and sunset.¹⁸⁰ The scene is followed by two horses and males riding an elephant under another umbrella. Behind the procession are two female musicians and a walking male. One of the woman plays a harp, while the other woman plays a long flute as a figure walks. Below his feet, there is a depiction of a small vase, similar to the shape of the actual Kulu vase itself. A second smaller vase is depicted between the harp and flute player. Here, the musicians are female and the visual reference of the vases suggests the importance of vessels as prestige goods in a courtly scene.

Scholars have argued that the scene depicted on the Kulu vase represents a Buddhist narrative. I suggest, however, that the scene can also be understood as a prestigious court object with little reference to Buddhist themes. The first indepth analysis of the vase was offered by Charles Horne (1871), who argues that the Kulu vase shows the great departure of Siddhartha. He writes, “at his left hand stands his charioteer, a character often alluded to in the four predictive signs shows to Sakya before he finally left the Palace of Kapila. This person, whether male or female, for there is little distinguish the sex, and the dress and ornament rather seem to

¹⁷⁸ Bayu Hijau, Beutong, and Grasberg mines of Indonesia

¹⁷⁹ Brigitte Borell, “The Power of Images: Coin Portraits of Roman Emperors on Jewelry Pendants in Early Southeast Asia,” in *Zeitschrift für Archäologie Auberuropaischer Kulturen* 6 (2014), 8.

¹⁸⁰ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 2020

indicate a woman, may possibly be his wife Yasodava.”¹⁸¹ The sex of the figures is mostly identifiable, mainly on the basis of the hair style. Horne states, “all the space not occupied by the drawing is filled in with Buddhist emblems, such as small circles, chakras or wheels.”¹⁸² The motifs do not resemble the Buddhist chakra wheels, but rather decorative patterns.

Scholarship continues to interpret the Kulu vase as showing a scene of a Buddhist narrative following Horne’s arguments. George Birdwood’s book, *The Industrial Arts of India* (1884) describes the water vessel as “enchased all round with a representation of Gautama Buddha as Prince Siddhartha, before his conversion, going on some high procession... in the midst is the Prince Siddhartha, in his chariot drawn by four prancing horses.”¹⁸³ More recently, Claude Rapin (1996) identifies the Kulu vase as depicting a scene of a generic royal procession, rather than a distinctive representation of an episode in the life of the Buddha.¹⁸⁴ In a 1997 book, Mark Zebrowski analyzes bronze, silver, and gold decorative objects from Mughal India and he reinforced Charles Horne’s Buddhist interpretation of the Kulu vase.¹⁸⁵ Beyond the fact that the vase was found in a Buddhist monastery, there is little indication that any of the iconography in the scene relates to Buddhism. Secular objects can exist within a sacred space, and they do not necessary associate to Buddhist ideology.

While the round shape of the vase is distinctively Indian, the imagery carved on the Kulu vase is a mix of Indian and Greco-Bactrian culture. Sharada Srinivasan writes, ‘the figurative

¹⁸¹ Charles Horne, “Notes on the Ancient Indian Vase, with an Account of the Engraving thereupon,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, New Series, No. 5 No. 2 (1871), 370.

¹⁸² Ibid, 374.

¹⁸³ George C Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India* 1(London: Chapman and Hall, 1884), 153-155.

¹⁸⁴ Claude Rapin and Rashmi Patni. *Indian Art from Afghanistan: The Legend of Śakuntalā and the Indian Treasure of Eucratides at Ai Khanum* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), 68.

¹⁸⁵Mark Zebrowski, “The Water Vase (Lota),” 207-225.

designs however, bear some distinct Bactrian/Greco-Bactrian influences in the depiction of the chariot with four horses and the large wheels akin to the chariot from the famed Achaemenid Bactrian Oxus treasure.”¹⁸⁶ The four-horse chariot is a common iconography depicted in hunting scenes in Roman art (fig. 113). In addition, Srinivasan states that “the figures on the chariot of the Kulu vase, however are similar to other early historic depictions from the Indian subcontinent related to Buddhist sites such as Sanchi and Bharhut.”¹⁸⁷ In light of the lack of metal objects in India, the object is likely from a foreign manufacture with an Indian related artistic style.

Found in excavations at Bhita, India in 1909-10, a terracotta medallion features the iconography of the four-horse chariot identical to that depicted on the Kulu vase (fig. 112). The medallion has two current interpretations, one associating the scene with a Buddhist narrative of Gautama. The second reading argues for the depiction of the story of Sakuntala and Kushyanta, a legend told in the epic, the *Mahabharata*. The first argument states that the medallion illustrates the Great Departure of the Buddha, similar to the Kulu vase. Here, scholars interpret the imagery as a depiction of Gautama taken to the garden outside of the city of Kapilavastu. The figure in front of the chariot is identified as the old man who Gautama meets outside of the palace gates.¹⁸⁸ The visual interpretations of this medallion are reliant on textual sources that cannot be verified to a specific narrative.

The second argument is that the medallion depicts the love story of Sakuntala and King Kushyanta. The king fell in love and married Sakuntala, giving her a royal ring with the promise to bring her to the palace upon his return from the forest. Sakuntala lost the ring, and without it

¹⁸⁶ Sharada Srinivasan, “Indian High-Tin Bronzes and the Grecian and Persian World,” *Indian Journal of History of Science*. 51.4 (2016), 608.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 608.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 14-15.

the king would not remember her. At the end of the legend, a fisherman returns the ring to the king after discovering it in the belly of a fish. When the ring was brought to the palace, King Kushyanta remembered his love, Sakuntala, and the two were finally reunited. Scholars argue that the medallion depicts a scene with King Dushyana and his charioteer, “entreated by a hermit not to kill the antelope which has taken refuge in Kanva’s hermitage.”¹⁸⁹ This interpretation has been rejected by scholars because the two antelopes are depicted too far from the four-horse chariot.¹⁹⁰

I suggest that the terracotta medallion reinforces courtly and military culture similar to the Kulu vase, and the imagery has iconographical links to imported bowls found in Southeast Asia (fig. 112). The medallion includes architectural features of a small, gated house with round roof. More specifically, this is a wagon roof, the type of roof that was placed on *viharas* and formalized as a *chaitya* roof. The roof is made using wood that was soaked in water and made pliable and bent over a central beam. It is depicted as “Indian” style building. The house is surrounded by a fence and there is a woman standing at the gate. There is figure standing outside to whom the woman looks, but is largely masked by the figure and chariot. Outside of the house, one kneeling figure gathers lotuses in a pond. A central figure rides a chariot pulled by four horses, stopped in front of another figure. He wears a specific Phrygian cap, that is associated in ancient times with Jewish merchants. There is a 7th-8th-century Dvaravati relief showing these figures, and many examples in Chinese ceramic sculptures.¹⁹¹ Below there are two animals, which have been interpreted as antelopes, but could also be two deer. An exquisite peacock is

¹⁸⁹ Vasudev V Mirashi and Narayan R. Navlekar. *Kālidāsa: Date, Life and Works* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1969), 14-15.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹⁹¹ I thank Robert L. Brown for these references.

rendered with its feathered wings spread out. On the top of the medallion, from an upper story, two people stand on a balcony, behind a rail. This iconography of people from an upper story is later repeated on the Gaultila *jataka* bronze bowl. The horse chariot, deer, peacock, royal couple, and small house are other common iconographical features on imported bowls found in Southeast Asia.

The imported Kulu vase discovered in India has direct visual connections to at least five imported bronze bowls and eleven bowl fragments found in Thailand with similar iconography and style. The bronze bowls were found among other iron and bronze tools, bracelets, and pottery in a burial context. Anna Bennett notes that three hundred bronzes have been excavated at the site of Ban Don Ta Phet (fig. 116).¹⁹² Based on radio-carbon dates, the bowls date to the 4th to late 3rd century BCE and are made of high-tin bronze. One bronze bowl fragment was found at the cemetery site of Ban Don Ta Phet, which is 25 kilometers from the archaeological site of ancient U Thong. A second bronze bowl fragment was also discovered at Khao Jamook, Chombeung District, Ratcha Buri province, 120 kilometers southwest of U Thong (fig. 115). Three other bronze bowls were found at Khao Sam Kaeo on the southeast coast of Thai peninsula (figs. 114 & 117). Some of the bowls were discovered with tin ingots shaped in rectangular blocks for semi-finished casting objects. While the date of the bowls is still uncertain, the iconography of the bowls shows strong visual connections to the Kulu vase. Bellina writes that “contrary to the artefacts’ trace elements similarity, the lead isotope data indicate a wide variety of metal sources, which combined with the other evidence, suggest that

¹⁹² Anna Bennett, Ian C. Glover, and Peter Skilling. *The Ancient History of U Thong, City of Gold: A Scientific Study of the Gold from U Thong* (Bangkok Thailand: DASTA, 2017), 20.

most of the Khao Sam Kaeo's artefacts were probably imported."¹⁹³ Robert L. Brown raises an important point, stating "what 'western' materials found in Southeast Asia that dates to this early period is probably best regarded as India, in the sense that it consists of Indian-made objects based on Western models, or of ones which, even if ultimately Western manufacture, were probably regarded as 'Indian' by the Southeast Asians."¹⁹⁴

One bowl from Khao Sam Kaeo shows iconography including one elephant, two bulls, two deers, a large house, and a foreign man and woman to represent a loving couple, *mithuna* (fig. 114). The woman has large, exposed breasts and she wears a long skirt with elaborate earrings. The image of the standardized beauty is similar in style to the woman depicted on the Kulu vase. Royal couples and elephants are the common iconographies between the vase and bowl. In addition, four lines are incised to show a man wearing an elaborate shawl draped over his shoulders with a circular hat on his head. The couple is seated outside of their house in front of the door. A second bowl fragment was discovered at Khao Jamook, which depicts a nude female and another unidentified figure next to an architectural building (fig. 117). The edge of the fragment has a decorative pattern of circles and triangles. The motif of circles is depicted as background on the Kulu vase and the bowls for Thailand. Another third bowl fragment from a burial at Ban Don Ta Phet shows a male figure next to a house (fig. 116). The male figure holds a lotus flower, and cannot be identified, but he reveals similarities to the style and features of figures on the bowls found at Khao Sam Kaeo.

In 1944, a hoard excavated from a mound in Kolhapur (Brahmapur), India from the Satavahana period (c. 1st- 3rd century CE) contained mixed metal objects such as bowls, lamps,

¹⁹³ Berenice Bellina, "Metallurgical Industries," *50 years of Archaeology in Southeast Asia: Essays in honour of Ian Glover*. (Bangkok: River, 2010), 535.

¹⁹⁴ Robert L. Brown & Anna Macdonnell. "The Pong Tuk Lamp: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the Siam Society*. 77 (1990), 17.

mirrors, and Roman artifacts. The metalworks were stored in two metal pots, each about one foot tall, discovered in the living quarters of a house. K. Khandalavala has interpreted the hoard to represent a merchant's "stock-in-trade" bound for an upcoming trading ship and stored in his residential dwelling.¹⁹⁵ One particular metal bowl from the Kolhapur hoard visually correlates with the metalworks found in Thailand. The bronze bowl with lid is dated to the 2nd century CE, similar to the bowls from Thailand (figs. 118-119). Proposed dates for the creation of the bowls from Thailand range from the 1st-2nd century CE, but the circulation and use of these bowls remains debateable. The lid from Kolhapur features with flower petals in concentric bands encircling the central motif, an image of a large elephant in profile view (fig. 120). The body of the bowl shows two registers of performative animals. The first register features a repetition of galloping horses, winged griffins, and other creatures while the second register displays moving ducks, elephants heads, and horses. Comparable to a fourth bowl from Khao Sam Kaeo, performative animals and decorative motifs alternate in concentric bands that radiate from the central floral motif (fig. 117). Five of the nine bands shows animals, including elephants, horses, winged sphinxes, and birds. The elephant head is an important iconographic element repeated on Thai metalworks and discussed in a later section of this chapter.

While no specific narrative can be derived from these scenes of the metalworks and other associated small-scale objects, the iconography of a royal couple in their house with images of elephants, horses, bulls, peacocks, and deers emerge as a generic scene. It reinforces courtly culture transformed from everyday imported objects to prestige goods in a burial objects in Thailand. This study of the imported bowls from Thailand is not exhaustive, and further study on the bowls must be conducted. The imported Kulu vase has a visual relationship with the

¹⁹⁵ Karl Khandalavala, "A Consideration of the Metal Objects in the Kundangar Hoard," *Lalit Kala*, No. 7 (April 1960), 29-75.

imported bowls found in burials from Thailand. The musicians and dancers depicted on the Kulu vase are female, with little association to a Buddhist narrative. The interpretation of an earlier object, the Kulu vase contributes to our understanding of the bronze footed bowl of the Gauttila *jataka* from South India discussed later in this chapter as a Buddhist narrative and its impact on the visual arts of Southeast Asia. The early imports in this case study do not come directly from India, but from the West, even though they were interpreted as “Indian.”

The bronze bowls from Thailand should be analyzed within the corpus of other finds such as pendants which imitate Roman coins, genuine Roman coins, and jewelry moulds. The circulation of jewelry moulds and tin pendants have been found in both Óc Eo and Thailand. Extensive studies have been published on the coins and pendants from Thailand, but the dating has not been conclusive. Brigitte Borell states, “reviewed in the context of pendants imitating the [coins] of Tiberius from India, this permits proposing a similar date for the pendant and mould from Klong Thom from the 1st century onwards, possibly late in the 1st century, or in the 2nd century.”¹⁹⁶ In her latest article, Borell states that “based on the evidence of coin hoards the earliest Indian imitations of Roman coins might date from the last first to early second century, but for other imitations—in particular cast imitations of second century Roman coins often used as jewellery—it has been suggest that they were made much later, in the fourth century at the earliest, most likely in the fifth and sixth century.”¹⁹⁷ Peter Berghaus proposes that the Indian imitations dated to the 4th- 5th centuries CE.¹⁹⁸ The creation of the objects and the date of

¹⁹⁶ Brigitte Borell, “The Power of Images – Coin Portraits of Roman Emperors on Jewelry in Early Southeast Asia,” in *Zeitschrift für Archäologie Außereuropäischer Kulturen* 6 (2014), 27.

¹⁹⁷ Brigitte Borell, “Some Western Imports Assigned to the Oc Eo Period Reconsidered” in *From homo erectus to the Living Traditions*. Choice of Papers from the International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, Bougon, 25th -29th (September 2006), 172.

¹⁹⁸ Brigitte Borell, “The Power of Images – Coin Portraits of Roman Emperors on Jewelry in Early Southeast Asia,” in *Zeitschrift für Archäologie Außereuropäischer Kulturen* 6 (2014), 27.

circulation, which was originally thought to be much earlier has been revised by scholars to much later. No genuine Roman coins have been found in Vietnam. Beyond Roman pendants with portraits of emperors, there are other pendants from Óc Eo that require study in the discussion that bring this study of objects to the 6th- 9th centuries.

III. Gautila Jataka Footed Bowl from South India

A bronze bowl from India, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is critical for our understanding of the different motifs incorporated in the artistic production of imported bronze objects in Southeast Asia, particularly their stylistical, technological, and iconographical features. There is extensive relief scenes depicted on the bowl that scholars have attempted to identify. Most identification have been, as we have seen for many other figures and scenes on metalworks, attempts to find religious, predominantly Buddhist narratives. I will argue, however, that the vessel is significant because the iconography carved on the bowl is linked to shared motifs of courtly culture appreciated in Southeast Asia. Five artistic motifs that occur on the bowl connect to courtly culture include dancers/musicians, human-animal processions, elephant heads, architectural features, and royal couples, each of which was appreciated as part of the visualization of Southeast Asian courtly culture.

The imported copper alloy footed bowl from South India was discovered in Malaysia (fig. 121). Little is known about the find spot, but the object it is thought to have come from India. The proposed date for this object ranges from the 5th to 11th century. There is no other object similar to this bowl, which also makes stylistic dating difficult. I will not focus on when the bowl was circulated to Southeast Asia, but on the current interpretation of the bowl and to evaluate its visual imagery associated to Buddhism. The only published identification that has attempted a detailed argument is that of Bo Lawergren, who argues that it illustrates a scene from

a jataka. That Buddhist story states that the character Gauttila plays a harp is the basis of his identification. The evidence relies heavily on imagery from one portion of the bowl, particularly the scene of the harp player, but imagery on the other half of the bowl has not been significantly discussed. In this section, I argue that the imagery does not illustrate the Gauttila *jakata*.¹⁹⁹ Instead, the imagery shows two females, a dancer and harpist, a tradition aligned to the prominent representation of female dancers and musicians in Indian visual arts. The footed bowl can be interpreted as a highly valued object of courtly consumption, but need not be related to any Buddhist texts.

The Gauttila *jataka* is a story about a master harpist named Gauttila, who accepts a student, Musila for music lessons.²⁰⁰ Musila demonstrated his extraordinary musical abilities as a performer, replacing his teacher Gauttila as the designated court musician. However, he was given only half of what Gauttila received as payment for his musical performances. In order to receive recognition as an equal to his teacher, Gauttila and Musila must compete in a musical competition for the king to determine which is the better harp player. Gauttila's protector, Saka descends to Earth, sending nine hundred beautiful nymphs to dance at Gauttila's harp recital. In the end of the tale, Gauttila breaks all the strings on his harp, but wins the competition because of his miraculous performance.

Bo Lawergren's interpretation of the footed bowl as a Buddhist jataka is based on textual evidence from the biography of the Buddha. Images of the Buddha as a musician are rarely depicted in the visual form, with only a few examples from the Burmese culture. Muriel C.

¹⁹⁹ Robert L. Brown first suggested that this scene does not depict a Buddhist jakata. Since Bo Lawergren's article in 2004, no other scholar has offered an alternative reading. Brown points out that the harp is in the shape of an elephant. I believe this may be a visual reference to imported bowls with elephant trunks as a spout circulated in Vietnam, in which the elephant was of particular interest to Southeast Asian audiences.

²⁰⁰ There are at least three gold coins that show the Gupta king, Samudragupta playing a harp, to circulate he was a great musician and patron of the arts.

Williamson has written about the development of the iconography of arched harps in Burma. She mentions one early example of the depiction of the Buddha as a musician from Sri Kestra dated to the 7th century. Williamson describes the scene as the following, “in the predella, seven figures (the far left one vestigial) are centered in the foreground by a lively dancer, accompanied by three musicians playing an arched harp, large clappers, and a small instrument. The crowned Bodhisattva is seated in *dhyanamudra* on the right, with a female figure on his left.”²⁰¹

Williamson identifies the scene as Buddhist because of the image of the crowned Bodhisattva. It is uncertain if the iconography is a crown or actual hair. Her interpretation is followed by other scholars and their conflicting interpretations of what the scene might represent. Another scholar, Gordon Hannington Luce interprets the predella from Sri Kestra as depicting Indra’s visit to Gotama at Indasala Cave with Panca-sikha playing his harp. His argument is that the presence of the dancers and musicians may represent the Temptation of Gotama. It has also been suggested by a third scholar, Judith Becker that the scene is a local Burmese depiction.

Another visual representation of the Gauttila *jataka* is dated to 1070 CE from West Hepetliek, Myanmar (fig. 122). The unglazed terracotta plaques illustrate 500 *jatas*, each identified by name and number. These are the only extant examples of identified *jatas* based on the inscriptions. In the plaque, the largest figure, the king is seated in front of three harp players and another figure lying in horizontal position. The third harp player wears a pointed hat, which can be also interpreted as an ushnisha. Williamson identifies this figure as Gauttila’s advisor, Saka. In the case of the footed bowl, the harpist is not featured with any sacred iconography such as a halo or crown, nor identified with written inscription to designate the figure as the Buddha.

²⁰¹ Muriel C. Williamson, “The Iconography of Arched Harps in Burma,” in *Music and Tradition*, ed. D. R. Widdess and R. F. Wolpert (1981), 218.

Bo Lawergren identifies the figures from the scene on the footed bowl as showing the seated Gauttila with Saka above, one dancing nymph, a drummer, and Musila on the end. Gathering from the outside of the palace, many figures watch the dancer's performance while carrying large umbrellas, tall pots, and elaborate vases. To offer another interpretation for the identity of the figures, I consider the characters within the context of other South Indian images of dancing females without attaching any Buddhist associations. An alternative interpretation is that the bowl functioned in the secular world to reinforce images of a shared courtly and military culture with royal processions of elephants, horses, female dancers, and musicians.

In Indian art, female musicians are integrated into secular and nonsecular imagery. For example, an Indian sandstone lintel from Pawaya dated to the 5th-century Gupta period is carved with visual imagery in three sections (fig. 123). On the central panel of the lintel, there is an illustration of the demon king, Bali's sacrifice. Bali pours water on the hand of the Hindu deity Visnu's avatar, Vamana, while the priest and women gather around a fire and animal sacrifice. Eight women are depicted from the upper story, with a ninth woman standing underneath an arched doorway. The right portion of the lintel shows Visnu and the moon god, who rides a two-horse chariot. The left section shows a female dancer, surrounded by all female musicians, playing instruments such as the lyre, lute, harp, and drums. In front of the crowd, there is a female harpist and dancer alongside a vina player. In Indian art, females are often the central dancer, accompanied by all female musicians. If we follow this observation from the Indian visual tradition, the figure playing the harp on the footed bowl is female.

The female dancer on the bowl from South India has striking visual resemblance to the row of dancing females carved on the 9th-10th-century Trà Kiệu pedestal from Champa, which I have argued is a symbol of courtly culture in chapter two. The Trà Kiệu pedestal depicts the

wedding of Sita and Rama from the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*. The similarities between the dancers include thick, long hair tied into a large bun. The female figures show their movement in the image with their arms and hands in the air and the criss-cross of the legs with two knees bent outward. On the side of her hips there is a bouquet of feathers or flower petals. This type of dancing female is recognized as the standardized image of the court female dancer across Southeast Asia as an *apsaras*. Like the Trà Kiệu pedestal, the footed bowl features dancers for a wedding ceremony, and if so the bowl may have served as a wedding gift.

John Guy states that the Gaultila *jataka* bowl was “casted in two parts, bowl and stand, and each may have originally functioned separately. At some point in antiquity, the two parts were joined.”²⁰² Small dwarf figures are depicted around the center of the stand. The figures are similar to the iconography of dwarfs in Indian arts and they also appear in Southeast Asian art, particularly on Cham art. The figures are rendered on the edge of pedestals with their arms raised above their head. The dwarf figures visually lift the pedestal to the spiritual realm. If the two parts were joined at some point, the upper portion of the bowl highlights movement. The male dwarfs raise the edge of the bowl into the spiritual world, the female twists her body to dance, and the second female glides her fingers to produce music from the harp.

There is a shared visual iconography between the arts of Champa and the footed bowl that reinforces courtly culture. Bo Lawergren has identified the other half of the bowl’s imagery as a procession of residents from the city coming to view the musical competition of Gaultila. The people on horses and elephants stride in a long procession. The horse riders raise one arm in the sky, holding a dagger in a vertical position. Furthermore, the shape of the bowl reinforces the

²⁰² John Guy, Pierre Baptiste, Lawrence Becker, Bérénice Bellina, Robert L. Brown, Federico Carò, Pattaratorn Chirapravati, et al, *Lost kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 35.

continual movement of the horses in procession. Secondly, the rendering of the elephant's second leg is strikingly with its foot bent back while walking. This is also seen on the same dish from Champa and a second dish of elephants walking in a private collection. While such artistic conventions may be seen as a coincidence, it is intriguing that the metalsmiths illustrated the bend of the elephant's second foot, conforming to an unified international artistic convention.

The female musician's harp is shaped like an elephant's head in profile with a long trunk. This is the only extant example of an illustrated harp, featuring the elephant trunk in Indian art.²⁰³ This version of the harp is designed for a Southeast Asian audience, which appreciated the visual presence of the elephant head. While there is no evidence of existing harps with a spout in the shape of an elephant's trunk, the iconography of the elephant head is found in South and Southeast Asia. The presence of elephants is integrated into the bowl and ewer because of its important connection to the feminine and water, which is highly valued in the Southeast Asian tradition.

Little evidence supports the fact that the harpist depicted on the footed bowl from India is indeed Gauthila. Other visual examples belong to Burmese visual culture and can be verified with embedded inscriptions. The bowl from South India contains images of courtly culture, which belong to a corpus of portable objects that emphasizes royal processions. I interpret the footed bowl as a depiction of two females, a dancer and harpist that emphasizes courtly culture. Furthermore, the iconography of elephants, musicians, and dancers was highly valued in Cham art and was reinforced in the colossal pedestals of Champa. In order to contextualize the scenes from the footed bowl, a third portable object, I will examine an elephant ewer to understand its impact on Southeast Asian art.

²⁰³ Robert L Brown.

VI. Ewer with Elephant Head Spout from Vietnam

A bronze ewer with an elephant trunk, discovered in southern Vietnam in the Mekong Delta, is held in the Ashmolean Museum in London (fig. 124). The ewer, as with many bronze objects found in Southeast Asia, is dated by the museum to the 1st- 2nd century CE. I suggest, however, that the ewer should be dated later to the 5th -6th centuries, belonging to a group of bronzes circulated in this later period. This particular ewer with elaborate stand is similar to a 5th- 6th-century Cham sandstone relief from the Đà Nẵng Museum in Vietnam of an urn with similar floral petals (fig. 126), forming a decorative single band across the center of the vessel's body. Henri Parmentier suggests that the Cham relief punctured with a open hole was once used as a base for one of the temple columns in Đa Nghi, Vietnam. The image of the urn with bowl stand, a symbol of the vase of plenty, was an important intergration as an architectural decoration to a Cham temple. The earliest images of the vase of plenty can be traced to 3rd- 4th- century CE reliefs from Nagarjunikonda (fig. 127). While it is still uncertain if the relief of the vase from Champa was once part of a temple structure, the body of the vessel is almost identical to the actual ewer with spout in the shape of an elephant's head.

The only examples of containers related to elephants include the spout of the ewer which forms the shape of an elephant's trunk are discovered in China and northern Vietnam, dated to the Han-Viet period, 1st-3rd centuries. In Harry Falk's 2012 study about metal artifacts from a Buddhist background, the objects relevant in his study include ewers and water dispensers dated to the late 2nd-3rd centuries. He discussed three ewers with the spout in the shape of an elephant head now held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Ashmolean Museum (England), and the Matsudo Museum (Japan) with other ewer parts such as handles and lids.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Harry Falk, "'Buddhist' Metalware from Gandhara," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*. 26 (2012), 37.

Another bronze ewer with elephant trunk is located at the Cleveland Art Museum and the Hà Tây Museum in Vietnam. Falk states, “the use of such ewers are varied, but frequently they were fundamental as water-dispensers in donation rituals.”²⁰⁵ While ewers were certainly used in rituals, the ones in Falk’s study are specifically created with a spout of an elephant’s trunk. Falk also mentions that “lustrating elephants provided the idea of elephant-based spout; obviously tamed elephants, even with six tusks, were ridden by mahouts, reminiscent of Vaisravana.”²⁰⁶ Furthermore, literature mentions the significance of the elephant trunk. Harry Falk writes, “its spout is also ‘similar to an elephant’s trunk’ by Buddhaghosa, the fifth Indian commentator of the Dighanikaya and ‘with an elephant outlet.’”²⁰⁷ Falk states that the objects from Gandhara, Thailand, and Vietnam were parallel to the description in the literary text.²⁰⁸ The iconography of the elephant follows closely with the descriptions in textual sources that document its importance.

The metal pots with elephant head spouts from Vietnam that Falk discusses can be compared to the elephant head used on the footed bowl. Because of this iconography, I date the ewer later in history, closer to the 9th-13th centuries, contemporary to the footed bowl. It is the reference of the elephant head and its long trunk as the spout of the ewer and the body of the harp that is uniquely appreciated in Southeast Asia. The ewer found in central Vietnam with the head of the elephant and its trunk is carved a second time, circulating the entire foot of the ewer, incised with two open spaces in the shape of a diamond (fig. 125). The spout of the elephant and the repeated image of the head of the elephant below the vase suggests the importance of the

²⁰⁵ Harry Falk, "Buddhist Metalware from Gandhara," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*. 26 (2012), 37.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 54.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 54.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 54.

iconography in Southeast Asia.

The earliest image of the ewer with spout of elephant head was seen on a Buddhist relief dated to the 1st century BC from Nagarjunikonda, Andhra Pradesh, India (fig. 128).²⁰⁹ The relief shows the Buddha's nativity, where "in the relief is sculptured the 'Nativity and the Seven Steps' on the right, grasping the branch of the sala tree, in the Lumbini garden near Kapilavastu, is the graceful queen Maya with her attendant maids, at the top of the Bodhisattva, represented symbolically by the royal *chatra*, and straight below, the water-pot from which the infant received his first bath."²¹⁰ In the depiction, besides the legs of Queen Maya, the waterpot sits on the floor and features a spout with an elephant head. If this waterpot was used to give the Buddha's first bath, the association of water poured from the elephant's trunk generates sacred water, but also highlights the feminine and fertility.²¹¹ The image of the elephant head highlights the feminine: Queen Maya's birth of the Buddha and his lustration, the lustration of goddess Lakshmi, and the female harpist depicted on the so-called Gauttila *jataka* footed bowl.

In addition, bronze ewers with elephant spout have been discovered in a burial context of the Chinese and northern Vietnamese culture. For example, Phillip Truong states that "ewers unearthed from the necropolis of Lạch Trường (Thanh Hóa province) where Chinese officials served in Cuu Chan were buried, featured an arched handle and the elephant trunk spout on the shoulder."²¹² In addition, the ceramic pots with elephant head spout "were designed as

²⁰⁹ Falk first mention this in a footnote, 57.

²¹⁰ Rao P. R Ramachandra, *The Art of Nāgārjunikonda. [with Reproductions.]*. Madras, 1956. plate XXV, the Buddha's Nativity

²¹¹ Elephants heads are also found on royal thrones and columns depicted on reliefs from Sanchi and Nagarjunikonda. It denotes the symbol of royal power, but the image of the lion is most popular.

²¹² Harry Falk, "Buddhist Metalware from Gandhara," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*. 26 (2012), 31.

substitutes for more costly bronze funerary objects.”²¹³ Falk believes there are alternative uses for the ceramic pots found in northern Vietnam, stating that “some catalogues relate the pieces from Vietnam to the ceramic *hu* vases of the Han period in China, obviously looking for a more proximate place of influence. But the *hu* vases have no spout, handle, or stand and thus point to a totally different usage.”²¹⁴ The ritual vessels found in Chinese burials are considered as valuable objects. Other functions beyond funeral or donation rituals could be linked to a courtly culture that highlighted the appreciation of the iconography of the elephant head. It is possible that the ewer with elephant spout can be derived from India, but China cannot be ruled out as well.

V. Dish with Dancers and Musicians

An important, but less known portable object is a circular bronze dish found in a hoard at Lâm Đồng province, Vietnam (fig. 129).²¹⁵ The dish depicts six male figures, specifically musicians and dancers, alternating between a flying winged bird, possibly a *hamsa*.²¹⁶ Five standing figures are visibly shown, while the sixth figure is missing due to partial damage. The six male figures correlate to the exact number of six male figures featured on the central panel of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal (fig. 131). Besides the possible iconography of the sacred *hamsa*, there is little visual imagery that associates the object to a particular religion.²¹⁷ The iconography of the dish is contemporary to similar visual imagery found on bowls from the West, particularly of

²¹³ Ibid, 31.

²¹⁴ Falk, 57.

²¹⁵ John Guy in *Lost Kingdom* (2014) identifies this object as a dish. It could also be a mirror, but difficult to prove.

²¹⁶ John Guy and Pierre Baptiste have compared this Lâm Đồng dish to a second one, located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The circular dish shows three equestrian riders, with animals such as lions, elephants, and buffalos. The style and composition is similar to the Lâm Đồng dish, but I will not discuss the second dish because the subject matter does not pertain to imagery of male dancers and musicians.

²¹⁷ Pierre Baptiste has discussed the Lâm Đồng dish in an unpublished paper.

Greek and Roman culture.²¹⁸ I suggest that the object from Lâm Đồng can be dated to the 7th century.

The six figures are illustrated walking with long legs, suggesting a strong connection to Roman artistic culture. One figure is rendered with one leg planted firmly on the ground, while the other foot is pointed to indicate movement. A Roman cameo fragment with two figures walking in similar fashion was discovered in Bang Klai Nok, Ranong province in Thailand (fig. 131). The dish features two musicians, one playing a lute and another playing a flute, which are also similar to the performing musicians, dancers, and walking animals carved on the 7th-century pedestal of the Mỹ Sơn E1 (fig. 132). The flute player wears a winged headdress, a common iconography associated to the Greek god, Hermes/Mercury.²¹⁹ The Lâm Đồng musicians are rendered wearing a long and flowing scarf with multiple layers of ruffles on the end of the cloth. One of the figures is naked, but shown with a long cloth with ruffle ends, similar to the attire of the six men depicted on the Lâm Đồng dish from Vietnam. The same type of cloth, iconography, and movement of the figures suggests that these artistic sources were connected to the arts in the West.

It has been argued in scholarship that the iconography of figures with ‘scarfs’ is derived from a Chinese tradition, dated to the Tang period. However, the elaborate cloths can be traced even further to 7th-century Sogdian culture and the emergence of the Sogdian swirl that influenced images of dancers in Chinese art. The Sogdian swirl is associated to the elaborate long scarf that Sogdian figures wear while dancing, allowing the cloth to swirl in its illustration.

²¹⁸ Brahmins in Champa incorporated dancers and musicians into their ritual ceremonies to enhance and attract worshippers by creating a ritual spectacle and theatrical space. Musicians produced dramatic sounds and performances that attracted people, regardless of religious associations. There are a few articles written in Vietnamese about the piece, as well as a few sentences mentioned as footnotes in English sources, but to date, there is no extensive discussion about this object in scholarship.

²¹⁹ Sanjyot Menhendale, personal communication, April 14, 2019.

At the center of the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal, three male figures also wear the same type of cloth. Furthermore, there are decorative patterns of floral motifs along the edge of the dish and the same decorative motifs enclosing a six petal lotus flower at the center. The decorative patterns circling the dish reinforced the active movement of the male performing characters. The similarity in subject matter between the imported dish and the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal suggests that images of male musicians and dancers were appreciated by Cham elites.²²⁰

A 9th-century silver bowl comparable to the Lâm Đồng dish from Vietnam was found in Tibet, which also shows six males alternating between trees and plants (fig. 133). The branches of the trees and the plants move in a swirling motion, contributing to the continuous circular motion of the dish. Three of the males wear a short tunic distinct with ruffles and elaborate folds, while three others are naked with long scarfs. The attire of the men bears resemblance to both the bowl and the dish. In addition, the six male figures carry vessels or bowls. One of the figures carries a drum under his arm while he beats on it. At the center of the bowl, similar to the movement of the musicians, swimming fishes are depicted in a circular motion. These types of bowls have connections to Sogdian culture, suggesting that the dishes were designed and imported to a specific region.²²¹

²²⁰ The visual image of alternating between animals such as the hamsas begins as early as the 3rd – 1st century BCE on the ringstones from Maurya of Indian culture. My point is that the alternating motif of the hamsas and musicians on the Lâm Đồng dish have a similar artistic connection to the imagery found on ringstones with depictions of walking animals and plants in a circular motion. Over seventy ringstones have been found in India. A Sunga-Mauryan ringstone was discovered in the region of the Thai peninsula, which suggests that artistic exchanges in India were extended into Southeast Asia. The ringstones could have served similar pattern pages for such motifs to be transmitted, as the ringstones were small and light in weight for distinct travelers.²²⁰ The function of the ringstones has been debated. Some scholars have argued there were earpools, but the weight the ringstone have lead scholars to suggest other possible functions. Anna Bennett has suggested that the ringstones were possibly molds for gold sheets, which were foundation deposits to be placed underneath pedestals for the gods.²²⁰ This is plausible, as the gold sheets of foundation deposits have parallel imagery to carved images on pedestals. The animals on the gold sheets and the animals also depicted on the pedestal in circular motion helps activate the life of the pedestal.

²²¹ Philip Denwood, "A Greek Bowl from Tibet," *Iran*, Vol. 11 (1973), 121-127.

In the central scene of the bowl found in Tibet, two nude men face each other between a tree. The figure holds a bowl in his right hand and a jar with two handles in his left hand. The scene has been interpreted as two men performing a sacrifice with two male assistants. It is not certain if the craftsmen meant to depict a ritual sacrifice. The depiction of a procession of male figures carrying vessels and cups with musical instruments is a common theme in visual culture, one that is appreciated in the courtly realm. Denwood argues that the story depicted on the bowl is likely to represent the Greek epic, *Iliad*, where Odysseus converses with Agamemnon about the city of Troy and its challenges. Connecting an epic to the imagery carved on the bowl is difficult because there is no inscription to verify the association. Denwood links the artistic style to Greek sources, but also Iranian connections, particularly Sasanian or Sogdian bowls. Denwood cautions readers, stating, “in endeavouring to fix a date and place of origin for this bowl one can do no more than make enlightened guesses. The problem is that although there are a number of pieces of metalwork similar in shape, decoration and/or technique to [the] bowl, few of them can be accurately located in space or time through authenticated archaeological contexts or original inscriptions.”²²² Greek connections with Southeast Asia via Thailand can be made, particularly with the material evidence of one copper alloy coin of Emperor Victorinus found in ancient U Thong and one gold coin Aureus of Domitian discovered near Bang Kluai, Ranong province in Thailand. Chinese sources also report the presence of envoys from Roman King Antoninus Pius’ court in 166 CE.²²³

We know that imported vessels have been found in a funerary context in Chinese culture. For example, in the tomb of Li Xian (557-581), the governor and general of Northern Zhou

²²² Ibid, 122.

²²³ Li Tana. “The Changing Landscape of the Former Linyi in the Provinces of Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên-Huế,” *Working Paper Series*, No. 3, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Center, 2.

Dynasty of China, a Late Sasanian vessel, specifically a silver ewer, was discovered along with other funerary items (fig. 134). The ewer is stylistically connected to the dish found in Tibet and Lâm Đồng. First, the ewer from Li Xian's tomb depicts three males and three females, wearing clothes similarly illustrated on the Lâm Đồng dish. What is particularly striking is the use of distinctive drapery and folds depicted on both vessels. Furthermore, the depiction of one nude male on the ewer from China draws similar parallels to the nude males on the Tibet dish. The similarities between the vessels suggest that these dishes are associated to craftsmen working in a related stylistic tradition. Wu Zhuo has also noted that "several silver ewers have been found in China: one of Lijiayingzi in Aochan Banner in Liaoning province, dated to the early Liao Dynasty (907-1125), five mentioned in the Pope Survey of which three, now in the State Hermitage, are identified as Sasanian."²²⁴ During the 9th century, the circulation of Sasanian bowls was a part of the international trade exchange of portables objects between Asian countries.

There are debates about whether the bowls in China are either Sasanian or Sogdian because the iconography are closely related. Historical records show that the Chinese had trade relationships with the Sogdian, which is why bowls were found in China. The Sogdians lived in towns and cities during trade routes in Eastern Turkestan and China. There are at least five settlements that existed by the 4th century, which included Dunhuang, Jiuquan, Guzang, Lanzhou, and Luoyang. The Sogdians dominated the silk road trade in Eastern Turkestan during the 7th-8th centuries. Sogdian bowls were traded for silks as prestige items, mediating trade as merchants. The Sasanian merchants closely interacted with the Sogdians as middlemen during trade exchanges. Boris Marhak has written about the distinction between Sogdian and Sasanian bowls. He states "Sogdian vessels are usually less massive than Sasanian ones. Accordingly,

²²⁴ Wu Zhuo. 1989. "Notes on the Silver Ewer from the Tomb of Li Xian," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 3, 65.

Iranian silversmiths cut away the background in order to emboss the figures on their plates and bowls, while the Sogdians preferred hammering and chasing.” The dish from Vietnam offers the most visual parallels to Sogdian bowls.

VI. Footed Dish with Equestrian Hunting Scene from central Vietnam

A bronze footed dish was found in central Vietnam with similar artistic organization as the dish from Lâm Đồng (fig. 135). The dish shows three horse riders alternating between trees and animals including elephants, buffalos, and lions. John Guy suggests that “both dishes were likely the products of court workshops associated with a Cham kingdom in the late first millennium.”²²⁵ The horse riders on the dish are comparable to the artistic depictions of equestrian scenes from Sogdian bowls. This suggests that the iconography of the two dishes related to artistic styles from the West, though whether it may be from Sasanian or Sogdian culture is uncertain. The important point is that images of courtly culture showing horse riding and processions are reinforced through these objects circulated in central Vietnam.

The imported dish found in Champa which shows mounted horse riders holding either a spear or an arched bow, alternated between elephants and trees (fig. 136). The mounted archer with a bow shoots a leaping animal, which is behind a tree. The archer depicted is similar to the archer on the foundation bases at the Khương Mỹ temple, and resonates with the iconography of Rama’s bow on the Trà Kiệu pedestal (figs. 138-139). The bow is carved in the same way on the dish and the relief at Khương Mỹ, showing the arch of the bow slightly bent on the edges with the archer’s hand firmly gripping the center of the bow. The imagery illustrates a thick bow arched on the ends similar to a flying boomerang. I suggest that the archer with bow is a visual representation of the king’s military stability in Champa and Java. Even more generally, the

²²⁵ John Guy, Pierre Baptiste, Lawrence Becker, Bérénice Bellina, Robert L. Brown, Federico Carò, Pattaratorn Chirapravati, et al, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 33.

archer with a bow represented the male hero, both human and deity, was a symbol of power, bravery, and victory.

The footed dish with its equestrian hunting scene is elaborately decorated on one side. It is similar to a silver plate with alloy of tin and lead now held at the Cleveland Museum, from Northwestern India dated to the Gupta period, 320-647 CE (fig. 130-40). This plate is dated to the 5th-6th centuries. *Plate with Scene of Revelry* at the Cleveland Museum of Art has been identified as being from Northwestern India, possibly from the Tanesara Mahadevam Gupta period. The plate is silver with alloy tin and lead with traces of gilding. The decorated plate shows two tiers of figures in a circular arrangement with the shape of the plate. The first tier shows a central male figure surrounded by seven other figures, possibly all women. The figures are repeated on the second tier.

Stephen Markel describes the dish, “embellished with two registers depicting lively scenes of revelry. Each scene has a prominent male figure in the center, flanked by amorous females and male servants. The underside of the plate is decorated by a broad band of fluting surrounding a shallow foot, with a narrow band of elephants marching around the rim.”²²⁶ The nude male and female figures have artistic connections to Greek-Bactrian bowls, but the most significant visual connection is the row of walking elephants depicted on the bottom rim of the plate. The walking elephants are not all identical; some have large tusks, some are depicted smaller, hiding behind other elephants, some elephants have bigger torsos. The elephants depicted on the rim of the dish are similar to the various elephants also depicted walking in

²²⁶ Stephen Markel. “Metalware,” *Encyclopedia of India*. Ed. Stanley Wolpert, Vol 3. (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Son, 2006). 2.

circular motion on the Equestrian Hunting Scene dish.²²⁷ Here is a visual connection of imported bowls found in India and southern Vietnam, with the artistic appreciation of walking elephants in both cultures.

VII. Jewelry: Coins & Pendants

There have been extensive studies on the Roman coins and imitation of Roman coins as pendants found in U Thong in central Thailand, Khlong Thom in Peninsular Thailand, and Óc Eo in southern Vietnam. A genuine Roman coin has not been discovered in Óc Eo of southern Vietnam, but gold pendants have been found that imitate Roman coins. Two are currently missing, but there are published photographs taken by French archaeologists. A third pendant is held at the Museum of Vietnamese History. Brigitte Borell suggests the pendants should be dated to the 4th – 6th centuries CE. The pendants are contemporary to the bronze lamp from Pong Tuk in Thailand dated to the 5th – 6th centuries. Robert L. Brown writes “the lamp’s later dating will force scholars to reconsider the past attempts made to delineate early contacts between Thailand—and more generally, Southeast Asia—and the West.”²²⁸ These pendants are similar to the Indian pendants made of clay and the coins and pendants discovered in peninsular Thailand. Besides gold pendants imitating Roman coins, there are other pendants that belong in the same group.

Another metal coin found in the archaeological site of Long An is related to the pendant of Roman coins. They share the same iconography of round dots around the edge of the coin. The top edge of the coin is broken, where the pendant’s latch would be found and thus we do not know if it served as a pendant or ornament. It consists of a full circle with wings on both sides.

²²⁷ There is also a bronze with the image of an elephant dated to the 5th century from the Gupta period. It is now held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York).

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 17.

Above this iconography, there are three lines and a circle. The symbol is related to the lintel found on the 9th-century Đổng Dương temple, which depicts the goddess Laksmi flanked by two elephants. Furthermore, this iconography can be related to the *triratna* symbol, representing the three jewels of Buddhism. There is also a possibility that this symbol is related to the Cham iconography of *han kan*, representing the moon and crescent. This may suggest that the coin is dated much later in the 7th – 9th centuries. Contemporary to 9th-century Arab pottery circulated in Champa, an Arab dinar, the caliph al-Mukta billar (r. 289-95) has been discovered in Chiêm Sơn, Vietnam. There is a hole punched through the coin, indicating that it might have been worn as a pendant similar to the Roman coins found in Thailand. Coins from Sri Lanka should also be considered when examining the Roman coins from Óc Eo culture of the Mekong Delta. Roman coins and imitations have been found in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India.

VIII. Bronze Icons

There are four bronze icons dated to the 9th century that were imported to Champa from China, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. The Sri Lankan statue is probably 9th-century because it was found in the 9th-century Cham temple of Đổng Dương. Two bronze Buddha statues discovered in Vietnam are imports from China dated to the Wei Dynasty. These two Buddhas are contemporary to two other 6th-7th-century Buddhist bronzes discovered buried as a cache in Kampong Cham, Cambodia. Three of the bronzes belong to the culture of Dvaravati and the two bronzes are from pre-Angkor Cambodia. We do not know if the statues were arranged together during ancient or modern times, but the style of the Southeast Asian Buddhas dates to the 7th century. The four Buddhas of from Chinese manufacture have artistic links to 6th-century Chinese Buddhas from Eastern Wei Dynasty, not Northern Qi which has a strong influence on the art of Gupta during the 6th century. A Chinese Buddha held at the Long Xuyên Museum in

Vietnam is similar to Eastern Wei statues from China dated to the mid 6th century. The hair with bun on top of head, closed eyes, soft facial features, and mudra of the fear not gesture are artistic choices honored in this piece. The edge of the Buddha's robe is placed over the left hand and dangles to the waist, indicating this type of Buddha comes from the same manufacture site.

Another bronze Buddha held at the Vietnamese History Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam also has connections to the style of Chinese Buddhas (fig. 142). The Buddha stands with the fear-not gesture. Both his hands are tucked under his robe with thick pleats across his arms and body. This standing Buddha serves as the prototype of the Buddhas in Avalokitesvara's hair, in another statue made in Vietnam now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The face of Avalokitesvara models a Chinese tradition, but he wears Indic jewelry, particularly of the styles of Cham and Khmer culture. This is similar to Cham-Khmer jewelry first dated to Mỹ Sơn E1 sculpture from the 8th century and then seen prominently on stone sculptures dated to the 9th century. For example, he wears two elaborate arm and waist bracelets, with a distinctive floral motif associated with Cham gods including Ganesha and Siva. He also wears an elaborate headdress with jewels. A serpentine cord reminiscent of snake skin hangs on one side of his shoulder and dangles to his right arm, which connects to the back of his body.

Two objects with connections to Chinese manufacture include one Buddha image, described by L. Malleret in 1960 as Kuan-yin. The Buddha also holds the fear-not gesture, but the gender of the statue is not known. The Buddha wears an attire similar to the Buddha in Eastern Wei style with many folds on the ends of the robe. Another example published by Malleret, shows a Buddha of a similar type, but less refined. The other object is a guardian figure, or *dvarapala* with some Chinese influences also showing the fear-not gestures and holding a club with this left hand. The figure wears a foreign attire with heavy drapery folds.

Paul Jett has studied its casting techniques and indicates that the two figures have a layer of gilding with alloy compositions similar to Chinese bronzes, but different from the Dvaravati style figures.²²⁹ Emma Bunker has stated that amalgam gilding began in southern China in the 4th century BCE and was introduced to Vietnam much later during the 7th-8th centuries. The Khmer produced bronze statues with amalgam gilding in the 8th century and later in the 10th century at Kor Ker.²³⁰

Robert L. Brown has discussed the importance of Gupta art in Southeast Asia and China. He writes, “the influence from Indian art reached China and Southeast Asia at the same time, primarily in the sixth century. This means that Southeast Asia is an unlikely source for artistic style, at least for Buddha images, for China. Finally, there are few South Indian or Sri Lankan artistic relationships with Southeast Asia at this point (fifth and sixth-centuries). Any relationship would begin more probably in the seventh century. The relationship of sixth-century Buddha images in China and Southeast Asia appear related to north Indian art of the Gupta period.”²³¹

The last object is a gilded bronze ‘dancer’ discovered in Trà Vinh village, Mekong Delta. I will discuss the ‘dancer’ statue as a 9th-century dancer from imported from Khmer culture. The Tra Vinh bronze dancer is currently held at the Guimet Museum in Paris, and its lower part of its legs are missing. It is thought that the figure legs are in a flexed position of the left knee, contemporary to dancing figures with flexed legs in a dancing position. Charles Picard argues that the object was made “somewhere in the east, an imitation of an imported Greek type.” In

²²⁹ Paul Jett, “Buddhist Bronzes in Cambodia: A Newly Discovered Cache,” *Orientalism* 20, (Vol. 41, No. 5, 10), 48-52.

²³⁰ Emma Bunker, “Amalgam Gilding in Khmer Culture,” in *Interpreting Southeast Asia’s Past: Monument, Image and Text, Selected Papers from the 10th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists*, Volume 2, Eds. Elisabeth A Bacus, Ian C. Glover, and Peter Sharrock (NUS Press, Singapore), 302.

²³¹ Robert L. Brown, “The Importance of Gupta-period Sculpture,” in *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-cultural Exchange*. Ed. Pierre-Yves Maguin, A. Mani, Geoff Wafe, 2012, 329.

1911, photographs of the figure show the statue reconstructed to look like the Greek god, Isthmian Poseidon. Recently Emma Bunker has dated the statue to late 8th century and Brigitte Borell argues that the statue is from Khmer culture in the Angkor period dated to the 9th century. The bronzer dancer has similar parallels to a dancing Hanuman dated to the 8th century and reportedly discovered in Angkor Borei. Now at the Asian Civilization Museum, the statue of Hanuman stands on one leg, with the other leg lifted in the air with his right arm raised right in the air.

IX. Conclusions

Bronze metalworks discovered in India and Vietnam have connections to Greco-Bactrian, Roman, Sogdian, and Chinese culture, but there are no extant imports from India. It may be that some of these objects were understood as “Indian” or “Chinese,” but there were no direct imports from India to Champa, due to the scarcity of metal in India. The purpose of this chapter is not to locate the origin of the object based on style, which remains impossible to determine. Instead, I highlight these foreign objects and what impact they might have had on Cham art in the 9th-10th centuries. The shared iconography from the imported bowls which were highly appreciated in Southeast Asian culture and promoted courtly culture included elephant heads, horses, musicians, dancers, and a loving couple, *mithuna*. Images of animated lions, bulls, buffalos, and hansas also depicted in the visual cultures of India and Southeast Asia suggest that these animals were highly valued and auspicious, circulating prosperity from the royal court and beyond. The auspicious motifs and limited metals contributed to objects’ transformation from everyday imported items to prestige valuables for ritual, burial, or court culture in foreign regions. The portable imported objects found in Southeast Asia, specifically Vietnam, were inclusively related to the iconography that appeared as visual images depicted on the Mý Son E1 pedestal.

Performative animals, musicians, and dancers appear on the pedestal of Mỹ Sơn E1 and relate to a larger iconographic language that began in the 7th century and continued to circulate in Southeast Asia as a standard international artistic kione for visual production.

Imported bowls have been examined to evaluate the profound impact of their visuality on the artistic production in Southeast Asia. Further research is needed beyond bronze bowls, such as the abundant silver and gold bowls and plaques found in Southeast Asia to understand the significance of the iconography and material within the artistic production of its region. I demonstrated that the so-called Gaultila *jataka* bronze footed bowl and the Kulu vase have little evidence for a depiction of a Buddhist narrative. The portable objects had visual connections to Cham colossal arts such as the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal, Trà Kiệu pedestal, and the reliefs from the temple of Khương Mỹ in central Vietnam. I suggest that circulated secular bronze objects directly connected with the visual formation of the sacred arts of the Chams. This iconography was circulated and understood by a wide community, not only religious, but related to an artistic kione of courtly culture.

The development of Cham art is a true amalgamation of many different iconographic and stylistic elements from Khmer, Javanese, Dvaravarti, Central Asian, and Chinese cultures. The artistic incorporations of Cham art were never mixed to form new or hybrid styles, but rather they could be distinguished between the cultures as a form of visual diplomacy. The Gaultila *jataka* bowl, the Kulu vase, the Ewer with spout of elephant head, the Musicians and Dancers Dish, and the Equestrian Hunting Scene dish are connected through the prestige material of bronze, intricate designs, and craft techniques. The 9th-century bronze Buddha from Sri Lanka and small bronze Buddhas from Wei Dynasty, China discovered in Champa suggest that the Chams valued the prestige of bronze (figs. 142-143). Imports found in Vietnam are most

abundant compared to other Southeast Asian nations. The imported bronze bowls and Buddha statue reflect the Chams' strong international exchange with other Asian regions and appreciation for imported objects, in both secular and nonsecular realms.

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CHAPTER FOUR:

Two Colossal Pedestal-shrines of Đổng Dương

The majority of archaeology in Champa consists of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominant religion. In 875 CE, Indravarman II was the first Cham ruler to actively support Buddhism with the construction of the Đổng Dương temple located in present-day Bình Định, Vietnam. An analysis of Sanskrit Buddhist inscriptions helps shed light on Cham royal women. The inscriptions revealed that royal women and the king shared an interest in Buddhism. Narrative relief carvings from two altar pedestals displayed the prominent role of females. In addition, a rare seated, Buddha statue with the legs pendant— a posture associated with female goddesses also intensified the importance of female power. In the 9th century, the female role in art at Đổng Dương is extraordinary in the Buddhist context. I argue, that the seated Buddha with the legs pendant and narrative relief panels of the Buddha's life depicted at the temple emphasized the female realm.

I. Introduction

The archaeology of Champa consisted of a majority of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominant religion. Indravarman II (875 – 899 CE) was the first Cham ruler to actively support Mahayana Buddhism with the construction of the 9th-century Đòng Dương monastery located in present-day Bình Định, Vietnam. Buddhism originated in Nepal and India, from which it spread to states across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea, and China. The architecture of the Đòng Dương monastery has been largely destroyed due to bombing and abandonment of the site during the Vietnam War. Most sculpture of Đòng Dương remains preserved in museums and private collections in Vietnam, France, and USA, and scholars rely on photographs to reconstruct the temple.

The ground plan of the monastery from Henri Parmentier's *Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments Cams de l'Annam* was published in 1909. The decorated altar with narrative relief panels depicting life scenes of the Buddha and jatakas is not conclusively identified by Parmentier. What images or architectural objects were placed as a focus of the pedestal is not known for sure, although there have been several suggestions by scholars. The previous scholarly discourse on Cham Buddhist art has offered numerous interpretations about the visual imagery. Currently, there is no scholarly consensus on the identity of some of the sculptures or which events are depicted on the narrative relief panels.

During intense warfare between the Champa, China, and Vietnam in the 10th century, Buddhism promoted compassion and dharma. The Vietnamese ended Chinese domination in 938 CE. In 982 CE, the Vietnamese king, Lê Đại Hành attacked a region to the north of Champa.²³²

²³² Kenneth R. Hall, "Competition of the East Coast of the Mainland: Early Champa and Vietnam Political Economies" in *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100-1500* (Rowman Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011), 67.

Scholars have agreed that the Đòng Dương complex was most likely devastated by these invasions and looting expeditions.²³³ Excavations showed that the main sanctuary was looted and some of the temple walls were destroyed by fire.²³⁴ The warfare between the Vietnamese and the Chams contributed to Champa's instability. The incorporation of Buddhist beliefs into the court officially placed Champa within the Buddhist culture alongside other powerful countries of Asia such as India, China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. Ian Mabbett has suggested, "the Cham elites participated fully in international Buddhist culture, which thus contributed significantly to the self-definitions and self-perceptions of Cham society."²³⁵ Entering into the international political and economic sphere in the 9th-10th centuries, Indravarman II's alignment with Buddhism distinguished Champa as a prosperous region.

Sanskrit inscriptions reveal that the monastery honored the king's personal deity, Laksmindra-Lokesvara. His personal deity represented a triad; the goddess Laksmi, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and the king Indravarman II, himself. Avalokitesvara is a bodhisattva who helps all human beings achieve Enlightenment, an attainment to full awakening. The Hindu goddess Laksmi represents wealth and prosperity. Inscriptions referred to Indravarman II as "equal in the splendour to the gods, and named Laksmindra-Bhumisvara-Grama."²³⁶ Thus, the personal deity, Laksmindra-Lokesvara positions Indravarman II in the same realm with Avalokitesvara and Laksmi. Ian Mabbett has indicated that, "in dedicating his

²³³ Trian Nguyen, "Laksmindralokesvara, Main Deity of the Đòng-Dương Monastery: A Masterpiece of Cham art and a New Interpretation," in *Artibus Asiae*, no 1, 1995, 8.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²³⁵ Ian W. Mabbett, "Buddhism in Champa," in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, eds. David Marr and Anthony Milner (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 291.

²³⁶ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campa: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber, and other French scholars and the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculation of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 71.

national shrine to a Laksmindra-Lokesvara, he was following a well-established tradition by joining his own name to that of his patron deity in a way that symbolized his absorption into the god-head.”²³⁷ The triad is unusual because previous Cham kings had worshipped Hindu deities, such as Siva or Visnu. Laksmindra-Lokesvara is only known from inscriptions and scholars do not know what the deity might have looked like as an image. It is possible that the duality of Laksmi and Avalokitesvara represents a male and female structure that is important in Champa.

In 875 CE, Indravarman II built the Đồng Dương monastery (fig. 144). The plan shows structures with long hallways and rectangular enclosures. The brick monastery has three sections: the vihara, long hallway, and main shrine. The monastery was built with corbel roofs, which significantly darken the interior.²³⁸ A 4-foot standing Buddha statue was discovered in the first enclosure (*vihara*) (fig. 143). The Buddha wears a traditional monastic robe performing the *vitarka mudra*, the gesture of teaching. The sculpture was most likely imported from Sri Lanka or South India before being placed in the monastery.²³⁹ Another large sculpture of the Buddha who sits with his legs pendant was found in the same enclosure (fig. 145). In addition, the seated Buddha’s pedestal depicts life stories of the Buddha on relief panels.²⁴⁰ An in-depth analysis of the seated Buddha with the legs pendant and the narrative relief panels will be discussed later in this chapter.

The second enclosure bridged the monastery and the main shrine. “No major divinity was honored in this hallway, although two large statues of protective deities, the *dharmapalas* stood

²³⁷ Ibid, 298.

²³⁸ Trần Kỳ Phương, “Hindu Temple Sculpture and Architecture,” in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*. Eds. Trần Kỳ Phương & Bruce M. Lockhart, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 296.

²³⁹ Why the standing sculpture of the Buddha arrived at Champa is beyond the scope of this paper.

²⁴⁰ Nguyen, 13.

guard at the gateway into the enclosure.”²⁴¹ The brick, pillared halls had doorways that opened to the east and west. Most likely priests and monks used this hallway for ceremonial preparations, which probably also functioned as a space for dance performances. This intermediary space prepared visitors to enter the principal sanctuary.²⁴²

The principal sanctuary was the most important component of the monastery, with nine smaller shrines that surrounded the central tower.²⁴³ It has been noted that, “Cham Buddhist kings and their ancestors were most likely honored in the small towers.”²⁴⁴ A large stone pedestal with an altar sits at the end of the main sanctuary. The statue of Avalokitesvara, a personal deity of Indravarman II, was most likely placed on top of the altar, although archaeologists have not been able to locate this statue.²⁴⁵ Like the pedestal of the seated Buddha, the altar’s pedestal displays jataka tales carved in narrative relief panels.

II. Literature Review

In the 1880s, Etienne Aymonier and Abel Bergaigne translated and published Cham inscriptions, which attracted the attention of French scholars. Louis Finot (1900-1930), Henri Parmentier (1909-1918), George Maspero (1928), and Jean Boisselier (1960) published survey books and articles on Cham art and architecture. In 1951, Pierre Dupont’s article compared the arts of Đông Dương with 7th-century Chinese art from the Tang Dynasty. The difficulty of classifying the arts from this period is evident as Dupont attributes a possibility of influences

²⁴¹ Ibid, 13.

²⁴² Ibid, 13.

²⁴³ Ibid, 13.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 13.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 13.

from the Sino-Vietnamese.²⁴⁶ He also concluded that there was local interest in the worship of female divinities and the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in Champa and China. Dupont stated that “ce cas tout à fait insolite d’un personnage féminin identifié au bodhisattva permet de se demander si l’on ne trouve pas ici un reflet du bouddhisme chinois où Avalokiteçvara a changé de sex pour devenir la Kouan-yin.”²⁴⁷ The goddess Kuan Yin was worshipped in China and her visual development can be traced to a gender switch of Avalokitesvara. Dupont’s work showed that although Chinese and Cham religious practices were different, the arts of Đông Dương had artistic connections to China.

Ian Mabbett contributed to the scholarship of Cham art, publishing one of the first in-depth discussions on the historical record of Cham Buddhism in 1986. He concluded that Champa’s “religious culture was synthetic and eclectic. Mahayana, Hinayana, Tantra, and Hindu devotion were mingled together in the religious life of pious Chams.”²⁴⁸ Cham Buddhism also “accommodated cults of ancestors, including female ancestors.”²⁴⁹ The Chams had a tradition of honoring male and female realms, which may explain why Buddhism resonated with the community.

After Mabbett’s publication in 1986, few scholars have since published on Cham Buddhism. Just recently, new publications on Buddhism in Champa began to appear beginning with Lê Thị Liên’s 2003 article on Vietnamese Buddhism. She discussed 1st-century Vietnamese Buddhism via Viet-Indian and Viet-Chinese interactions. Literary records show that Buddhism

²⁴⁶ Pierre Dupont, “Les apports chinois dans le style bouddhique de Đông-dương.” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient*. (Tome 44 N1, 1951), 273.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 274.

²⁴⁸ Ian W. Mabbett, “Buddhism in Champa,” in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, eds. David Marr and Anthony Milner. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 306.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 306.

entered central Vietnam during the 4th to 6th century via merchants and monks. In the 5th to 7th century, Buddhist art began to appear, supporting theories regarding the popularity of Buddhism in southern Vietnam.²⁵⁰ Liên explained, “Cham people participated in the trade network from the 7th century onward. The development of Buddhism in this area seems to have depended much on its role in the trade network and in the same way contributed much to the development of Southeast Asian culture.”²⁵¹ Indravarman II’s alliance with Buddhism opened a wider network for trade with other regions.

In 2005, Trian Nguyen re-evaluated the largest female statue of the site, which was discovered fifty meters from the monastery’s main sanctuary. He concluded that the figure represented Laksmindra-Lokesvara. The figure must have been worshipped at the center of the main altar because the bottom on the statue fits perfectly into the hole at the main altar. However, it has also been suggested that the statue would have been too small to be placed at the center of the altar.²⁵² In addition, Nguyen identified the figure as the female Avalokitesvara because of the iconographic features of the conch shell, a lotus flower, and the Mucalinda Buddha.²⁵³ There is no textual or visual development that shows the Chams changed the gender of Avalokitesvara to a female. The Chinese goddess Kuan Yin’s visual development originated from a gender change of Avalokitesvara. Later, the Vietnamese followed the Chinese tradition, worshipping the feminine form of Avalokitesvara, Quan Âm in the 15th century.²⁵⁴ The Cham

²⁵⁰ Lê Thị Liên, “Buddhism in Vietnam during the First Millennium A.D from Archaeological Evidence.” *Transaction of the International Conference of Eastern Studies* 48, (2003), 35.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 36.

²⁵² Nguyen, 33; Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 30 August 2011.

²⁵³ Nguyen, 33.

²⁵⁴ Anne-Valerie Schweyer, *Ancient Vietnam: history, art and archaeology*. (Bangkok: ACC Distribution, 2011), 241.

female statue, however, does reveal the importance of the worship of female deities in the 9th century. Nguyen explains, “Mahayana was not the exclusive religion honored at the Đông Dương complex, since elements of Hinduism (chiefly Shaivism), Hinayana and Tantric Buddhism, and indigenous beliefs were present at the site as well.”²⁵⁵ The cosmopolitan nature of the arts of Đông Dương positioned Indravarman II’s royal court as an active participant in the network of trade.

Nantana Chutiwongs published an article in 2006, on Buddhism at Champa in the exhibition catalogue, *Tresors d’art du Vietnam*. She analyzed terracotta votive plaques, stone icons, and bronzes from the 2nd century to the 14th century. Chutiwongs argued for the significance of the duality of male and female in Champa, suggesting, “le culte des divinités féminine’s est l’annonce, dans le bouddhisme, du développement des formes ésotériques d’enseignement, centres sur l’unité des contraires et sur la nature dualiste de tous les phénomènes.”²⁵⁶ She also noted the importance of the statue Tara, who was considered the wife or *alter ego* of Avalokitesvara. There were a significant number of Cham female cult images as well as male sculptures such as Vajrapani and Avalokitesvara.

In 2009, Anne-Valerie Schweyer analyzed Sanskrit Buddhist inscriptions from the 7th to 14th century. It is the first time that a scholar has conducted a comprehensive study of the inscriptions for Champa. Schweyer concluded that the Chams were interested in “Tantric practices, belonging to the Vajrayana Buddhism, mixing Saiva and Buddhist beliefs.”²⁵⁷

Chutiwongs’ most recent discussion in 2011 analyzed the narrative relief panels on the pedestals

²⁵⁵ Nguyen, 33.

²⁵⁶ Nandana Chutiwongs, “Le Bouddhisme du Champa,” in *Tresors d’art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa V-XV siècle*. Guimet musee national des arts asiatiques, 12 octobre 2005- 9 janvier (2006), 85.

²⁵⁷ Schweyer, 309.

at Đổng Dương using the literary text, the *Lalitavistara*. The reliefs emphasized one coherent theme of Enlightenment, the pivotal point in the Buddha's life.

In the same year, John Guy published an article about pan-Asian Buddhism in Champa and the cult worship of Avalokitesvara. He argued that the “popularity of the cult of the bodhisattva Lokeshvara in particular sheds light on the specific character of Southeast Asian Buddhism as practiced by the royal households of Champa and its relationship to the Pan-Asian Buddhism of the period.”²⁵⁸ Guy explains the “development in Buddhism was occurring in a climate of pan-Asian internationalism, encouraged by a rising wave of trade wealth. The circulation of spices, aromatics, resins, pearls and cotton textiles all stimulated the wealth of the region and furthered the consolidation of emerging states.”²⁵⁹ Indravarman II's adoption of Buddhist beliefs enabled Champa to participate in a larger network of trade with other Buddhist states.

Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura co-authored an article, published in 2012 about the dualist cult of Cham society. The work of the two scholars revealed that two sanctuaries, Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar “reflect certain characteristics of the cosmological dualism.”²⁶⁰ Wooden temples were built as early as 774 CE, but the sanctuaries were always vulnerable to fire. During the 10th century, two sanctuaries made with a sandstone foundation, Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar permanently represented the male and female realm. The cosmological dualism still resonates with the Chams

²⁵⁸ John Guy, “Pan-Asian Buddhism and the Bodhisattva Cult in Champa” in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*. Eds. Trần Kỳ Phương & Bruce M. Lockhart (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 319.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 309.

²⁶⁰ Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura, “Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (central Vietnam),” in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende (Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. 2012), 208.

in central Vietnam today.²⁶¹ Cham Buddhist arts and inscriptions supported the female realm, an integral emphasis on the visual formation of cosmological dualism.

This chapter reevaluates the nature of Cham Buddhism in the 9th—10th centuries, synthesizing the previous scholarship on Buddhism in Champa. This study investigates the significance of the female realm recorded in 9th-century Buddhist Cham art and Sanskrit inscriptions. The following questions will be addressed. What was the nature of Buddhism during the 9th—10th centuries in Champa? What was the significance of the dual worship of the female goddess Laksmi and the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara? Why was there a radical visual change and incorporation of Buddhist beliefs in a brahmanical society? What were the reasons for the prominent display of female imagery on the narrative relief panels at the Đồng Dương monastery?

Prior to the construction of the Đồng Dương monastery, Champa was prominently a region with Hindu architecture and imagery. The historian Kenneth R. Hall explains the visual connection between the Indic and Cham society. He explains that the “Siva-linga was a male divine figure, symbolic of creative energy of the celestial realm, seated with legs partly crossed, hands on hips, on the coils of a naga or seated on a five-headed naga throne, symbolic of natural deities (yaksas) in brahmanical imagery of the subterranean world of the naga presided over the yaksa Kavedra, protector of riches and treasures.”²⁶² Before the 9th century, the majority of deities were rendered in the aniconic form. For example, sculptures of the *linga* represented the male deity Siva and circular bases were associated to the female *yoni*. There were a few

²⁶¹ Rie Nakamura, “Awar-Ahier, Two Keys to Understanding the Cosmology and Ethnicity of the Cham People (Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam),” in *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)*, Eds. Andrew Hardy (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 103.

²⁶² Hall, 75.

sculptures of Hindu goddesses and a majority of pedestals from the 7th century depicted the Hindu deities, Visnu and Siva.²⁶³ The imagery of female and male realms showed the value of cosmic duality that is still present in modern Cham society.

The cosmological dualist cult is defined as the Cham male and female dichotomy. Based on Cham legends, Champa was controlled by two clans, Areca, the male clan, and Coconut, the female clan. Another Cham legend cites the division of *Ahier* and *Awal*, which translates from Arabic to English as *back* and *front*. Modern Cham people have regarded *Ahier* as the male realm and *Awal* as the female realm. A third instance of male and female dichotomy includes the Chams' views on the days in the week. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday are associated to *Ahier*, the male realm. Wednesday is the day of equilibrium. Thursday, Friday and Saturday represent *Awal*, the female realm.²⁶⁴ I propose that the 9th-century Buddhist arts at Đồng Dương and the site's Sanskrit inscriptions stressed the significance of the female world. The emphasis reflects the early formation of the anthropomorphic visual arts to reinforce Cham beliefs about the existence of female and male duality. The belief was developed since the beginning of Cham history and it remains important in modern Cham society.

III. Buddhist Sanskrit Inscriptions

Two written languages are used in Champa: Sanskrit and Cham. The earliest Sanskrit inscription in Southeast Asia was discovered in Champa and it dates to the 5th century. There are at least eight Cham Buddhist Sanskrit inscriptions.²⁶⁵ In addition to Sanskrit, the second written

²⁶³ See catalogue, *Tresors d'art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa V-XV siècles*, 176, 185, 186.

²⁶⁴ Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura, "Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam)," in *Old Myths and New Approaches—Interpreting Ancient Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*. Ed. Alexandre Haende (Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 2012), 276.

²⁶⁵ R.C Majumdar, "Buddhism," in *Ancient Indian-Colonies in the Far East. Vol. I. Champa* (Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, Lahore, 1927), 208.

language, Cham, began to appear in the 9th century. Inscriptions written in Cham recorded legal details such as land donations and practical details like the dimensions of land.²⁶⁶ In contrast, Sanskrit was still used for all political and religious messages. Anne-Valerie Schweyer states, “the majority of those who saw the steles and inscribed stones were incapable of deciphering them, the inscriptions manifested a power which everyone would recognize implicitly without being able to read or understand the words.”²⁶⁷ In addition, she explains, “those in Sanskrit were addressed to Indian gods who could read and understand such language, while those in Cham were to ensure that the humans were aware that the donations had been made.”²⁶⁸ The introduction of inscriptions written in the Cham language was an effort to record business deals securely with less subject to a misinterpretation.

An inscription, dated to 797 CE, reveals that Indravarman II created the *Đồng Dương* monastery for monks. The inscription reads, “for the sake of Dharma, and not for revenue, a monastery has been founded for the community of monks. I have placed all necessities in the monastery for the enjoyment of the community of monks as well as other creatures. This monastery has been founded for the perpetual enjoyment of the community of monks. And not for the enjoyment of the king, nor as a permanent source of revenue. Those who will protect all these riches of the monks—the learned Brahmanas, ascetics, relations of the king—will, their friends and kindreds, attain the Buddhist Nirvana to which there is no parallel.”²⁶⁹

The protection of the monks brings merit to the king, his friends, and family to achieve Nirvana. Like the king who protects the monks, the deities reciprocate by protecting the king.

²⁶⁶ Schweyer, 12.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 12.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 13.

²⁶⁹ Majumdar, 88.

Furthermore, the inscription reveals how Indravarman II has given many things to the monks, for the sake of Dharma. The inscription states, “Now the King Sri Indravarman has given these fields together with their corn, male, and female slaves and other goods, such as gold, silver, bell-metal, iron, copper etc. to Lokeshvara, for the enjoyment of the community of monks and the sake of the propagation of Dharma.”²⁷⁰ The inscription records Indravarman II as a devoted Buddhist. His donations will ensure his path to Nirvana.²⁷¹

An inscription stele dated to 811 CE was discovered at Ba-Mang village, 10 miles from Đồng Dương.²⁷² The inscription affirms that there were certain statues installed by Indravarman II for his deceased parents. The stele states, “He has installed this Sri Mahalingadevi (in honor) of his father, and also a beautiful (image) Mahadevi, dear to his mother.”²⁷³ This implies that cult images honored the dead depending on the ancestor’s preference to a particular deity. Cham rulers honored the deceased through the installation of cult images. A second example, the Hoa Que Stelae Inscription of Bhadravarman III, dated to 831 CE, states “to the north of this they erected, in their native place, in the saka year denoted by ‘kha-vahni-tanu,” an image of Bhagavati, out of devotion to and in imitation of the features of their mother Pu Pov ku Rudrapura.”²⁷⁴ The inscription shows that the image of Bhagavati was created to have characteristics identical the king’s deceased mother. Some of the images were set up as deities

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 88.

²⁷¹ Ian Mabbett suggests that the Khmer monarch Jayavarman VII (1181-1218) is the only Mahayana Buddhist ruler offering a close analogy using the patron divinity bodhisattva Lokeshvara, a form of Avalokitesvara (Mabbett, 298). Jayavarman VII conquered Cham by using the same patron deity as Indravarman II to legitimize his rule.

²⁷² Majumdar, 89.

²⁷³ Ibid, 90.

²⁷⁴ Majumdar, 120.

that represented actual deceased ancestors.²⁷⁵ The image installations for ancestors reinforced the importance of male and female realms in Cham society.

The same inscription notes the significance of female goddesses as a protector for the king. The inscription states, “may the king, whose superior mind has been purified by successive births, followed by excellent men, protect you in order to rule the whole of beloved Champa. May the Goddess of Sovereignty in her turn always protect him.”²⁷⁶ Here, the king desires to seek protection from the Hindu goddess, Laksmi commonly referred to as the Goddess of Sovereignty. Older Sanskrit inscriptions mention that Hindu goddesses such as Uma and Laksmi, which suggest the prominent position goddesses held in the Hindu context.

Another stele, the Đông Dương Inscription of Jayasimhavarman I was found outside of the temple. The inscription documents the donation made by a princess named Haradevi Rajakula, the younger sister of the king’s mother. The inscription states, “King Jayasimhavarman has a maternal aunt (mother’s sister) she is always skillful in virtuous work, endowed with exceptional qualities, and decorated by the increase of fortune, she takes delight in her fame and hopes; she is an asylum of pious thought formed in her mind, and she is very skillful in making perfumes and arranging flowers and clothes.”²⁷⁷ The details that outline her life, intellect, and skills suggest that she had a high status in the royal court.

Furthermore, the inscription reveals, “she takes delight in her devotion to the feet of her dead husband; is well disposed towards the supreme truth; she makes the best use of her wealth according to religious precepts and her inborn qualities; she constantly makes gifts to

²⁷⁵ This was also a standard practice in Cambodia, particularly during the Jayavarman VII’s reign. Robert Brown, personal communication, 30 August 2013.

²⁷⁶ Majumdar, 86.

²⁷⁷ Majumdar, 90.

Brahmanas, ascetics (yati) and virtuous people in the world, and she lives with the sole object of worshipping the feet of Siva. Her fame was purified by the praises of elderly relatives; she as united with fortune merely to cause unmixed delight to them; she was noble, she obtained dear and pure boons from the favour (of those elderly persons); her riches were produced by unshakable determination and her intelligence was without blemish.”²⁷⁸

Haradevi increased the merit of the royal family with image installation and reinforced with inscriptions. For example, the same inscription states, “[an image]...has been installed in the city named Indrapura, the august goddess known as Haroma for increasing the religious merit of his mother’s younger sister princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula, also known as Haradevi. Sri Indrapamesvara was installed by princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula, who is of virtuous mind and is a connoisseur of qualities... for the sake of religious merit of her own husband Sri Paramabuddhaloka.”²⁷⁹ Princess Haradevi Rajakula, the widow of Indravarman II had the power and responsibility to increase her late husband’s merit. She also had tremendous power to commission statues for her father and mother.

The same inscription continues, “in the same Saka year the princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula has installed the god Rudrapamesvara for increasing the religious merit of her father. And for increasing the religious merit of her mother, princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula installed, with pious devotion, this goddess Sri Rudroma. The inscription states, “victorious is the goddess Haromadevi, the great glory in the world, and a reflected image, as it were, of Haradevi Rajakula.”²⁸⁰ The image of the queen reflected the goddess with

²⁷⁸ Majumdar, 103.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 104.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 104.

characteristics similar to the deity after her death. The three inscriptions show the importance of honoring male and female ancestors and the power of one royal princess, Haradevi, to install cult images for her husband.²⁸¹ The Nhan- Biều inscription of Indravarman III (833 CE) records “in the Skara year 833, he established, together with his eldest son (brother?) a monastery called Sri Vrdhalokesvara in the village Cikir.”²⁸² Here, a Buddhist monastery was erected in honor of Jaya Simhavarman’s wife, another royal woman who had tremendous power. A Buddhist monastery was erected in honor of a deceased royal wife indicates that royal women had a special interest for Buddhist monasteries.

Indravarman II’s construction of his monastery for Buddhist monks was a declaration of his association to Buddhism. Inscriptions and image installations created merit for the king to reach Nirvana. At the same time, Indravarman II’s wife had power to install cult images to honor her deceased husband, mother, and father. The wife of Jaya Simhavarman held a powerful position in the court because a Buddhist monastery was dedicated in her honor. This followed the tradition of past Cham rulers who continued this practice, which was recorded on stela inscriptions. Some of the images were used to honor both male and female ancestors, reflecting on the importance of dual female and male realms. Royal women, particularly the wives of the Cham kings, also contributed to the interest of Buddhism.

IV. The Seated Buddha with Two Legs Pendant

²⁸¹ In the discussion by Vincent Lefevre, in *Portraiture in Early India: Between Transience and Eternity*, he writes, “on this point, Southeast Asian epigraphy is often more explicit and straightforward than the Indian one. Thus, the famous stele K 806 describes the foundation in 961 CE of the Pre Rup temple, in Angkor: among the many image that king Rajendrarvarman installed there, we learn that Visnu is called Rajendravisvarupa, probably in memory of one of the king’s ancestor Visvarupa, thatva Parvati is also a representation of Jayadevi, Sri Harsadeva’s mother and young sister of the king’s mother and that his cousin Sri Harsavarman gave his features to Siva called Isvara Rajendravarmanmadevesvara” (Lefevre, 43).

²⁸² Schweyer, 130.

A 5-foot (at the neck) sandstone, seated Buddha with the legs pendant was found in the *Đông Dương* monastery's first enclosure (fig. 145). The statue would have originally been placed on top of the pedestal carved with narrative relief panels. Archaeologists have rejoined the Buddha's head with the body, but the head still does not fit perfectly.²⁸³ The Buddha wears a heavy robe that has been compared to early Chinese Buddhist arts from the Sui and Tang periods.²⁸⁴ His enlarged hands and feet as well as thick folds from his robe are stylistic different from the standing, imported Buddha also found in the first enclosure. This unique Cham Buddha sits with his legs pendant.

In order to understand the significance of the seated Cham Buddha with the legs pendant at the *Đông Dương* monastery, I will re-examine the meaning of this relatively rare seated posture in Buddhist and Hindu sculpture. The posture with the legs pendant is depicted in four figures in early 1st-century CE Indian art. Sculptures of the Kushan King Vima, and the deities Kubera, Hariti and the Buddha in early Indian arts shows the four figures in the rare seated posture. Scholars have argued that this position is a royal posture. It is not, however, exclusively associated with royalty. There are examples of deities such as Hariti and Kubera seated in this position in a non-royal context, which suggest that this posture has multiple meanings. I argue that the posture itself does not have exclusive royal connections. The posture, at times, can be associated with feminine sources of power; even in some instances the figure seated in legs-down posture is male. Thus, the posture has connections to royal, divine, and feminine power.

Deities, including the Buddha, in Indian art are often shown seated in a wide variety of postures. One posture that is relatively rare is sitting in a chair with the legs pendant. While this

²⁸³ The head is a modern creation, or original but poorly recarved, probably at some point before modern times.

²⁸⁴ Guillon, 82.

seated posture is expected in European art showing people sitting in a chair, in the Indian context, figures mostly sit cross-legged or stand on platforms. Only a handful of powerful figures are depicted in the seated position with the legs pendant, including King Vima, Kubera, Hariti, and the Buddha, although scholars have studied the seated Buddha most extensively.²⁸⁵ The seated Buddha with legs pendant has circulated in different geographical countries including India, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Current scholars study each country in isolation from each other while using a different terminology to describe the same posture. This Buddha seated in the legs pendant position spread across Asia linking the geographical regions as Buddhist states in the 9th century.

Alfred Foucher identified the seated Buddha in 1849, as “a l’européenné” and scholars have used the English translation “European posture” to describe the seated Buddha with the legs pendant.²⁸⁶ Ananda Coomaraswamy disagreed with this terminology and referred to this position as *pralambapadasana*, which means, “sitting posture with two legs pendant.”²⁸⁷ Scholars have continued to use either Foucher or Coomaraswamy’s terminology. One scholar, Nicolas Revire has recently discussed the need to revise this terminology primarily because there is no textual support for the terms “European posture” and *pralambapadasana*.²⁸⁸ In addition, he believes that the words do not convey royal symbolism that is associated with the seated position. Revire abandons the term “European posture” and *pralambapadasana*.²⁸⁹ Instead, he uses Buddha “in

²⁸⁵ John Rosenfield writes that the posture with the legs pendant is also present on some deities placed on the ornamental Gavaksa windows: Yama and Indra. See John Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 187.

²⁸⁶ Nicolas Revire, “Some Reconsiderations on Pendant-Legged Buddhas in Dvaravati Art,” Unpublished paper, 4.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 4.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 4.

²⁸⁹ Revire, “Some Reconsiderations on Pendant-Legged Buddhas in Dvaravati Art,” 6.

majesty” or *bhadrasana*, which translates as “auspicious sitting posture.”²⁹⁰ The use of different terminologies is due to the problem that there is no clear word in Sanskrit or Pali for this position and thus the current terminology is a modern creation.²⁹¹

Chotima Chaturawong argues that the sitting pose has a royal association and indicates superiority.²⁹² While the posture is undoubtedly linked to royal figures, there are female deities sitting in this posture who do not have significant royal characteristics. One example is Hariti, a goddess associated with children and fertility. This posture may have multiple associations, including feminine, royal, and divine power. The posture serves as a seat for powerful figures such as Hariti and the Buddha that appear in various regions throughout India and Southeast Asia. Royal characteristics with the posture are evident but other interpretations are possible. The study of earlier examples of figures in this sitting position indicates that the posture is originally associated with feminine strength.

The earliest examples of figures seated in the legs pendant position come from representations of female deities on 1st-century coins from the Kushan period in the reign of Kanishka and Huvishka.²⁹³ Claudine Bautze-Picron explains that “‘gods’ and ‘goddesses’ could include royal aspects, making them ambivalently close to the human devotees on one hand (since they become more earthly) but also contributing to a more divine approach to the royal function.”²⁹⁴ In other words, the acquisition of royal attributes for the gods and goddesses places

²⁹⁰ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, October 5th, 2011.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁹² Chotima Chaturawong, “Indo-Thai Cultural Interaction: Buddha Images in *Pralambapadasana*,” in *Connectivity and Beyond: Indo-Thai Relations Through Ages*, Ed. Lipip Ghosh (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2009), 58.

²⁹³ John M. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 72.

²⁹⁴ Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Bejeweled Buddha from India to Burma: New Considerations* (New Delhi: Sanctum Books, 2010), 19.

them on a more accessible approach to the human world than the divine world. Madhuvanti Ghose suggests that Kaniska received his kingship from a Mesopotamian goddess Nana who is also shown seated on a lion in an impression from a Kushan intaglio (fig. 146).²⁹⁵ Thus kingship and divinity have a direct relationship in visual imagery. Some gods display royal iconography to enter the earthly world, while kings acquire more power on a divine level, separating them from the human population.

Tablets from the Temple of Marduk reveal that the goddess Nana is a powerful deity in the Mesopotamian culture. The tablets describe the goddess Nana as “lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses, directress of mankind, mistress of the spirits of heaven, possessor of sovereign power, the light of heaven and earth, daughter of the Moon God, ruler of weapons, arbitress of battles, goddess of love, the power over princes and over scepters of kings.”²⁹⁶ This description indicates that whether or not the Kushans associated the goddess of Nana with all of these roles, nevertheless, she is considered as more superior than a king. The Kushans adopted her image on coins and seals because of her high status.

One early example of a figure seated in a posture with legs pendant is an unidentified goddess from Gandhara from the 2nd century (fig. 147). The goddess holds a bowl in her right hand and an animal head in her left hand. An ambiguous animal that scholars have interpreted as a lion, dog or jackal flanks both sides of her seat. This image can possibly be related to the goddess Nana mentioned above. Ghose discusses how “Nana remained a dynastic cult goddess with esoteric practices which were never adopted by the masses. She was assimilated into the

²⁹⁵ Ghose, “Nana: The Original Goddess on the Lion,” 103.

²⁹⁶ Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 85.

cults of local goddesses who shared certain aspects and attributes with her.”²⁹⁷ Nana and other female goddesses adopted this sitting posture as the seat of power.

Another example of a goddess seated in legs-down posture is an animal-headed goddess who holds a wine cup in her right hand (fig. 148). Its provenance and date are unknown. Scholars have interpreted the figure as a “goddess that may be associated with a child-protecting, animal-headed (goat) deity associated with the god, Skanda. Her face resembles a fox, bear, dog, or goat with upright ears, angled eyes, and a small muzzle.”²⁹⁸ Various goddesses are also seated in the legs pendant posture with possible connections to a child-protecting, motherly figure. In her left hand, “the animal head held may be an innovation or variant motif derived from the animal-headed cornucopias so common to the Gandharan goddesses of abundance.”²⁹⁹ Although the identity of the figure remains unknown, the posture is closely identical to the cornucopia bearing Greek goddesses. The number of sculptures of female goddesses in this posture indicates the popularity of the worship of female deities.

In addition to sculpture, various Kanishka coins show the Persian goddess Ardokhsho seated with legs pendant while holding a cornucopia. Jennifer Rowan indicates that the “[cornucopia] has been associated with numerous goddesses from Mediterranean and Iranian cultures: Demeter, Roma, Fortuna, Tyche, Anahita, and Ardokhsho. It is likely that the cornucopia was introduced into Gandhara by means of these goddesses whose similar characteristics and functions facilitated their eventual fusion with Hariti.”³⁰⁰ Greek or Ancient

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 103.

²⁹⁸ Jennifer Rowan, *Danger and Devotion: Hariti, Mother of Demons in the Stories and Stones of Gandhara: a Historiography and Catalogue of Images*, MA Thesis, (University of Oregon, 2002), 320.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 320.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 53.

Near Eastern goddesses would be a likely source as a prototype for Hariti. My point is that the posture of legs pendant is taken by a number of important female deities in early South Asian art. The association of this posture with feminine power and identity, will influence how the King Vima, Kubera, Hariti, and the Buddha are interpreted when they assume this position.

The Kushan emperor Vima preserves the image of female deities by popularizing the image on coins. He later adopts her posture for his portrait sculpture. Rare coins show the image of the king on one side and the reverse side depicts the goddess labeled, “NANASAO.”³⁰¹ By linking his image with hers, the king believed the goddess Nana had great importance to his reign. King Vima’s interest in the creation of coins with female deities seated with legs pendant intensifies the significance of feminine power with the emergence of his portrait in this same posture. One example is a monumental stone portrait statue of King Vima (fig. 149). The inscription reads, “Great King, King of Kings, Son of God, the Kusana Scion, the Sahi.”³⁰² The king sits on a throne supported by two lions with his feet placed on a footstool. As far as I know, King Vima is the only Kushan king that takes this posture. This image was once placed at the center of a dynastic shrine at Mat (outside Mathura) and later Kushan kings worshipped the sculpture.³⁰³ The continuous worship of the sitting King Vima preserves his permanent royal power.

Kubera is the Lord of Wealth and has a royal role as king of the Yakshas. He is usually shown wearing fine and elaborate clothing and ornaments to indicate his wealth, and very often is placed with his consort Hariti, the goddess of wealth and fertility. One example (fig. 150)

³⁰¹ Ibid, 103.

³⁰² Chaturawong, “Indo-Thai Cultural Interaction: Buddha Images in *Pralambapadasana*,” 58.

³⁰³ Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985), 126-130.

shows Kubera wearing a *dhoti* with a long sash that falls in-between his legs.³⁰⁴ Based on the designs of the garments that are identical to the designs on a sculpture of Hariti, scholars have suggested that the original sculpture of Kubera was broken from that of his consort, Hariti. Kubera's seated position may represent his royal power as the king of the Yakshas. Since his consort is Hariti, they are depicted seated together as king and queen of the Yakshas. Although royal aspects are linked with this posture, some sculptures of Kubera emphasize family and children that connects the posture to wealth.

Kubera and Hariti often sit next to each other with their legs pendant. As a couple, Hariti and Kubera represent auspiciousness. One sculpture dated to the 1st-2nd century shows Kubera and Hariti on a "throne-like chair" (fig. 151).³⁰⁵ Although we can interpret the couple as royal, more can be discerned from the sculpture. Hariti's extension of her hand touches Kubera's arms, suggesting that love is shared between the couple. In addition, Kubera slants his head over to Hariti as she also turns her eyes towards him, which displays a strong connection between the two that is visible to the viewer. With the presence of Hariti and children, Kubera's role as father is emphasized, enhancing himself as a fertile and strong man. At the same time, Kubera's presence highlights Hariti's role as a mother. Hariti and Kubera symbolize wealth and children, bringing auspiciousness to the worshipper.³⁰⁶

Hariti also sits in the seated position with the legs pendant without her consort, Kubera. The word "Hariti," comes from "Hri," which is translated as "to steal or kidnap." In Nepal, her

³⁰⁴ Stanislaw J Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art with Indian University Press, 1985), 36.

³⁰⁵ Madhurika Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess. Hariti: A Buddhist Deity* (Mumbai: IIRNS Publications, 2009), 143.

³⁰⁶ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, November 9th, 2011.

name is translated as “stealing or taking away suffering and illness from children.”³⁰⁷ Originally in Indian literature, Hariti is a demon that devours children. She converts to Buddhism when she meets the Buddha. Later, people worshipped Hariti as a fertility goddess and the protector of children.³⁰⁸ In some texts, Hariti no longer devours children, leaving her own children unprotected. As a result, she relies on monks for the supervision of her children.³⁰⁹ Based on the original stories of Hariti, she does not have any royal associations. In visual imagery, Hariti remains known for her role as a fertility goddess with royal attributes.

The lower half of a seated Hariti from Nagarjunakonda dates to the 3rd or 4th century (fig. 152). Unfortunately, excavators have not discovered the upper portion of the statue. Scholars have identified the limestone sculpture as Hariti because it was discovered inside her shrine. The sculpture shows a figure seated in the asana posture with the legs pendant.³¹⁰ She wears numerous round anklets that are similar to the jewelry worn by the consorts of the universal king. The consorts are depicted on a limestone relief showing the Cakravartin (universal king) from the Great Stupa at Amravati dated to the 2nd century. Hariti’s royal regalia have strong connections to the universal king and his consorts.

Madhurika Maheshwari published a Gandharan image of Hariti that she describes as “majestic seated Hariti.”³¹¹ While Hariti sits on an elaborate chair, a seat of power, there is no indication that she sits on an actual throne. Two children stand before her knees and two others flank her seat. A fifth child sits in her lap. Hariti uses her hand to nurture the baby on her lap as a

³⁰⁷ Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess Hariti: a Buddhist Deity*, 11.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, 11.

³⁰⁹ Gregory Schopen, personal communication. May 3rd 2011.

³¹⁰ Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess. Hariti: a Buddhist Deity*, 63.

³¹¹ Ibid, 181.

child protector. If one interprets her seat as a throne, her main role as a mother remains more important than her royal associations because she is depicted alone without her consort, Kubera. In this particular sculpture, she carries a cornucopia, but in later images, she holds a baby, transforming herself into a mother goddess. Hariti assumes a strong position as the protector of children.

A standing sculpture of Hariti with children dated to 250-300 CE reveals a possible visual reference to the Buddha (fig. 153). The exact date of the existence of the earliest Buddha images in South Asia remains debatable, but for the Buddha's iconography "only one type of Buddha in anthropomorphic form was created in South Asia."³¹² Viewers can recognize the Buddha in human form, either cross-legged, standing, or sitting in the 1st century. This becomes important when interpreting the Buddha's posture because he is also shown seated in the leg pendant position in the 5th century.

Jennifer Rowan notes that "between [Hariti's] her feet, a fifth small figure sits on a cushion in cross-legged pose and appears to be writing on a slate. Unlike the children, he is fully dressed, wears his hair in a bun (ushnisha?) and may be intended to invoke comparison with the Buddha."³¹³ This cross-legged figure is not an ordinary child. The artist chose to position him at the center of Hariti's feet, which is visually separates him from the other children. Whether or not the artist chose to refer to the Buddha, his cross-legged pose and bun reminds the viewer of the Buddha.³¹⁴ Although the Buddha's image fully evolved in the 1st century, reference to the Buddha on the sculpture of Hariti indicates the worshipper's close relationship to the Buddha and

³¹² Robert L. Brown, "The Walking Tilya Tepe Buddha: A Lost Prototype," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 14, (2000), 77.

³¹³ Rowan, *Danger and Devotion: Hariti, Mother of Demons in the Stories and Stones of Gandhara: a Historiography and Catalogue of Images*, 309.

³¹⁴ Robert L. Brown points out that there are a number of Gandharan sculptures that show the child Buddha learning to write by sitting with a slate and stylus.

Hariti. If the child is not depicted to bring to mind the Buddha, Hariti's size and standing posture commands authority over the children.

In another standing sculpture of Hariti from the Chandigarh Museum, she carries a baby near her chest (fig. 154). Two children sit on her shoulders with their legs pendant. The posture of the children suggests that the seat of power comes from Hariti's shoulders. The children sitting in the legs down posture receive power from Hariti. This suggests that her power can be transferred to her children. Future worshippers created sculptures of the Buddha in both the cross-legged and legs pendant posture identical to the posture of the children that cling to Hariti. Perhaps the Buddha in the legs down posture reminds devotees of the significance of feminine power from Hariti.

On the sculpture of Hariti itself there is an inscription that reveals how people worshipped Hariti. The inscription states, "in the year two hundred ninety one, on day 22 of the month of Ashadha/let the tenth carry up to (a) bright fortnight. I remember (Hariti) for the protector of children." A second version of the translation reads, "in the 400th year less one (399) on the 22nd day of the month Ashadha. In heaven may she carry the tenth. I ask for the protection of children."³¹⁵ Another interpretation translates the date to 165 CE, when a smallpox epidemic occurred in the Roman Empire and reached Gandhara, and images of Hariti multiplied. A scholar, Ludwig Bachhofer has dated the text to 87 CE based on Hariti's drapery that is identical to the designs on the clothes of the worshippers on the Kanishka reliquary.³¹⁶ Regardless of the actual date, the inscription and the statue suggest that during a disaster, people venerated Hariti for motherly protection.

³¹⁵ Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess. Hariti: a Buddhist Deity*, 154.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 154.

As we have seen in numerous seated sculptures of Hariti, the Buddha in figure 155 is shown seated in the asana position with two legs pendant. The sculpture dates to the 5th-6th century and is from Sarnath. In most cases, the Buddha is shown cross-legged or standing in human form. The Buddha seated in this position reserved for female deities can be interpreted in different ways. Supported by two royal lions, the Buddha sits on a throne performing the *dharmacakra mudra*, the gesture of preaching his doctrine, also associated with the turning the wheel of law. Another teaching gesture that is closely related to the Buddha from Thailand is the *vitarka mudra* that symbolizes intellectual argument and communication of the dharma. The Buddha gave his first sermon in the deer-park at Sarnath. Besides royal connections, the seated Buddha image places an emphasis on the teaching of the Buddha. The lions with their royal context that are part of the throne on which the Buddha sits give to the Buddha a superior status.

The Buddha's strength and power are reflected in his posture and royal connections. Chaturawong explains, "as the Buddha is considered a superior man, a halo (*prabhamandala*), a symbol of the radiant splendor of the great man, is marked around the Buddha's head in Buddhist art and *pralambapadasana* became a posture of the Buddha."³¹⁷ The posture with association to royalty brings strength to a great man. Although the seat connects to royalty based on the lion throne, I emphasize that the posture of the king is secondary to the actual lion throne. The lion throne serves as the symbol that relates the image to royalty but not the posture itself. In addition to the Buddha's strength, his posture can be related to the power of femininity.

In 1986 during the second season of excavation at Ranigat, Pakistan (an ancient site in Gandhara), an early 3rd-century seated figure with a base of a goddess was discovered in Room

³¹⁷ Chaturawong, "Indo-Thai Cultural Interaction: Buddha Images in *Pralambapadasana*," 73.

301 (fig. 156).³¹⁸ The excavation report describes figure 149 as “seated Buddha with pedestal.”³¹⁹ Nakeo Odani has identified the figure on the base as the goddess Nana.³²⁰ The identity of the seated figure cannot be determined because the sculpture is damaged. However, other sculptures found in room 301 show the Buddha rendered in drapery identical to the drapery of the damaged seated figure. If the figure is indeed the Buddha, it is intriguing that the artist created a sculpture of a seated Buddha with a seated goddess with legs pendant, revealing the importance of collectively worshipping the Buddha and femininity. Odani suggests that the sculpture shows “valuable evidence of religious and cultural interaction in Gandhara.”³²¹ Although scholars have focused on the interpretation of the base of the sculpture, the seated Buddha is also important to understand the sculpture as a whole.³²² In Gandhara, at least for this sculpture, the Buddha and a goddess were worshipped together, showing the significance of femininity to represent power.

The worship of feminine power captivated the followers of Buddhism. Madhurika Maheshwari writes that “in Buddhism, Hariti worship started as a mother cult and her images introduced to an austere Buddhism a feminine face—full of love, compassion and generosity.”³²³ Previous scholars have written about the gender of the Buddha in various books and articles. Robert L. Brown discusses the feminization of 5th-century Sarnath sculptures from the Gupta

³¹⁸ *Kyoto University Scientific Expedition to Gandhara. Ranigat*. Vol. II. Plates (Japan: Kyoto University Press, 1994), 353.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 353.

³²⁰ Nakao Odani, “The Banquet Scene on the Base of A Seated Buddha in Gandhara” in *Religion and Art Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology* 1. Ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron (London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008), 31.

³²¹ *Ibid*, 31.

³²² *Ibid*, 31.

³²³ Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess. Hariti: a Buddhist Deity*, 77.

period. He suggests that there “appears to be a shift from a strongly masculine image toward a much less masculine (if not overly female) image.”³²⁴ John Powers agrees with Brown concluding that “the images of masculinity [in his book] generally failed to resonate with Buddhists in other countries, so the Buddha was modified to fit different cultural norms.”³²⁵ This change in the Buddha figure occurs in the Gupta period and spreads to Southeast Asia. Similarly, the worship of Hariti that begins in India and creates a strong, motherly figure spreads outside of India to China, Nepal, Indonesia, and Japan. This popularity spreading across Asia suggests that worshippers embraced feminine worship.

The ideal body in female and male form is a popular topic in the field of art history, although not specifically focused on the Buddha. For example, Vidya Dehejia explains “beautiful” could refer to both male and female physique.³²⁶ In addition, “men frequently shared with women a set of established poetic tropes, such as faces that put the moon to shame, eyes that outdo the lotus, arched eyebrows, full red lips, and gleaming toenails.”³²⁷ The description indicates that physical beauty must evoke a viewer’s response regardless of the gender of the figure. Men and women had similar attribute of beauty and despite biological differences, western stereotypical feminine and masculine attributes are not applicable for Indian society. In the Buddhist world, feminine attributes were favorable. Alfred Foucher also argues, “the most universally attractive role will always revert to those figures which incarnate the

³²⁴ Robert L. Brown, “The Feminization of the Sarnath Gupta-Period Images,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16, (2006), 165.

³²⁵ John Powers, *A Bull of A Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex, and the Body in Indian Buddhism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 232.

³²⁶ Vidya Dehejia, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving the Boundaries Between Sacred and Profane in India’s Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 46.

³²⁷ *Ibid*, 46.

maternal...grace of the eternal feminine.”³²⁸ Feminine beauty is favorable, possibly for both male and female figures like the Buddha and Hariti in Southeast Asia and China.

Four figures, Hariti, King Vima, Kubera, and the Buddha are represented in the seated position with the legs pendant. This posture is often interpreted as royal based on the specific objects rendered with the figure such as the Buddha’s throne or Hariti’s royal jewelry. Eventually Hariti became popular as a fertility goddess and a protector of children. She can be associated to royalty, based on her jewelry or elaborate throne, although we can interpret her elaborate chair as a seat of power like the Buddha. With the emergence of devotion to Hariti as a divine fertility goddess, mortality rates for children and mothers must have been very high. Rendered in sculpture alone, eventually Hariti emerged on her own, without her consort Kubera, the king of the Yakshas. Jennifer Rowan explains that “in China, Hariti was assimilated and effectively subordinated to the Chinese manifestation of Avalokitesvara under the designation of Songzi Guanyin. She indicates “Peri attributes the feminization of Avalokitesvara to rivalry between the cult of Guanyin and Hariti’s popular cult in China.”³²⁹ There was a desire for a feminine motherly worship, and perhaps this may explain the major shift in visual image of the Buddha from strongly masculine to feminine; after all, the worship of Kubera, the king of the Yakshas did not spread as widely as Hariti in Asia.

A feminized Buddha resonating with others parts of Asia developed during the Gupta period in India.³³⁰ Other sculptures of the seated Buddha in pendant-legged position have spread

³²⁸ Alfred Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1917), 291.

³²⁹ Rowan, *Danger and Devotion: Hariti, Mother of Demons in the Stories and Stones of Gandhara: a Historiography and Catalogue of Images*, 100.

³³⁰ Robert L. Brown, “The Feminization of the Sarnath Gupta-Period Images,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16, 2006.

along with the worship of Hariti throughout Asia including China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. This pendant-legged sitting position echoes the female Mesopotamian and Greek goddesses also seated in this posture. Perhaps, themes of motherly worship of the Buddha along with Hariti created a profound impact across the south of Asia. These themes popularized the standard image of the feminine motherly Buddha embracing an inclusive worship for both men and women with feminine attributions. Thus, in India, Southeast Asia, and China, the seated posture with the legs pendant places King Vima, Kubera, Hariti, and the Buddha on a seat of power that can be interpreted as feminine, royal, or divine. The seated 9th-century Cham Buddha with the legs pendant takes a pose popular for female goddesses, reinforcing the importance of the female realm at the Đổng Dương monastery.

V. Royal Women from the Vihara

There is a pedestal with narrative relief panels discovered in the Đổng Dương monastery's first enclosure. The seated Buddha with the legs pendant, along with narrative relief panels promote feminine power. The entire story on the pedestal remains difficult to reconstruct because many of the images are not well preserved or did not survive. The reliefs available to us show episodes of the life of the Buddha, from a Mahayana Buddhist literary text, the *Lalitavistara*.³³¹ The first panel on the Buddha's pedestal shows King Suddhodana and Queen Maya at the court (fig. 157). Queen Maya informs her husband about her auspicious dreams.³³² The next scene depicts Queen Maya in the Lumbini garden (fig. 158). At the garden, she holds a stylized tree branch and two smaller figures stand beside her. Chutiwongs describes the scene,

³³¹ The visual imagery told from the *Lalitavistara* is also depicted on the relief panels of 9th-century Borobudur at Central Java.

³³² Nantana Chutiwongs, "Buddhism in Champa: Narrative Reliefs of Two Images Pedestals at Đổng Dương," *SACHE Lettre*, No. 14, (2011), 14.

stating ‘the baby had already emerged and is seen standing on the ground, escorted by a divinity who probably represents Indra, the king of gods, acting for all divinities who are said to be present at the moment of the Bodhisattva’s birth.’³³³ Emmanuel Guillon indicates that the figures are two attendants “shown in the conventional diminutive scale.”³³⁴ Most likely the figures are not Queen Maya’s attendants since the two figures are males.³³⁵ Regardless of the identity of the figures, Queen Maya is depicted larger than the two figures to show her power as the mother of the Buddha.

The next scene shows a seated figure who is worshipped by a group of people. There is no scholarly consensus about the identity of the figure (fig. 159). First, the panel has been interpreted as “the Buddha in the heaven of the Tusita gods who venerate him and bow to his teaching. The worshippers are in the anjali posture with one knee touching the ground, and the Buddha is seated in the ‘European’ position.”³³⁶ Guillon suggests that the seated figure is Buddha. Nandana Chutiwongs offers a different interpretation in 2011, explaining that “the upper panel depicts the rarely seen episode of Queen Maya attaining heaven after her demise, enthroned, surrounded by halo (prabhamandala) of divine radiance and being worshipped by the gods.”³³⁷ The upper panel was defaced before 1972, but the original condition of the panel can be found in photographs. Based on a photograph in Jean Boisselier’s *La Statuaire du Champa*, the seated figure is rendered with breasts (fig. 160). This indicates that the figure is female. Chutiwongs uses literary texts the *Buddha-Charita* and the *Lalitavistara* to identify the seated

³³³ Chutiwongs, 2011, 14.

³³⁴ Guillon, 92.

³³⁵ Robert L. Brown. UCLA, Spring 2013.

³³⁶ Guillon, 92.

³³⁷ Chutiwongs, 2011, 15.

figure as Queen Maya. If we accept that the seated figure is female, then the figure cannot be the Buddha. Without inscription accompanying the imagery, we do not know if the figure is Queen Maya.

In the *Lalitavistara*, the Sanskrit text tells the reader about the life of the Buddha from his birth to his Enlightenment. The text states that after the Queen Maya's death, she entered heaven. The translation reads, "Thus O Bhiksus, when Bodhisattva had been born seven nights, his mother, Mayadevi, died. After death, she was born among the Trayastrimsa gods."³³⁸ The story reveals that other gods possibly worshipped Queen Maya, but the text does not say that she was enthroned. In another text, the *Buddha-Charita* reads, "But the queen Maya, having seen the great glory of her new-born son, like some Rishi of the gods, could not sustain the joy which it brought; and that she might not die she went to heaven."³³⁹ The text suggests that Queen Maya entered heaven, but again, the text does not help to determine if the seated figure is Queen Maya.

The only section in the text that describes Queen Maya as seated states, "she was surrounded by women like divine maiden, bathed anointed, clad in excellent clothes and ornamented, and accompanied by the melodious sounds and thousands turyas (musical instruments), the Queen ascended and seated herself like a heavenly bride."³⁴⁰ If we do accept that the seated figure is not the Buddha, Queen Maya (or some other female goddess or female figure) enthroned is a rare depiction. There may have been a desire to worship female goddesses at the Đổng Dương monastery, in addition to the Buddha. This may not be surprising because

³³⁸ Bijoya Goswami, *Lalitavistara*. Bibliotheca Indica Series, No. 320, March (2001), 96.

³³⁹ Edward Cowell, *The Buddha-Charita or Life of the Buddha by Asvaghosa* (Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1977), 19-20.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 50.

royal women and female deities had a high status in Indravarman II's court. The *Lalitavistara* enthrones Queen Maya to exhibit her status as a mother of the Buddha.

The scene below shows a sorrowful woman with a child clinging on her knees. The figure has been identified as Mahaprajapati, Queen Maya's sister (fig. 161). The depiction of Queen Maya's sister indicates that the elite had an interest in documenting the emotions of the female court women and as well as showing their prominent status as royal court ladies. Two female attendants "hold up the parasol of honor (chatta) to indicate the royal rank of the lady, who has now become the chief Queen of Kapilavastu."³⁴¹ The depiction of the parasol over the royal woman's head indicates her high status.

In a rare depiction, a relief shows a child holding his mother by the hand (fig. 161). Most likely, it is the Buddha's wife and their son, Rahula.³⁴² This perhaps records the compassionate nature of the Buddha's mother, something that the Buddha was leaving behind upon his departure. While the reliefs show the life of the Buddha, a strong reference to women is embedded in the narratives. In the lower panel, Chutiwongs describes, "the last fragment known from this series contains the scene of Siddhartha looking at the sleeping women of his harem, and that of his subsequent farewell to his wife and new-born child."³⁴³

At the main staircase, there are also narrative relief panels and figurative sculptures. The scene shows "the horde of Mara, namely Mara himself riding on the leading elephant, a prince representing Mara's thousand sons, and his three daughters who all play significant roles in the

³⁴¹ Chutiwongs, 2011, 15.

³⁴² Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 30 August 2013.

³⁴³ Chutiwongs, 2011, 15.

attack on the Buddha (fig. 162).”³⁴⁴ There have been other interpretations for the identity of the figure in this relief. Guillon argues the rider on the elephant is female.³⁴⁵ In another sculpture found in Trà Kiêu dated to the 10th century, a figure is seated on an elephant depicted in the same style. Jean-Francois Hubert identifies the figure as “Indra, the god of war, atmosphere and lighting. His supporting animal is the elephant Airavata, on which he sits Indian style.”³⁴⁶ The different interpretations show that scholars have disagreed on the identity of some of the figures. It is most plausible that the rider is Mara with his daughters, since female presence in the visual imagery is important in the court.

VI. Royal Women from the Main Shrine

The narratives of the pedestals of the main shrine in the third enclosure also show relief panels of the Buddha’s life and jatakas that emphasize the significance of women in flashback episodes. Henri Parmentier labeled the main pedestal from A to O and scholars have followed this organization. Relief O begins the story of the Great Renunciation. Siddhartha sits on a horse with a charioteer, Chandaka and three deities. The scene above shows Siddhartha cutting his hair (fig. 163).

The removal of Siddhartha’s hair and his departure on a horse are commonly rendered episodes from the Buddha’s life story. A similar scene of depicted in the 9th-century relief panel at Borobudur in central Java. Two registers above show the past lives of the Buddha, in a battle between king Kasi and Ksantivadin. The second register shows a battle between Prince

³⁴⁴ Chutiwongs, 2011, 16.

³⁴⁵ Guillon, 90.

³⁴⁶ Jean-François Hubert, *The Art of Champa* (USA: Parkstone Press and Confidential Concepts, 2005), 140

Candakumara and Brahmin Khandahala.³⁴⁷ On the third register, Siddhartha meets a group of women. The leader of the group has been identified as Queen Mahaprajapati Gautami, the stepmother of Siddhartha³⁴⁸ (fig. 164). Note the presence of royal court women on the reliefs: Queen Maya, Queen of Kapilavastu, and Queen Mahaprajapati Gautami at the Đồng Dương monastery.

The next scene depicts previous life events of the Siddhartha's wife, Yasodhara. For example the reliefs show "two embracing ladies to the left of the lower register probably show Yasodhara saying farewell to her mother before proceeding to the new court."³⁴⁹ Panel L shows all females in the relief. Guillon explains: "as with quite a number of the pedestal panels, L shows a series of figures in three registers which are hard to assign to a specific episode in the life of the Buddha. In this case they are almost all female, and it is likely that they illustrate an edifying take from the *jataka*."³⁵⁰ In the middle of the register, there is an image that has been interpreted as a stupa. Chutiwongs, however, argues that the relief does not depict a stupa, but a ceremonial vessel designated for the prince and princess (fig. 165). This vessel celebrates the marriage of Siddhartha and Yasodhara. In addition, the upper panel shows a group of court women. All the ladies are depicted with an elaborate headdress, revealing their feminine power.

The subsequent episode shows the seated Buddha, receiving his last meal before Enlightenment, by "lady Sujata and her retinue."³⁵¹ Another female kneels in worship before the Buddha. The scene below depicts "Siddhartha approaching and eventually assuming the seat

³⁴⁷ Chutiwongs, 2011, 20.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 20.

³⁴⁹ Chutiwongs, 2011, 20.

³⁵⁰ Guillon, 100.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 24.

under the Tree of Enlightenment. Below the prince is shown bending over a female figure, which seems to be half-emerging from the ground. The *Lalitavistara* tells us that on his way to the Tree of Enlightenment, a naga princess who lived in the water of Nairangjana river, rose up from the earth to worship him and offer him a jeweled throne (fig. 166).³⁵² Note that the figure before the bodhisattva is a female showing her reverence.

The last scene tells the story of the attack of Mara with the presence of female figures. Chutiwongs suggests that “the lower most level unfolds the attack by the forces by a troop of armed warriors, whose actions are repelled by a tiny female personage, seated cross-legged on the ground and raising her right arm only slightly to upset the advancing foes. The tiny female who appears to have been the cause of all the consternations would only be Mother Earth, the Supporter of All lives.”³⁵³ Females are prominently featured in the scene of the attack. Scholars have interpreted the female figures as Mara’s daughters (fig. 167). The relief shows the daughters of Mara carrying weapons. In the *Lalitavistara*, Mara and his daughters retreat after failing to distract the Buddha’s mind. The scene does not emphasize the seductive nature of women, but Mara’s daughters as powerful warriors. Chutiwongs concludes that “all the unwholesome and dark powers of samsara are shown defeated and dispersed by the accumulated forces of Charity and Renunciation that has paved the way to final Enlightenment, as unfailingly unregistered and timely acclaimed by Mother Earth, the upholder of All lives, herself.”³⁵⁴ Chutiwongs’s interpretation shows that the power of femininity is a prominent theme.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Ibid, 24.

³⁵³ Ibid, 25.

³⁵⁴ Chutiwongs, 2011, 26.

³⁵⁵ Evidence for Mahayana Buddhism exists at sites other than the Dông Dương monastery. The Phong Na Cave was once a Cham Buddhist sanctuary for monks in the 9th century. Currently the cave is inside the Phong Na-Ke Bang National Park in Quang Binh province. It is the second largest cave in Vietnam. Buddha statues and terracotta

VIII. Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates that Cham royal women held a visible role in the historical records during Indravarman II's reign. The interest of Buddhism from royal women was recorded in inscription, which corresponds with the prominent presence of female imagery in the visual narratives. In addition, a seated Buddha with legs pendant, sits on top of the pedestal from the *Đông Dương* monastery. The Buddha's posture originates from female goddesses, a seated position of feminine strength. The *Nhan Biều* inscription of Indravarman III (833 CE) records that in the year 833, a Buddhist monastery of Avalokitesvara in honor of their grandmother, the princess *Lyan Vrddhakula* (queen of *Jaya Simhavarman I*).³⁵⁶ This inscriptions reveals that a Buddhist monastery was dedicated to the wife of *Jaya Simhavarman I* after her death. The interest in Buddhism by Cham royal women created a presence of visual imagery for the importance of feminine powers depicted on the visual imagery at *Đông Dương* monastery.

tablets dated to the 9th–10th centuries have been found there.³⁵⁵ For example, there are thirty-six, undeciphered inscriptions found at the *Phong Na Caves*. In addition, thirty-five votive medallions were found. It has been suggested that pilgrims brought the medallions to the cave as an act of ritual piety.³⁵⁵ Louis Finot has compared them to Buddhist seals found in India, and identified five categories or types to which they belong: “Buddha, haloed and seated on a lotus, stupa, with umbrella on either side, a seated figure, either *Padmapani* or *Avalokitesvara*, seated figure with four arms holding bow and arrow, four-armed goddess seated on a lotus, holding two more lotus.”³⁵⁵ He noticed, “Saivite characteristics of the last two but was inclined to see the fourth as *Avalokitesvara* and the fifth as *Tara*. The character of the cave as a centre of Mahayana worship with a tantric flavor, appears, to be indicated by the medallions.”³⁵⁵ Two of the medallions have the image of a bodhisattva with four arms (fig. 27). The third image is a female figure (fig. 28). Although the figures on the medallions are unidentified, the cave shows the presence of a Mahayana Buddhist practice with an interest in the worship of male and female deities. A second Buddhist site, the *Marble Mountains* is a group five limestone hills located near *Đà Nẵng*, Vietnam. Various Buddhist sanctuaries can be found inside the mountains. For instance, a pedestal in the courtyard of *Linh Ung* pagoda dated to the 10th century is rendered in the same style to the imagery on the pedestal from *Đông Dương*.³⁵⁵ The pedestal depicts an elephant identical to the elephant on the pedestal at the *Đông Dương* monastery (fig. 29). This indicates that the artists were trained in the same school as the artists of the *Đông Dương* monastery. The pedestal from *Linh Ung* pagoda shows the elephant's trunk curling upward in a spiral. A figure sits above the elephant, as he is not depicted riding the elephant. This figure may represent *Indra* or *Mara*. An in-depth analysis of the *Phong Na Caves* and the *Marble Mountains* is beyond the scope of this paper. The sites reveal that Mahayana Buddhism was also practiced outside of *Indravarman II*'s royal court. Field research must be conducted at both sites to understand the specific nature of Mahayana Buddhism at the caves.

³⁵⁶ Schweyer, 130.

Cham Buddhism was not exclusive to Indravarman II's royal court, for the worship was practiced at other 9th-century Buddhist sites such as the Phong Na Cave and the Marble Mountains. A pedestal found at the Marble Mountains is identical in style and subject matter to the pedestal at Đổng Dương. In addition, various medallions found at the Phong Na Caves depict images of male bodhisattvas or female deities. The seated Buddha with the legs pendant and narrative relief panels stressed the female realm. During the 9th century, there was a trend for anthropomorphic visual arts to reinforce the female world at the Đổng Dương monastery. In early Cham history, there was a popularity of aniconic imagery such as sculptures of the *linga* and yoni. The visual representation of the anthropomorphic female world contributed to the importance of female and male realms that is still valued in modern Cham society.

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CHAPTER FIVE:

The Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal-shrine: Mobility and the Alignment of the Planetary Deities, the Directional Guardians, and the Constellations

The Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine is one of the first three-dimensional cosmic mandalas in Champa. The imagery of personified planets and directional deities combined with the divine feminine are associated to ritual gold deposits and compartment boxes placed under Southeast Asian temples. The Indic tradition of placing deposits under the temple helped activate the spiritual life of the sacred location. The planets, directional deities, and constellations carved on the square pedestal perpetuated an aligned, cosmic universe in the physical form. The image of the sapta-matrika was also transmitted to Southeast Asia, but was not commonly depicted. While the Indian concept of the navagraha and the dikpala traveled to Champa, Thailand, and Cambodia, the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal included localized iconography and meanings within a Southeast Asian artistic tradition.

I. Introduction

The remains of a colossal pedestal that were discovered in the town of Vân Trạch Hòa in Thừa Thiên-Huế province in the 20th century are today housed in the Historical and Revolutionary Museum in Huế of central Vietnam (figs. 168-169). The pedestal has been less studied by scholars than the three other colossal pedestals that have been the subject of my dissertation. I discuss the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal focusing on representations of the divine feminine in carvings on the pedestal. I argue that the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal with images of the directional deities, personified planets, and the divine feminine served as a cosmic *mandala*, symbolic of an aligned Cham universe.³⁵⁷ The sculptures carved on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal were connected ritually to small-scale deposits including compartment boxes and gold plaques placed under the temple. Ritual deposits activated the spiritual life of the temple. The altar connected the worshipper to the home of the gods, a cosmic universe which included the feminine divine, personified planets, directional deities, and constellations.

The cosmic universe is an integral part of the story in the epic of the *Mahabharata*. As far as I know, there are no existing visual representations from the *Mahabharata* found in Champa, but inscriptions mention the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as early as the 7th-8th centuries. There is one extant inscription that relates to the *Mahabharata*. The 8th-century Mỹ Sơn Stele Inscription of Vikranatavarman II reads,

He who, at one and the same time, destroyed the three cities belong to the
Tripura-Asuras for the peace of the worlds, making Pranava his strong bow, with
the Savitri as its bowstring, Visnu, his arrow, with Soma as its excellent feather,
and the blazing fire (Agni), its barb; his chariot, with the four Vedas as its horses,

³⁵⁷ The Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal is the only archaeological remain from this town. There are no other surface finds at the site.

and Ida and Virinca as its charioteers.³⁵⁸

The inscription reflects a passage from the *Mahabharata* which reads,

He, being thus addressed, said ‘So be it,’ and making Visnu his arrow, Agni its barb, Yama, the son of Vivasvat, its feather, all the Vedas his bow, and the excellent Savitri [the Gayatri] his bowstring; and having appointed Brahma his charioteer, he in due time pierced through these cities with a three-jointed, three-barbed arrow, of the colours of the sun, and in fierceness like the fire which burns up the world.³⁵⁹

The passage suggests that the inscriber of the Cham inscription may have been familiar with the poetic verses of the *Mahabharata* in the 8th century. There are no surviving images that depict this story in the visual form.

The Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata* is well-known in India and Southeast Asia and mentions that the planet’s misconfiguration causes destruction in the world. The representation of the *navagraha* (nine planets) is a literal representation of the planet alignments, preserving the order in the cosmic universe. The *Yuga* was described as, “a time of great destruction, caused by mainly natural forces: torrential rains, implied by the rolling clouds and the thunder; earthquakes, hinted at by the shaking produced by Arjuna’s conch as well as by the fallen guardians of the quarters, terrible winds, and an intense, replendent Sun; but most of all, fire, an all-consuming fire that destroys everything. There are also comets or meteors, as well as negative planetary

³⁵⁸ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campa: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber, and other French scholars and the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculation of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 32.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 32.

configurations.”³⁶⁰ Worshipped as deities, the planets were closely connected with the directional guardians and the stars. The visual representation of the *navagraha* reinforced a perpetually unified alignment of the universe and ensures continual worldly prosperity.

Originally derived from Hellenistic astronomy, Indian planetary deities assumed specific iconography and local meanings. In Southeast Asia, the representations of the *navagraha* also developed visual variations and trans-regional interpretations. The nine deities in Khmer and Cham culture have associations to planetary and directional deities. In addition, the Khmer local variations of the *navagraha* had visual associations to mother goddesses (*sapta-matrikas*). Cham culture highlights the importance of personified planets on pedestals with connections to zodiac signs (*rasi*). Each region adopted the visual concept of the *navagraha* integrated to their temple site and culture with new meanings and interpretations.

In this chapter, I argue the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine was one of the first three-dimensional cosmic mandalas in Champa. The imagery of personified planets and directional deities combined with the feminine divine were associated to gold plaques carved with similar images. The Indic tradition of the placing deposits of sacred images under the temple helped activate the spiritual life of the sacred location. The planets, directional deities, and constellations carved on the square pedestal perpetuated an aligned, cosmic universe in the physical form. The concept of the vast universe was represented in a single miniature form. The image of the *sapta-matrika* was also transmitted to Southeast Asia, but was not commonly depicted compared to the *navagraha*. While the Indian concept of the *navagraha* and the *dikpala* traveled to Champa, Thailand, and Cambodia, the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal included localized iconography and meanings within a Southeast Asian artistic tradition.

³⁶⁰ Johannes Bronkhorst, “The Historiography of Brahminism,” in *History and Religion: Narrating a Religious Past*, Eds. Bernd-Christian Otto, Susanne Rau, and Jorg Rupke, Berlin, Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2015, 31.

II. Navagrahas and Sapta-matrikas in India

Based on inscriptions and visual evidence, I trace the development of the *navagraha* and its associations to birth and fertility in India to understand the visual conception of the nine planets in Cham and Khmer culture and their local interpretations. In Indian art, the *navagraha* are nine planets depicted as personified deities aligned in a row.³⁶¹ Unlike Hellenistic culture, planetary deities in India are rarely depicted as female with the exception of the ninth planetary deity Ketu, which is depicted either as male and female by the 8th century. The visual change of Ketu from male to female is due to the prominent association of birth to the *navagraha* in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh along with the increasing worship of the *sapta-matrika*, the seven mother goddesses in the 7th- 8th centuries. Daniel Balogh's epigraphic research on *sapta-matrika* worship shows that male deities were mentioned in inscriptions to accompany the Mothers. He argues that there was a strong association of Skanda, Siva, and Ganesha with the mother goddesses from texts in the Gupta period.³⁶² Originally depicted as two separate groups in Indian sculpture, the *navagraha* and the *sapta-matrika* were later represented together on Indian temple lintels. This complements *linga-yoni* pedestals that also combined male and female energies as divine power, representing Siva and Parvati.

The earliest visual representations of figures in succession is a cylinder sealing from the Indus Valley dated to the 1st century CE. At Mohenjo-Daro, an Indus Valley site, the sealing shows an image of a divine figure standing between two plant stems, growing from one root (fig. 170). Below, a figure kneels in worship of the divinity and the plant with seven figures depicted in a row. Shivaji K. Panikkar suggests that this cylinder sealing is an image of *proto sapta-*

³⁶¹ Stephen Markel, *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities*. Lewiston: Mellen, 1995, 99.

³⁶² Daniel Balogh, "The Company of Men-Early Inscriptional Evidence for the Male Companion of Mother Goddesses," downloaded on academia.edu, 3.

matrika, but the image does not reveal the gender of the seven figures. The figures can be associated to the feminine because of its connection to plant and fertility worship. The seven figures have long hair, with plants growing from their head. The scene is interpreted to include a severed head that lies below the knee of the kneeling figure that is being presented as a gift to the tree deity. In another cylinder sealing, a figure is upside down while giving birth to plants (fig. 171). The seven figures parallels with the *sapta-matrika* the seated-legs pendant position with association to birth that circulated with representation of the *navagraha* beginning in the early 5th century.

The sequence of the Indian *navagraha* begins with Surya the Sun God and Candra the Moon God. The next five are planets, Mangala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brhaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), and Sani (Saturn). The eighth figure is Rahu, a demon who devours the sun and the moon. Rahu is associated to the ninth figure, Ketu, the personification of the comets.³⁶³ The cult images of the nine deities included mother goddesses flanked by two deities (*sapta-matrika*) and nine personified planets (*navagraha*). *The sapta-matrika* is often flanked by Siva and Ganesha.³⁶⁴ The seven divine mothers include Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Maheshvari, Indrani, Kaumari, Varahi, and Chamunda. Examples of the *sapta-matrika* appear in the colossal form, as part of cave walls or as temple lintels. An example of the *navagraha* depicted on a sandstone relief comes from Uttar Pradesh, India dated to 550-575 CE currently housed at the Worcester Art Museum (fig. 172). From left to right, the first figure is the Sun (Surya) who holds lotuses in his hands. The next six figures are identified as Candra, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and

³⁶³ Stephen Markel, *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities*. Lewiston: Mellen, 1995, 20. Ketu is a new addition to the visual representation of the nine planets, which appears after ca. 600.

³⁶⁴ Shiva and Ganesha travels to Southeast Asia. See Robert L. Brown's *Ganesha in Southeast Asia: India Connections and Indigenous Developments*, 1991.

Saturn. Rahu is the eighth figure who is paired with the ninth figure, Ketu.³⁶⁵

An intriguing aspect to the *navagraha* includes the feminine and the visual representation of Ketu as a female, found in Uttar and Madhya Pradesh, India. The ninth figure, Ketu is a personified comet and later associated with the descending moon. Ketu is depicted as either male or female and does not appear in visual representations until after c. 600 CE, and then mostly from the 8th century onward (fig. 173).³⁶⁶ The representation of Ketu in the form of a female is a local manifestation in India, which associates the *navagraha* to fertility and apotropaic purposes. This argument can be extended to suggest that there is a larger visual connection of the *navagraha* and the *sapta-matrika*, representing the nine heavenly bodies by combining the male and female spiritual powers.

Michael Miester links the *sapta-matrika* and the *navagraha*, stating “both the *navagrahas* and *sapta-matrikas* use a device for bracketing to define them as sets. The *navagrahas* are bracketed by Surya and by the abbreviated and distinctive images of Rahu and Ketu. The *matrikas* in Central India are bracketed by Vinadhara and Ganesa and, within the set, by the visually easily identified Brahmani (three faces) and fierce Camunda. Such a device provides quick recognition for otherwise repetitious images.”³⁶⁷ This visual bracketing highlights the nine divine bodies. I suggest that the Khmer and Cham *navagraha* and the *dikpalas* contributed to the

³⁶⁵ Robert L. Brown discusses the role of Rahu in the Indian context, stating “when the elixir popped out the roiling Milk Ocean, the demons attempted to steal it. The great Hindu god, Visnu saw the attempted robbery and stopped the demons from getting their prize, but not before some of the elixir had spilled from the pot and Rahu had started to drink it. Visnu instantly released his sharp-edged weapon, throwing it like a Frisbee, and cutting off Rahu’s head. Because his head has touched the elixir, however, it was now immortal. Rahu periodically attempts to swallow the moon or sun, which results in their disappearance.”³⁶⁵ (Robert Brown, Ph.D. “Planetary Deity Rahu.” *South and Southeast Asian Art*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2013. Web.) This is why Rahu is considered of the nine planetary deities in Indian culture.

³⁶⁶ Stephen Markel, *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities*. Lewiston: Mellen, 1995, 20.

³⁶⁷ Michael Meister, “Regional Variations in Mātrkā Conventions,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 47, No. 3/4 (1986), 240.

worship of the heavenly bodies. These images were carved on the pedestal of Vân Trách Hòa discussed later in the chapter and were also found on small-scale temple consecration deposits arranged to reflect the cosmic system. The image of the human form represented aspects of astronomy and astrology associated with the divine feminine, zodiac signs, planets, and constellations.

One relief panel from Uttar Pradesh dated to c. 700 CE, now at the Cleveland Art Museum, shows a tiny female figure standing between the legs of Surya (fig. 177). Stephen Markel suggests that she is a honorific attendant because she holds what might be a flywhisk. Ketu is depicted as a male serpent with staff. While Ketu is not depicted as female, the feminine is incorporated in the depiction of the *navagraha*.³⁶⁸ The need for mother worship and fertility associated with the *navagraha* in India is documented in the visual representations of Ketu as female. Ketu is never depicted as a single icon, and is rendered with Rahu in a row of nine deities in Central India.

A 8th-century relief shows a *linga-yoni* pedestal-shrine visually associated to the *navagraha* from Sikarra Khera in the Bharatapur district of Rajasthan, now housed at the State Museum in Bharatpur, India (fig. 179). A pedestal-shrine with the *linga* on top is depicted to the right of Surya. Stephen Markel suggests that the *sivalinga* with planetary deities combines the association of fertility and the apotropaic function of planetary deities, enhancing the divination of the nine planets. Here, Ketu is a female with a serpentine tail and her hands are placed palm to palm, in the gesture of worship. Another example of a *linga-yoni* pedestal possibly dated to the 11th century depicts Gauri, goddess of abundance and fertility with Sadyojata. (fig. 180). Gauri is

³⁶⁸ An example of Ketu depicted as female is dated to the 8th century from the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh, originally from the Mrtangesvara temple complex. Surya holds two lotuses in his hands. Candra and Mangala hold a rosary. Budha, Brhaspati, Sukra, Sanid and Ketu hold a water vessel in their right hand. Ketu is depicted as seated female, with large, round breasts. See Stephen Markel, 113.

flanked by two goddess on both sides of her bed. Above her, there is a depiction of the *navagraha* or the *sapta-matrika* in a row, but the gender of the nine deities are not specific. In addition, the *linga-yoni* pedestal with Siva and Ganesha is depicted directly above Gauri, an iconography commonly associated with the *sapta-matrika*. The *navagraha* was depicted with the *sapta-matrika* and *linga-yoni* pedestals to strengthen the visual associations of birth and fertility. The concept of the *linga-yoni* pedestal with the *navagraha* stresses the male and female energies that plays an important visual role in Khmer and Cham culture.³⁶⁹

In India, Rahu is also the only *graha* that is depicted on the pedestal with the Buddhist goddess, Marici who represents light and victory (fig. 181). A 9th-century sculpture shows Rahu on the bottom of the sculpture. His bust is depicted, holding out his two hands. Gerd Mevissen states that Rahu is depicted between seven horses with a charioteer seated on his head. Here, the seated charioteer is female, which is connected to the divine, feminine power. The two wheels of the chariot are shown flanking Rahu. The right wheel shows eight spokes while the left wheel has nine spokes. Mevissen suggests that, “one could speculate that the numbers are meant to refer symbolically to the nine *grahas*, and since one of them, Rahu is already represented figurally, the number of spokes on the right wheel was reduced by one.”³⁷⁰ The association to Rahu and the feminine goddess, Marici reveals a relationship between divine mother worship

³⁶⁹ Stephen Markel writes that the “association of the *navagraha* with birth and the proper maintenance of life can clearly be seen in the iconography of a particular type of image in which the divinities play a subsidiary role; which is the function performed by representations of the planetary deities. *Grahas* can be created as an individual deity and act as single icon in a shrine. Second, they are depicted on lintels of doorways to protect the space of the deity. Thirdly, they act as subsidiary deities to protect the enshrined deity in the spiritual plane. The representation of the *navagraha* in connection to birth, *linga-yoni* pedestal and cosmic universe was adopted in Cham and Khmer culture,” (Markel, 13)

³⁷⁰ Gerd Mevissen, “Ladies and Planets: Images of female deities accompanied by graha figures,” *South Asian Archaeology 2001. Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, held in Collège de France, Paris, 2-6 July 2001*. Eds. Catherine Jarrige & Vincent Lefèvre, 2005, Vol. II: Historical Archaeology and Art History, pp. 579-588., 2005, 158.

and *grahas* in the 9th century.

Stephen Markel describes the Bhutesvara temple in Madhya Pradesh with depictions of the *navagraha* and the *sapta-matika* (fig. 182). He writes, “on the slightly later temple number two in the same Bhutesvara group temples at Batesvara... there are nine planetary deities depicted on the architrave over the sanctum doorway... Surya squats, wears a crown, and holds two lotuses. The next six planetary deities are each seated on a low cushion with its right knee upraised.”³⁷¹ In addition, Ketu is rendered in the female form with a serpentine tail and holding her hands in the gesture of praying with “a group of eight avatars on the left, Visnu on Garuda in the center, and on the right are seven mothers border by Siva-Virabhadra and Ganesha.”³⁷² Here, Ketu is depicted as a female and the worship of the *sapta-matrika* enhanced the presence of the nine deities with feminine powers.

The lintel held at the Asian Civilization Museum in Singapore depicts both the *navagraha* and the *sapta-matrika* (fig. 183). This suggests that at some time beginning in the 8th century, sculptors depicted the two groups together, integrating the mother goddesses with the *navagraha*. The two tiered lintel shows the *navagraha* on the lower level and the *sapta-matrika* on the upper level. The lower level features the seated four-armed Visnu. Rahu appears as a bust with his hand out with Ketu depicted as serpentine. Two apsaras flanked by mythical creatures appear on both sides of the representation of the *navagraha*. The upper level shows Durga with her two sons. There are other mother goddesses, such as Chamunda but most of the goddesses cannot be identified.³⁷³ By the 9th century, sculptures combine the presence of Visnu and Durga

³⁷¹ Stephen Markel, *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities*. (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1995), 114.

³⁷² *Ibid*, 114.

³⁷³ The Indian text, the *Agnipurana* mentions the nine deities and their human characteristics, holding earthly objects. This text follows closely the visual production of the nine deities in Cambodia and Champa. For example,

with the *navagraha*, the *sapta-matrika*, and celestial figures to create a local representation of the astronomical world.³⁷⁴ This tradition is followed in the Southeast Asia.

III. The Navagrahas and the Dikpalas in Thailand, Cambodia, and Champa

Current scholarship focuses on the identification of depicted Khmer and Cham deities, with conflicting interpretations. It is difficult to identify the specific deity from the visual representations because Cham and Khmer sculptors combined shared iconography and attributes associated with the deities. Instead of focusing on identifications, I analyze how personified deities emphasized the body and gender to construct ideas about the astronomical and astrological world on both colossal and small scale objects. The earliest representation of the *navagraha* in Southeast Asia is found in Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia dated to the 7th century (fig. 184). The nine figures are not associated with fertility nor can they be associated with a specific gender; they are depicted as free-standing figures. The *navagraha*, *sapta-matrika*, and the *dikpala* are not depicted as separate groups, but are rendered together as one visual sculpture. For example, the representation of the Khmer *navagraha* also can be interpreted as guardian

the text reads, “The Sun rides in a chariot provided with a single wheel, and drawn by seven horses, carrying in his own hand the two celestial lotus flowers. The form of the Moon should be represented as holding a sacrificial pitcher and rosary. The image of Mars should be holding a spear and rosary. The figure of Mercury should be holding a bow and rosary in his hands. The form of Jupiter should be holding the sacrificial pitcher and rosary. The image of Venus may be holding a pitcher and rosary. That of Saturn should be endowed with a special staff, khinkhira. While that of Rahu is represented as holding half of the lunar disc, and that of Ketu is represented as holding the sword and lamp.” Stephen Markel, *Origins of Planetary Deities*, 191.

³⁷⁴ Dated to c. 900, the doorway at Jari Math at Barwasagar near Jhansti is what Michael Meister calls a “visual compound” that depicts the *navagraha*, the *sapta-matrika* and the *dikpala* together at one temple, but the visual concept never becomes conflated unlike Southeast Asian culture. Meister writes, “to the left appear the Navagraha, framed by Surya (carrying lotuses and with this knees pulled up) and the distinctive pair of Rahu and Ketu, to the right are the Sapta-matrikas flanked by Vinadhara and Ganesa” (Meister, p. 243). Other major deities include Shiva on Nandi, Visnu on Garuda, and Brahma on hamas (goose). Above Visnu, “to either side appear the Dikpala (guardian of directions): Indra (lord of heaven on his elephant), Agni (lord of fire, on ram), Yama (lord of dead, on buffalo), Nirrti (lord of destruction, on donkey), to the left, Varuna (lord of water on a makara, Vayu (lord of wind, a scarf billowing over his head, on an antelope), Kubera (lord of wealth, on a ram), and Isana (Siva, as “Ruler,” lord of lords, on a bull), to the right” (Meister, p. 244). Here, personified figures represent the inclusion of planets, directional deities, and mother goddesses ruling the cosmic and astronomical world above an Indian temple doorway. The human characteristics emphasized in the representation of planets allow the worshipper to understand complex astronomically ideas in a simplified material form through a human lens.

directional deities, the *dikpalas*. Furthermore, the visual representation does not adopt the Indian iconography of the last two planet deities, Rahu and Ketu. In Cambodia, Rahu is not depicted as a large bust with open hands and Ketu always remains male.

The standard *navagraha* in Khmer culture depicts the nine deities depicted either standing or seated on vehicles (fig. 185). Kamaleswar Bhattacharya and Louis Mallert rejected the idea of the nine planets, in favor of an indigenous interpretation, with iconography that combines planetary and directional deities. Another scholar, Debala Mitra disagrees with this idea and prefers the interpretation of the nine deities. The disagreement among scholars about whether the nine deities were meant to represent the *dikpala* or the *navagraha* lies in the iconography, which conflates numerous visual concepts associated with the *dikpala*, the *navagraha*, and the *sapta-matrikas*. Visual meanings also change over time across geographical regions.³⁷⁵ Around 900 CE, another phrase of the *navagraha* appeared in Khmer culture that reflected local variations. For example, one panel shows the three-headed Brahma depicted at the center of the lintel (fig. 186). The second figure is female, wearing a long skirt, distinguished from the males in the group who are wearing a shorter garment. Here, the standing nine deities are represented in row similar to the visual representation of the *navagraha*, but the iconography of nine planets has been modified to include gender specificity, representing both male and female directional deities.

The representation of the *navagraha* in Champa offers another visual interpretation compared to Khmer and Indian culture. Harry Falk suggests that “the visualization of Venus meeting Leo is the basis for the art motif, “Nana sitting on lion,” or “alias Venus on Leo.”³⁷⁶ It

³⁷⁵ *Navagrahas* are also found in Thailand, but its representation will not be discussed in this section (fig. 180).

³⁷⁶ Harry Falk, “Kushan Rule Granted by Nana: the Background of a Heavenly Legitimation,” in *Kushans Histories: literary sources and selected papers from a symposium at Berlin*, December 2 to 7, 2013, 293.

shows a planet and a sign of the zodiac combined. Cham culture also visually represents the *navagraha* as personified planets or the *dikplala*, which meets the sign of the zodiac.³⁷⁷ For example, one Cham sculpture shows all nine deities seated on pedestals with animal vehicles, a common feature for the Indian representation of the *sapta-matrika*. The animal on the pedestal represents the zodiac sign associated to that planet. In Cham art, depictions of Rahu in a whirlpool do not appear as a prominent visual representation shared between Indian and Khmer culture.³⁷⁸

The seven *linga* pedestal dated to the 10th century has visual connections to the construction of the *navagraha* (fig. 189). It has been described as a “somewhat puzzling pedestal with a row of seven *lingas* with incisions.” It is not, however, too surprising if compared to the nine rows of planet deities from Cham culture. This pedestal has been identified as the eight forms (*astamurti*) of Siva with different incisions on the stone. The incisions were intended to support the symbols that would have been cut from gold sheets with pegs to fit in the holes. Scholarship has identified the incisions to reveal a vase, trident, arrow, disc horn or crest moon, conch, and thunderbolt. These visual attributes cannot be completely verified, however, what is significant is that the forms are depicted as aniconic symbols, but the forms may not be completely associated to only the deity Siva. The iconography has similar association to a Khmer brahmancial stele, one that depicts Brahmanical gods arranged on an altar (fig. 190). John Guy describes the imagery as “a holy water vessel encircled by a rosary (*aksamala*), the principal attribute of Brahma, supported on the bloom of a lotus flower. At the center is a trisula, Siva’s

³⁷⁷ Ibid, 293.

³⁷⁸ *Navagraha* are depicted in small and large representations. For example, they are sometimes represented as eight or five gods placed in the exterior of Cham buildings. Nine small temples for the deities of the planets surround the 9th century temple of Đồng Dương, which will be discussed in a later chapter, a visual representation of a physical manifestation of the Cham astronomical world.

trident, its three prongs springing from a central shaft. At its base, a broad-bladed axe emerges from foliage. At the right are Visnu's discus weapons (*cakra*) and probably his conch and war trumpet.³⁷⁹ In this context, the Cham pedestal suggests that the symbols associated to deities were a significant visual choice, and may not all be associated to Siva alone, but are in themselves *mangala*, symbols of success, plenty and prosperity, even though the importance of Siva is highlighted in the seven *linga*-forms. Here, in the Cham version, it was arranged in a row similar to the depiction of the *navagraha*.

The sculpture of the anthropomorphic nine planets located in the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture follows the traditional way of representing the deities, nine in a row. However, there are visual differences between the Khmer and the Cham version. First, the gods with halos sit cross-legged on altar-pedestals. In the Cham version, Surya sits on a pedestal-shrine with six horses (fig. 188).³⁸⁰ The visual repetition of the horse-chariot is not used in the Khmer version. Furthermore, Rahu is not depicted the same way as the Cambodian version where Rahu's lower body is covered with rows of designs, interpreted as a twirling clouds or a whirlpool. In the sculpture from Champa, Rahu is seated similar to the other gods, with either an ox or bull carved in front of his pedestal. The local creation highlights the importance of altar-pedestals in Cham culture.

A stele with five deities held at the Norton Simon Museum is an example of the representation of the *navagraha* with a spout to drain ritual liquids. A pedestal with a spout for the *navagraha* sequence was found in the 11th-century Ta Keo temple in Cambodia (fig. 191).

³⁷⁹ John Guy, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia; [this Catalogue Is Published in Conjunction with "lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia, Fifth to Eight Century", on View at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from April 14 Through July 27, 2014]*. Bangkok: River Books, 2014, 163.

³⁸⁰ It follows the visual tradition in Java, where Surya is usually represented with riding a horse-chariot, but the horses are closely stacked in a row and repeated, showing only the face of the horse and its two frontal legs. In Java, views can only see the body of the first and last horse from its side.

The spout suggests that the *navagraha* was worshipped in rituals, in which water could be poured over the deities and liquids would drain from the spout. Pratapaditya Pal suggests that the stele may have been installed in its own shrine. This suggests that this Southeast Asian representation of the *navagraha* was not a part of an architectural temple or lintel, but rather, a functional object for worshippers to offer *puja*. Many examples of the *navagraha* only highlight the nine deities, and we do not know how it was used. In this example, the spout suggests that ritual libation was involved during the worship of the *navagraha* and reinforces the significance of pedestals and libations in Cham culture.

At the 8th-century Khmer temple of Pre Rup, the use of *sapta-marika* are represented in local forms as directional deities.³⁸¹ At the south-west tower, there is the visual depiction two of *matrikas*, Brahmi, with three heads like Brahma, and Vaharhi, with the boar head of Varaha. The deity, Varaha in a shorter garment is represented in sculpture found at Prasat Trapeang Phong with his cohort. Sculptors of Pre Rup highlight the consort of Varaha. The *matrikas* wear a long skirt. While the *sapta-matrika* are rare in Khmer art, individual mother goddesses from the *sapta-matrika* served as important directional deities in the female form for the temple. Another lintel at the same temple shows seven ascetics depicted in a row, in squat position on pedestals. This suggests that the *navagraha* and the *sapta-matrika*, originally depicted nine in a row also inspired depictions of ascetics in Khmer art in local forms and new interpretations.

The nine planets are also depicted in 12th-century reliefs at the temple lintel of Angkor Wat in Cambodia (figs. 193-195). The deities have been slightly modified from the usual planetary deities with a visual representation of Ketu on lion, Agni on rhinoceros (Saturn & Saturday), Yama on buffalo (Mars & Tuesday), Indra on elephant (Jupiter & Thursday), Kubera on horse (Venus and Friday), Skanda on peacock, Varuna on hamsa, and Nirrti on yaksa. Some

³⁸¹ There are no surviving representations of *sapta-matrika* in Cham art.

of the deities are associated to planets and days of the week. Eleandor Mannika argues that Ketu leads the procession in the east at sunset. The *navagraha* honors the year 1131 when Visnu would have presided over the planetary sequence and this would explain King Suryavarman's devotion to Visnu as his personal deity. The representation of the nine deities has been modified to fit a particular event in the royal court. In every case, while the Khmers use the *navagraha* in their visual representation, each example obtains site-specific and local meanings.

Gudrun Buhnemann explains that there are four categories of ritual associated to the nine heavenly bodies of the *navagraha*, which are important to our understanding of how these images were used during ritual ceremonies. The heavenly bodies are connected to pacification rituals, religious observances, ritual repetition of mantras, and special tantric practices.³⁸² Texts including the *Vaikhanasa-Smartsutra*, the *Baudhayana-Grhyasesasutra* and the *Matsya-Purana* describe how different colors are associated to the heavenly bodies. There is a special position of the individual grahas in the mandala.³⁸³ Images of the *sapta-matrika* are often flanked by the god Siva and Ganesha. Furthermore, the ritual practice "the grahamaksha begins with the ritual purification of a selected place on which a mandala is prepared. The basic pattern of the mandala of the nine heavenly bodies is an eight pedetal lotus surrounded by circles and a square whose four sides are interrupted T-shaped entrances. The heavenly bodies are represented by specific shapes."³⁸⁴ These shapes (iconography) have been changed once they were adopted into their specific local cultures.³⁸⁵

³⁸² Gudrun Buhnemann, "The Heavenly Bodies (Navagraha) in Hindu Ritual," *Nagoya studies in Indian culture and Buddhism: Sambhāṣā*. vol. 11, (1989), 1.

³⁸³ Ibid, 2.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 3.

³⁸⁵ While the *sapta-marika* has iconographical connections to the navagraha, the nine planets, there are textual sources and ancient myths that also suggest a connection. Shivaji K. Panikkar states that "in the Skanda Purana, the

Beyond imagining the *navagraha* in a row, the concept was later designed to be represented within a round or square mandala. Related examples are two Khmer miniature bronzes depicting Surya in a mandala (fig. 196). Indeed, Surya stands at the center of his temple pedestal and cosmic universe. The style and size of the cosmic mandala from Cambodia is different from the version on the plaque, but the artistic arrangement and astronomical concept is the same. The first bronze mandala of Surya is from Koh Ker (10th century) in a private collection. Surya stands under a temple arch with lotus-leaf motifs. He holds a lotus flower bud, iconography associated to him. In this example, eight directional deities surround Surya and six of them are half-kneeling. The sixth figure is cross-legged and the eighth figure is surrounded by clouds. The seated figure in front of Surya has been identified as Candra, the eighth figure is Rahu. The last figure has been identified as Ketu.

The second example dated to the 12th century, is now housed at the Art Institute of Chicago, and shows the standing Surya on a pedestal in the center of the mandala, surrounded by eight planetary deities in a circle (fig. 197). These planetary deities are not individualized; thus it is difficult to identify because there are no iconographic clues. The deities are not distinguished, which suggests that the identity of the god is not as important as the physical presence of numerous gods protecting and circling the central figure to create a mandala. Below, there are

seed of Siva thrown into the Ganges by Agni is placed on the banks by the river. The wives of the seven sages, who come there to bathe, pained by cold, through that the blazing seed was fire and warmed themselves and the seed entered them[...] Troubled by the seed, and in the fear of their husbands they hide on the banks of the Ganges, until Svaha, the wife of Agni entered their bodies and took the seed. Then she took the form of the wives of the seven sages and made love to Agni. The seven sages abandoned their wives, who went to Skanda and claimed him as their son. Skanda sent them to heaven and they became Kristikas.” Furthermore, in the book, *Ocean of the Story*, Siva came with Parvati in heaven, “followed by deities, and the Ganas, and demons, and mothers.” Penzers states that “mothers are sixteen in number and are worshipped at sacrificies, worshippers, house-warmings, etc. As mothers are supposed to be planets which include the unborn child, they are also worshipped to bring about an easy delivey.”³⁸⁵ These myths and textual sources highlight mother goddesses and the feminine as a separate group associated to constellations. Birth and fertitily creates humanity in the cosmic world and also rules the astonomical system.³⁸⁵ The *navagraha* and the divine feminine in the astrological world appear in Khmer and Cham culture in new artistic forms.

nine lions with their arms supporting the base of the object.³⁸⁶

The third related object is another mandala, with the image Candra, the moon deity in the center seated on a throne, supported by four garudas and eight lions (fig. 198). Candra is cross-legged and holds a broken lotus bud in each hand. Eight deities surround him, forming the nine devas. The eight figures cannot be identified because there are no attributes and scholars have used the example from Ker Koh to make the identifications.³⁸⁷ Seven of the figures are kneeling, the eighth figure has no legs due to corrosion. The eighth figure places his hand palm to palm in the gesture of worship. The three objects suggest that individual planet deities emerged as central single icons, with other *navagrahas* surrounding their cosmic world. Understanding the construction of the *navagraha*, the *dipaka*, and the *sapkamatrika* in India, Cambodia, and Champa sheds light on the visual arrangement of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal as a cosmic mandala.

IV. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal-Shrine

Nancy Tingley has identified the Vân Trạch Hòa structure as a *bali-pitha*, an altar for offerings to the gods. The imagery on the pedestal includes the *dikpala*, the directional deities and the *navagraha*, the nine planets with connections to zodiac signs (*rasi*).³⁸⁸ The Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine is carved with elaborate imagery in four directions, and consisting of two levels with major Hindu deities in the center, surrounded by the *dikpalas* and other deities in a square mandala (fig. 199). Based on iconography, the inner and upper levels depict the four

³⁸⁶ Emma Bunker states that the object was modeled in wax separately, then assembled. The piece was then lost-waxed cast in one pour.

³⁸⁷ The mandala was casted in eleven pieces and then assembled. Each figure was casted separately and has a tang underneath for attachment.

³⁸⁸ Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, *The Gods of the Directions in Ancient India. Origin and Early Development in Art and Literature*, Berlin Dietrich Reimer, 2001.

major deities: Brahma, Visnu, and Siva and an unidentifiable fourth deity. Baptiste (2003) identifies the fourth deity on the first level as Rudra, while Trần Ky Phương suggests the deity is Mahesvara. Nancy Tingley suggests only that the figure is a fourth major deity, whose identity is not certain. In addition, Trần Ky Phương and Pierre Baptiste (2003) have identified eight of the major deities and their attributes depicted on the lower and outer level of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal.³⁸⁹

In addition, Nancy Tingley has argued that the eight directional deities can also represent the nine planets. She argues there may have been an additional figure on the pedestal that has not been accounted for, which could possibly represent Rahu and Ketu. Tingley suggests that multivalent interpretations could be possible, suggesting “to see the eight figures seated around the top of the upper section [as] both *dikpalas* and *navagraha*, the ninth figure of the latter group supplied by the ninth figure seated below Kubera. Certainly the two groups, with their shared figures and *vahanas*, lend themselves to multivalent interpretations.”³⁹⁰ While multiple interpretations may be possible, other scholars have argued that there is one meaning for the maker. The Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal remains the least understood structure found in Champa as one scholar has described the platform with “strange stylistic and iconographic features” and “complex organization made for numerous iconography [that] is rather rare in Champa art.”³⁹¹ The inscriptions and iconography of the pedestal must be studied within the context of other Southeast Asian and Indian arts.

Various inscriptions from Champa discuss the importance of astronomy and astrology

³⁸⁹ Pierre Baptiste. “Le piedestal de Van trac Hoa: un bali-pitha d’un type inedit. Nore sur l’iconographie des dikpala au Champa.” *Arts Asiatique* (vol. 58), 2003, 168-76.

³⁹⁰ Nancy Tingley, “The Pedestals of Champa,” *Arts of Asia*. Vol. 39, (No. 6), 2009, 111.

³⁹¹ Tran Thuy Diem. “Le piedestal de Vân Trạch Hòa,” *Lettre Sacha*, Newsletter 10 (Autumn), 2003, 6.

such as zodiac signs, special days of the week, the eight directions, and nine planets. The inscriptions from Champa show that zodiac signs are integrated with meaning of the nine planets. Nancy Tingley argues that in Cham culture, some of the images are at the same time, a planet and a directional deity. Based on Cham inscriptions, planets and directional deities were also associated to the twelve zodiacs, *rasi*. I present below an overview of the inscriptions as integral to the interpretation of the divine planets in Cham culture.

While the Indian text describes the planets in relation to their visual attributes such as spears, rosary, pitchers, etc. the Cham inscriptions emphasize the importance of the planets with zodiac signs. The Mỹ Sơn Stele Inscription of Prakasadharmā (658 CE) states,

When the ascendant and the other elements were favorable, when Sun, Mercury and Venus were in the pair of Pisces, Mars and Saturn in Libra, Jupiter in Aquarius and the Moon in Gemini.³⁹²

The Đòng Dương Stele Inscription of Indravarman II (875 CE) reads,

In some places descendants of Valabhit (Indra), Brahma, and Visnu, in some places Vasuki, in some places Sankara, in some places Rsis, Sun, Moon, Varuna, Agni, and in some places image of Abhayada (Buddha) appeared for the deliverance of creatures.³⁹³

In this inscription, the planetary deities, the Sun and the Moon is worshipped, as well as the directional deities, Agni and Varuna. There is no separation between the worship of Hindu and Buddhist deities as the inscription also mentions the image of the Buddha.

³⁹² Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates*. Aachen: Shaker, 2004, 20.

³⁹³ Ibid, 71.

The same inscription reads,

Adorned with the riches of Fortune, without equal in respect for royal glory, knowledge, wisdom, splendor, fame, sacred learning, polity, renown, and conduct; protected by Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, the Moon, the Sun, Venus and Saturn, the illustrious Jaya Indravarman shines fourth in wisdom.³⁹⁴

These are humans desire obtainable on Earth and protected by the seven divine planets.

In addition, there are other associations with the planetary deities with zodiac signs and days of the week. The inscription continues,

In the year of the Saka king, denoted by the Munis, nine and the mountains, when Saturn was in Aquarius, the Sun in the Taurus, Jupiter and Venus in Gemini, on Friday, when Mars was in Aries and the Moon in Cancer, in the Nakstra Pusya, on the fifth day of the bright half of the month Suci, he, Indravarman, by means of his own command, erected [the image] of Savbhayada [Buddha].³⁹⁵

The Hoa-Que Stele Inscription of Bhadravarman, states,

Whose linga-which has surpassed the earth and has sky as its horizon; which has got a shining orb surrounded by a large number of dependent spirits; and whose splendor, to which homage is paid by the Moon, the Sun and the Planets, grants series of benefits to the world,- may it protect this world!³⁹⁶

The inscription suggests that the personified planets on *vahana* can represent a planet (deity) on

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 71.

³⁹⁵ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates.* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 72.

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 104.

zodiac sign (vahana).

The female goddesses on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal are rendered in the same fashion as other Cham female goddesses found on the Đồng Dương temple (fig. 202). For example, one tympanum belongs to a shrine in the first enclosure of the Đồng Dương Cham temple. It depicts Laksmi flanked by two elephants. The trunk of the elephant forms a protective umbrella over Laksmi's head, designed identical to the architectural temple above the head of the goddesses on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. She is rendered seated with heavy ear pendants. Another 9th-century sculpture similar to the previous statue has been identified as possibly Tara was found at the Buddhist site, Đại Hữu, Quảng Bình province.³⁹⁷ This female figure holds two staffs. Her thick lips, large nose, round eyes, and unibrow are almost identical to the 9th-century female statue found at Đồng Dương. The goddesses on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal hold the columns, a strong presence and authoritative position. Peter Skilling has discussed the importance of the warrior goddess in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam.³⁹⁸ Although we cannot pinpoint who these goddesses are, the cult of female goddesses was prominent in Cham culture during this period.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 85.

³⁹⁸ Peter Skilling, "No Head, no Arms no Legs: An Image of a Warrior Goddess from Si Thep, Thailand." *Indology's Pulse: Arts in Context. Essays Presented to Doris Meth Srivnivasan in Admiration of Her Scholarly Research*. Ed. Corinna Wessels-Meviseen & Gerd J.R. Mevissen. Aryan Books International, 2019, 337-352.

³⁹⁹ A decorative slab is currently located in the court yard of the Linh-Ung pagoda inside the Marble Mountains with connections to the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. The piece does not have an archaeological provenance, and thus, it could be a possible modern creation. However, I bring this into the discussion because the iconography of the piece is identical to the iconography featured on the Van Trach pedestal, which would indicate it was copied from a later period or in modern times. The front of the stone slab shows Indra seated on an elephant, similar to one side of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. The elephant is identical to the elephants from the Buddhist Đồng Dương temple, with a curvy tail, large jumbo ears and a trunk. The center of the elephant's face has a round, circular motif common on all elephants depicted in the style of Đồng Dương. The elephant is flanked by two roaring lions, again, identical to the type found on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. The lion's tail is curvy, raised to the level of its head. The lion is perched on two legs, sitting up with two hands raised to his chest. This lion is repeated on some of the corners of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. The rare two flying figures flanking Indra is uncommon in Cham art. The only time we see flying figures is featured on the Trà Kiệu pedestal, but they are never depicted in the context of flanking a god.

The second side of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal shows on the inner level and Kubera on Brahman or Kubera on Kala (fig. 206). This interpretation of the inner level of the pedestal is not conclusive because of the two figures depicted. Trần Ky Phuong and Pierre Baptiste have suggested that it is Kubera who is drawn by spirits or a man (or rides on a human). Nancy Tingley suggests that the figure above is Kubera, but the additional figure below him is possibly Rahu or Ketu. Inscriptions from Champa do not mention Rahu but only Ketu. For example, the Po-Nagar Stele Inscription of Satyavarman dated to 784 CE reads,

In the year of Saka king designed by Kosa ether and the mountains on the lunar day of the Vaisakha, when the munis are gone on Thursday then, when the sun was shining, when Ketu, the sun and the son of the moon were in the zodiac of Aries, the son of the earth [Mangala = Mars], the Guru were in [Libra], the moon in Gemini, Saturn in Capricornus and Venus was established.⁴⁰⁰

Here, Ketu is mentioned but never together with Rahu. The eighth deity, Rahu in Cham art does not follow the iconography of Rahu covered with repeated designs, symbolizing clouds or a whirlpool in Khmer or Indian art. The figure is not individualized, but he is nevertheless important, seated on a Kala head under an architectural temple.

In the 6th-century Mý Sơn Stele Inscription of Sambhuvarman, Rahu is mentioned. The inscription reads, “in the Yoga Indra, on Friday...when Aurika was the 30th part, the ninth part, the decan, and the hora of Sthira... in the auspicious ascendant, when Rahu was in the sixth house, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus in the fourth, Ketu and the Sun in the third.”⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates.* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 35.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

The M̃ Son Stele Inscription of Vikrantavarman II (8th century CE) states,

[E]arth, water, fire, air, sky, sun, moon and sacrifice- which are dignified by the titles of gods of very great power, name Sarva, Bharva, Pasupati, Isana, Bhima, Rudra, Mahadeva and Urga, and whose infinite power may be inferred from the fact that, aided by (the gods with) Brahma, Vishnu and Agni (Fire) at their head, he exterminated the great Asura (demon) Tripura, who had destroyed all the worlds with the gods, acetics and the Gandharvas.⁴⁰²

In the Bang An Stele Inscription of Bhadravarman III (906) Rahu is associated to the zodiac sign Capricornus. It reads,

It is my duty to install the Paramesvara for the salvation of all...installed in the year of the Saka king denoted by Mangala...Jupiter in the ascendant Gemini, Rahu in Capricornus, Jupiter in Aquarius, on the 8th day, a Sunday, in the Naksatra Punarvasu..Exemption given to him by Sri Bhadravarman- it will ensure in the world as long as the Sun and the Moon.⁴⁰³

Another inscription from the same period found in M̃ Son A 1 states,

Vikrantavarman, possessed of fortune and an enduring body, established here the body of glory in the year of the Saka king denoted by Rama, Artha and six, on the fifth Ma[gha], along with the Sun gone in the Nakstra, on the day of the Moon (Monday) when Jupiter (Angiras) and Venus (Sukra) were auspicious, when Saturn was in the house of the Pisces, when Sun and Mercury were gone down,

⁴⁰² Ibid, 33.

⁴⁰³ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 97.

Mars and Venus when into Libra.⁴⁰⁴

In this inscription, there are various minor gods mentioned, with the exception of Isana, Rudra, and Mahadeva. However, I stress that the inscription mentions eight deities, aided by four major deities, Brahma, Visnu, Agni and Asura. This construction is visible on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine, where four major deities are depicted at the center, surrounded by eight direction deities. The concept of eight deities, aided by four major gods is mentioned. Who these gods are does not matter as much as the artistic arrangement of four gods and eight deities, reinforced on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal.

The Nhan Biều inscription states,

Then he, with his heart bent down under the burden of many excellent meritorious works, together with his eldest son installed Devalingesvara, for the sake of glory, in the year of Saka king denoted by Mangala, Fire und Ether, on Monday, on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Jyaistha, the Sun, Ketu and the son of the moon (Mercury) in Gemini, on the ascendant Leo, the Moon in Leo, the Son of the Earth (Mars) in Virgo, Rahu in Capricornus, Jupiter and Saturn in Aries, in the Naksatra Magha.⁴⁰⁵

Here, Rahu is paired with Capricornus and Ketu is paired with the moon of the moon (Mercury).

Besides the reference to astronomical gods, inscriptions mention an array of gods that protect the universe, related to the *dikpalas*. The numerous deities suggest that many gods helped

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 28.

⁴⁰⁵ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates.* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 113.

form the Cham astronomical world protected by numerous gods. This makes specific identification of deities difficult, but the visual concept depicts the importance of various gods in one visual conception. One inscription reads,

The discs of whose feet is anointed by the rays of jewels of the crowns at the head of Siddhas, Caranas, Hari, Karttika, India and other gods prostrating before him... whose two feet, like two lotuses, cause purification to the multitude of gods, Asuras, Munis, Siddham, Yaksas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, and beautiful Apsaras...⁴⁰⁶

The third side of the pedestal has been interpreted as Siva on the inner level and Varuna on the outer, flanked by two worshippers. There are also two celestial beings standing on a pedestal with their hands placed palm to palm (figs. 208-209). These are different from the goddesses that flank Indra on the opposite side. Varuna is seated on a hamsa. This follows the visual tradition in Khmer of single sculptures of Varuna seated on a flying goose. Sometimes the goose does not spread its wings and he is depicted in front of the pedestal-shrine with the seated deity in other single sculptures in Cham art. Niriti is seen on the right hand of the pedestal.

The fourth side of the pedestal shows Visnu on the inner level and the deity, Yama below. Pierre Baptiste suggests this could be Yama or Isana, but the iconography is not definite. Yama is usually paired with a buffalo and Isana with a bull. Worshippers flank the four central guardians on each side of the pedestal on the outer level. In addition, celestial figures are featured six times under an architectural frame. They are celestial because they stand on a pedestal-shrine with their hands placed palm to palm, touching their chest. Furthermore, they are flanked by two birds, one on each side of the temple structure. All the celestial figures are

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 50.

rendered differently and they could represent both male and female goddesses.

This section combines previous scholarship, inscriptions, and less discussed figures to form a synthesized and revised interpretation of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. Depicted on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine are other figures that have not been discussed in the scholarship, such as the two female deities flanking the Hindu god, Indra. The two female deities are similar to the goddess Laksmi depicted in the temple of Đồng Dương. While we don't know the identity of the goddess or whether she represents a general goddess, the feminine divine was significant to the cosmic universe. I argue that the Vân Trạch Hòa is a complex visual extension of the *dikpala* and the *navagraha* that combines the visual representations beyond the nine planets and eight guardian directions. It integrates but modifies the visual concept of *matrikas* or *dvarapalikas*, the seven goddesses or female directional deities in addition to the nine planets and eight directions to create a local *mandala*, an astronomical universe protected by numerous divine guardians, planets, and goddesses associated to astrological ideas of planets, zodiac signs, and special days of the week.

Current scholarship is not conclusive about the deity represented on the inner level of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal. The deity has been interpreted as either Rudra or Mahadeva. Trần Ky Phương and Pierre Baptiste have identified the figure in the outer level as Indra. The left corner is Agni and Isana is on the right. While these figures have been identified by Trần and Baptiste, there are less studied figures such as the two goddesses flanking Indra. The goddesses appear in an architectural frame standing on a pedestal. Outside of the temple, the goddesses are flanked by two birds on each side. The style of the goddesses is identical to the goddess of Laksmi found at the temple of Đồng Dương but these goddesses are not flanked by an elephant, which suggests these may represent local Cham goddesses. Nevertheless, the visual representation of the local

goddesses was an important inclusion to the astronomical world in Champa.

The pedestal has also been associated to the 10th-century Nhan Biều inscription, which was discovered around 30 km from the pedestal. The Nhan Biều inscriptions records the practice of both Buddhism and Hindu in the same inscription, which states, “as both the moveable and immovable things in the world become fixed by the support of the mountains, so this region would find a stable support in the two sanctuaries of Siva and Avalokitesvara.”⁴⁰⁷ The same inscription states, “Having thought thus, he, as intelligent man and desirous of fame, resolves to install gods (Siva and Avalokitesvara) in the two places.”⁴⁰⁸ This inscription contains Buddhist and Hindu themes, which has led scholars to argue for a syncretic practice of Buddhist and Hindu religions in Vân Trạch Hòa. There is no evidence for a direct relationship between the pedestal and the stele. The inscriptions show the emphasis of divine gods to represent important astronomical elements such as the Sun, the moon, and the Earth. The divine gods are also associated to the concept of *rasi*, the twelve Hindu zodiac signs.⁴⁰⁹

IV. Temple Consecration Deposits and Boxes

Having explored the iconography and visual program of the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine, I now suggest that the outer organization of the Vân Trạch Hòa originates from a ritual tradition related to the diagram of small scale compartmental boxes and consecration plaques

⁴⁰⁷ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 114.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 114.

⁴⁰⁹ As argued by Pierre Baptiste, there are many free-standing statues of directional deities in Champa that would have been placed to surround temples. The Vân Trạch Hòa is the first time that deities with directional, planetary and astrological associations have been visually incorporated into a single work of art in Champa. The planetary deities in Khmer culture were worshipped and visually depicted together, but later separated into individual deities of free-standing sculpture. The worship of individual gods was increased with the visual depiction of mandalas in Khmer culture which places a deity in the center, being surrounded by less planetary deities.

found in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Cambodia, Java, and Thailand (figs. 212-214). Archaeologists have yet to find compartmental deposit boxes in Champa, but buried pots have been found containing gold leaf of various flowers, animals, figures, and precious stones. It is possible that there are no compartmental deposit boxes in Champa because the pedestal serves as the container that houses the deities. In some instances, the objects were placed between the bricks in Buddhist stupas, not in boxes. The construction of the Vân Trách Hòa pedestal-shrine is a more complex one and begins with the placement of the *dikpalas* into eight units of space that form a square mandala. For the Chams, the center of the universe is encircled by Visnu, Siva, Brahma, and an unidentified god.

In Stanley O'Connor's article about Sri Lankan deposit boxes containing numerous chambers, he states, "In 1909, [a] *yantragala* of twenty-five chambers was discovered in which thirteen chambers had not been disturbed. The box contained seven bronze figures which averaged about six inches tall. [These] figures represent the *dikpalakas*, the guardians of the regions of space. Among other objects in the box were small figures representing bulls, lions, horses, and elephants."⁴¹⁰ The consecration deposits boxes related to the significance of configuring the *dikapalas* into a specific space. Here, I stress the close numerological relationship between the nine chambers, the nine planets, and eight directional deities (*dikpalas*).

Another link of the directional deities to the *garbhayasa* ritual are the discovery of inscribed 10th-century gold plates discovered in Jolotundo (Java).⁴¹¹ Anna Ślęczka mentions that two of the plates include inscriptions to the Guardian of the Directions, named as Isana and Agni.

⁴¹⁰ Stanley J. O'Connor, "Deposit Boxes in Southeast Asian Sanctuaries," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1966), 58.

⁴¹¹ Anna A Ślęczka, "Depositing of the Embryo's Temple Consecration Rituals in the Hindu Tradition of South and Southeast Asia: A study of the Textual and Archaeological Evidence," in *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on cross-cultural exchange*. Ed. Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani, and Geoff Wafe. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2011, 438.

They were placed in the deposit casket, and “the lokapalas are invoked in the jars... which is part of the *garbhanyasa* ritual. Subsequently, by pouring water from the jars over the deposit casket, the lokapalas are transferred into it.”⁴¹² The *garbhanyasa* ritual is performed by priests to bring wellness and prosperity to mankind, and to those to perform in the ceremony.⁴¹³ This may explain the cultural connections of images of the *dikpala* as a part of the consecration deposits in Champa.⁴¹⁴ Anna Ślęczka has argued that consecration deposits are the act of ‘depositing the embryo.’ Compartmental boxes, or ‘embryo-boxes’ and the *garbhanyasa* ritual is associated to the installation of the four bricks—the foundation of the square pedestal of a temple. In addition, another text, *Prathamestakanyasa*, states the ritual marks the end of the foundation works, and the actual construction of the temple.⁴¹⁵ The *garbhanyasa* ritual and deposits of the image of *dikpala* buried under the foundation pedestal to consecrate the temple, linking the spiritual to the earthly manifestations of the deities.

There are abundant gold plaques discovered from brick foundations in Champa dated as early as the 1st century CE from the Óc Eo culture and onwards (figs. 215-222). One of the debates is whether the structures at Óc Eo were graves or worship sites. The gold plaques can be identified as consecration deposits, a ritual object also found in other countries of Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Java. In this section, I explore the visual and textual

⁴¹² Ibid, 438.

⁴¹³ Anna A. Ślęczka, *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India: Text and Archaeology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 201.

⁴¹⁴ Stella Kramrisch, “Isana siva gurudeva paddhati Kriyapada chaps. XXVI, XXVII,” *Journal of Indian Studies of Oriental Art* 9, 1941, 151-193.

⁴¹⁵ Anna A Ślęczka, “‘Depositing of the Embryo’ Temple Consecration Rituals in the Hindu Tradition of South and Southeast Asia: A study of the Textual and Archaeological Evidence,” in *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on cross-cultural exchange*. Ed. Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani, and Geoff Wafe. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2011, 437.

connections between the pedestal, the *navagraha*, and the gold plaques showing images of the *navagraha* and the *dikpalas*. I suggest that the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine can be understood as a three dimensional visualization of the cosmos with associations to the traditional practices of consecration deposits and rituals related to the *navagraha* and *dikpalas* in Cham culture.

Images of gold plaques include female deities and the elephant-headed deity, Ganesha. Similarly, the Khmer plaque also depicts Ganesha on the four corners (fig. 215). We also find images of elephants in Cham culture. In addition, there are female deities. Lê Thị Tiên has identified the deity as Laksmi, however, it is difficult to name the figures, but it does suggest the deposits of the divine feminine as consecration deposits. Female deities are also depicted to represent the constellations in the Khmer plaque. Lê Thị Tiên also documents the *dipkalas* rendered on the gold plaques. Their identity of the figures depicted on the plaques remains uncertain, but the deities are seated on vehicles to represent the *dikpalas*. The identity is not as important as their physical presence in the consecration ritual and their placement in the deposit to represent a cosmic universe.

A 9th-century Khmer gold plaque shows the ritual symbol of the *linga-yoni* pedestal and the planet deity, Surya (figs. 223-224). Nancy Tingley states, “the dedication of a temple in ancient Southeast Asia was an important religious and secular event. The temple, usually located on a hill, represented a microcosm of the universe, the gods’ domain on earth. A ruler legitimized his power through its establishment, and it served as the center of his kingdom.” In addition, each corner of the plaque contains an image of an elephant, symbolic of Ganesha. There are numerous personified figures, wearing crowns on four sides of the pedestal. It is difficult to determine if the personified figures are male or female, but there are four flying females on four corners, lifting the *linga-yoni* pedestal.

Indic myths highlight the mother goddess' association to constellations. For example, Dikshit argues that “*Krttikas* are in the constellation of the *Vrshba* (Taurus), so the natural conclusion would be that they were regarded as *gavahh* or cows, evidently identical with mother goddesses.”⁴¹⁶ Dikshit also emphasizes “importance of Pleiades (*Krttikas*) in primitive calendars throughout the world and defines how these stars were used to determine the beginning of the year and the seasons for planting or reaping. For the Aryans, the erection of the sacrificial altar is directly linked to the rising of the *Krttikas* (Pleiades). The *Taittiriya Samhita* gives the mantra for the order of the laying of the bricks for the circular fire ring, in which each of the twenty eight *nakshatras* was represented by brick, and the first brick to placed was the one symbolizing *Krttikas* and it was located in the southern-eastern direction.”⁴¹⁷ The visual connection between the text is shown on the Khmer plaque, which depicts twenty-seven *nakshatras* as female.

The Khmer plaque illustrates the dedication of the ritual temple ceremony, involving constellations from all four directions with *Surya* at the center of the pedestal and *Ganesha* protecting the four corners of the universe. Anna A. Slaczka suggests that “consecration rituals play a crucial role in the construction of the Hindu temple. They are frequently mentioned in the Sanskrit treaties on architecture, the *Vastu* and the *Silpsastras*, and usually involve depositing precious stones, gold and small objects of symbolic value on various locations in the foundation.”⁴¹⁸ In a 9th-century Khmer plaque, the foundation stones are depicted. This plaque may be one of the objects deposited with the temple. In addition, Ashley Thompson mentions the importance of the *linga-yoni* pedestal as the central temple depicted on the plaque. Other

⁴¹⁶ Shivaji K. Panikkar, *Saptamātrkā: Worship and Sculptures: an Icological Interpretation of Conflicts and Resolutions in the Storied Brāhmanical Icons*. (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1997), 57.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 57.

⁴¹⁸ Anna A Slaczka, ACSAA, 2017.

scholars suggest that an image of Brahma would have been placed at the center, with an association to the creation of temple.⁴¹⁹ We can combine these interpretations and suggest the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal is a representation of the cosmic astronomical universe, in visual dialogue with concepts of the *navagraha*, the *linga-yoni* pedestal, and the constellations.

On the gold plaque, the sun-god, Surya with his seven horse-chariot can be interpreted as either a directional deity or a planet, integral to the visual configuration of the universe, with a temple pedestal in the center of this world (fig. 224). Surya rides on a seven-horse chariot exactly as described in the *Agnipurana*. He is flanked by his twelve *adityas* (sun gods), six on each side.⁴²⁰ Markel argues that “the retention of the Hellenistic personalities of the planetary deities suggest that the iconography of the planetary deities was transmitted to India through textual descriptions rather than through Graeco-Roman manuscript illustrations which were reinterpreted by the Indian artists.”⁴²¹ The same transmission occurs from Indian planetary deities to Cambodia, as local meanings were already adopted to the iconography. Khmer artists also follow Indian textual inscriptions rather than the Indian iconography.⁴²²

Stephen Markel states that “the number five as referring to the planets can also be inferred in the Vedas in connection with the number thirty-four.”⁴²³ Nancy Tingley suggests that

⁴¹⁹ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 2020.

⁴²⁰ Surya is commonly depicted with his twelve sun-gods, wearing crowns as depicted on the gold plaque. See pl. 2: Gerd J.R. Mevissen, *Adityas, Grahas and other Deities of Time and Space on Surya Sculptures*, predominately from Bengal, 2006. Mevissen writes, “Surya is not only an independent god, he is also closely related to a number of deities that symbolize certain phenomena of time and space. He is considered as one of the Twelve Adityas, the ancient solar deities symbolizing the twelve months of the solar year. Furthermore, Surya is the first and foremost of the Nine Grahas. Then, in the course of the year, Surya travels through all Twelve Rasis, the signs of the zodiac. And lastly, by his daily movement, Surya covers the whole mundane space, symbolized by the Eight Dikpalas, the guardians of the cardinal and intermediate directions,” 1-2.

⁴²¹ Stephen Markel, “The Genesis of the Indian Planetary Deities,” *East and West*. 41 (1991), 177.

⁴²² There are also gold plaques found in Thailand dated to the 7th century that depict the sun god, Surya.

⁴²³ Stephen Markel, *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities* (Lewiston N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1995), 75.

the gold plaque from Cambodia may be derived from the *Vatupurshamanda*. The thirty-two figures on the outer row depicted on the three sides of the square represent, “*nakshatras*, constellation sacred to particular divinities.”⁴²⁴ I suggest that the 32 figures can also represent letters of the alphabet.⁴²⁵ The additional row of 27 figures are represented in the inner row. The 27 figures are the lunar mansion, or *nakstras*, and the center represent one pole. Tingley suggests that the figures on this plaque total “sixty-four, plus Vishnu-Surya, the Ganeshas, and the charaprushsha.”⁴²⁶ Personified constellations along with their nine planets were depicted to create this astronomical universe with the *linga-yoni* temple at the center. A Cham inscription mentions that “the king established the Mahadeva together with a Kosa and riches at the time, when the *tithi*, the *naksatra* and the solar day were in conjunction.”⁴²⁷ The construction of temple had to align with the constellations, planets, and guardians of the universe.

VII. Conclusions

The representation of the *navagraha* in Indian, Khmer, and Cham culture adopted local meanings and iconographical variations. The nine planets in Indian culture have an association with birth and fertility. Khmer culture connects the *navagraha* with directional deities, which includes both male and female deities. Cham culture highlights the *navagraha* and the *dikpala*, with the Hindu zodiac signs, *rasi*. In addition, objects from each of the region show regional interpretations in relation to specific site temples. The Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine has been

⁴²⁴ Ibid, 75.

⁴²⁵ Archaeology reports of gold foils with alphabet letters as deposits in Java. We also have 32 stupas at Borobudur, which can also represent letters in the 9th century.

⁴²⁶ Markel, 75.

⁴²⁷ Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Inscriptions of Campā: based on the editions and translations of Abel Bergaigne, Etienne Aymonier, Louis Finot, Edouard Huber and other French scholars and of the work of R.C. Majumdar: newly presented, with minor corrections of texts and translations, together with calculations of given dates* (Aachen: Shaker, 2004), 37.

argued to represent the Indian concept of the *dikpala* and the *navagraha*, but other interpretations of the Vân Trạch Hòa are possible. I suggest that the pedestal is an extension of the concept of the *navagraha*, placing planetary deities, directional guardians, and solar constellations within a three-dimensional mandala which are contemporary to 12th-century Khmer mandalas.

Martin Polkinghorne writes “in order to understand medieval Khmer culture, repeated reference has been made to Indian meanings and text which may have had little association with special Southeast Asian context.”⁴²⁸ The Cham inscriptions suggest that many local gods were worshipped, often at the same time, and even in Hindu and Buddhist context. Sometimes these figures could be interpreted as a guardian deity, planet, zodiac sign, or day of the week. This may explain the existence of an array of different identifications that cannot be verified to a single local meaning. This pedestal was a local visual *mandala* that blended visual concepts of the *dikpala*, the *navagraha*, and the *matrika* that was inspired from India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia. These images also have a strong connection to consecration deposits. The local inclusion of goddesses, roaring lions, celestial figures, and worshippers arranged in several levels, forming a single *mandala* of the Cham astronomical world. The human body was linked to ideas related to the *dikpala* and the *navagraha*, associated to the feminine divine, astral constellations, and zodiac signs within the cosmological system.

In this chapter, I argued that the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine is one of the first three-dimensional cosmic mandalas in Champa, adding to the concept of pedestals as divine seats, or mountain temples. The imagery of personified planets and directional deities combined with the divine feminine are connected to ritual gold deposits and compartment boxes placed under Southeast Asian temples. The Indic tradition of placing deposits under the temple helped activate the spiritual life of the sacred location. The planets, directional deities, and constellations carved

⁴²⁸ Martin Polkinghorne, *Makers and Models: Decorative Lintels of Khmer Temples, 7th to 11th Centuries*, 2007, 7.

on the square pedestal perpetuated an aligned, cosmic universe in the physical form. The image of the *sapta-matrika* was also transmitted to Southeast Asia, but not commonly depicted. While the Indian concept of the *navagraha* and the *dikpala* traveled to Champa, Thailand, and Cambodia, the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal included localized iconographies and meanings within a Southeast Asian artistic tradition.

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CONCLUSION:

Contemporary Art: the Legacy of the Chams

I. Nguyễn Trinh Thi

Throughout early and modern history, the Chams established and maintained relationships with other regions of Southeast Asia because of their geographical location. My dissertation has examined the Cham culture and art in terms of historical, cultural, and artistic relationship among a variety of South and Southeast Asian cultures. This final chapter presents a conclusion, beginning with a brief look at how the Chams have survived in Vietnam today, and how they continue to present echoes of the long historical journey I have traced in the body of the dissertation. Cham communities today reside in the coastal areas of Cambodia, Laos, southern Vietnam, and other regions outside of Asia. This chapter introduces two Vietnamese artists, Nguyễn Trinh Thi and Trần Hữu Chất who celebrate Cham culture in their artworks, using the image of the female body to symbolize the memory and culture of Champa.

In 2015, Vietnamese female artist, Nguyễn Trinh Thi connected the ancient arts of Champa with contemporary arts in collaboration with Cham communities.⁴²⁹ As a film maker and visual artist, Nguyễn Trinh Thi produced a film, exhibition, and catalogue, *Letters of Panduranga* as a response to the Vietnamese government's disclosed plans to construct two nuclear power plants in Ninh Thuận province, Vietnam by 2020. Ninh Thuận serves as a home to one of the largest population of the Cham communities, but also an important archaeological site with numerous ancient Cham temples. Due to concerns for the funding of its construction plans

⁴²⁹ Within the Cham community, there are at least four religious groups, the Cham Balamon that follow Hindu practices and the Cham Bani that practice traditional Islamic beliefs (Eastern Cham). There is a 3rd group that follows new Islam, and a 4th group, Cham Hroi that does not follow any religion. A small percentage of Chams also follow Buddhism. The Cham Balamon often refer to themselves as indigenous Chams.

in the local community of Ninh Thuận, the Vietnamese government halted plans in 2016. Currently, there are new discussions to pursue alternative solar power plants options.

The film, *Letters of Panduranga* is a spoken dialogue exchanged between an anonymous man and woman, who write letters to each other. The exchange between male and female and highlighting the importance of the female and male realms in Cham culture is preserved in this artistic concept by Nguyễn Trinh Thi. The letters provided two unique perspectives with dialogue from different worlds, one from a woman who resides and works in the land of Champa (southern Vietnam) and another, a man who is traveling on the Hồ Chí Minh trail, a route that connects northern Vietnam to southern Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The first letter reads, “I’m writing you this letter from what seems like distance land. She was once called Panduranga.... Champa, a kingdom that no longer exists.”⁴³⁰ Panduranga was the last territory annexed by the Vietnamese in the 15th century. The second letter reads, “I’m writing from far to the north of you, from the Trường Sơn Long Mountain trail...The Americans call this trail system ‘one of the great achievements of military engineering of the 20th century.’ I hope to see what that means.”⁴³¹ The woman continues that she is “writing you from the land of the woman. They are the landscape. I’m sending you this landscape from the future.”⁴³²

In Nguyễn Trinh Thi’s video art, a Cham woman in a gold dress is seated legs pendant on a chair, inside an abandoned space of emptiness, surrounded by remnants of concrete deteriorating walls (fig. 225). The scene, now transformed into a single photograph, asserts a powerful image that recalls a kingly posture or the legs pendant Buddha from the Đòng Dương

⁴³⁰ Nguyễn Trinh Thi, Erin Gleeson, and Nora A. Taylor. *Letres De Panduranga: Nguyen Trinh Thi = Letters from Panduranga*, 2015, (Letter 1: Woman to Man), 3.

⁴³¹ Ibid, (Letter 2: Man to Woman), 4.

⁴³² Ibid, (Letters 19-20: Women to Man), 28- 30.

temple. In another scene, two women sit together smiling in the same space, while directly looking into the camera (fig. 226). In a third video still, an elderly woman dressed in bright purple is surrounded by other men, women, and children (fig. 227). The environment is built with the life of its vibrant community from ancient to modern times. The matriarchal power of the strong Cham woman still remains today, and it is the feminine divine that continues to prevail from early history and contemporary Cham communities.

II. *Trần Hữu Chát*

In comparison to artist Nguyễn Trinh Tri, Trần Hữu Chát also incorporates images of Cham women and temples as one of the subjects in his artworks. An engraved lacquer artist, he uses decorative motifs and iconography from ancient temples of Champa and contemporary Cham festivals, which served as inspiration for his large and complex paintings. In his engraved lacquer painting, *The Festival of the Cham People* (1989) (figs. 228), three Cham temples are depicted behind a tall mountain under a full moon. The temples can be identified as Po Klong Garai in Phan Rang, Ninh Thuận. In 1987, the exact image of the temple complex was placed on postage stamps circulated in Vietnam (fig. 229-230). In Trần Hữu Chát's painting, there are two processions of figures standing before the great Cham complex. In the front row, seven female dancers, wear similar pink traditional attire, with large water jugs on their heads. Other men and women play music, beating on drums and blowing on trumpets. A colossal statue of Siva is also present among the musicians and dancers, incorporating the artistic innovations of the Cham civilization and ancient religious beliefs. Currently, these traditional dances continue to be performed at Mỹ Sơn, southern Vietnam (fig. 234).

Another artwork by Trần Hữu Chát titled, *Rice Mother* (2003) shows four dancing *apsaras*, in front of a Cham brick temple (fig. 241). The background is divided into four

registers. The second register shows an iconography of two small temples identical to the image carved on the 7th-8th century Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal, along with three dimensional bronze Buddha in earth-touching *mudra* inserted eight times as small statuettes. This *mudra* is chosen in this painting to reference the earth goddess that is called upon to witness the Buddha's enlightenment.⁴³³ The earth goddess and the rice goddess evoke the strongest feminine force. The artwork refers to the importance of Buddhist icons, but Mỹ Sơn E1 temple was originally conceived as a Hindu temple by the Chams. Trần Hữu Chát incorporated the importance of Buddhism and antiquity in his own artwork, including identical motifs and iconographies from the Hindu temple, Mỹ Sơn E1. In another untitled painting by Trần Hữu Chát in 1991, he depicts a Cham woman, carrying a large fruit basket above her head, and holding an instrument while standing behind two Cham temples (fig. 242). All three lacquer paintings of Trần Hữu Chát utilize the image of the female body to memorialize the artistic achievements of Cham culture, celebrating temple construction, music, and dance of the Chams.

My dissertation situates the region within the history of early transregional exchanges between South and Southeast Asia in the 7th-12th centuries, through careful analysis of the colossal pedestal-shrines of Champa and its relationship to small-scale treasures. The dissertation argues that the Chams constructed their communities as independent entities scattered across the coastal areas of central and southern Vietnam to promote their economic visibility and courtly culture. Anne-Valerie Schweyer writes, “set apart from the so called ‘Hinduisation process, the Cham country is characterized by the presence of many sites or shrines dedicated to local deities. The continuity of ritual practices performed at Cham potent places, centuries after the

⁴³³ Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 2019

disappearance of any form of Cham political power, shows the link between the first occupants of the land and the following Viet inhabitants.”⁴³⁴

While the landscape is significant, but not permanent, I believe that the Chams united themselves as communities in scattered and unfixed territories, or strategic “non-state spaces” with symbolic image-making and inscriptions, particularly through the standardization of repeated iconography and style, a visual efficacy related to the interregional koine of Indic culture in Southeast Asia. Phillip Taylor argues that the “kingdom of Champa [is] a water-based society, whose military and commercial dominance was based on sophisticated boat-building technology and knowledge of navigation and seaborne travel.”⁴³⁵ The Chams acquired social, political, and religious status through cultural interactions between other regions across southern Vietnam as great seafarers and trade mediators in the international maritime network of Indian Ocean trade.

III. Conclusions

I first explored in Chapter One: *The Early Interrelationships between the Chams and the Khmers*, the early shared artistic relationship between the Chams and the Khmers established in the 7th- 8th centuries. The mutual iconography included performing male figures such as dancers, musicians, ascetics, and brahmins carved on large scale pedestal-shrines. The Mỹ Sơn E1 colossal pedestal-shrine is one of the earliest extant examples of Cham art created closely connected to the style and iconography of Dvaravati and Khmer art in the 7th century. The relationships among the communities of the Cham, Dvaravati, and Khmer makers contributed to

⁴³⁴ Anne Schweyer, “Potent Places in Central Vietnam: Everything that Comes out of the Earth is Cham,” in *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, (vol. 18, no. 5, 2017), 400.

⁴³⁵ Phillip Taylor. *Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta: Place and Mobility in the Cosmopolitan Periphery*. (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2007), 36.

a shared interregional artistic koine, a common visual language across Indic culture that connects the regions of India, Southeast Asia, and Sri Lanka.

The Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal is decorated with carved reliefs, entirely of male figures that intersected between the spiritual and earth realms. The figures included performing male worshippers, dancers, instrumentalists, and religious specialists, representing the power of brahmins and its Hindu worshippers who participated in ritual spaces taking place in relation to the temple pedestal. In an extension of previous studies, I argue, first, the images of performative male figures on the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal symbolically animated the pedestal's presence and the brahmanical rituals focused on it. Second, the performing figures were repeated and standardized, re-emerging on later Cham temple foundation walls and outside royal spaces such as mountain caves during the 10th century. Thirdly, the iconography reinforced a performative interaction between the visual object and the viewer to accommodate a growing social community in the sacred and secular world. There is little direct stylistic borrowing among Southeast Asian regions as seen in the later extant Cham art.

Chapter two: *The Ramayana and the Colossal Trà Kieu Pedestal-Shrine* re-dates the Trà Kiệu pedestal from 7th century to the 10th century and explores the iconography of courtly culture depicted on the monument. This chapter reviews the previous scholarship on the Trà Kiệu pedestal found in modern-day southern Vietnam to shift the current discussion beyond dating and identification. The pedestal has been understood as a visual representation possibly related to three different Hindu texts, the *Bhagavatapura*, the *Ramayana*, or the *Mahabharata*. In addition, the pedestal has been given two dates, either the 7th century or the 10th century. Neither interpretation and dating is conclusive. Using inscriptions, visual analysis, recent excavations, and previous scholarship, I offer a revised interpretation of the Trà Kiệu pedestal as a local

depiction of the *Ramayana*, inspired predominately from an oral narrative tradition. Based on stylistic analysis, I suggest that the pedestal is dated to the 10th century. The Trà Kiệu pedestal is one of the first depictions of a king with human weaponry— bow and arrow, secular images associated with battle, hunting, and action scenes in later Cham art. The Trà Kiệu pedestal links the image of the heroic prince, Rama, and the Hindu god Visnu, to a similar ideal form, thereby establishing the image of the ideal king to the divine form. Although the political entities of Champa was not unified, the scenes of the Ramayana displayed a visual representation of a heroic kingship that connected the Chams through a theatre of symbols and characters, a coherent set of stylistic practices that created an imagined, militaristic kingdom and courtly culture.

Chapter three: *Luxury Bronzes from the West and South Asia* explores five bronze vessels discovered in India and Southeast Asia. Decorated metalworks from the west and south of Asia discovered in India and Southeast Asia are examined as a collective group in this chapter. Bronze bowls, dishes, and vases have been analyzed independently as Buddhist or funerary objects in previous scholarship. To explore an additional interpretation within the context of other metal vessels, five portable bronze objects will be examined. The metalworks discovered in India and Vietnam are stylistically related to bowls from the West, particularly Greco-Bactrian, Sogdian, and Roman culture. Beyond discussions of origins, which remain debatable, I investigate the significance of the material and iconography in connection to a shared courtly and military culture among prestige objects in South and Southeast Asia, utilizing a visual language of common iconography which includes performing animals, dancers, and musicians. The secular images of courtly culture on small-scale portable objects were intertwined with the visual imagery carved on the sacred Cham colossal sandstone pedestal-shrines of Mỹ Sơn and Trà Kiệu

as the standard representation for courtly culture widely appreciated and accepted in the canon of Southeast Asian artistic traditions.

Chapter four, *Two Colossal Pedestal-Shrines of Đồng Dương* examines the Đồng Dương Buddhist pedestal dated to the 9th century. The archaeology of Champa consists of a majority of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominate religion. With visual and inscriptional evidence, I argue that the colossal pedestal was originally carved to model after the shape of a small-scale Hindu pedestal, but the Chams significantly changed the visual concept with Buddhist imagery during the reign of Indravarman II, who was the first ruler to actively support Buddhism in Champa during the 9th century. Although the pedestal is Buddhist, there are local and Hindu elements that are still embedded into the pedestal. The female iconography on the pedestal was an early development in the visual arts to reinforce female and male cosmological dualism, still a significant ideology in modern Cham society today.

In Chapter Five: *Mobility and the Alignment of the Planetary Deities, the Directional Guardians, and the Constellations in Champa*, I argue that the imagery of personified planets and directional deities combined with the divine feminine carved on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal-shrine was one of the first three-dimensional cosmic mandalas in Champa. Second, the images carved on the Vân Trạch Hòa pedestal were connected to hidden small-scale gold deposits carved with the same images of directional deities and personified planets. Thirdly, the tradition of the placement of deposits under the pedestal activated the spiritual life of the temple, connecting the worshipper to the invisible astronomical world via the pedestal. The planets, directional deities, and constellations carved on with the square pedestal represented an aligned, cosmic universe in the physical form. In Madhya Pradesh, India, the *navagraha* developed visual

variations of the planet Retu depicted as female to associate the nine planets with earthly concerns such as birth and fertility. The iconography of the *navagraha* and the *dikpala* prominently appeared in Southeast Asian artistic culture. The image of the *sapta-matrika* was also transmitted to Southeast Asia, but not commonly depicted. While the Indian concept of the *navagraha* and the *dikpala* traveled to Champa and Cambodia, the meanings were conflated, re-interpreted, and embedded into local Cham culture.

While monumental art was a major component to the visual production of Champa, small-scale arts often understudied, but equally important visual arts to accommodate the movement of the Chams as powerful seafarers. I examine the intentional shared visual iconography between portable objects such as metal bowls, plates, and ewers found Champa to the colossal sacred pedestals of Champa. This shared visual iconography is part of a larger, interregional artistic koine of South and Southeast Asian visual culture. The monumental objects established a permanent religious, political, and courtly culture of Champa on political landscape and small-scale objects circulated alongside the movement of the Chams as great seafarers.

Communities & Cultural Exchanges of Champa: the Art of the Chams in Central and Southern Vietnam investigates the visual choices, particularly the iconography, style, and overall composition depicted on the ancient sacred to secular spaces and monumental pedestal-shrines to small-scale portable objects. An exploration of five themes emerges in this study, which includes stylistic and iconographic transfer, courtly culture, female agency, and visual re-translations. At the apex of international cultural exchanges in the 9th-10th centuries in South and Southeast Asia, the art and architecture of the Chams is a true amalgamation of cultural styles and iconography related to the cultures of Khmer, Java, Chinese, Indian, and the West.

Cham communities from ancient to modern times, established connections through religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamic cultures, which became visible through symbolic image-making of temples, inscriptional monuments, and courtly objects. Community formation in non-state spaces for the Chams is vastly different from the community of the Vietnamese in the North and later agendas for Vietnamese nation-building. The Vietnamese moved south over the centuries, finally by the 16th century occupying what is today the country of Vietnam. In summary, the region of what we understand as the landscape of Champa is a Southeast Asian coastal contact and transit zone, unified through a coherent artistic communal practice that comprised of art and architecture that enhanced the performative experience through inscriptions and image symbols.

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APPENDICES

Figure 1. Mỹ Sơn E1, Author's Photograph

Figure 2. An Xa Towers, 9th century, Museum of Quảng Trị, Đông Hà, Vietnam, Author's Photograph

Figure 3. Miniature *Linga* 1, 7th century, rock crystal, Vọng Thê, Thoại Sơn district, Vietnam

Figure 4. A silver model of a sanctuary tower, Champasak, Vat Phou Museum

Figure 5. Throne, Mauryan period, 3rd – 6th century, Bodh Gaya, India

Figure 6. Visnu Anantasayana, 8th century, M̃y Son E1, Champa

Figure 7. Visnu Anantasayana, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 8. M̃y Son E1, detail, Author's Photograph

Figure 9. Sambor Prei Kuk Detail, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 10. Pillar, 7th century, Sri Thep, Thailand, Photograph of Robert L. Brown

Figure 11. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia

Figure 12. Khmer lintel, 7th century Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia

Figure 13. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia and M̃y Son E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 14. Kompong Preah round platform, 8th century, Cambodia

Figure 15. Kompong Preah round platform, 8th century, Cambodia

Figure 16. *Lingodhavamurtri* Myth and a king's Consecration, detail, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 17. Sambor Prei Kuk, N-17, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 18. Line Drawing of Khmer temple

Figure 19. Khmer lintel depicting *Lingodhavamurtri* Myth and a king's Consecration, 7th century

Figure 20. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 21. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 22. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 23. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 24. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 25. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Musical Artists: Drummers, Harpists, and Fluter Players, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 26. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 27. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Human and Animal Dancers, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 28. Mỹ Sơn E 1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 29. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Worshippers, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 30. Dancing Siva, Mỹ Sơn C1, Housed in D1, 8th century, Champa

Figure 31. Pottery Sherd, Kiên Giang Museum, 7th century, Vietnam

Figure 32. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Author's Photograph

Figure 33. Marble Mountains, 2015, Vietnam, Author's Photograph

Figure 34. Marble Mountains, Vietnam, old photograph

Figure 35. Dvarapala at Đồng Dương, 9th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 36. Dvarapala, 7th century, China

Figure 37. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, detail, Champa

Figure 38. Mỹ Sơn F1 Temple, Author's Photograph

Figure 39. Đông Dương Temple, Pedestal of Ravanaanurgha, 9th century, Author's Photograph

Figure 40. Bronze kneeling worshipper, 7th century, Champa

Figure 41. Mỹ Sơn A Group, Champa

Figure 42. Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 43. Northern Gallery, Banteay Chhmar, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 44. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, 7th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 45. Tourane Park, 1915-1916, before the construction of Cham museum

Figure 46. Tourane Park, 1915-1916, before the construction of Cham museum

Figure 47. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, detail, Champa

Figure. 48. Lotus Pedestal, Hà Trung, Champa, 7th century

Figure 49. Pedestal in Inscription (C. 97), Champa, 7th century

Figure 50. Trà Kiệu Pedestal in Cham Museum, EFEO_VIE00786

Figure 51. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 52. Prasat Trapeang Phong, 9th century, Cambodia

Figure 53. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 54. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 55. Prasat Trapeang Phong, Khmer, 9th century, Cambodia

Figure 56. Thailand, EFEO_GROB00877

Figure 57. Khmer Dedicatory Plaque, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 58. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 59. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 60. Inverted Fleurons, Khmer temples, 10th century, Cambodia

Figure 61. Polo Players, 10th century, Champa

Figure 62. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, Detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 63. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 64. Rama at sea, Stone, 9th century, Prambanan, Java

Figure 65. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 66. Southern wall of Papanatha Temple, c. 680, India

Figure 67. Visnu on Garuda, Uttar Pradesh, India, Gupta, 5th century, Brooklyn Museum

Figure 68. Rama and Lakshmana, 400-500, Uttar Pradesh, India, Asia Society

Figure 69. Ravana, Sita and Jatayus, and King of Vultures, 400-500, Uttar Pradesh, India, Asian Art Museum

Figure 70. Visnu under Naga, 10th century, Champa

Figure 71. Visnu under Naga detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 72. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure. 73. Rama, Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 74. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 75. Ramayana Reliefs, 10th century, Champa, Author's Photograph

Figure 76. Wrestlers, Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 77. Relief of Sita, 10th century, Champa

Figure 78. Trà Kiệu, 10th century, Champa, Museum of Quảng Trị, courtyard, Vietnam

Figure 79. Sita, East Java, Panatran, 1323-47

Figure 80. Visnu flanked by Naga, 10th century

Figure 81. Khương Mỹ, 10th century, Author's Photograph

Figure 82. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 83. Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 84. Lakshmana and Surpanakha, Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 85. Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 86. Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 87. Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 88. Khuong Mỹ, detail, 10th century, Champa

Figure 89. Khuong Mỹ, Ramayana Reliefs, 10th century, Champa

Figure 90. Khuong Mỹ, 10th century, Champa

Figure 91. Khmer lintel, 7th century, Cambodia

Figure 92. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 93. Trà Kiệu, 10th century, Champa

Figure 94. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 10th century, Champa

Figure 95. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 96. Royal Scene, 10th century, Champa

Figure 97. Chánh Lộ Reliefs, 11th century, Champa

Figure 98. Chiên Đàn Towers, 11th century, Champa

Figure 99. Hunting Scene, Champa

Figure 100. Bình Định, 10th century, Champa

Figure 101. Mỹ Sơn F1, Ravana, 10th century, Champa

Figure 102. Ravana, Đồng Dương Temple, 9th century, Champa

Figure 103. Ramayana Bowl, Java, 10th century

Figure 104. Equestrian Hunting Scene, 8th century, MET

Figure 105. Equestrian Hunting Scene, detail, 8th century, MET

Figure 106. Khuong Mỹ Temple, 10th century, Champa

Figure 107. M̃y Son F1, Ravana, 10th century, Champa

Figure 108. Bhuta Messenger with Candi (Ramayana Reliefs), Pantaran temple, 1323-47, Java

Figure 109. Ravana defends himself with magical powers, Pantaran temple, 1323-47, Java

Figure 110. Kulu vase, British Museum

Figure 111. Line drawing of Kulu vase

Figure 112. Terracotta Medallion, Indian Museum, Kolkata, Bhita, Allahabad

Figure 113. Terracotta medallion, late 2nd–early 3rd century A.D. Roman, MET

Figure 114. Bronze bowl, Kaho Sam Kaeo, Thailand

Figure 115. Bronze bowl, Khao Jamook, Thailand

Figure 116. Bronze bowl, Ban Don Ta Phet, Thailand

Figure 117. Bowl found at Khao sam Kaeo on the southeast coast peninsula, detail, Suthi Ratana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK 525

Figure 118. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 119. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 120. Engraved vessel from Brahmapuri, Satavahana

Figure 121. Gauttila *jataka* Footed Bowl, Bronze, Malaysia, MET

Figure 122. Gauttila *jataka*, 1070 AD West Hepetliek, Myanmar

Figure 123. Pawaya, 5th century, Gupta period

Figure 124. Bronze Ewer with Elephant Spout, Ashmolean Museum, London

Figure 125. Bronze Ewer with Elephant Spout, detail, Ashmolean Museum, London

Figure 126. Vase of plenty, 5th century, Champa

Figure 127. Nagarjunikonda, Vase of plenty, 3rd century

Figure 128. Nagarjunikonda, Depiction of elephant pot, 3rd century

Figure 129. Bronze Dish with Musicians, found in Lâm Đồng province, Vietnam

Figure 130. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Detail, Champa

Figure 131. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Performing Human and Animal Dancers, Champa

Figure 132. Roman cameo, Klauai Nok, Ranong, Thailand

Figure 133. Silver Dish, Tibet

Figure 134. Ewer, Li Xian (557- 581), China

Figure 135. Equestrian Hunting Scene, MET

Figure 136. Equestrian Hunting Scene, detail, MET

Figure 137. Khương Mỹ temple, 10th century, Champa

Figure 138. Trà Kiệu Pedestal, 9th century, Champa

Figure 139. Plate with a Scene of Revelry, 400s 320-647, Silver with alloy of tin and lead with traces of gilding, Northwestern Gupta Period, India

Figure 140. Back. Plate with a Scene of Revelry, 400s 320-647, Silver with alloy of tin and lead with traces of gilding, Northwestern Gupta Period, India

Figure 141. Fragment of Box, Elephant Bronze, 5th century, MET

Figure 142. Bronze Chinese Buddha, 9th century, found in Champa

Figure 143. Bronze Sri Lankan Buddha, 9th century, found in Champa

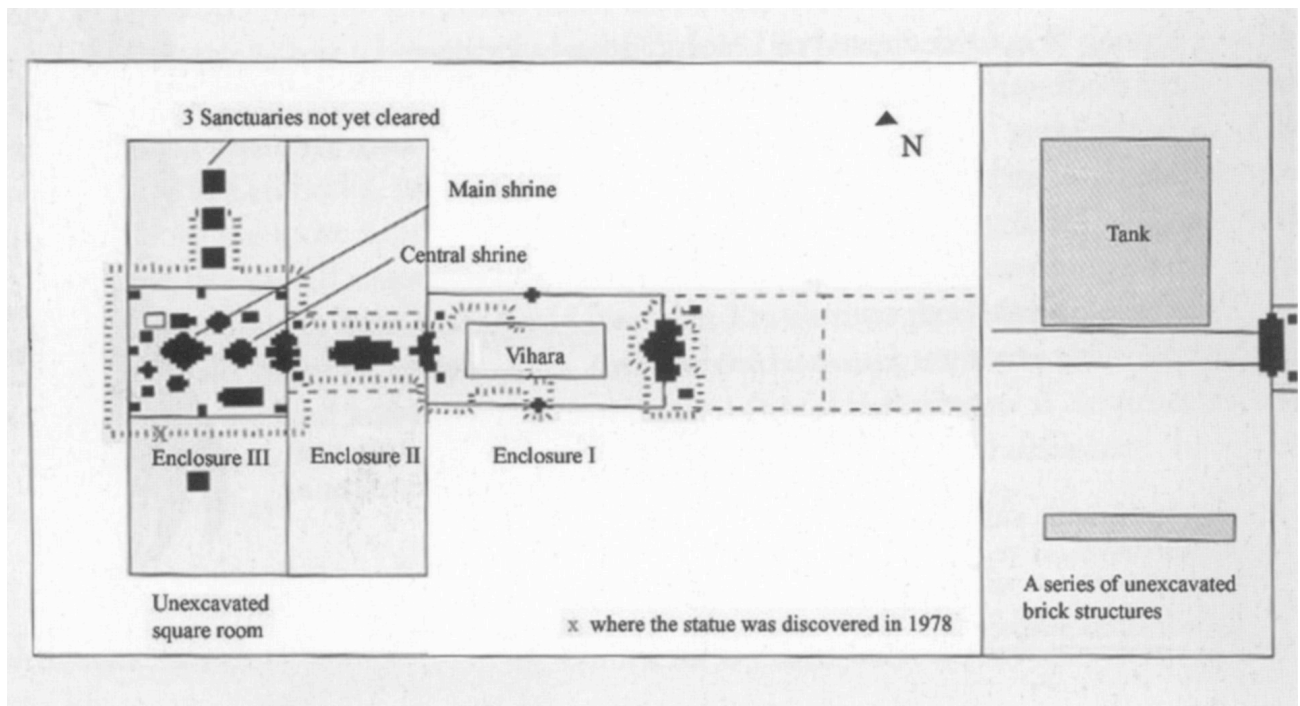


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Figure 145. Seated Buddha with the legs pendant, Đông Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 82

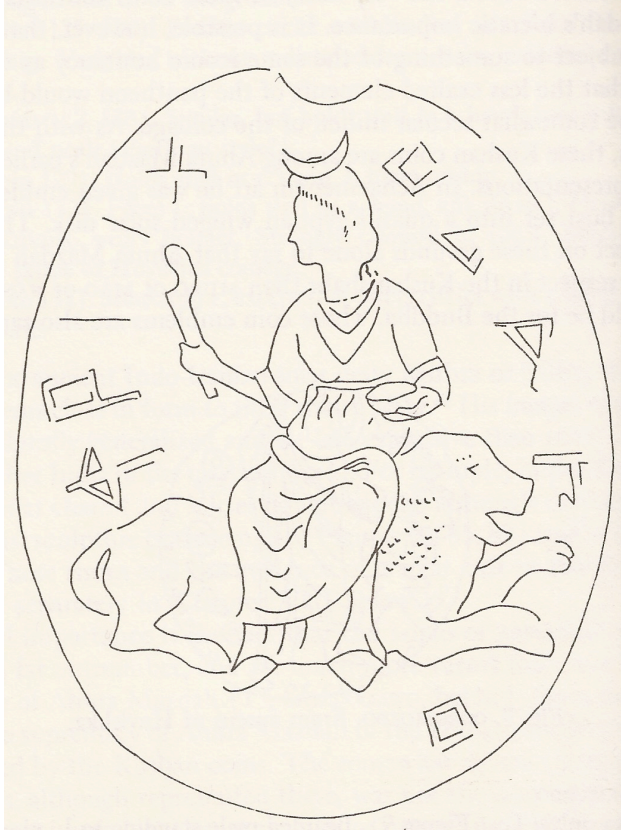


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Figure 148. Animal-headed goddess with wine cup. Zwalf, Wladimire. *Buddhism: art and faith*. Lonson, The British Museum Press, 1985. fig. 440



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Figure 150. Seated Kubera. Late Kusana period, probably Kausambu. 3rd- 4th century AD. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Czuma, Stanislaw J. *Kushan sculpture: images from early India*. Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland Museum of Art: Indian University Press, 1985.



Figure 151. Kubera and Hariti
<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=50008;type=101> Pakistan, Gandhara region, South Asia.



Figure 152. Hariti with children. Rowan, Jennifer. *Danger and devotion: Hariti, mother of demons in the stories and stones of Gandhara: a historiography and catalogue of images*, MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 2002, p. 309

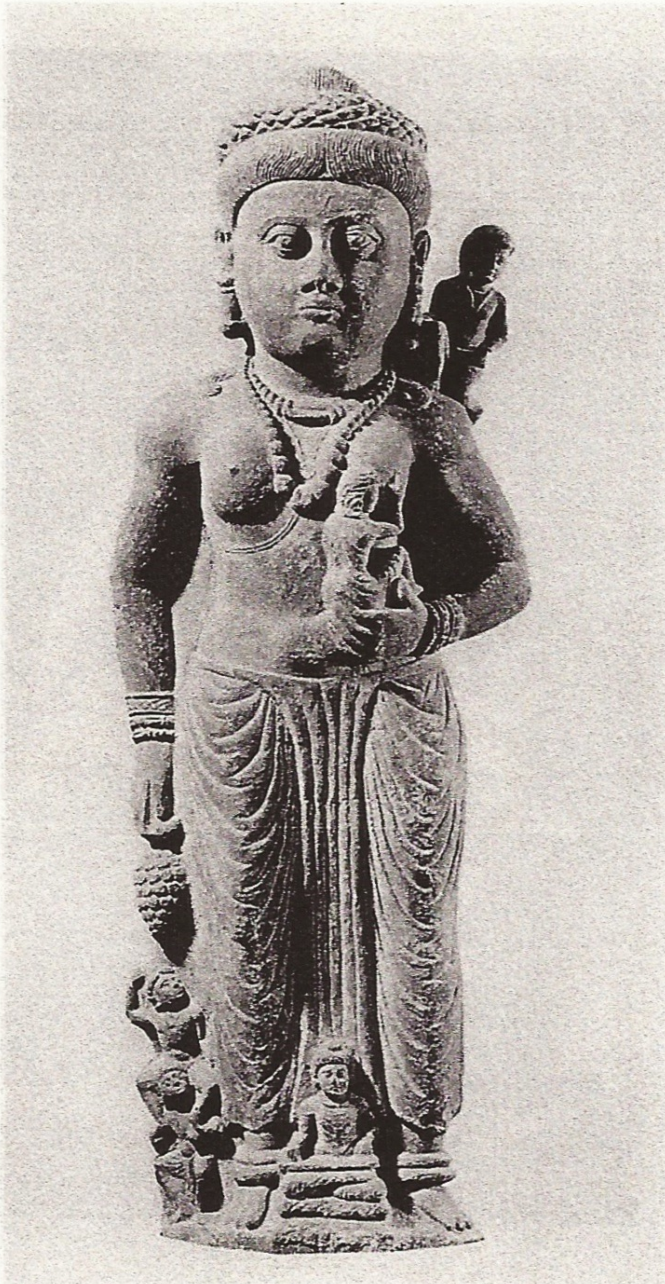


Figure 153. Hariti with children. Rowan, Jennifer. *Danger and devotion: Hariti, mother of demons in the stories and stones of Gandhara: a historiography and catalogue of images*, MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 2002, p. 309



Figure 154. Standing Hariti from Skarah-dheri, Peshawar. Chandigarh Museum. Early 2nd century CE. American Institute of Indian Studies. Maheshwari, Madhurika. *From ogress to goddess. Hariti: a Buddhist Deity*. IIRNS Publications Pvt. Ltd. 2009. p. 26



Figure 155. Sandstone figure of the seated Buddha. From Eastern India, Sarnath Gupta Period, 5th century
http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/s/sandstone_figure_of_the_buddha.aspx



Figure 3. Drawing of the banquet scene with the goddess Nana by N. Odani (© author).



Figure 2. Seated Buddha from Rānigāt and the relief on the base with 'Nana on lion'. 55 x 44 cm (© author).

Figure 156. Seated Figure with base of goddess, 200 CE, Odani, Nakao. “The Banquet Scene on the Base of A Seated Buddha in Gandhara” in *Religion and Art Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology 1*. Ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron, (London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008), p. 31.



Figure 157. Relief of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya, 9th century, Đờng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 90



Figure 158. Relief of Queen Maya Lumbini Garden, 9th century, Đờng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 93

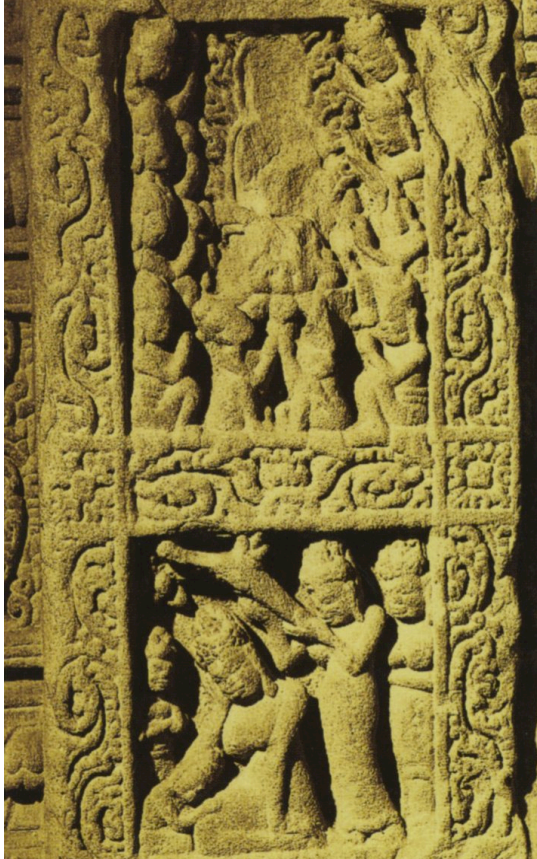


Figure 159. Seated Figure, 9th century, Đông Dương, Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 94



Figure 160. Photograph of Seated Figure. 9th century, Đông Dương. Boisselier, Jean, *La Statuaire du Champa*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963. fig. 59



Figure 161. Relief of child holding mother. 9th century, Đông Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 94



Figure 162. Mara Riding on Elephant, 9th century, Đồng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 91



Figure 163. Relief of Siddhartha Cutting Off His Hair, 9th century, Đồng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. P. 99



Figure 164. Relief of Queen Mahprajapati Gautami. 9th century, Đồng Dương. Chutiwongs, Nandana. “Buddhism in Champa: Narrative Reliefs of Two Images Pedestals at Dong-duong.” *SACHE Lettre*, No. 14, 2011, p. 20



Figure 165. Relief of the Marriage of Siddhartha and Yasodhara. 9th century, Đồng Dương. Chutiwongs, Nandana. "Buddhism in Champa: Narrative Reliefs of Two Images Pedestals at Dong-duong." *SACHE Lettre*, No. 14, 2011, p. 21



Figure 166. Relief of Naga Princess. 9th century, Đồng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 101



Figure 167. Relief of Mara's Daughters. 9th century, Đồng Dương. Guillon, Emmanuel, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001. p. 102

Figure 168. Map of Pedestal Shrine of Vân Trạch Hòa, Author's Diagram

Figure 169. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal-Shrine, Author's Photograph

Figure 170. Mohenjo-Daro Cylinder Seal, 1st century BCE

Figure 171. Mohenjo-Daro Cylinder Seal, 1st century BCE

Figure 172. *Navagraha*, Worcester Art Museum, MA c. 500 -575

Figure 173. *Navagraha*, San Diego Museum of Art, c. 950-1000

Figure 174. Mother Goddesses, Ellora, c. 600

Figure 175. Mother Goddesses, LACMA, c. 800- 899

Figure 176. *Navagrahas*, 7th-8th century, Aihole, India

Figure 177. *Navagrahas*, 7th-8th century, Cleveland Art Museum, India

Figure 178. *Navagrahas*, Madhya Pradesh, Mrtangesvara Temple India, 8th century

Figure 179. *Navagraha*, State Museum, Sikarra Khera, Bharatpur, 8th century

Figure 180. Gauri with Sadyojata. Museum of Indian Art. Berlin, Inventory 10109

Figure 181. Marici with Rahu, 9th century, Museum of Indian Art, Berlin

Figure 182. Temple no. 2. Bhutesvara temple, Madhya Pradesh, India, 775-800

Figure 183. Madhya Pradesh, 9th century, Asian Civilization Museum, Singapore

Figure 184. *Navagraha*, 7th century, Sambor Prei Kuk, EFEO_CAM12248

Figure 185. *Navagraha*, Baphuon, 1000-1100, Cambodia, Asian Art Museum

Figure 186. Nine Deities, Asian Art Museum, 900-1100, The Avery Brundage Collection

Figure 187. National Museum Mahaverawongsa, Nakhon ratchasima province, Thailand

Figure 188. *Navagraha*, 10th century, HCMC Museum of History, Vietnam

Figure 189. Seven *Linga* Pedestal, Mỹ Sơn, 10th century, Champa

Figure 190. Brahmanical Stele, second half of the 7th century. Eastern Cambodia

Figure 191. Five Deities with Spout, Cambodia, Norton Simon Museum, 9th–10th century

Figure 192. Ta Keo, Cambodia EFEO_CAM 19725_3, ca. 1000

Figure 193. *Navagraha*, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 194. *Navagraha*, Details, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 195. *Navagraha*, Details, Angkor Wat, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 196. Surya, Art Institute of Chicago, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 197. *Mandala*, Koh Ker period (928–944), Cambodia

Figure 198. *Chandra Mandala*, Angkor Vat style, 12th century

Figure 199. Vân Trạch Hòa, 12th century, Champa

Figure 200. Bronze Mandala, Cambodia, 12th century, Yothin Collection, Bangkok

Figure 201. Vân Trạch Hòa, 12th century, details, Divine goddesses, Champa

Figure 202. Female Goddesses on Vân Trạch Hòa, Đồng Dương temple, 9th century, Champa

Figure 203. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 204. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 205. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, free-standing *navagraha*, 12th century, Champa

Figure 206. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 207. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 208. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, detail, Champa

Figure 209. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, detail, Champa

Figure 210. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal, 12th century, Champa

Figure 211. Vân Trạch Hòa Pedestal drawing

Figure 212. Polonnaruwa, Pabalu Stupa, 12th century, Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Figure 213. Pedestal deposit stone, Preah Khan, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 214. Pre Rup, 12th century, Cambodia

Figure 215. Ganesha, Go 2A, Gold Deposit 1, Cát Tiên

Figure 216. Goddess, Go 1 A, Gold Deposit 2, Cát Tiên

Figure 217. Gold Deposit 3, Cát Tiên

Figure 218. Gold Deposit 4, Cát Tiên

Figure 219. Dikpala Images, Go 1 A, Gold Deposit 5, Cát Tiên

Figure 220. Gold Deposit 6, Cát Tiên

Figure 221. Gold Deposit 7, Cát Tiên

Figure 222. Gold Deposits Gold Deposit 8, Cát Tiên

Figure 223. Dedicatory Plaque drawing, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 224. Dedicatory Plaque, 9th century, Asian Art Museum

Figure 225. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 226. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 227. Nguyễn Trinh Tri, *Letters from Panduranga*, 2015

Figure 228. Trần Hữu Chắt, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989



Figure 229. Tem bưu chính, Postage Stamps, Vietnam, 1987



Figure 230. Tem bưu chính, Postage Stamps, Vietnam, 1987

Figure 231. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 232. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 233. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Festival of the Cham people*, 1989

Figure 234. Mỹ Sơn Temple, 2015, Author's Photograph

Figure 235. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 236. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Champa

Figure 237. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 238. Trần Hữu Chát detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 239. Mỹ Sơn E1 Pedestal, Champa

Figure 240. Trần Hữu Chát, detail, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 241. Trần Hữu Chát, *The Rice Mother*, 2003

Figure 242. Trần Hữu Chát, *Untitled*, 1991