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Cultural Resource and Heritage Issues of Historic Champa States in Vietnam: Champa Origins, Reconfirmed Nomenclatures, and Preservation of Sites

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**Cultural Resource and Heritage Issues of Historic Champa States
in Vietnam: Champa Origins, Reconfirmed Nomenclatures,
and Preservation of Sites**

Trần Kỳ Phương

THE CHAMPA KINGDOM AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Champa¹ (Endnote 1) kingdom of Vietnam dates from the late second century CE. Its territories ranged from south of the Ngang Pass in Quảng Bình Province to Bình Thuận Province (approximately between latitudes 11° N and 18° N), including the coastal plains and the interior highlands in South-Central Vietnam. According to Chinese historical documents, in 192-193 CE, due to the harsh rule of the Han dynasty, the people of Xiang Lin (Tượng Lâm District) revolted, killed the local Chinese mandarin official, gained their sovereignty and established their own independent state. Khu Liên, the leader of the uprising, was considered king (Đào 1957: 122-34; Yamagata and Momoki 2001: 277-354). From the evidence of recent archaeological discoveries along the basin of the Thu Bồn River, we may suppose that this newly-established state was probably located in current Quảng Nam Province (Yamagata 2005: 622-34; Trần 2002a: 63-68). It was named Lin-yi/ Lâm Ấp (192-758), later known as Huan-Wang/ Hoàn Vương (758-886), and then Zhan Cheng/ Chiêm Thành (886-1471). The name Zhan Cheng/ Chiêm Thành comes from Champapura in Sanskrit, the city of Champa. In fact, the name of Champa appeared for the first time in two Sanskrit inscriptions, one dated 658, discovered in Central Vietnam and the other dated 668, found in Cambodia.

¹ In this paper, I use the term “Champa” to refer to aspects of the Champa kingdom, such as: Champa art, Champa inscription, Champa inhabitants (*urang Campa*) so on; and the term “Chăm” for those of Chăm ethnicity, especially to those contemporary people of South-Central Vietnam, such as: Chăm people, Chăm language, Brahmin Chăm, and so on.

THE CHAM KINGDOM AS A MANDALA ALONG RIVER VALLEYS AND THE COAST

The Champa kingdom can be described as a mandala, which indicates that the kingdom was not one unified political entity but it was rather a federation of several regions which had their own political centers.² The people of the Champa kingdom lived mostly on the coastal plains, but these people also included several other ethnic groups of the Central Highlands, belonging to two language family groups: Austronesian (Chăm, Jarai, Chăm-Hroi, Chru, Ede/Rhade and Raglai) and Austroasiatic (Katu, Bru-Vân Kiều, Koho, Hre, Sedang, Bana, Mnong, Stieng, Mạ, etc.). The Chăm themselves maintained an Austronesian language spoken from at least the fourth century CE (Po 1997:41; Thurgood 1999: 3-4).

The Champa kingdom was basically located on a strip of land extending for more than a thousand kilometres along the coast of Central Vietnam. Compressed between the mountains and the sea, the kingdom lay on narrow areas of riverine and coastal plains with difficult access except by river or sea due to the rugged terrain. The kingdom was divided into various geographical areas by eastward branches of the north-south Trùng Sơn Mountain Range. As a result, the minor states of the Champa mandala were limited with their agricultural land being mainly restricted to the banks of the river. (Momoki 1998) According to the Hindu

² On the formation of the kingdom: The political and economic networks of the Champa kingdom are constructed by applying Bronson's model which he called a 'riverine exchange network'. According to this model, the exchange network system has a coastal based trade centre, usually located at a river mouth. There are also distant upstream centres that are initial concentration points for products originating in more remote parts of the riverine watershed. These products were produced by non-market oriented people living in upland or upriver villages. Each:

mandala has its own such a riverine exchange network... The scholars pointed out the short life-span and unstable political situation of their models. The connection between the centers and the peripheries were built on patronage and personal magnetism, instead of institutionalized bureaucracy. As a result, smaller centers tended to look in all directions for security, and centers of spiritual authority and political power shifted endlessly. Thus the characteristics of the Cham state can be seen as a loose, marginally interdependent alliance network among a series of river-mouth urban centers whose very nature was politically and economically unstable. The Cham political authority was concentrated in coastal and riverine centers near the coast. The Cham royal center was shifted among several of these river-mouth urban centers over time which has been explained as representing corresponding shifts from one dynasty's rule to that of another. It was actually a reflection of transfer of authority from the elite of one Cham riverine system to that of another (Nakamura 1999:60).

The "riverine exchange network" model mentioned above very closely corresponds to the geography of Central Vietnam where most of the rivers flow west to east, from the high mountains to the sea. Along these rivers there are many villages --the upland ones inhabited by groups of ethnic minorities and those at the middle reaches and lowlands connecting with a coastal based trade centre, usually located at a river mouth. Such is the context of the Thu Bồn River with Hội An as its trade port-city in Quảng Nam Province, known formerly as Champa Amaravati.

concepts of state formation, each state of the Champa mandala was centred on a holy mountain, a symbol of God Siva, and a holy river as a symbol of the Goddess Ganga, Siva's consort. Along the holy river, each state established three prominent centres: 1. A centre of trade or the port-city at the estuary; 2. A centre of royal power or the royal city; 3. And a centre of royal religion or the sanctuary.

During the seventh century, by examining the geographical features and the historical sites of a Champa mandala in the present Quảng Nam Province, one can find the observe these aspects of the state as follows:

- The sacred mountain of Mahaparvata or Răng Mèo (Cat Tooth) Mountain;
- The sacred river of Mahanadi/Ganga³ or the Thu Bồn River;
- The estuary or port-city of Đại Chiêm Hải Khẩu (Port of Great Champa) or Cửa Đại Rivermouth in the Hội An area (Trần and Vũ 2003: 105-10);
- The royal city of Simhapura (City of Lion) in Trà Kiệu (Glover and Yamagata 1994: 75-93);
- The sanctuary of Srisana-Bhadresvara or Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary.

The geographical sub-regions in Central Vietnam created an environment whereby the minor states of the Champa mandala were established at major river mouths. Thus, through the Cham inscriptions, we learn that, between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries there were minor states on the estuaries (from north to south) named as: Traik > Trạch > Gianh on the Gianh River and Jriy > Lý/ Lê > Nhật Lê on the Nhật Lê River in Đồng Hới, Quảng Bình Province; Vvyar > Việt > Cửa Việt on the Thạch Hãn River in Quảng Trị Province; Ulik > Ô-Lý on the Hương River of Huế in Thừa Thiên-Huế Province; Amaravati on the Thu Bồn River in Quảng Nam Province; Vijaya > Chà Bàn on the Côn River in Bình Định Province; Kauthara on the Cái River of Nha Trang in Khánh Hòa Province; and Panduranga > Phan Rang on the Dinh River of Phan Rang-Tháp Chàm in Ninh Thuận Province. Besides, other estuaries of main rivers on which some other minor states may well have been located but for which we have not yet confirmed their names include: Cửa Hàn Estuary on the Hàn River in Danang City; Kỳ Hà Estuary on Tam Kỳ River in Quảng Nam Province; Châu Ô River and Trà Khúc River in Quảng Ngãi Province; Ba River or Đà Rằng River of Tuy Hòa in Phú Yên

³ The name of the holy mountain and the holy river appeared in the Cham inscriptions from the late 4th to the 7th centuries (Majumdar 1985: (III) 4-8; 21-26).

Province; Phan Rí Estuary on Sông Lòng Sông River and Phan Thiết Estuary on the Cà Ty River in Bình Thuận Province, and so on. These minor states were recorded by a number of different names in Chinese historical records (Southworth 2000: 237-44; Trần 2004: 3-4).

According to Chăm legends, the Champa kingdom was ruled by two clans: the areca clan or male clan, called Pinang in the Chăm language (Kramuk Vansh in Sanskrit) belonging to the mountain line of descent (Stau Chok) that ruled the northern region; and the Coconut clan or female clan, called Li-u in the Chăm language (Narikel Vansh in Sanskrit) belonging to the sea line of descent (Stau Thik) that ruled the southern region. Similar to other traditional cults in Southeast Asia, the Champa indigenous belief system revealed a cosmological dualism: female-male/mother-father/sea-mountain/coconut-areca that adapted themselves to the religions imported from South Asia such as Hinduism and Buddhism, developing into the court religion of the Champa royal dynasties.

CHAMPA HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

The two major sanctuaries of the Champa courts were Mỹ Sơn in Quảng Nam Province and Po Nagar Nha Trang in Khánh Hòa Province that also reflected the phenomena of the Champa cosmological dualist cult. Geographically, Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary was located in a deep valley surrounded by high mountain ranges; on the contrary, Po Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuary was located on a riverside hill near the estuary. Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary was of the North, which belonged to the Amaravati State where the God Bhadresvara/father/god-king (devaraja)/mountain/areca were worshipped, and Po Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuary was built in the South which belonged to the Kauthara State where the Goddess Bhagavati/mother/Po Yang Inu Nagar/sea/coconut were worshipped. In this context, the unity of the north and the south regions of the Champa kingdom functioned in symbolic correlative unity (Trần 2004: 4-5).⁴

Around the late fourth century, Hinduism was introduced to Champa, and the Hindu sanctuary of Mỹ Sơn was constructed by King Bhadravarman/ Fan Hu-ta/ Phạm Hồ Đạt

⁴ Based on the *yin-yang* principle, we can posit that coconut with its empty heart should belong to the yin/female; on the other hand, the areca with a solid heart should belong to the yang/male. Therefore, the coconut clan should belong to the female; and the Areca clan should belong to the male. Nowadays, amongst the Chăm ethnic community in Ninh Thuận province, Chăm people are divided into two groups, so call: Ahier and Awar. Ahier is the Chăm Brahmanists and Awar is the Chăm Bani (old Islamic). In their legends, Ahier belongs to the male and Awar belongs to the female. (Nakamura 1999: 82-108)

(reigned 380-413) (Trần 2004: 33). During the ninth century, Mahayana Buddhism influenced the kingdom and the Buddhist sanctuaries at Đồng Dương were established by King Jaya Indravarman II in c. 875 (Schweyer 2000: 205-18; Higham 2002: 268-86). After the tenth century, as Champa played an increasingly crucial role in the South China Sea trade, which has become known as the “Silk Road of the Sea”, extending from the Middle East to the Far East, Islam was introduced into Champa by Arabian and Persian merchants (Nakamura 1999:63-68; 2000: 55-66).

The most significant legacy of the Champa kingdom remaining today in Central Vietnam is in the form of brick temple-towers (*kalan* in the Chăm language) which are scattered over the coastal lowlands, with a few in the highlands. These Hindu and Buddhist temple-towers date between the 7th/8th centuries and the 16th/17th, and total approximately eighty structures.

The temples are concentrated in the following provinces —Quảng Trị Province: Hà Trung Temple (10th century); Thừa Thiên – Huế Province: Liễu Cốc Temple (11th-12th century), Mỹ Khánh Temple (8th century); Quảng Nam Province: Mỹ Sơn temple complex (7th-13th century), Đồng Dương temple complex (9th-10th century), Khương Mỹ temple group (10th century), Chiên Đàn temple group (11th-12th century), Bằng An Temple (10th-12th century); Bình Định Province: Tháp Bạc/ Bánh Ít temple group (11th-12th century), Bình Lâm Temple (11th century), Dương Long temple group (12th-13th century), Hưng Thạnh/Tháp Đôi temple group (12th-13th century), Cảnh Tiên Temple (13th-14th century), Thốc Lốc Temple (13th-14th century), Thủ Thiện Temple (13th-14th century); Phú Yên Province: Tháp Nhạn Temple (11th-12th century); Khánh Hòa Province: Po Nagar Nha Trang temple complex (8th-13th century); Ninh Thuận Province: Hòa Lai temple group (9th century), Po Kloong Garai temple group (13th-14th century); Po Rame Temple (16th-17th century); Bình Thuận Province: Po Đàm temple group (8th-9th century), Phú Hải/Phố Hải temple group (8th-9th century); Dak Lak Province: Yang Prong Temple (12th-14th century). Most of these temples were built along on the main river of the region (Trần and Shige-eda 1997:39-49; 2002 [1]: 75-88).

The characteristics of the Champa temple architecture include corbel building techniques. With this type of structure, bricks are stacked in a slightly offset manner to the spire of the roof—something that Champa architecture had in common with that of the Khmer and Central Javanese. The corbel style created large vaulted internal spaces. Champa architecture resulted in tall structures with comparative large internal spaces. The most commonly-used

construction material was baked brick. Bricks of different lengths and thicknesses were used for a variety of different purposes and were rubbed together until they fitted perfectly. The main characteristics of Champa architecture were the flat foundation of the main sanctuary, the square cylindrical cella (inner chamber), and a three-stage pyramid-shaped roof. The three-storey pyramid remained standard for the roof of the sanctuaries along with boat-shaped roofs which were designed for treasury buildings. In many cases the exteriors were sculpted, but this was carried out after all the bricks had been laid and the building completed.

Despite many Champa religious buildings were constructed during the tenth and eleventh centuries, it is thought that a turning point was reached with the construction of Indrapura and Đồng Dương temples during the latter half of the ninth century. King Indravarman II introduced Mahayana Buddhism into a Hinduism belief system that had been the religion of the aristocracy up until that time. It is thought that this was part of his efforts to consolidate the kingdom, which included both political and economic reform (Shige-eda 2000:100-07; Trần and Shige-eda 2002 [1]:75-86; 2002 [2]: 41-47).

Champa art was an integral element in Southeast Asian art. According to Champa inscriptions, most temple-towers built before the seventh century were of wood and were all razed during armed conflict. Brick and sandstone towers subsequently began to appear from the seventh century onwards. The variety of sculpture carved from sandstone to decorate the towers, together with the varied motifs carved into the brick walls, give Champa monuments a subtle beauty.

Champa architectural concepts were strongly influenced by South Asian Hindu elements. The temple complex included a sanctuary or *kalan*, encircled by small towers, ancillary buildings, and a surrounding wall. Influenced by the Hindu *sikhara*, the Champa *kalan* is a temple dedicated to the sacred image or *yoni-linga* housed in the sanctum sanctorum, a narrow square room with a pyramid-shaped roof. The *kalan* represented a sacred microcosm of the world. The tower itself could be interpreted as an altar, and the tower roof as the summit of Mount Meru, home of the gods. The *kalan* usually faced east (towards the rising sun), starting the temporal movement of the universe. Particularly at Mỹ Sơn, the *kalan* structures face both east and west, constituting a distinctive type of temple, Kalan (Tower) Mỹ Sơn A-1. In India, this style of architecture is known as *natamandir*. The icon venerated in the sanctum sanctorum was set on a dais ending in a *snana-droni*, which had an ablution channel used for

bathing the deity with a spout always pointing north. Sometimes there was another square container under the altar, or a *somasutra* (water-spout) through which holy water flowed from the tower. Around the altar was a narrow corridor or *pradakshina-patha* for devotees to file past when praying. In Buddhist shrines such as those of Đồng Dương, the altar was set against the western wall of the sanctum sanctorum and with ceremonies held in front of it, but people were not permitted to pass around the altar as in a Hindu temple. Linked with the sanctum through a doorway was a narrow vestibule where, to one side, stood a statue of the sacred bull Nandin, as in the Po Kloong Garai and Po Rame. Around the entrance to the vestibule were two finely-carved stone pillars. They could be round, octagonal, or quadrangular depending the period of construction. The Cham frequently carved inscriptions on such pillars.

The *kalan* has a basic architectural style: the body of the tower is square, while the pyramid-shaped roof is of three levels with a sandstone ridge. Champa temple-towers were built according to the following pattern:

In the centre of the structure was the *kalan*. Opposite to the *kalan* was the gate-tower/*gopura* with doors opening to the east and west. In front of the gate tower was a *mandapa*—an elongated tile-roofed house with many windows and main doors opening to the east and west. This was the vestibule where believers purified themselves and prayed before entering the *kalan* to perform rituals. In many cases, the *mandapa* lay between the *kalan* and *gopura*. There were three types of *mandapa*—one surrounded by a wall with many windows, as in Mỹ Sơn D-1 and D-2; another without walls that used large columns of brick or stone to support the tiled roof as in Po Nagar Nha Trang and Đồng Dương; and, the third type used rows of wooden columns to support the roof, as in Po Kloong Garai (Trần 2004: 16-17).

To the right of the *kalan*, there was always a repository for offerings or *kosagrha*, which is called a “fire-tower” by modern-day Chăm people. This structure was made of brick with a curved boat-shaped roof, and had either one or two rooms. The *kosagrha* always points north—the abode of the deity Kuvera, the god of wealth and good fortune—and has two windows facing east and the west. Around the *kalan* and ancillary buildings was a square low brick enclosure that meets at the gate-tower. Outside the enclosure were often a number of stela-towers and secondary temples. We see this especially at the Mỹ Sơn temple complex, where groups A and B are a network of secondary temples dedicated to the deities of all

points of the compass (*dikpalakas*) or the deities of seven planets (*saptagrahas/navagrahas*). For example, Mỹ Sơn A2-A7 is dedicated to *dikpalakas* such as: (1) Indra, deity of thunder, guardian of the east, on an elephant; (2) Agni, deity of fire, protector of the southeast, on a rhinoceros; (3) Yama, deity of death, guardian of the south, on a buffalo; (4) Varuna, deity of water, defender of the west, on a goose; (5) Nairrta, the destroyer god, tutelary of the southwest, on a yaksa (demigod); (6) Vayu, deity of wind, protector of the northwest, on a horse; (7) Kubera, deity of wealth and good fortune, defender of the north, on a castle; and (8) Isana, the supreme being, tutelary of the northeast, on a bull. And, Mỹ Sơn B7-B13 is dedicated to *saptagrahas/navagrahas*, such as: (1) Surya, deity of the Sun, riding a horse; (2) Chandra, deity of the Moon, sitting on a lotus throne; (3) Mangala, deity of Mars, riding on a rhinoceros; (4) Varuna, deity of Mercury, on the back of a goose; (5) Brhaspati, deity of Jupiter, riding on an elephant; (6) Sukra, deity of Venus, riding on a bull; and (7) Sahni, deity of Saturn, riding on a buffalo (Trần 2004: 42-44). (See Illustration #1)

Illustration 1:

Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary under the Holy Mountain Mahaparvata.

Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary was the Holy See of the Areca clan worshipping the god-king (devaraja) Bhadresvara, the protector of royal power.



#1

ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHAMPA ART

Many scholars have argued that the inhabitants of the Champa kingdom (*urang Campa*) were composed of many ethnic groups among which the major one was the Chẵm whose language was spoken in Champa during the fourth century (Gay 1988: 49-58). In present-day Vietnam, one can find in the Trường Sơn Range the Austronesian-speaking people who live in the southern central region and who include the Jarai, Ede/Rhade, Chẵm, Raglai, Chru, Koho, Chẵm-Hroi; whilst the Austroasiatic people who live in the northern central region include the Bana, Sedang, Katu, Bru-Vân Kiề̃u. The Chẵm probably were the lowland people who were connected through forest product trade with the upland peoples. (Lieberman 2003: 348-52; Wheeler 2002).

The particular features of these groups played an important role on the evolution of Champa art. The Champa dynasties most often based themselves on their own ethnic bias, and either as Austronesian speakers or Austroasiatic speakers, selected their decorative patterns or their human models for expressing their own ethnic characteristics. The ethnicity source is clearly reflected in human figures, clothing, and decorative patterns. Concerning this topic, from the beginning of Champa art in the seventh century onwards, through the sculptural works found at the Trà Kiề̃u site (the former capital city of Simhapura in Quảng Nam Province) one can see the ethnic aesthetic characteristics that were represented on some remarkable pedestals. The figures of women carved on the pedestal of Ramayana Trà Kiề̃u (Trần 2000: 51-58) [on display in the Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture, Danang, Vietnam] (Illustration #2), which belongs to the late seventh century, illustrate ethnic features similar to those of Austronesian speakers in terms of their hairstyle with a tied bun at the back of the head, the long cloth dress or sarong, and the decorative rows of female breasts.⁵

⁵ See Boisselier 1963:174. According to Chẵm legends and inscriptions, the female breasts symbolize the goddess Uroja, the founder of the kingdom (in Chẵm language, *uroja* means female breasts). These motifs of female breasts are found as house decorations of the Ede people who are an Austronesian-speaking group. There are about 195,000 Ede who live in Dak Lak Province in the central Vietnam highlands. (Illustration #9 – on page 19)

Illustration 2:**The pedestal of Ramayana Trà Kiệu (detail) (Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture).**

The human figure shows the typical Austronesian characteristics with hair tied in a bun, long legs, and so on. The row of female breasts are also typical. Dated to the middle of the 7th century (c.657-687 CE). Found at the Trà Kiệu site.



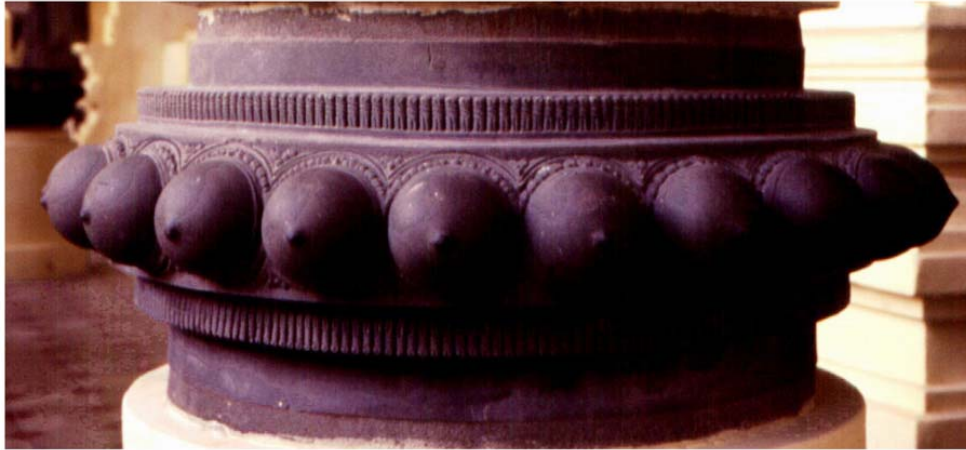
#2

The motif of female breasts was frequently carved on Champa temples and pedestals through several centuries and can be seen in most of the temples and pedestals in the sites of Trà Kiệu, Mỹ Sơn, Dương Long, Tháp Mẫm (Boisselier 1963: 285-86, fig. 193; AFAO-EFEO/Cham Art 2001: cat. nos. 147, 148, 151). This motif also appeared widely in the artworks discovered in Vijaya state (Bình Định Province) from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries [displayed in the Tháp Mẫm Gallery, Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture] and in Mỹ Sơn G1 temple which built in c. 1157 (Trần 1988: 50-52). (Illustration. #3)

Illustration 3:**The pedestal of Uroja (Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture).**

This is the typical decorative motif of Austronesian people that appeared throughout the art history of Champa from the beginning to the latest periods.

Dated 12th-13th century. Found in Binh Định Province.



#3

One also can see the hairstyle in which the hair is tied in a bun at the back of the neck and the decorative motif of female breasts as being typical art features of Austronesian people. The human figures that belong to Austronesian people are depicted with tall-slim bodies with long legs, such as the female figures carved on the most famous pedestal of Apsaras Trà Kiệu which belongs to the tenth and eleventh centuries (Boisselier 1963: 179-82, fig. 97-100; AFAO-EFEO/Cham Art 2001: cat. nos. 107-11) [displayed in the Trà Kiệu Gallery, Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture]. (Illustration #4)

Illustration 4:**The pedestal of Apsara Trà Kiệu (Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture).**

The work shows the typical human figure with Austronesian characteristic --

a tall-slim body with long legs. Dated to the middle of the 11th century.

Found at the Trà Kiệu site.



#4

On the other hand, one can find Austroasiatic speakers depicted with a different style of art expression: the hair is sculpted as long and curly, falling down on the shoulders past large round ear ornaments. They also include the decorative vermiculate/vermiform motifs that appear frequently in the Đờng Dương Buddhist sanctuary. The sculpted human figures that belong to Austroasiatic speakers have short-fat bodies on Đờng Dương pedestals (Boisselier 1963: 97-118, fig. 46-63; AFAO-EFEO/Cham Art 2001: cat. nos. 20-57) [displayed in the Đờng Dương Gallery, Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture] (Illustration #5) and on architectural square reliefs such as the Yaksa relief sculpture found in Trà Kiệu (Boisselier 1963: 29-30, fig. 6) or those of An Mỹ Style that belong to the eighth century (Trần 1987: 231-33; Le Bonheur 1994: 258, fig. 129) [The sculptural works belonging to the An Mỹ Style are displayed in the Trà Kiệu Gallery, Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture while the

others are displayed at the Cham Gallery in the Museum of Vietnam History, Hanoi].
(Illustration #6)

Illustration 5:

The pedestal of Đồng Dương (detail) (Danang Museum Of Champa Sculpture).

The Đồng Dương pedestal shows the vermiform decorative motifs and human figure that have short-fat bodies. Dated to the end of the 9th century. (c. 875 CE).

Found in Đồng Dương Buddhist monastery.



#5

Illustration 6:**The relief of kudu of An Mỹ (Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture).**

The figure of a god with long-curly hair, big eyes, round ear-rings that supposedly belonged to Austroasiatic speakers. Dated to the beginning of the 8th century.

Found in An Mỹ Hamlet, Tam Kỳ Dist., Quảng Nam Province



#6

The Austroasiatic features in Champa art appear to have been drawn it from Mon-Dvaravati art influence during the eighth and ninth centuries through the land route of Peninsular Indochina in which the ethnic groups of Austroasiatic speakers brought forest goods from the highlands to the lowlands. These routes then connected with the Champa seaports by the large rivers in Central Vietnam flowing from west to east, in the context of the riverine exchange network mentioned above (Southworth 2001:151-52).

Evidently, the Champa art style which received influence from Mon-Dvaravati art belonged to the *Đông Dương* Buddhist dynasties of Indrapura who ruled over the territories of northern Champa in a period from the ninth to the late tenth centuries; their area of rule included the land between Quảng Bình and Quảng Ngãi provinces where there are still several

Austroasiatic language speaking groups residing in mountainous areas, such as the Katu, Bru-Vân Kiều, Hre, Sedang, etc. (Schweyer 1999: 345-55; 2000: 205-18). In this art period, one can clearly discern the Austroasiatic characteristics of shorter bodies, long-curly hair, big-round eyes, thick lips, and big noses on the human figures, as well as the unique decorative vermiform motifs which were widely carved on the temples and pedestals.

Generally, the Austronesian characteristics that appear in Champa artwork were retained for a longer period throughout the period from the seventh century until the latest phase of art between the fifteenth and seventeenth/eighteenth centuries; while the Austroasiatic characteristics only appeared for a shorter period between the eighth and tenth centuries. Because the majority of the Chắm were Austronesian speakers, their characteristics remained in the artwork found through the kingdom for such a long period.

The motifs of female breasts which were carved on *kut* or gravestones which, being from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, are among the last examples of Cham art as practiced in Chắm villages, such as Mỹ Nghiệp Village in Ninh Thuận Province, (Boisselier 1963: 391-94), provide good evidence of the tendency to preserve ethnic art motifs throughout the history of Champa art.⁶ (Illustration #7). Some *kut* continue to be worshipped up to today by Raglai people who speak an Austronesian language and who reside in Lâm Đồng Province in the southern highlands of the Trường Sơn Mountain Range. Chắm living in Ninh Thuận, Bình Thuận Provinces still use the hairstyle with a bun tied at the back of the neck. This is especially so of the Brahmin Chắm, who skillfully arrange their hair in this style when they celebrate rituals at the temples. (Illustration. #8)

⁶ Mus proved that Hinduized Champa culture can be divided into three periods: the first, from the beginning to the 4th or 5th centuries, the pre-Hinduization period, in which Champa inhabitants were animistic; the second, the Hinduization period when they worshipped Hindu gods and which extended until the 15th century; the third, from the 15th to the 17th or 18th centuries when the relationship with Hindu institutions waned and the Cham people returned to worship the local gods which still remain in the vestiges of Hinduization. Mus discussed the likelihood that worshipping the *kut* meant that Cham people had come back to their indigenous cults after moving away from Hindu influences. (Mus 1933: 367-410)

Illustration 7:**Kut (gravestone) in Mỹ Nghiệp Village, Ninh Phước District,
Ninh Thuận Province (in situ).**

The motif of female breasts appears on the Kut gravestone that was made in the 17th–18th century. in Phan Rang area, where most of the Chăm people are living now.



#7

Illustration 8:**Chăm Brahmanists at Kate New Year Festival in Ninh Phước District
Ninh Thuận Province.**

Chăm people speak an Austronesian language, and most of them now live in Ninh Thuận and Binh Thuận Provinces. There are about 120,000 Cham people living in Southern Vietnam nowadays.



#8

Illustration 9:**The decorative motifs of female breasts on a house of Ede ethnicity people
(Museum of Ethnology, Hanoi).**

The decorative motifs of female breasts is very popular on the housing of Ede ethnic people who are Austronesian speakers.



#9

PRESERVATION ISSUES OF CHAMPA MONUMENTS

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ecole Francaise d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Hanoi was the official bureau that carried out research work on and cared for the Champa monuments. In 1930, the EFEO started serious preservation with a new administrative office under the title 'La conservation des monuments historiques de l'Annam-Champa'. Jean-Yves Claeys was its director and the main office was in Hué (BEFEO 30:185-86, 231; Southworth 2001: 59-60). During 1931 and 1942 Mỹ Sơn and Po Nagar Nha Trang, the two largest groups of Champa temple-towers were preserved and reconstructed. In 1931, Claeys began to work on the consolidation and the restoration of the temple of Po Nagar Nha Trang, including the main temple, while the southern temple was restored by Parmentier in 1902 and 1907 (BEFEO 31: 319-24); in 1933 Claeys did restoration on the vestibule of Bàng An Temple with the collaboration of an irrigation engineer named Crocquet (BEFEO 33: 495).

The restoration work at Mỹ Sơn was started in July 1937 by Louis Bezacier and Nguyễn Xuân Đồng. In 1937, the edifices of group B and D such as: B3, B5, B6 and D1, D2, D6 were consolidated. The following year, the temple of A1, a masterpiece of Champa architecture, and six small towers (A2-A7) were reconstructed and the other structures of B1, B3, B4, B6, C1, D1, D2 were consolidated (BEFEO 37: 617-18; 38: 414-15). The EFEO's conservators used cement, gravel and iron to consolidate the bases and the walls of the edifices, or to rebuild the broken parts of the temple-towers in order to keep as much of the original surfaces of the structure as possible (BEFEO 30: 532-33).

In 1939, the conservators built a dam in order to change the course of the river which had damaged the tower of A9 (BEFEO 39: 334). The dam was finished in 1941, and it let the stream flow to the west side of group B. Unfortunately, the dam was breached by the big flood in the year 1946 (Nguyễn Xuân Đồng pers. comm. in 1978). The work of restoration in Mỹ Sơn was recognized by the inauguration of the 'Parc Archeologique de Mỹ Sơn' by Admiral Decoux, Governor General of Indochina in August 1942 (Southworth 2001: 60).

The years 1954-64 were a peaceful period for Mỹ Sơn. Afterwards, from 1965 on, the war gradually began to expand in the countryside. Mỹ Sơn was deserted and soon after became the base of guerillas. Around the years 1966-68, Mỹ Sơn came under the control of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and became a free-bombing zone for the

South Vietnam Government. Mỹ Sơn really became a battlefield between both sides. Mines were set thickly on the hillsides and the mountain slopes, especially, on the northern mountain slope which has a path leading to villages. Devastation occurred at Mỹ Sơn when United States B52 aircrafts carpet-bombed the site in August 1969. This event completely changed Mỹ Sơn. Most of the temple-towers collapsed. Today, large bomb craters remain at groups B, E and F. The two largest temples at Mỹ Sơn; A1 and E4 were completely devastated, and other temples, such as B2, B6, B9, B11, B13, D1, D2, D4, E1, E2, E4, E5, E6, E7, F1, F3 were seriously damaged. The damage at temple A1, a masterpiece of Champa art with its twenty-eight metre tower, was profound as it was both bombed and damaged by a mine. This important temple was attacked because the guerrillas had used it to house a communications station.⁷

After the Vietnamese civil war, beginning from 1978, for the purpose of scientific research, the Mỹ Sơn site was cleaned up and the mines were removed. This work resulted in nine deaths and eleven persons being injured. Everywhere there were bomb craters and remains of munitions; many tower-walls were destroyed by rockets; many stelae and sculptural works were damaged—and the temples become just mounds of crumbled bricks. Then in 1980, a team of Polish experts attached to the Centre for Restoration of Cultural Properties, Ministry of Culture and Information of Vietnam, carried out research on the Champa monuments in Central Vietnam. At that time, a sub-committee of Champa monuments was founded and led by Kazimier Kwiatkowski (1944-97), a Polish architect of the Ateliers for the Conservation of Culture Property of Poland (PKZ).

During the years 1981-85, photogrammetric surveys were done for the consolidation, preservation and reconstruction of the temple-towers of Mỹ Sơn groups B, C, and D. During 1986-90, the towers belonging to A-group were consolidated. The thousands of square meters of broken bricks were moved and re-arranged and this has altered the Mỹ Sơn site. The

⁷ After the bombing of Mỹ Sơn, Nguyễn Xuân Đông (1907-86), the curator of the Danang Museum of Champa Sculpture from 1938 to 1973, immediately passed on the bad news to Philippe Stern, an eminent French scholar on Indochinese arts who had been the chief curator of Musée Guimet at that time. Stern then denounced this event in a communication to the United States President (Nguyễn Xuân Đông pers. comm. in 1978; Southworth 2001: 62). United States President Nixon sent an official message to the United States Commander in South Vietnam: “The White House desires that to the extent possible measures be taken to insure damage to monuments is not caused by military operations.” This message was sent in January, 1970. (Heffley 1972:13)

conservation was reported in the two bulletins that were published by PKZ.⁸ For the restoration in Mỹ Sơn, the Polish experts re-used the fallen brick from the towers, and modern cement was used to join them in order to restore walls and damaged towers. They applied the methodology of consolidation, anastylosis (recovery) and fragmentary restoration to preserve the authenticity of the temple-towers (Trần 2002b: 116-18).

During the years between 1980 and 1990, along with the Mỹ Sơn site, other Champa monuments, such as Chiên Đàn (Quảng Nam Province), Po Kloong Garai (Ninh Thuận Province), Hung Thanh/Tháp Đồi, Dương Long (Bình Định Province), were also restored by PKZ. Among the Champa monuments restored by PKZ, the Po Kloong Garai group was considered by the experts to be the most successful case because its authenticity was perfectly preserved. During the restoration work in Chiên Đàn in 1989 and Dương Long in 1985, there were several new finds of sculptural works including the stone foundation-base with high-relief in Chiên Đàn (housed at a Chiên Đàn site gallery); and the remarkable pediments of Hindu gods and goddesses in Dương Long (housed at the Bình Định Provincial Museum in Qui Nhơn).

Recently, many of the Champa historical monuments in several provinces of Central Vietnam have been carelessly restored by the local authorities, who changed and deformed the surfaces and the shapes of the temple towers. For example, similar to Hindu temples, the interior sanctum of a Champa temple was built with rough walls creating niches where Hindu gods resided and votive items were placed. Due to the lack of scientific research, during 1998 to 2001, local authorities used modern cement to fill in the interior walls of the sanctum. Such cases can be seen at the temples of Thủ Thiện, Thốc Lốc, Bình Lâm in Bình Định Province; or at the Po Nagar Nha Trang group, the oldest temple, the so-called Northwest Temple, built in the tenth century with its distinctive boat-shaped roof that was completely deformed during the restoration in 1998-2000; or at the Po Dam group, in 2001-02, where the local authorities used new bricks to make the new walls covering the original walls of the temple that had been built in the eighth century; and so on. Generally, the current Vietnamese conservators are conducting restoration of the Champa temples based mainly upon their own whims rather than upon the architectural historical facts. Research on the monuments is for the most part

⁸ “Recherches sur les monuments du Champa, rapport de la mission Polono-Vietnamienne”, 1 (1981-82); 2 (1983-86).

not completed before carrying out restoration, since government policy demands accomplishment of work with expediency.

In the past few years, most of the main Champa temple towers have been restored based on government demands. However, the restoration work on the monuments has caused a lot of debate and discordant opinion because the methodology employed on the brick monuments remains an issue of contention, especially with international experts. The following thoughts by Italian experts were published as information for the brick restoration and conservation of the Champa buildings:

- (1) The bricks were fired at a temperature below 850 C,
- (2) lime was not used for mortar and tight bonding between the bricks,
- (3) joints between bricks were so thin that moisture could not penetrate from outside,
- (4) contact between the bricks was improved by the presence of a natural glue or resin,
- (5) thin joints also helped increase the strength of the masonry even if the bricks were rather soft and of low strength,
- (6) biological growth that damages the wall surfaces is much less in the original thin joints than with repaired walls where modern cement mortar is used.

(Ballio, Baronio, Binda 2001)

The resin that was used to tighten the bonding between the Cham bricks might have been *dầu rái*, of which the scientific name is *Dipterocarpus Alatus Roxb*. Formerly, Champa people widely used this resin to tighten the bricks in their construction. The *dầu rái* resin is adhesive and water-proof. It is a natural glue which can be produced in a large amount every year and can be used easily. This resin once mixed with dry clay or brick powder becomes a kind of mortar which dries easily with sunlight. After finishing the building of the tower, Champa people coated the walls with a layer of *dầu rái* to prevent moisture absorption. Nowadays, the inhabitants of Central Vietnam still use this resin mixed with powdered-mollusc-shell to coat the hulls of their boats to make them waterproof. The mortar which is made of the mixture of *dầu rái* with powdered-mollusc-shell was widely found at the construction of the Po Rame Temple, of relatively late construction during the seventeenth or eighteenth century (Trần 1993:14).

Thanks to its perfect environment and its historical architectural value, in December 1999, Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary in Quảng Nam Province was listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. Even though centuries have passed, the Champa ruins continue to keep their own mysterious and attractive stature. Except for the heavily damaged monuments from the recent war, we need not hurry to do restoration of these remarkable ruins. Some conservators are proposing to restore half of the structures leaving the rest for the following generations. Thereby, we can concentrate on the rescue of the endangered structures. And, finally, the work of restoration on the Champa monuments could provide the best training for students who want to learn the craft from a heritage produced by the Cham in creating their brilliant civilization.

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