

38. LINGA

Go Phat, Long An Province, 6th–7th century
Rock crystal, H: 3.4 cm × W: 1.4 cm × D: 1.4 cm
Long An Museum, DL87 GC01

LINGA

Go Phat, Long An Province, 6th–7th century
Rock crystal, H: 1.8 cm × D: 2.7 cm
Long An Museum

Unable to create mortals, Brahma, the creator, told Shiva to do the work for him. Furious at the thought that he should be the one to create imperfect beings, Shiva refused, castrated himself, and threw his phallus to the ground, where it sank into the earth. In another version of the story, Shiva refused by turning into a post. The linga (phallus), erect and resembling a post, came to symbolize Shiva. In art, it represents his most frequent manifestation and the duality of the god, for it stands both for fertility and regeneration and for the yogic discipline for which Shiva is known. During the Fu Nan period, the Hindu god Shiva was most often worshipped in the form of a linga, the single sculpture that would have been placed in the interior of a temple.

These small pieces would have served another purpose, either for a personal altar, or for burial in the foundation of a temple. The rock crystal used to produce

them is particularly fine, with no inclusions. Unlike the stone *ekamukhalinga* included in this exhibition (cat. no. 30), these linga are set into bases, or altars, so that the lower octagonal and square portion cannot be seen. These two are shaped differently, one tall on a square base, and the other more squat on a circular *yonī*.

LITERATURE

Le Xuan Diem, Dao Linh Con, and Vo Si Khai, *Van Hoa Oc Eo: nhung kham pha moi*, 1995; Bui Phat Diem, Dao Linh Con, and Vuong Thu Hong, *Khao Co Hoc Long An: Nhung The Ky Dau Cong Nguyen (Archaeology in Long An Province: Centuries in Early Christian Era)*, 2001.