

Manguin and Dalsheimer propose a pan-Southeast Asian family that is linked to the trade network of the coastal region; Nadine Dalsheimer and P. Y. Manguin, "Vishnu mitres et réseaux marchands en Asie du Sud-Est: Nouvelles données archéologiques sur le 1er millénaire apr. J.-C.," *Bulletin de L'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (1998) 85: 87–123. According to Vo Si Chai, "Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan," in Khoo, ed., *Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan*, 75, images dating up to the fifth century have been discovered at "Oc Eo, Ba The Mount, Giong Xoai, Sap Mount, Da Noi (Kien Giang), Chau Doc, Tra Vinh, My Tho, Tay Ninh, Dong Nai," and from a slightly later period, "Mound Bay Liep, Mound Sao (Long An), Bien Hoa (Dong Nai)."

### 39. VISHNU

Hoa Ninh, Tay Ninh Province, 6th–7th century

Stone, H: 54.9 cm × WL 33 cm × D: 17.6 cm

Fine Arts Museum, Ho Chi Minh City, BTMT187

By the fifth century A.D., images of the Brahmanic deities were being produced along the coastal regions of island and mainland Southeast Asia; Vishnu, the preserver, was the most popular during this period. Generally depicted in his four-armed form, his attributes include the mace (*gada*), conch (*shankha*), a clod of earth (*bhu*), and a wheel (*cakra*). The earliest form of these images (fig. 6 in Introduction) shows Vishnu wearing a bulky swath of cloth across his hips and carrying the conch in one of his lower hands, just as he was depicted in India during the Kushan and into the Gupta periods.<sup>25</sup>

The lower right arm of this piece is broken, but the other attributes are clear. The mace, which symbolizes the power of knowledge, is surmounted by a lotus. The face is finely detailed, with a double line on the upper lid of the eyes and the arched brow swelling above. The lips are full, as are the cheeks, while a hard-edged miter contrasts with all the softness of the fine face and the large ears. Surprisingly, no hair is visible. In contrast to the detailed features, the drapery is incised in a cursory fashion, as is often the case in images found in the Mekong delta area.