

42. GANESHA

Loc Giang, Long An Province, 7th century
Sandstone, H: 61 cm × W: 34.8 cm × D: 19 cm
Long An Museum, LG87 LA93 DA56

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Vo Si Khai, "The Kingdom of Fu Nan and the Culture of Oc Eo," in Khoo, ed., *Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan*, 67, LG93To2 H2L5; 1490 +/- 50 BP = A.D. 460, adjusted to A.D. 530 to 640, 85.

The elephant-headed god Ganesha is the first figure one encounters and worships at a Hindu temple. As the Lord of Obstacles and the God of Wealth, he is worshiped by devout Hindus for numerous reasons, for not only does he remove obstacles, he also creates them. His father, Shiva, is responsible for his elephant head. Arriving home after a lengthy journey, Shiva encountered a young man standing guard at his wife Parvati's bath. Incensed at the sight of this stranger, Shiva cut off his head, whereupon Parvati told him he had killed his own son. Chastised, Shiva rushed off to find the first head he could place upon his son's body.

Ganesha can be depicted standing or seated, though pre-Khmer images of him tended to favor the standing posture. Ganesha traditionally holds a bowl of sweets in his lower left hand and his broken left tusk in his right. The importance of elephants in the day-to-day life and trade of ancient Viet Nam provide good

reason for Ganesha's depiction. A single carbon-14 date of A.D. 530 to 640, taken from a charcoal sample at the site of Loc Giang, indicates it dates to at least the fifth century, though this only gives a general indication of the overall date of the site.³¹

LITERATURE

James C. M. Khoo, *Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan: Pre-Khmer Kingdom of the Lower Mekong Valley*, 2003; 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.