

58. PEDESTAL

Van Trach, Phong Dien district, Thua Thien Hue Province, 8th–9th century
Stone, H: 54.4 cm × W: 118 cm × D: 115.5 cm
Thua Thien Hue Historical and Revolutionary Museum

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Another instance of Agni mounted on a rhinoceros in Southeast Asian art occurs on the north wall of Angkor Wat; Vittorio Roveda, *Khmer Mythology: Secrets of Angkor* (Thailand: River Books, 1997), figs. 52 and 46.

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See catalogue essay for further discussion of the pedestal, pp. 182–83.

The embellishment of the pedestal in Cham art is most evident in the relics of Quang Nam Province in central Viet Nam, but one found farther north, in the town of Van Trach Hoa in Thua Thien Hue Province, suggests the extent of this feature in central Viet Nam. All sides and both levels of this small, square pedestal are carved, with the upper, simpler level depicting Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva, and a fourth figure holding a *kendi* in his left hand (the right is broken). A rampant lion, who stands, mouth open, appears to roar each of the corner figures into existence; below, an animal (or in the case of Nrtita, a man) identifies each.

Early Indian texts identifying the *dikpalas* (directional deities) include the *Matsya Purana*, the *Agni Purana*, and *Abhilasitarthacintamani* of Somesvara Devi. The lists of directional deities included in each of these texts vary slightly in their descriptions, both of the directional deities and their mounts. Two of the figures included on the Van Trach pedestal differ from the published lists. One is Agni, who rides a rhinoceros, though a goat or ram is stipulated,¹¹ and the other is Rahu, who takes the place

of Kubera. The first might be explained by the substitution of one horned beast for another, but the occurrence of Rahu, the ascending node of the moon, at temple sites is unusual.¹² He generally appears among another group of minor divinities, the *navagraha* (nine planets) and illustrates the Cham inclination to combine the two. A number of Cham temples have separate shrines for the *dikpala/navagraha*.

LITERATURE

J. C. Sharma, *Temples of Champa in Vietnam*, 1992; Tran Ky Phuong, "Phu dieu ho the bat phu-ong thien Van Trach Hoa va hinh tuong ho the bat phu-ong thien trong dieu khac Champa" (The relief of *astadikpalakas* of Van Trach Hoa and the images of *dikpalakas* in Cham sculpture), 2001; Pierre Baptiste, "Le piédestal de Van Trach Hoa: un *bali-pitha* d'un type inédit. Note sur l'iconographie des *dikpala* au Champa," 2003.