

72. KINNARA

Thap Mam, Binh Dinh Province, late 12th–13th century
Stone, H: 82 cm × W: 51.2 cm × D: 49 cm
Hue Royal Antiquities Museum, DKC 33

The *kinnara*, a supernatural being, half man and half bird, raises its two hands in *anjali mudra*, the gesture of devotion. Originally located on the superstructure of one of the towers of Thap Mam (a complex of temples no longer extant), it would have played an apotropaic role. The *kinnara* was a very popular figure in Southeast Asian art, attaining a degree of independent status not assigned to other minor divinities. Most often, only the upper torso is shown.

Its broken wings, visible behind the shoulders, and the various decorative ornaments encircling the smooth surface of the flesh, are all carved in the large, bold patterns characteristic of the Thap Mam style. Even the beadwork of the five-tiered headdress, the strand of beads around the neck, and the beads in the

short *sampot*, from which the figure seems to grow, stand out. The curved elements of the second, lower necklace may represent teeth; tiger-teeth necklaces often indicate a youthful figure in Southeast Asian sculpture, as they were used as amulets for children. The broad mouth and nose and high arched brows above wide-open eyes are typical of this period of sculpture.

REFERENCE

Jean Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa: recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie*, 1963.