

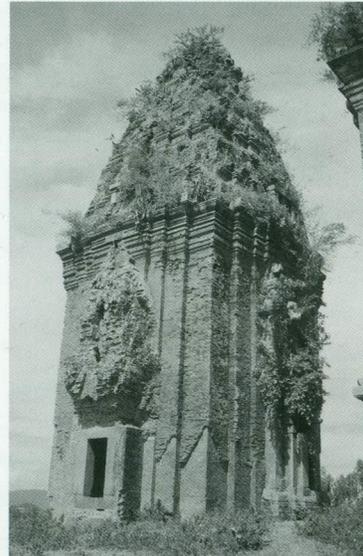
The art of Champa through the carvings collection in the National Museum of Vietnamese History

The ancient sculptural art of Champa, though being influenced by Hinduism in terms of expressing the Hindu gods, the Hinduism themes as a common rule to be abided by, reveals itself as a peculiar art with its particular aspect and aesthetics distinctive from the Hinduist sculpture in India and Southeast Asia. That is due firstly to the materials of construction. Temples in Champa, different from India, Cambodia and Indonesia, were built of bricks. This tradition has been strictly observed throughout the history of Champa. The Champa artisans therefore did not have long and large stretches of wall for use as background as did their colleagues in Cambodia or Java. As a result there did not exist in Champa bands of bas-relief of hundreds meters long depicting scenes in Hindu epics or phases of Buddhist life as was the case of Angkor Vat, Bayon in Cambodia or Borobudur and Lara Jongrang in Indonesia. The Champa people have found out their own way to

those incarnate Hindu gods and themes on their temple by carving them separately and making them parts of the construction or fixing them on its various parts. Those carvings are classified into main groups as follows:

- Icons
- Pedestals
- Pediments
- Fragments of architectural decorations (at the base or on various tiers of the temple).

Due to such regulations concerning the nature and function of temples, there only prevail in Champa temple two categories of sculpture: ronde-bosse and bas-relief. To illustrate even stories from Hindu epics or Buddhist tales, Champa artisans had to carve them in bas-relief as evidenced by the pedestal bearing Tra Kieu dancers, the Dong Duong



Duong Long Temple, Binh Dinh Province, 12th-13th century.



Detail of Duong Long Temple, Binh Dinh Province, 12th-13th century.