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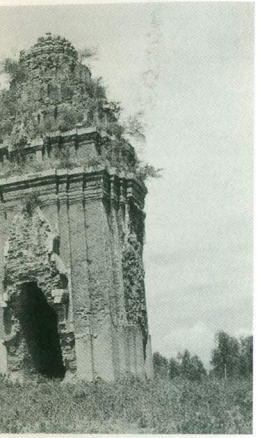

vince, 12th-13th century

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ong My and Tra Kieu.

Style of Yang Mum (14th — 15th century).

Style of Po Rome (after 1471).

Those ancient Champa sculptures having been of an early date made their appearance in a continuous evolution of more than a dozen centuries of the history of Champa. Every period, every style have handed their beautiful sculptural works over to our generation, and as a matter of course each museum, each collection have in their store - houses peculiar Champa masterpieces. The National Museum of Vietnamese History has since long kept not a few of Champa antiquities such as inscriptions, carving works... Most valuable among them are stone sculptures.

Thirty years ago when stepping into the research of ancient Champa art I was fully aware that stone carving and bronze casting works have always been objects to be collected by various museum, collector and antiquarians in and outside the country. In Vietnam, apart from the Cham Museum in Da Nang, the Museum of Vietnamese History in Ho Chi Minh city, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Hue, and the National Museum of Vietnamese History were keeping not a few of ancient Champa sculptures. Nevertheless throughout a long period, I did only have contact with photos illustrated in introductory and research works on Champa art by foreign scholars. Out of their introduction and analysis I was actually informed of a lot of peculiar, ancient, unknown carving works of Champa culture prevailing in the wealth of the National Museum of Vietnamese History, and as a matter of course I was eager - eve since long - to see those specimens from my own eyes. And then such a wish was just coming.

Three years ago, the National Museum of Vietnamese History made a decision of opening a gallery for displaying Champa stone carvings being conserved in the Museum. I had the good fortune to be invited, together with other scholars, for an examination and a judgment of the display. I had then a rare opportunity to see from my own eyes, to get touch from my own hands of those Champa ancient works of art rather than being acquainted with them though illustrated photos and research works as in earlier times.

Things did not stop there. This time the National Museum of Vietnamese History is offering the readers a beautiful publication on typical specimens of Champa ancient sculpture. It is a great honor for me to be invited for some introductory words to this album.

Although 51 specimens (numbers from N1 to N51) being choosen to be presented to readers are not great in number, they have been connected to one another in one chronological order affording thus a quasi - complete string of beads in miniature of Champa sculpture. That is to say the works of typical styles in the history of Champa ancient sculptural art are present in this publication. The book includes photos and comments of the author on Champa sculpture from the earliest specimens dated prior to 8th century. Up to those appertaining to the most distinguished and typical styles of Champa art, namely Dong Duong, Tra Kieu and Thap Mam.

Again the busts from Tam Ky, Quang Nam and Cung Son are considered as typical specimens of Champa art period to 8th century.

And the Shiva face (N9) among various sculptures of Dong Duong style, is of particular interest. The vigour and the racial features proper to the style have been associated lyrically with a realistic style resulting in a quite lively physiognomy.