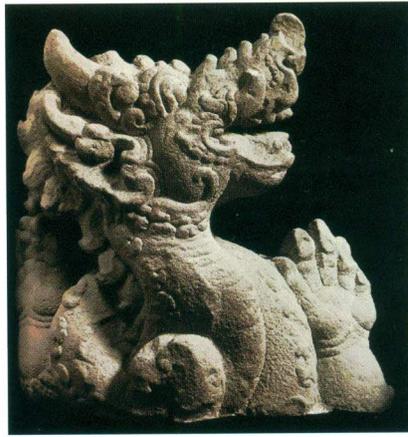




**Fig. 21** Tháp Mãm dragon (cat. 80). (River Books)



**Fig. 22** Mỹ Sơn A1 style dragon (BTC. 42.3).



**Fig. 23** Dương Long tower pediments. (Photo: Grace Chiao-Hui Tu)

**Fig. 24** Dương Long makara head, Bình Định museum. (Photo: Grace Chiao-Hui Tu)



central flower on the pedestal (BTC 22.43) are also of typical Chinese decoration and depicted on a Song dynasty manual *Yingzhuo Fashi* (營造法式, *Treatise on Architectural Methods or State Building Standard*).

The sculpture of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Tháp Mãm dragon (Fig. 21 Cat. 80: BTC 222-42.48) has parallels with Chinese dragons. This hybrid creature has physical features comparable with a contemporary Song dynasty dragon with arched horns, curled like a ram; a wide-open mouth decorated with a band like fish gills and pointed canine teeth; a scaled body, long serpentine tail and a fish-like, dorsal-fin. An earlier and simpler form of Cham dragon, which has been little noticed by scholars, existed at 10<sup>th</sup> century Trà Kiệu and belonged to the Mỹ Sơn A1 style (Fig. 22 BTC. 42.3).<sup>53</sup>

The pearl ball inside the Tháp Mãm dragon's mouth is also derived from the Chinese tradition. Dragons from the Tang dynasty onwards are commonly depicted chasing or holding a pearl, which derives from the Buddhist *cintāmani* (*ruyi baozhu* 如意寶珠, 'wish granting jewel'). Pairing the dragon of Chinese mythology with

the jewel of Buddhist iconography bridges two separate traditions since the Han dynasty.<sup>54</sup> This Sinicized dragon also influenced the representations of the Cham *makara* and *nāga* of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. At Dương Long tower, Bình Định province, the pediments are framed by the scaled bodies of elongated *makaras* reaching down from a *kāla*'s mouth, while the *makaras* spew out multi-headed *nāgas* (Fig. 23). The head of *makara* (Fig. 24) is comparable with the above-mentioned Cham dragon, whilst its sinuous body is closer to a Sino-Vietnamese dragon. The multi-headed *nāgas*, although showing Khmer influence, have each of the *nāga* heads depicted with a pair of pricked up horns, like dragons. (Fig. 25)

## Conclusion

Han Chinese culture impacted the early formation stages of Cham civilization. The archaeological record shows that the proto-Cham culture of the Linyi period and especially the Sa Huỳnh culture of Gò Cẩm and Trà Kiệu, were affected. Centuries later, at the zenith of Chinese political and artistic power in the Mahāyāna-impregnated Tang dynasty, the Chams built the huge 9<sup>th</sup> century Đồng Dương temple complex that echoed at a distance the Buddhist iconography and decorative styles of the northern neighbours. Chinese traces were submerged during the 10<sup>th</sup> century when a Śaiva resurgence at the nearby Mỹ Sơn Brahmanical temple complex, but it resurfaced in the later Tháp Mãm style. The place of the Sinitic transfers into Cham art, countering at times the predominantly Indic, is worthy of more extended study.

**Fig. 25** Nāga with horns, Bình Định museum. (Photo: Grace Chiao-Hui Tu)

