

Fig. 3 Dancers with scarves.



Fig. 4 Scarf dance at Mỹ Sơn A Group. (Trần Kỳ Phương)



The risers of the pedestal steps are a masterwork of interconnected movement in stone. In the lower riser three bejeweled dancers spread their legs almost along the ground in flowing movements, trailing scarves from their hands and raising ecstatic faces. In the upper riser a single dancer with a longer drape achieves a similar position between two kneeling people with offerings. A related dance sequence can be found on the Mỹ Sơn F1 temple-foundation and on a sandstone piece of a small pedestal found at Mỹ Sơn A Group, currently on display in the site museum of Mỹ Sơn D1 temple. This scarf dance appeared again on the Đồng Dương pedestal in

2 The scarf dance in Trà Kiệu site is slightly different in that the dancers stand on one leg with the other bending up.

3 The one string musical instrument includes a long rod imbedded in a hemispherical gourd commonly found in southern India and in contemporary Dvāravatī art (Phrapathom Chedi National Museum 1999: 40-41).

the late 9th century (875 CE) and is still preserved on the sculptural works in Trà Kiệu site during the 11th and 12th centuries.²

The stairway is formed by two lion heads spitting out two strips of foliate patterns with lozenge shapes and four-petal flowers.

On the right string-wall of the stairway there is a relief of a seated sage (*rṣi*) attentively reading a text under a tree (Fig. 5). His beard is long, his hair is a braided *jaṭā* and his sacred thread slips down his body to his right calf. His head tilts slightly to his left towards a perching parrot; on his left a squirrel runs down the trunk of a tree. The niche suggests a tranquil yet animated space in a forest.

In the left string-wall niche of the stairway (Fig. 6), a standing, bearded ascetic plays a barzither (*tuila*), with right leg slightly raised. He wears a loincloth, *jaṭā* hair bun and pointed beard. The *tuila* of India appears in Cham sculpture several times in later centuries.³

The bas-relief on the right niche of the main façade (Fig. 7) depicts a harpist sitting under a sophisticated *torāṇa* arch supported by two square pillars. Above the columns, two outward-facing *makara* spit long-horned gazelles and under the arch two crested *nāga* heads rise up. The harpist's pile of ascetic hair is gathered into an elaborate *jaṭā* braided in a unique sheaf-of-rice style. The ascetic, in a temple activity phase, does not yet wear a beard. Over his shoulder