



are reinforced by supports. Unfortunately, only the bust and head of the Đà Nẵng deity are original today, as the lower body and the hands disappeared in 1972. These are now replaced by replicas in the museum, which shows the missing features.

There has been a debate as to the identity of the deities – whether they represent Prajñāpāramitā, goddess of supreme Buddhist wisdom, or Tārā, patron deity of Tibet. Since there are no Cham inscriptions mentioning either deity, we have to draw conclusions from the sparse iconography and the art historical context. There are in fact two other sculptures which are similar, one hailing from a neighbouring temple, Mỹ Đức, and the famous bronze from Đờng Dương (cat. 18).

The Jina in the hair is a marker for Tārā as well as for Prajñāpāramitā. Tārā is generally regarded as the consort or companion of Avalokiteśvara while Prajñāpāramitā, in contrast, is the independent deity representing the supreme wisdom of the Buddha and is called the 'mother of all Buddhas'. The fact that two

or possibly three Đại Hūu towers housed the same female deity makes it likely that this was a most powerful deity for the Chams.

In the later 10th century there is evidence of a cult of Prajñāpāramitā in neighbouring Cambodia and we can trace sculptures Jina in the crown which can be identified as the Goddess of Wisdom. In Bengal the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* was one of the key texts of Buddhist learning celebrated at the Buddhist universities together with a series of tantras. This may suggest that the Cham figure is a Prajñāpāramitā. However, one of the main attributes of Prajñāpāramitā, the book, is not present, leaving a question over the identification.

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