



Fig. 2 Khương Mỹ three temple group. (Trần Kỳ Phương)

clan, including their leader Duryodhana. The statue is adorned with serpent bands (*nāgayajñopavīta/sarpayajñopavīta*) and he carries a small club (*gadā*) or thunderbolt (*vajra*) in his right hand; in his left he holds a large rosary.

Bhīma is the second of the five brothers of Pāndava (those are Yudhishtira, Bhīma, Arjuna and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva), the sons of king Pandu and queen Kunti. The Pāndavas together with their Kaurava cousins are the protagonists of *Mahābhārata*, which in 18 books or *parva* tells the story of the Kuru lineage. The main theme is the contest between the five brothers of Pāndavas and the hundred Kaurava sons in Hastināpura city. This contest culminates in the great Kurukṣetra war (Duijker 2001: 70). Bhīma became a major cult figure in East Javanese art during the period of Majapahit, from 11th to 15th centuries (Duijker 2010: 236-41). The *Mahābhārata* has been interpreted as representing battlefield of the human mind between the divine and the evil in which Arjuna is truth personified, Bhīma the strength and wisdom; and their antagonists are greed, jealousy and infatuation (Roveda 2005: 18).

The Khương Mỹ three temple group is located in Tam Xuân 1 village, Tam Kỳ city, Quảng Nam province. According to Philippe Stern the temple group was built at the beginning of the 10th century and is in the 'Transition entre le style de Đồng Dương et le style de Mỹ Sơn A1' (1942:17-8, 78-9). This was based on comparing decorative patterns on false-doors, pilasters on the walls of the towers of Khương Mỹ with the unique 'silkworm' pattern of the complex of Đồng Dương (875

CE). Stern analyzed the ornamental patterns of the Khương Mỹ group as a development of a twisted pattern at Đồng Dương, and perhaps an enhanced influence in floral patterns from Javanese art. Later, Jean Boisselier developed Stern's classification into sculpture and defined a Khương Mỹ style (1963: vii, 147-53).

According to Henri Parmentier, Khương Mỹ temple group was built on an earlier structure (1909: 247). In 2001 and 2007 there were archaeological excavations that revealed reliefs on the temple-bases of the southern tower depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic with many reliefs of monkey soldiers of Hanuman (Levin 2008: 85-99; Griffiths, Shoettel & Tran Quyet Chinh 2017). Hanuman is also spiritual son of Vāyu and therefore a half-brother of Bhīma.

Among the artifacts found is a broken piece of an inscription dated to the 12th century (Griffiths, Shoettel & Tran Quyet Chinh, *op. cit.*). Some decorative corner pieces in terracotta which are similar to those of the Mỹ Sơn G temple group built in 1157/8 CE (Stern 1942: 105-7; Trần Kỳ Phương 2008: 48; Reinecke, Maus, Koppen 2016: 483-4 [cat. 8.4-5]). The new archaeological findings at the Khương Mỹ temple group indicate the three temples were built and restored from the 10th to 12th centuries.

The Bhīma from Khương Mỹ stands on a square base in a combat-ready posture, with his right leg slightly forward. The left hand placed on his thigh holds a large rosary (*akṣamālā*) and his fingers clearly have very long nails. The right hand holds a weapon like a small club (*gadā*) or a thunderbolt (*vajra*) that leans on his shoulder; instead of the big club as often depicted on Bhīma