**APPENDIX #5 - Cham Art**

At the end of the 19th century, French archaeologists began to collect Cham sculptures discovered at scattered sites in central Vietnam. These included altars, statues of gods and goddesses from temples, and stele engraved in Sanskrit. These works were put on display in a museum in 1915 located in Da Nang. Subsequent archaeological excavations produced more sculptures and a need for expansion of the museum. Today the Cham Museum is a showcase for this collection of art created from the 5th through the 15th century in the Kingdom of Champa.

Cham art is religious in nature and heavily influenced by Hindu mythology. Over the centuries there were a range of distinctive stylistic changes. During the first millennium, Buddhism was introduced to the Cham. Images of Avalokiteshvara (one who looks for the welfare of humans still on earth) are most prominent. While most countries, including Vietnam depict the bodhisattva as female, the Cham depicted Avalokiteshvara as male.

Depicted in the art of the early My Son period are the Hindu gods who can often be recognized by certain animals and objects connected with them:

• Indra, God of Thunder & Lightning Rides a golden chariot with horses with flowing manes. Weapons are thunderbolt, bow, net, and hook

• Agni, God of Fire Rides a rhinoceros; associated with color red;

Sometimes shown with three heads sprouting red flames.

• Yama, God of Death Shown riding a buffalo and carrying a mace and noose to snare victims

• Varuna, God of the Oceans Shown riding Makara, an aquatic monster (that

resembles a dragon)

• Vayu, God of the Winds Shown with a deer

• Surya, the Sun God Shown with a stallion or mare, his disguise

• Brahma, God of Creation Seated, with three heads, sometimes shown with his swan, Hamsa.

• Vishnu, God of Preservation Often shown reclining on Shesha, the hooded *naga* (serpent) with a thousand cobra heads; a lotus flower grows from his stomach. In the flower sits the god Brahma. Both gods are in deep meditation.

• Shiva, God of Destruction Shown in a variety of appearances, this complicated god has great power and many functions. His hair is braided/matted, and has the moon in his hair. Shown with a third eye, often with many arms, one holding a trident. Sometimes Shiva is shown dancing. His mount is the bull, Nandi.

Shiva is symbolized by the linga (Sanskrit for *phallus*) as a cylindrical stone standing in a circular basin, the *yoni*, symbol of the female.

• Balarama, brother of Krishna Shown with his plow share and pestle

• Krishna, the God of Pasture Eighth incarnation of Vishnu, Krishna is a god in his own right. Shown in many ways, sometimes as a boy or a flute-playing cowherd.

• Skanda, the God of War In Indian art, Skanda is shown with six heads. However in Cham art, he is shown as a one-headed god riding a peacock. In his hand he holds the thunderbolt of Indra.

• Ganesh, the God of Wisdom Shown with elephant head and human body with two or four arms

• Uma, the Goddess of Light Shown as feminine ideal of beauty

• Parvati Shown singing or dancing

• Mahisha Mardini Has a belligerent appearance, holding weapons in each of her eight arms. Shown on a lion or a buffalo.

• Lakshmi Shown fully-grown holding a lotus. She is some-times shown massaging the feet of Vishnu as he reclines on a serpent

• Saraswati, Goddess of the Arts Shown with her swan, Hamsa, or seated on or holding a lotus flower

• Rama Seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu, Rama is usually shown in scenes of the epic tale of the *Ramayana*. The Tra Kieu pedestal has a well-known scene around the base that depicts scenes from this story.

• Ravana, demon king (*Ramayana* epic) Shown with ten heads, twenty arms, burning eyes, and saber-like teeth in battle scenes.

• Hanuman, the monkey god Known for his agility and speed, the monkey god was devoted to Rama in the *Ramayana* epic. Son of the wind god, he can change his shape.

• Makara, the Sea Monster Originally a fish, then a crocodile, the Makara

functions like a dolphin; depicted with a fish tail.

• Apsaras The nymphs of Indra’s heaven, known mostly for their singing and dancing. They are also called “the daughters of pleasure” for they were produced during the Churning of the Ocean of Milk. Both the gods and the *asuras* (demons) wanted them as their wives, leading to a war between the gods and the *asuras.*

• Garuda, the King of Birds Shown with the head, wings, talons, and beak of an eagle with the body and limbs of a man. Because of his well-known hatred of snakes, he is sometimes shown biting them.

**Buddhist Iconography**

• Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva represented as male

• Tara Spouse of Avalokiteshvara, depicted with the

royal *vajra* in hand with crown on her head

• Dharmapala Guardian who protects the *dharma* (one’s duties based on position in life and society)

• Dvarapala Doorkeeper who guards the doors to the nether world.