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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HINDU TEMPLES IN CHAMPA CULTURE IN THE MIDDLE OF VIETNAM.

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Abstract

From studies of the French in the late 19th century, Hindu temples in Champa culture were called Champa Temples, Champa Tower and since 2000, some Vietnamese scientists have called them Champa Tower-Temples. These concepts may be understood in different ways and the most exact concept in Hinduism is Champa Temple – a house of god with his image. When there was a contact between Champa and India, Champa temples were built and in their development they created their own unique and particular temples of Champa culture: Hypaethral Temple, Roofed Temple, Structural brick or brick and stone Temple. There were not only temples with god-like sitting or lying form, but also the artifacts associated with the temple as dancing Shiva statue, fire, showing the gods to be active in the architecture of Champa Temple. This article would like to study Hindu temples in Champa culture i.e their characteristics to show how the Cham people received cultural elements from Indian people and then acculturated them into theirs. The building stages show some developments in time which still remain today. In comparison with that of Oc Eo culture and India, this article will throw light on Hindu temples in Champa culture in the middle of Vietnam.

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Introduction:-

In Champa culture, Hindu temple is truly a house of God and the body of Deity. In the 20th century they were known as Champa Temple, Champa Tower and since 2000, some Vietnamese scientists called it Tower-Temple of Champa or Champa Tower-Temple¹. According to Thanh Phan, a Cham scientist, Katé ritual is held on bimong and bimong kalan. Bimong is a temple with a wooden frame structure (bimong Po Nit, bimong Po Dam); kalan is a temple built of brick; bimong kalan is a brick temple, whose inside is a wooden frame where the symbol of linga-yoni is placed (Po Klaong Girai, Po Rome)². In the Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, French scholars like H. Parmentier, R.P. Durand used the word 'Le temple' to refer to Hindu temples in Champa or temples of Hindu gods in Southeast Asian region. However, when describing them, they used the word 'la tour' to refer to the structure of temple; if there is a groupe or le temple, there can be one or more than one 'la tour' and tower is only a part of the

¹ Tran Ky Phuong, The Architecture of the Temple -Towers of Ancient Champa (Central Vietnam), *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)*. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), pp.155-186.

² Thanh Phan, Preservation of beautiful tradition of Éw Muk Kei, Katé – Ramâwan and Rua Nâgar festivals. Cham Culture and Society at present. (Hanoi: Youth Press, 2014). P.15-16

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complex architecture³. The use of la tour/tower and temple tower to refer to Hindu architecture is an inaccurate term in Hinduism.

In Hinduism of India, it is Mandir in Sanskrit or Prasada (Sanskrit: मन्दिर mandir, प्रासाद prāsāda)⁴ and *Alayam* in Tamil closely related to *Temple* in English⁵ and hence, in Champa culture it is accurate to refer 'Champa Temple' to be the dwelling place of God and temple form to be the body of God with lying or sitting gesture due to being influenced by Dravidian style with five types of temples⁶. This article would like to explore more about Champa culture through three types of Hindu temples:

- Hypaethral Temple
- Roofed Temple
- Structural brick or brick and stone Temple

Hypaethral Temple:-

Previously, regarding Champa culture, some scholars discussed only temples built of brick or brick and stone remained standing on the ground so far which have an ancient style such as My Son E1 (the 8th century) or the late style (from the 14th to 16th century)⁷. Hypaethral temples or roofed ones are recorded as being collapsed. Temples of early stages, from the third to the seventh century, were not mentioned or were said to be due to the lightweight material such as bamboo and leaves⁸. In India, hypaethral temple existed in the Harappa time (2500 -1500 B.C) and in Oc Eo culture and Post Oc Eo one (from the 1st to the 12th century), this type of temple was very popular. Only until the 8th century, the post Oc Eo time, temples with brick and stone structure appeared such as Binh Thanh Temple (Tay Ninh province), Vinh Hung Temple (Bac Lieu province)⁹ and other present temples which belonged to Oc Eo culture. Previously, some excavations have recognized the temple architecture existing before the temples still seen today. The excavation at Dai Huu Temple (Quang Binh province) showed that it has been built with a brick pillar in the heart of the temple, inside there are gold objects in the form of lotus flowers, turtles and many colored gems¹⁰. (Figure 1). Finding the Swastika-like pillar in the temple proved that this is the temple of the early period (the 3rd - 7th centuries AD) of the Champa culture and the gold in the pentagram has a turtle-like shape Kurma (the second incarnation of the ten incarnations of Vishnu) and the lotus (symbol of the beautiful god Lakshmi - Vishnu's wife) showed that Dai Huu temple was a Vishnu temple.

³ Henri Parmenttier, *Inventaire descriptif des monuments Cams de l'Annam: vol.I. Description des monuments* (Paris: EFEO, 1909)

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_temple, accessed 25th October 2017

⁵ https://books.google.com.vn/books?id=_19v5dv2C78C&pg=PA97&dq=the+term+alayam&hl=vi&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=the%20term%20alayam&f=false, accessed 30th October 2017

⁶ K.R.Srinivasan, *Temples of South India*. (India: National Book Trust, 2003), p 201

⁷ Tran Ky Phuong, *Ibid*, p. 155-186

⁸ Le Dinh Phung, *Ibid*, p. 217

¹⁰ Le Dinh Phung, *Dialogue with ancient Champa Civilization*. (Ha Noi: Social Science Press, 2015), p. 207

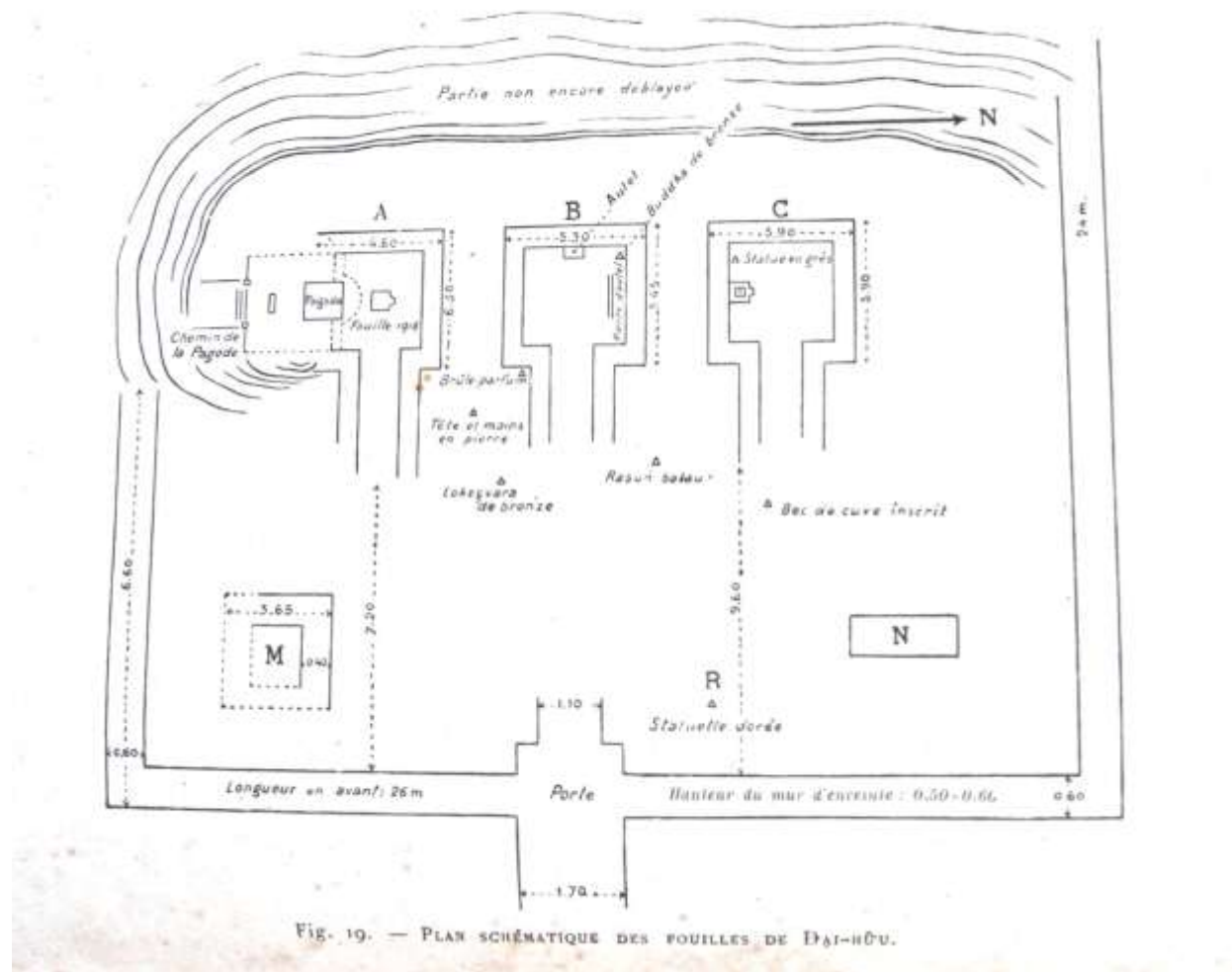


Figure 1:- Plan surface of Đại Hữu Temple
Source: L. Finot et Goloubew 1926: 470

The excavation of Van Trach Hoa Temple (Thua Thien Hue province) in 2000 also found the Swastika-like pillar built upright to the bottom of the pedestal, on which a set of Linga – Yoni was placed, in the pillar there are some gold pieces carved with lotus flowers¹¹. Linga - Yoni is the symbol of masculinity (Shiva) and femininity (wife of Shiva - goddess Parvati, goddess of energy, creativity and victory of good from evil) of Shiva. The Lotus is considered a symbol of the beautiful god Lakshmi - wife of Vishnu), hence it should be more likely that Van Trach Hoa is the Temple of Shiva and Vishnu god.

The excavation at the F1 - My Son Temple in 2003 showed that underneath F1 Temple there was a rectangular temple architecture, built of pure brick, decorated with beautiful art. According to those who directly excavated, the date of this rectangular temple architecture was back in the late 8th century, the upper part of the F1 temple was built upon the lower part dating back to the 9th century¹².

In two years 2013 and 2014, the Archaeological Center of the Southern Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with Binh Thuan Museum excavated the Temple of Po Dam. In 1909, Henri Parmentier published a survey of the Po Dam (Groupe de Po Dam) and the six temple structures (le temple) he called it the tower and divided it into three

¹¹ Le Dinh Phung, *Ibid*, p. 207

¹² Le Dinh Phung, Ibid, p. 224-225

places: two north towers (central tower and three south towers (south tower, west-south tower, south-east tower)¹³. The excavation results showed that there are not only nine temples but also other substructures such as the Mandapa, the Gopura, the wall and brick blocks (it is possible a place for outdoor ceremony). In addition, the two north-west and north-eastern architectures were previously thought to have a function as shrines with the above collapsed structures, but now excavations showed that they are temple-like structures, a kind of hypaethral temple¹⁴. (Figure 2)

This is a kind of Hypaethral Temple early appearing in Champa culture and much earlier than the 8th century, it could be dated back to the 3rd – 7th century similar to Hindu temples of Cat Tien-Lam Dong¹⁵. In the 8th century, there were high-built temples such as Binh Thanh Temple (Tay Ninh), Vinh Hung Temple (Bac Lieu) in post Oc Eo culture¹⁶, similarly in the Champa culture, from the 8th century, there are high-built temples built of brick or brick and stone still remaining to these days, such as Hoa Lai - Ninh Thuan temple. In India, the high-built temple with stone structure appeared in the 5th century, for example, the Vishnu Temple also known as the Dashavatara Temple in Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh in central India, built around 500 AD, the Gupta period (320 - 550), is one of the earliest Hindu stone-built temples still in existence today¹⁷ and from the 6th to the 8th century stone-high-built temples were more popular in India¹⁸.



Figure 2:- Hypaethral Temple at North-West side of Podam Complex
Source: Nguyễn Khánh Trung Kiên, Speech at Archaeology Conference in 2015

¹³ Henri Parmentier, Ibid, p. 50-58

¹⁴ Nguyen Khanh Trung Kien and Nguyen Xuan Ly, Aspect of the Po Dam Complex Temple, Binh Thuan province through two times of excavations, New Discovery of Archaeology. (Hanoi: Social Science Press, 2015), p. 730-731

¹⁵ Dang Van Thang, Vo Thi Huynh Nhu, Hindu Temples in Cat Tien, Lam Dong. Archaeology Magazine, Volum 5, 2016, p. 43-57.

¹⁶ Dang Van Thang, Ibid

¹⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DashavataraTemple> , Deogarh, accessed 1st October 2017

¹⁸ K.R.Srinivasan, Ibid, p 292

Roofed Temple:-

My Khanh temple was discovered on April 18, 2001. Thua Thien Hue General Museum conducted the digging on 3rd May, 2001. Department of Culture and Information of Thua Thien Hue in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology excavated from 5th to 21st September, 2001 to expose a temple in My Khanh (Phu Dien commune, Phu Vang district, Thua Thien Hue province). The architecture is 6m deep in the ground, quite intact with the whole block of architecture and the edge of the roof, with the door facing to the east. The temple has rectangular plan, the foundation size is 8.22m long, 7.12m wide, 0.7m high; The platform of temple is 6.25m long, 6m wide; The body of temple is 5.35m long and 5m wide. The heart of temple is 3.9m long, 3.3m wide built of brick, walls in the temple were from 2.4m to 3m high including 44 rows of bricks. The door is 2.73m high and 1.75m wide. In the middle of the temple there is a brick pedestal, on which the stone Linga – Yoni was placed. Yoni is of square shape, edge of 0.6m, 0.10m thick, long stranded hose of 0.112m, the edges are of square shape and smooth, in the middle is a rounded-up Linga. Overall, this is a complete Shiva temple architecture. In addition to the main temple built of brick, there are other related architectural works built with light materials. The main temple was built of brick with roof frame of light material: wood, bamboo and leaf roof. According to those who directly excavated, the temple was built in the late eighteenth century, C14 at the foot of the temple dated back 750 ± 40 years¹⁹. (Figure 3)



Figure 3:- Mỹ Khánh Temple

Source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/68096694>, accessed 5th October 2017

In 2005, an archaeological excavation at My Son, 3.2m far from D group, along the Khe The stream, located at the depth of 0.9-1.1m, found a ruined archaeological layer. Group D architectures are currently being built on this dilapidated architecture. Items found here are mainly building bricks, especially to find the leaf-like tiles, the tile head with the god face. Compared with the same material found in Tra Kieu, Ho citadel, these artifacts dated from around the 4th to 5th centuries. The tiles used for roofing architectural works with wooden frames early appeared in My Son, proving that before the construction of high brick and stone temples, there were temples with wooden roof with tile cover²⁰.

Structural brick or brick and stone Temple:-

1.1. Sitting-God-like Temple

There are only one or two, three built on a north-south axis with sitting form of a god. For example, Nhan Temple is a Champa temple located on Nhan Mountain, a typical landscape of Tuy Hoa, the capital of Phu Yen province. Nhan

¹⁹ Le Dinh Phung, Ibid, p. 220-224

²⁰ Le Dinh Phung, Ibid, p. 225

Temple is located on Nhan Mountain, showing its beautiful shadow on Da Rang River, which creates a charming painting of Nhan Mountain - Da Rang River. It was built by the Cham people living in the basin of Ba River Delta in the 12th century. The temple is quadrangular with 4 storeys, the higher it is, the smaller the temple will be, but still followed the style of the lower storey. The temple is about 23.5 m high. Each foot of the temple is 10m long. Nhan Temple is an architectural art with high historical value of Cham people and this is also a typical landscape of Phu Yen province²¹. (Figure 4). The temple has twelve smaller shrines on top and on the top-most is a Linga, representing the Mandala Temple, which means that besides the main god Shiva, there are other gods around.

Duong Long is a group of three temples located close to each other, aligned along the north-south axis, the main doors face the east, in Tay Son district, Binh Dinh province. Besides the popular name 'Duong Long', it is also known as 'Van Tuong'. The Northern Temple has suffered much damage but remains clear in shape and structure. Unlike other temples in Binh Dinh, the foundations have square planks, each side is about 12m wide. The temple is 32m high. The top of the stone door was decorated with the statue of Garuda, whose feet twisted by two snake head solidly. The fake door simulates the main door but smaller. Instead of the garuda image, on the top of the pillar is ornated with ear-shaped leaves, the outer side is a snake-shaped body wrapped around it, the inside of which is fierce Kala's face, the mouth exposes a 7-head-snake in a winding posture. The stone distinguishing between the body and the roof is lively, beautifully and smoothly carved into a sculpture of elephants and lions, each with its own pose as a runner, joking running around in strips. Compared to the North temple, the South Temple is relatively intact. The size is almost equal to the North one and less carved on stone than the North Temple. Especially the stones in the foot of the temple are recognized to be carved uncompletely. It is a tradition of building architecture in India, because if the building is complete the ghosts and devils will hate and destroy the temple. Two temples create a symmetry through the main temple. The structure of the south temple is not different from the North's. However, the theme of decoration is different from that shown in the North's, especially the ornamental stripes around the roof. In the middle of the decorative pattern is the round breasts decorated with bas-relief next to each other running around the temple. The upper part is the relief of monks meditating in the ear-shaped leaf frame, and the bottom strips are human figures, lions and deformed animals interwoven with medallions, in the middle of which there is a symmetrical spread of flowers in bloom. On the roof floor, fringed surrounds are also decorated. Each floor represents a different scene. There are elephants, lions, Nadin cow, Kala face, Naga snake, etc. The art of sculpture carving has reached the high level of skill. The animals and decorative motifs are both vivid and mysterious. The largest and the most central of the cluster is the Middle Temple. In terms of structure, the temple is not different from the two smaller temples, but high up, 36m high. It is the main temple with large size but it was not decorated as sophisticatedly as the other two North and South Temples. Based on the temple grounds and artistic styles, many researchers believe that although the Duong Long Temple still has many features of the Champa Temple, it has been influenced by the Khmer art²².

²¹ https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A1p_Nh%E1%BA%A, accessed 5th October 2017

²² http://svhttdl.binhdin.gov.vn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:khu-thap-dng-long-binh-nh&catid=78:dulich&Itemid=199, accessed 10th October 2017



Figure 4:- Nhan Temple in sitting posture of God
Source: By Đặng Văn Thắng

The Three Noble Truths in Hinduism: Brahma (Creator) – Vishnu (Conservator) – Shiva (Destroyer) is only three different aspects of the same being or Supreme Being - Trimurti. When the three highest supreme of Hinduism is expressed in Linga, it creates three-part Linga: Shiva-the upper cylinder, Vishnu-the middle octagonal cylinder, and

Brahma-the bottom cylindrical. (Figure 5). When Brahma lost its historical role, because the world is created, the linga has only two parts: the Shiva in the upper cylinder, the Vishnu in the lower cylinder, and when Shiva is the only one left, linga was craved stick to yoni. When Yoni appears - the female form of Shiva (from the Gupta period of India: 320-550) and Linga - the male form of Shiva, a common Linga - Yoni appears. This god Shiva creates tremendous power to recreate the world. When the Trimurty was represented by temple, the Champa had a unique creation to create a cluster of three temples aligned on the north axis as Chien Dan (Quang Nam), Khuong My (Quang Nam), Duong Long (Binh Dinh). The position of the three gods in Linga and the position of the three gods in the Trinity is Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma, whose most obvious evidence for the position of the Trimurty is the temple complex of Khuong My (Quang Nam), the gate in the east, built in the late nineteenth century and early 10th century: the northern temple is the smallest in the group - Brahma Temple; the middle temple is larger than the North one - the Shiva Temple; the south temple is the largest - Vishnu Temple. Because the temple clusters have many works of Vishnuism (Garuda bird, Naga snake, etc), clusters of Khuong My temple is identified as the temple with Vishnu as main god - the largest temple in the south. The Temple of Duong Long (Binh Dinh), the gate in the east, built in the late twelfth century, is identified as temple complex with Shiva as main god and so three temples have shown this: the middle largest and highest temple is most notably of Shiva, the northern temple of Brahma and the southern temple of Vishnu. (Figure 6).



Figure 5:- 3-part-Linga (Trimurty) in Mỹ Sơn

Source:https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C4%83m_Pa, accessed 10th October 2017



Figure 6:- Dương Long Temple Complex of three gods
Source: By Đặng Văn Thắng

In Binh Dinh, there is a unique temple complex named Hung Thanh Temple (Hung Thanh Temple), formerly in Hung Thanh Village, now in Dong Da Ward, Quy Nhon City, Binh Dinh Province. Hung Thanh Temple was built in the 12th century. Hung Thanh Temple is not only unique in terms of architecture but also unique in terms of quantity - only two temples. It was built in the 12th century. It is unique not only because of its architecture but also number - it is only two temples. Some said that formerly Hung Thanh had three complex temples²³. Hung Thanh Temple consists of two temples lying on a flat land at the foot of a hill and facing south, although they have same shape and structure as a cubic body but the northern temple (about 20m) is higher than the south temple (about 18m). The whole wall of the northern temple covered with large sandstone shows a giant lotus to support the whole temple, on top is an elephant, Naga snake, lion and dancers, at the four corners of the upper part is the four stone Garuda birds. In the south temple, despite much more damaged than the northern temple, some of the stones on the site proved that earlier the south temple had a similar stone platform as the north temple, though more damaged, the false doors, the decoration on the upper floor are similar to the north's²⁴. The group of two high temples appeared during the Late Oc Eo stage, such as Binh Thanh Temple (Tay Ninh). In May 1994, excavation of the Binh Thanh Temple Group exposed two foundations adjacent to the Binh Thanh Temple, but at a lower level. The foundation of the first temple is much larger than Binh Thanh Temple, the east - west dimension is 8.2m long and the north - south 7.7m - 7.8m wide. The second temple foundation is aligned with the first foundation, but smaller in size. Surface is square with each edge of 6m. The temple door turns east. At the entrance of the temple, a Vishnu statue was broken. According to those who directly excavated, the temple of Binh Thanh had at least two different early and late stages: low foundation with the god pond belonging to the early period (the 7th-8th century) and the temple is now seen to belong to the late stage (the 9th-10th century)²⁵. Possibly, in the first stage, the first large temple foundation had a Stepped Pond similar to that of the Go Thanh - Tien Giang, Go Don - Long An which is the temple god Siva and the second

²³ Le Dinh Phung, Ibid, p. 125

²⁴ https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A1p_%C4%90%C3%B4i, accessed 15th October 2017

²⁵ Pham Nhu Ho, Binh Thanh Tower (Tay Ninh province) in the context of antique towers in the South of Vietnam. Archaeology, No. 4-1996), p. 68-72

temple foundation, smaller, where the Vishnu statue was found, is the temple of Vishnu; Later, only one temple was built²⁶. It is possible for the Hung Thanh temple group in Binh Dinh to have only two temples expressing the duality of Linga as only two parts (Shiva and Vishnu) and, like Binh Thanh Temple (Tay Ninh) there are two shrines: Shiva Temple and Vishnu Shrine, and the Hung Temple, the large northern shrine of Shiva Temple and the smaller southern shrine of Vishnu Temple. Both temples are full of stone walls showing the giant lotus to support the god who is sitting on it, and on the top has six miniature shrines, each with five temples, on the four sides. The temple represents a Mandala: besides the Shiva Shrine (Temple of the North) and the Vishnu Temple (Temple of the South), there are other gods around.

Lying-God Temple:-

Hindu temples including a main temple (Vimana), a long house or festival playground (Mandapa) and gates (Gopura), etc are in the form of gods lying. For example, the Poklong Garai Temple is located on Trau Hill, in Do Vinh Ward, Phan Rang - Thap Cham City, 9 km northwest of the city center, built in the late 13th and early 14th centuries in the time of King Shihavaman, the Vietnamese call Che Man and the Cham call Kalan Poklong Girai (Poklong Girai Temple) (Cham people in Ninh Thuan call the Temple Kalan and the Tower Bimon). Po Klong Girai (Po Klong Girai Temple) has Vimana as god's face, Mandapa as god's body and Gopura as god's foot, the whole temple is considered as god lying²⁷, on the right side of god has Agni Temple. Above the main temple there are twelve miniature shrines and the top-most situates a Linga, showing that the temple represents a Mandala, in addition to the god Shiva there are many other gods. The Mukha-Linga in the temple shows the presence of Shiva. Mukha is the face a human being but mostly it was that of god Shiva, but at this stage Mukha face depicts King Po Klong Girai (1151-1205), who had many great contributions to ruling the country. (Figure 7).



Figure 7:- Mukha-Linga with king Po Klong Girai's face
Source: By Đặng Văn Thắng

²⁶ Dang Van Thang, Ibid, p.58

²⁷ G. Venkataramana, *Alayam – An Epitome of Hindu culture*. (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 2010), p. 65, Dang Van Thang, Ibid, p.59

According to Hinduism, a person of some caste tries to do his job well so that his next life will be born in higher caste, otherwise he will become worse, never become a Hindu god. This is the most obvious evidence that Champa Hinduism has been influenced by Mahayana Buddhism - everyone can become a Buddha and here the king became Shiva. Po Klong Girai is a common name referring to the most beautiful temple complex in Vietnam today. Pô Klong Girai consists of two temples: Shiva Temple is 20.5m high, Agni Temple 9.31m high, Mandala and Gopura 8.56m high. This construction has high level of architecture, art and sculpture²⁸. (Figure 8).



Figure 8:- Po Klong Girai Temple with God lying
Source: By Đặng Văn Thắng



Figure 9:- Shiva at Po Klong Girai with dancing posture, fire surrounding
Source: By Đặng Văn Thắng

²⁸ https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A1p_Po_Klong_Garai, accessed 20th October 2017

The form of Poklong Girai temple representing god lying is very popular in India. For the head part of the god, the remarkable point in the temple, focuses more on many other elements of Shiva and Hinduism, expressing the unique creativity of the Champa people. The god's head represents Shiva sitting belonging to the South Indian style.

- The ear-shaped leaves before the temple (Tympan) with stone reliefs represent Shiva dancing (Shiva Nataraja) of a universe operating dance (Tandava): destruction and re-creation.
- Surrounding the stone ear-shaped leaves, there are expanding brick layers of them, on which brick fires were placed. These are not decorated fires, but burning fires due to Shiva's tandava in order to destroy and re-create.
- On the upper part of the temple has four storeys, at the three lower parts there are miniature temples at the four corners and on the top-most there is a linga, symbol of Shiva. This part mainly shows a Mandala in which the central god is Shiva and there are other gods surrounding.
- Inside a Mukha-linga was placed to represent the presence of Shiva and also of king Po Klong Garai.
- Hence, when contemplating Po Klong Gia Rai, we look at it in its active posture not a passive one – God is performing a universe operating dance to destroy and re-create the world.



Figure 10:- Relief of Shiva at Phong Lê in dancing posture

Source: Emmanuel Guillon (2001), p.107

In Champa culture, Shiva Nataraja is usually made of sandstone, in the form of ear-shaped leaf relief, and it is placed on the door (tympan) of temples. God's hair is often braided in three layers like Jata-Mukuta or twisted in a crown as Kirita-Mukuta, not kept at shoulder-length as in case of Shiva Nataraja in India. Rarely Shiva was standing alone but often danced with bandsman, fairies and other gods worshipping. The specimen of early stage around the 8th and 10th century found in Quang Tri, Quang Nam province, etc., have unique realistic style when it described Shiva with obvious characteristics of the Cham people such as dense eyebrows, big nose, thick lips, slanting eyes, etc. On the other hand, the relics dating back to the 11th-13th century as in Mam Temple, Binh Dinh are imposing, focusing on meticulously carved details and clearly showed the cultural connections and influences

with Khmer arts²⁹. It is necessary to contemplate the symbol Shiva Nataraja in its active form – He is performing a universe operating dance to destroy and re-create the world.

The relief of dancing Shiva Phong Lê (displayed at Da Nang Cham Museum) represents Shiva dancing with worshipping people surrounding. He stands among the people arranging in two layers upper and under. The upper layer has six people, three in each side with hands together and snake-like body. The under layer has musicians (one holding a harp, the other playing three small drums) and two sitting on their heels. Shiva wears a Jata-mukuta of My Son A1 style or Khuong My one (the 10th century) with three big horizontal hair braids and many other small ones. There is beard on his face, wearing earrings and pearl necklace. There is a rope at his waist. The metal rope is doubled into a carrying rope with five big rings at the lower part. The sampot has the long middle body. It is said that he has 16 hands or the two main hands and 14 subhands dancing³⁰. Indeed, God has only two hands, the right hand touches his waist, the left hand touches his shoulder, his palm open, the thumb and his index finger keep together, which is the movement at the beginning of the dance. Other 14 hands forming 7 couples are only remaining image of his hand at different postures in his dancing course representing Hinduism posture (Vitarka-mudra). When performing this posture, the right hand points up, the left points down, the palm toward the front. In each hand the thumb and index finger touch together forming a circle³¹. Hence, the 7-couple hands (from the elbow to the top-most finger) were added later to the back side of the elbow, and so it is better to contemplate god in his active posture, the dancing posture of Shiva to destroy and re-create the universe.

Particularly, dancing Shiva at Poklong Girai temple is more unique. It is not only unique in its costume but also in his hands. God has two hands, the right hand holding a trident, the left holding a lotus, the first movement of the dance. Other four hands making 2 couples are only remaining image of the two main hands at different postures in the dancing course, but each image shows the Mudra or the hand with different symbol, and which only god can do: the two upper hands keep together making the three ancient Mudra (三股印). The mudra symbolizes the three-edged Vajra bat of Mi-zong. The mudra which is half made is called the third small ancient mudra, and it is also known as the third giant ancient mudra. The two middle fingers point straight at each other, the two index fingers are shrunk like a hood, put at the back of the middle hands – keep the distance around a grain of rice – making a three-edged bat³², it is a destructive mudra and also one of the two functions of god, the two hands under the right hand hold a symbol like a knife, the left hand holds a symbol like a bowl. Because god is dancing to destroy and re-create the universe, the temple representing god sitting is on fire – the fire spread around and the whole temple – hence we need to contemplate Poklong Girai Temple as an image of god in its active form, performing a universe operating dance to destroy and re-create the world. (Figure 11).

Not only Shiva but his female form (one of the Shakti) or his spouse also has beautiful dances. Mahishamardini relief was found at Cầm Mountain, Binh Nghi commune, Tây Sơn district, Bình Định province (displayed at Bình Định Museum) (Figure 11). The relief was made by sandstone with 1.2m high, and in intact form. In the front, the goddess was carved in dancing posture, solemn face, full breasts, legs saging on the heels. Goddess has two hands, the left hand touches her waist, the right one holding a fan, which is the first movement of the dance. At the back side is the image of eight hands making the four couple hands – image of her hands in different postures in dancing, which was added to the shoulder of goddess later by artist. These couples of hands hold different symbols when dancing, which only god can do (from the upper down, the upper hands keep together as destructive mudra, similar to the mudra of dancing Shiva at Poklong Garai Temple; the lower hands hold a spear in the right side and a plate in the left side; the next lower hands hold an arrow in the right side and a bow in the left side; and the lowest hands hold a bead band in the right side and water jar in the left hand. With delicate details and complete body, especially hands in dancing performances of goddess and skillful dancing legs in accordance with music, etc., this relief is considered Mahishamardini in her most beautiful dancing posture in Champa culture³³.

²⁹ Nguyễn Quốc Hữu. (2014). Vũ điệu thần Shiva Nghệ thuật điêu khắc đá Champa. Retrieved from <http://baotanglichsu.vn/portal/vi/Tin-tuc/Kien-thuc-lich-su---van-hoa/2014/11/3A924389/>

³⁰ Emmanuel Guillon, *Cham Art Treasures from the Da Nang Museum*. (Vietnam: Thames & Hudson Press, 2001), p. 107-108; Ngô Văn Doanh, *Champa Arts – A Story of antique Sculptures*. (Hanoi: The World Press, 2014), p. 27-28.

³¹ https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%E1%BB%A7_%E1%BA%A5n

³² Full Volum explaining Buddhist Mudra. (2008). Retrieved from <http://phatam.org/dictionary/detail/tu-dien-phat-quang/2/T/56002/tam-co-an/4>, p. 181

³³ Ngô Văn Doanh, *Ibid*, p. 287-293



Figure 11:- Mahishamardini Relief with dancing posture
Source: Binh Định Museum

Conculsion:-

We can recognize three different types of temples in Champa culture: Hypaethral Temple, Roofed Temple and Structural brick or brick and stone Temple which are nearly similar to Hindu temples in Oc Eo culture.

There are three or two temples built in north-south asix representing three gods (Vishnu-southern temple, Shiva-the middle temple and Brahman-northern temple) or two gods (Shiva and Vishnu-southern temple, north-south direction), just like Trimurti: Shiva-upper, Vishnu-the middle and Brahman-under or only two gods (Shiva and Vishnu-under, from upper down direction) representing on linga – Anicomic form of Shiva.

The unique creation of Hindu temples in Champa culture is that the temple not only represents the image of god Shiva but it also represents his being active, dancing (Shiva Nataraja), operating the universe (Tandava) to destroy and re-create the world. Hence, when contemplating the temple, we should look at it in its active posture not passive one – god is dancing to operate the universe.

Another unique creation is that god sculpture is attached to the temple in Champa culture: god with only two hands but through dancing postures made images of his hands in different postures when dancing, and hence making the masterpiece lively and impressive.

Words count: 6.019

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