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## Title of Object

Deified King

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## Photo of Object (optional)



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## Object Information

**Artist:** Unknown

**Culture:** Cham

**Date of Object:** late 10th century

**Country:** Vietnam

**Accession Number:** 2003.59

**File Created:** 5/10/2016

**Material/Medium:** Sandstone sculpture

**Author of File:** Ingrid Roberts

**Department:** Chinese, South and Southeast  
Asian Art

**Reviewer of File:** Kara ZumBahlen

**Last Updated/Reviewed:** 6/23/2016

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## Tour Topics

Group 3 tour, ancient culture, artist/patron, architecture, gods/goddesses, power/status, ritual/ceremony, spirituality/sacred, stories/storytelling, symbolism, Hinduism, Buddhism

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## Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. As you stand in front of this sculpture, take a moment to look at his facial features, as well as his other defining characteristics. Please describe what you see.
2. How do you feel when you look at this sculpture? Why do you think the deified king is portrayed in a yogic posture?
3. Have you ever practiced yoga breathing before? Let's take a minute and give it a try. \* Ask tour guests to stand up tall with their shoulders back and arms down at their sides, palms open. Softly close your eyes. Your tongue should rest gently against the back of the top of your teeth. Draw a deep breath in through your nose while silently counting to five. Pause for a moment, and then exhale for five counts. Yoga breathing is breathing with sounds. Let's do this five times.

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## Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

1. This is the first piece of Vietnamese sculpture to enter Mia's collection.
2. Carved sandstone relief of male deity. Relates stylistically to sculpture found at temple complexes (central Vietnam).
3. Exhibits features associated with Buddha – down turned meditative eyes, elongated earlobes, dressed in simple garment, understated/ humble appearance, but also with Hindu deities such as Shiva, with the chignon hairstyle.
4. Portrayed in a seated, meditative yogic position (satvaparyankasava). Hands hold lotus flowers.
5. Flame shaped aureole (halo) behind figure. Includes floral ornamentation.

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## Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

1. Deify – worship, regard or treat (someone or something) as a god. Devaraja (meaning king of the gods) – a Khmer (Cambodia) ruler was deified during his own lifetime. Purposes of Divine Kingship 1.) Bolster ruler's power 2.) Create new ideological foundations to support growing political tendencies.
2. Champa Kingdom once occupied what is now part of South Vietnam. Did not achieve the status or longevity of the Cambodian Empire, but was influenced by Khmer (Cambodian) art and culture. Concept of deified kingship comes from this influence. Hindu dynasties ruled Champa from early 6th century AD. Also heavily influenced by Chinese. By 1471 the Cham were totally extinguished as a nation and absorbed by the Vietnamese.
3. All Cham art is based on the cult of divine kingship (loosely resembling the Khmer cult). Kings were the only patrons for whom temples were built. They were concerned about their own post-mortem deification and thus built shrines (Temple Complexes) at a site – a function of "personalization" of the divine. The culturally most important temples of historical Champa were the temple of Bhadresvara (located at My Son near modern Da Nang) and the temple of Bhagavati (located just outside modern Nha Trang).
4. Cham created freestanding sandstone sculptures in the round, as well as high and bas-relief carvings of sandstone. Generally they (Cham) preferred sculpting in relief and especially excelled in sculpture in high relief. The subject matter of Cham sculpture is drawn mostly from the legends and religion of Indian civilization. Many sculptures represent particular Hindu and Buddhist deities. (Could compare to a Buddhist sculpture or a Hindu sculpture.)
5. Seated figure in a yoga position. Seen in Buddhist and Hindu art. Yogi (holy man), Yogini (holy woman). The practice of yoga includes breath control (prana). Concept of yoga is to "yoke" oneself with universal, divine forces. Yoga has long been part of the ancient religious traditions in India including Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism.

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## Current Mia Label Information (optional)

Dating to the tenth century, this crisply carved, sandstone image of a deified king relates stylistically to sculpture found at ancient temple complexes like those at My Son and Dong Duong south of Da Nang, in

Vietnam's central highlands. It is a rare and classic example of Cham sculpture, a product of Champa, an Indianized kingdom that flourished in South Vietnam between the third and fifteenth centuries. Champa reached its zenith in the tenth century and maintained economic, political, and religious links with China, India, and the Khmer civilization in Cambodia. While the concept of deified kingship is most likely Khmer in origin, Cham rulers enthusiastically promoted it and their stylized portraits were occasionally integrated into court sponsored Hindu and Buddhist temples.

The male deity sits trance-like, meditating in a yogic posture (satvaparyankasava), his stomach distended in a form of breath control. Meant to be wise and intelligent, the king has been portrayed in meditation to symbolize his intellectual rather than martial power. His hair is elaborately plaited, and he wears a finely carved necklace of large beads with a central pendant. He holds lotus flowers in his outstretched hands, and the flame-shaped aureole behind him has floral ornamentation.

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### Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)



My Son, Cham Temple Towers

An article from National Geographic:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/06/140616-south-china-sea-vietnam-china-cambodia-champa/>

Here is a standing figure of the Cham Empire, in the collection of the Met Museum:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/38314?sortBy=Relevance&ft=cham+vietnam&pg=1&rpp=20&pos=2>



Dancing 16-armed Shiva, Cham art from the 10th century, Cham Museum, Da Nang, Vietnam, Indochina, Southeast Asia, Asia (from: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-dancing-16-armed-shiva-cham-art-from-the-10th-century-cham-museum-29025791.html>)

Article on the art of Champa” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art\\_of\\_Champa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_of_Champa)