



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA  
NATION RELIGION KING

MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND FINE ARTS

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PRESS RELEASE

Recovery of Cambodia's Cultural Treasures:  
33 Cambodian Cultural Artifacts to be returned to Cambodia from  
the Lindemann Family of the United States

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is delighted to inform the public that an incredible collection of Cambodian cultural artifacts will be returned to Cambodia. This momentous event is the result of years of collaboration between our Cambodian team and the US Government, in support of the recently renewed Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Government and the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The U.S. Government, led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York ("USAO-SDNY") and Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), has reached an agreement with a private collector, the Lindemann Family, relating to 33 Cambodian cultural artifacts. HSI, in cooperation with USAO SDNY, seized the sculptures from the person.

The artefacts include a reclining Vishnu and Ardhanarishvara, a half male/half female sculpture believed to be from Prasat Krachap temple at the ancient royal city of Koh Ker. According to several witnesses, these statues were removed in the 1990s. This is the same temple where the Shiva and Skanda and Skanda on the Peacock came from. The returned national treasures also include a sculpture thought to be Drsthadyumna (commander in chief of the Pandava Army) from Prasat Chen temple at Koh Ker.

H.E. Dr. Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, stated: "It pleases the Cambodian government that the Lindemann Family, in possession of these national treasures of Cambodia, knowing they were wrongfully possessed, have voluntarily returned them to the rightful owner, Cambodia. This return sets an excellent and proper example for other museums and private collectors we have informed to follow and return our national treasures. We are delighted that after more than three years of efforts by the US Government, with the strong support from the restitution team of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, these extraordinary masterpieces are now being returned. The sculpture of Drsthadyumna, for instance, is incredibly important to the world's cultural heritage as it nearly completes the set of 9 statues previously at Prasat Chen of Koh Ker. The Drsthadyumna was looted during Cambodia's civil war and appeared at an auction of the Chinese Porcelain Company in New York City in 1994. It was later featured in Architectural Digest. We are also incredibly excited about the prospect to recover two of the most important statues we have learned about from Prasat Krachap at Koh Ker. The reclining Vishnu and half male-half female were looted in 1997. The reclining Vishnu was looted from the main chamber of Prasat Krachap. We also note the significance of the Asura and Deva heads from the temple of Angkor of one of our greatest kings, King Jayavarman VII."

This repatriation shows once again Cambodia's continuing commitment to fighting and bringing back our ancestors' souls that departed from their motherland. H.E. Dr. Phoeurng Sackona especially extended her appreciation: "I would like to express my utmost gratitude to our friends



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