

Southeast Asia

Early interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on cross-cultural exchanges

Edited by PIERRE-YVES MANGUIN, A. MANI and GEOFF WADE

Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and New Delhi: Manohar, 2011.

Pp. xxx + 514. Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463414000113

This conference volume is a major addition to our knowledge of the ancient links between Southeast and South Asia. The book consists of 23 chapters, divided into two parts, covering nearly a millennium in Southeast Asian history, c. 500 BCE to 500 CE, a period with scarce textual and/or other written source material. Field archaeology's importance in generating rich data for understanding the material culture and life of early Southeast Asian societies and to help formulate research agenda is ably established here.

Pierre-Yves Manguin's Introduction provides a crucial overview of changing perspectives on the presence of Indian elements in early Southeast Asia. Initially, scholars such as R.C. Majumdar, George Coedes, K.A. Nilkantha Sastri, and B.R. Chatterjee theorised that there had been a wholesale Indianisation of Southeast Asia. Decolonisation brought about a rejection of this Indo-centric narrative, paving the ground for the more nuanced views of, for instance, Paul Mus, I.W. Mabbett, J.G. de Casparis, and O.W. Wolters. Their empirically rich, indigenous and/or autonomous historiography critique the Indo-centric model, proposing instead more useful concepts like 'lasting relationship' (de Casparis), 'localisation' (Wolters), and 'elective affinities' (Hermann Kulke).

More recent historiography seeks to unravel indigenous elements of change and continuity in Southeast Asian societies even if they were influenced by Indic socio-political and cultural norms and practices, most visibly, in the realms of language (Sanskrit), religious beliefs and practices (Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism), and visual arts (sculpture and iconography). These influences were facilitated by the centuries-old Indian Ocean maritime trade and other networks.

Part 1 of the book deals with recent archaeological advances. Lam Thi My Dzung surveys Central Vietnamese sites (500 BCE–500 CE), in particular, Northern Sahuynh and Southern Sahuynh, which reveal carnelian and agate beads as well as pottery of Indian origin. Lam notes, however, that the polities here 'were established under strong Han Chinese influence' (p. 14).

Reassessing the earliest Indian contacts, Ian G. Glover and Bérénice Bellina look at two excavated sites in Thailand, Bon Dan Ta Phet and Khao Sam Kaeo, noted for semi-precious stone ornaments and bronze artefacts pointing to subcontinent–Southeast Asian interactions dating to as early as 4th–2nd centuries BCE. The Khao Sam Kaeo finds suggest the transfer of Indian stone ornament manufacturing technology to Thailand, implying Indian artisan settlements (and not merely those of merchants, religious preachers and Brahmans). Glover and Bellina emphasise that such links started long before the so-called Indianisation period. Phaedra Bouvet's chapter on Khao Sam Kaeo's participation in the South Asian maritime

ceramics trade and the circulation of Indian potters in peninsular Thailand supports this view. Boonyarit Chaisuwan follows with an overview of the contacts between India and the Andaman coast (c. 2nd century BCE–11th century CE), highlighting archaeological sites like Khuan Luk Pat and Phu Khao Thong. The latter was a notable bead-making site which has yielded, among other artefacts, the half-crouching lion pendant of rock-crystal, carnelian beads, and a ring-stone with a superb carved horse-rider, all strongly pointing to connections with the subcontinent, further supported by the presence of Rouletted Ware (from the eastern Indian seaboard), gold *triratna* beads, and inscribed Tamil-Brahmi pottery shards at Phu Khao Thong.

The presence of Tamil speakers in early Southeast Asia gains further ground in the light of the c. 3rd century CE Tamil inscription at Khuan Luk Pad. Chaisuwan shows the continuity of this contact and network in later centuries by highlighting the Thung Tuk site, which has yielded a Ganesa image, shards of Changsa ware (late T'ang), Persian ware, etc. Thung Tuk provided safe mooring for ships and was also connected overland with Laem Pho, on the Gulf of Siam, allowing merchants an alternative to the pirate-ridden Strait of Malacca.

Further east, Manguin and Agustijanto Indradjaja take us to Batajuya, West Java, a cluster of nearly 30 sites, with Buddha images, Buddhist temples, and associated structures; the early phase is marked by Rouletted Ware, Indian stamped ware, and inscribed gold-foils. Crucial material has been unearthed at Segran, demonstrating its 'early Buddhist' phase pre-800 CE; the post-800 CE phase at Segran has yielded the remains of a 'market place'. The authors underline some cultural commonalities between the West Javanese sites and those in Central Vietnam, the Mekong delta, peninsular Thailand, south Sumatra, and Bali, and in particular, the role of the Buni of West Java in procuring and accessing commodities (including pottery) from South Asia and mainland Southeast Asia.

Two papers on north Sumatra respectively by Edmund Edwards-McKinnon, and Daniel Perret and Heddy Surachman, draw upon Claude Guillot's excavations at Barus/Lobu Tua, celebrated as Fansur in medieval Arabic and Persian texts on travel and geography, and noted for its camphor, a coveted aromatic. To this is added the evidence of a late 11th century Tamil inscription recording the Tamil ship-owners, ship-captains, sailors who came to Varochu (Barus) to procure camphor. Perret and Surachman see the thirteenth-century Javanese–Tamil inscription as evidence of sustained cooperation between both cultures, negating a common view that non-indigenous merchants were barred from the Sumatran hinterland. Sumatra's immense commercial significance is also attested to by the fact that, besides Java, it was the only region to have struck coins, with close affinities to the Cholas' gold issues.

John Guy's insightful essay on Tamil merchants and the Hindu–Buddhist diaspora in Southeast Asia has been placed in a different section, but it dovetails well with the two chapters on Sumatra. Guy offers a fine combination of epigraphic, iconographic, and other art-historical data for situating the South Asian diaspora in Southeast Asia and even in China. His essay dispels the notion (based on orthodox and normative Brahmanical treatises) that seafaring was a forbidden activity (*kalivarjya*) for South Asians from the early Middle Ages onwards.

The second part of the volume shifts to localisation and culture: there are chapters on language/text (Johannes Bronkhorst, Daud Ali, Sachchidanand Sahai); visual

arts (Julie Romain, Robert Brown, Martin Polkinghorne); belief systems and practices (Peter Skilling, Kyaw Minn Htin, Le Thi Lien, Anna A. Slaczka, Boreth Ly), and musical instruments (Arsenio Nicolas). Bronkhorst and Ali both critique Sheldon Pollock's influential concept of the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' in the context of the spread of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia. Analysing inscriptions, from both South and Southeast Asia, Ali finds that 'the apportioning of symbolic and quotidian functions to Sanskrit and local languages, respectively, is too simple a paradigm for epigraphic reality ... particularly in the case of Southeast Asian epigraphy' (p. 290). Relying more on Wolters' 'localisation' model, he argues for the 'different ways in which localisation could work in the process of Sanskritic "transculturation"' (p. 291). Romain's examination of the temple architecture of Dieng plateau, Central Java, compares it with near-contemporary architecture in Orissa and the Pallava monuments at Mamallapuram, in Andhra Pradesh. Romain shows that the earliest Dieng temples were 'uniquely Javanese in style' and that the Indian elements therein spoke of the selective use of Indic motifs, rather than a direct transplantation of style(s). With an emphasis on Buddha images from Gupta-period South Asia (4th to mid-6th century CE), China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, Brown questions some long-standing assumptions, arguing against the influence of post-Gupta stylistic influences on the art of China and Southeast Asia.

Nicolas's delightful essay on musical instruments examines the textual and epigraphic sources for two Sanskrit terms (*kachchhapi* or lute and *kamsya/kansya* or bell metal/gong) in Java, the Philippines, Thailand, Sulawesi, Champa, Khem, and Myanmar, along with related evidence from shipwrecks. By citing the instance of Burmese ruler Kyanzitha's sending of musical instruments to Bodhgaya during the construction of the famous temple (12th century), he also explores the possibility of movements of instruments from Southeast Asia to South Asia.

Peter Skilling questions the prevalence of monolithic/homogenised Indian religion. His connecting of rituals and the mass production of small clay Buddhist images, often with Buddhist *ye dharma* verses, deserves special mention. To these he couples evidence of the increasing production of figures of Bodhisattvas, Buddhas, miniature *stupas*, and *dharani* seals (long texts of spells ensuring security and wellness) in peninsular Thailand. While Buddhism pushed this production, Skilling argues that the artefacts often found 'new outlets and new expressions' (p. 380), bespeaking indigenous elements in rituals and accessories.

Htin's study of nearly fifty inscriptions, c. 5th–10th centuries CE, offers an interesting account of the spread of Buddhism in Arakan. The inscriptions contain formulaic Buddhist mantras, which also occur on portable miniature stupas, suggesting ritual use. However, it is difficult to do justice to a historical study of Arakan Buddhism in isolation from Buddhism in the adjacent land of Harikela (the ancient name of Chittagong, Bangladesh).

Buddhism was not the only Indic religion which arrived in Southeast Asia of course. Lien's study of Hindu deities in South Vietnam discusses the images of Brahmanical divinities (Siva in various forms, Vishnu, Brahma, Karttikeya, Lakshmi and various goddesses) on miniscule gold plaques from south Vietnam. The key site here is Go Thap, which served as a political and religious centre. The use of gold plaques for portraying Brahmanical divinities has no known parallels anywhere in Southeast Asia.

Three essays, by K. Rajan, V. Selvakumar, and Sundares and A.S. Gaur, respectively, all highlight the subcontinent's seafaring history. Rajan's overview of trade in India during the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE draws from recent archaeological evidence of South Indian crafts and commerce. He argues that Kodumanal in Tamil Nadu was a major centre for artisanal activities in pearls, gemstones, and metals (especially iron), trade goods whose production appears to have grown through burgeoning commerce with Southeast Asia. He also recognises tin, essential for making bronze artefacts, as an import from Southeast Asia. Sundares and Gaur present evidence of underwater findings from coastal/port sites, e.g. Poompuhar, Mahabalipuram (the Nirappeyaru site), and Tranquebar. Their chapter also takes into account the history and impact of sea-level fluctuations along the eastern seaboard of India during the last 5,000 years. Selvakumar, noted for his contributions to the excavations at Pattanam, shows the influence of Southeast Asian ship-building techniques on seafaring in Kerala.

Other than these three chapters, the sea remains largely in the background in this volume, however, and there is no discussion of the historical geography of the eastern Indian Ocean. And, given the importance of material from Southeast Asian shipwreck sites, this volume could have contained an overview of findings from these sites. Contributors could also have paid more attention to what Romila Thapar has conceptualised as the reciprocity of 'cultural transactions', rather than unidirectional cultural flows.

The best aspect of the volume is that it tries to integrate the field-archaeological materials with epigraphic, art historical, and textual sources, without fixing the primacy of one category of sources over the other, and yet allowing the distinctive voices of different sources for the study of an exciting past which has a definite bearing on the present.

RANABIR CHAKRAVARTI

Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Living Islamically in the periphery: Muslim discourse, institution, and intellectual tradition in Southeast Asia

By IKK ARIFIN MANSURNOOR

Banten: UIN Jakarta Press, 2011. Pp. xxi + 414. Bibliography, Index.

Bangsa and umma: Development of people-grouping concepts in Islamized Southeast Asia

Edited by YAMAMOTO HIROYUKI, ANTHONY MILNER, KAWASHIMA MIDORI and ARAI KAZUHIRO

Kyoto: Kyoto University Press and Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2011. Pp. ix + 279. Illustrations, Maps, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463414000125

Despite the rapid expansion of publications on Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia, some problematic assumptions and characterisations persist. Within religious