

Bibliography on Sailing to Suvarnabhumi

Introduction

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Introduction

The Project titled ‘Sailing to Suvarṇabhūmi: Cultural Routes and Maritime Landscapes’ was proposed by the ASEAN – India Centre (AIC) at RIS and was sanctioned by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for two years on 30 December 2016. The Project was implemented from 1st May 2017 and the first year until April 2018 was utilized for preparation of detailed lists of readings on the various themes under the Project. The Bibliographies of the ASEAN countries prepared to date have been uploaded on the AIC- RIS website at <http://aic.ris.org.in/culture-and-civilization>.

This introduction on the Project addresses the following issues with a view of providing a context to the Project and the Bibliographies:

1. Discussion of the term ‘Suvarṇabhūmi’;
2. The raison d’être of the themes chosen for the bibliography and their relevance; and
3. To what extent does the Project chart a different course vis-à-vis existing secondary writings on the theme of India and Southeast Asia interactions?

1. Defining Suvarṇabhūmi: Discussion of the term ‘Suvarṇabhūmi’

References to Suvarṇabhūmi are found not only in Indian literary sources such as the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya (2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE)¹ and the Buddhist Jātakas, some of which date to 3rd century BCE,² but in Greek accounts as well. Chapter II of the *Arthaśāstra* contains detailed descriptions of several commodities such as precious stones, perfumeries and cloth. It lists many varieties of aromatics and includes Kaleyaka or a kind of incense that came from Suvarṇabhūmi.³ References in Buddhist literature, especially in narratives associated with the past lives of the Buddha indicate the use of the term as a destination reached after sailing across dangerous seas.⁴ There are references to voyages undertaken by merchants to Suvarṇabhūmi in numerous Jātakas. The Mahājanaka Jātaka mentions adventures of a prince named Mahājanaka who sailed with some merchants in a ship for Suvarṇabhūmi for trade and wealth.⁵ Evidence of another sea voyage from Bharukaccha (modern Broach in Gujarat) to Suvarṇabhūmi is discussed in Suppāraka-Jātaka.⁶ The Sussondi Jātaka refers to the journey of the minstrel Sussondi from

¹ Patrick, Olivelle, *King, Governance and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya’s Arthaśāstra*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, Introduction.

² Maurice Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol.II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993(reprint), p.116

³ Himanshu Prabha Ray, *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Link s of Early South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 87

⁴ R.C. Majumdar, *Suvarṇadvīpa, Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, Vol.II, Dacca: Asoke Humar Majumdar Ramna,1937, pp. 56-57.

⁵ E. B. Cowell and W. H. D. Rouse (tr), *The Jataka*, Vol. VI, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ,1907, No. 539.

⁶ Majumdar, *Suvarṇadvīpa*, p. 37.

Benares to Bharukaccha, from where some merchants sailed to Suvarṇabhūmi.⁷ In the Sankha Jātaka the Bodhisattva was once born in Molinī nagara (Benares) as a very rich brahmana, named Sankha. He spent six thousand daily on alms-giving. One day he thought to himself, "My store of wealth once gone, I shall have nothing to give. Whilst it is still unexhausted I will take ship, and sail for the Gold Country, whence I will bring back wealth." So he caused a ship to be built; filled it with merchandise; and bade farewell to wife and child.⁸ Stories of voyages of adventurous merchants to Suvarṇabhūmi also occur in Sanskrit narrative literature, for example the *Bṛhatkathāmañjari* (400 CE), *Bṛhatkathā śloka samgraha* (1037 CE)⁹ and the *Kathāsaritasāgara* (1063-1081 CE).¹⁰ The *Kathāsaritasāgara* (stories that could have originated well before the seventh century), centres on the voyages of the brahmana Candrasvamin who went in search of his lost son and of the princess Gunavati, and whose ship was wrecked on the coast of Suvarṇadvīpa while on its way from Kataha to India.¹¹

The *Milindapañha*, dated to first and second century CE, also mentions various places of overseas trade and seaport towns like Suvaṇṇabhūmi, Takkola and Cīna.¹² The *Samaraiccakaha* dating to the eighth century CE describes a sea voyage to *Suvarṇadvīpa* and the making of bricks from the gold rich sands which were inscribed with the name *dharana* and then baked¹³ An 11th century Indian text refers to the gold coming from *Survarṇadvīpa* as being of different types: of yellow gold colour and white shell colour, which is presumed to refer to the amounts of silver or copper contained in the alloy.¹⁴

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, a Greek text by an anonymous sailor of the first century CE refers to the Land of Gold, Chryse, and describes it as "an island in the ocean, the furthest extremity towards the east of the inhabited world, lying under the rising sun itself, called Chryse... Beyond this country... there lies a very great inland city called Thina".¹⁵ Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography*, dated to second century CE contains the best-known and perhaps the earliest reference to the Golden Chersonese. According to Ptolemy's account, ships sailed from a

⁷ H.T. Francis and R.A. Neil. (tr). *The Jataka*, Vol. III, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897, No. 360.

⁸ E. B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse (tr), *The Jataka*, Vol. IV, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1901, No. 442.

⁹ A.A. Macdonell, *India's Past: A Survey of her Literatures, Religions, Languages and Antiquities*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927, p.126.

¹⁰ Raj Kumar (ed), *Essays on Indian Economy*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House., 2003, p.16.

¹¹ Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese- Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before AD 1500*, Kuala Lumpur : Univ. of Malaya Press, 1966, pp.80,82

¹² R.K. Dube, 'Southeast Asia as the Indian El-Dorado', in D. P. Chattopadhyaya, and Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy, and Culture (eds.), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, Vol.1, Pt.3

¹³ Anna T. N. Bennett, 'Gold in early Southeast Asia', *Archaeo Sciences, revue d'archéométrie*, 2009, 33: 101.

¹⁴ Bennett, 'Gold in early Southeast Asia,' :101.

¹⁵ Lionel Casson (ed.), *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p.91.

point of departure near modern Chicacole and striking right across the sea called at Sada and Tamale in the Silver country on the way to Chryse Chersonese.¹⁶

With regard to names given to sailing destinations in ancient literature, it is suggested that “Information about these places was not obtained from the lone voyage of a vessel that managed to return home after being swept by a storm to an unknown coast, whose sailors told fabulous stories that in no way could be checked. There is an increasing conviction that this information was the result of both indirect and direct trade contact which began long before the Christian era and became, at least from the beginning of that era, a regular occurrence along well-known trade routes.”¹⁷

The term Suvarṇabhūmi, however, has been the focus of attention and much debate. The French art historian Nicolas Revire cautions in his article *Facts and Fiction: The Myth of Suvannabhumi through the Thai and Burmese Looking Glass*¹⁸ that both Burma and Thailand claimed to be the ‘Buddhist Golden Land’. “As expected, this myth has largely shaped the vision and the historical interpretation of generations of archaeologists, historians and art historians, especially in these two Buddhist countries. With such nationalist agendas, it is hardly surprising that the scholarly quest to identify [Suvarṇabhūmi] has been both controversial and muddled.”¹⁹

The search for Suvarṇabhūmi became the focus of intellectual history in 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and Southeast Asia.²⁰ Revire points out that, “in the eyes of the Buddhist devotee throughout the Theravada world Suvarṇabhūmi is more than just a name. Much of the scholarship has been preoccupied with attempting to identify the precise location of Suvarṇabhūmi, motivated in part by “the national pride of claiming to be the first Buddhist state of Southeast Asia.”²¹ Pali sources specifically link the name with a pivotal story that narrates the spread of Buddhism into various ‘countries’ or polities, one of which was called Suvarṇabhūmi. The most important sources are the Sinhalese Chronicles such as the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*.²² From the 15th century onwards Lower Burma and Northern Thailand adapted parts of the myth contained in the Sinhalese Chronicles.²³

Revire claims that, “Based on this meagre historical and scanty archaeological evidence it would seem to suggest that Buddhist practices were gradually introduced in various regions of

¹⁶ G.E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, London: Royal Asiatic Society and Royal Geographical Society, 1909, p.78

¹⁷ W. J. van der Meulen, ‘Suvarṇadvīpa and the Chryse Chersonesos’, *Indonesia*, 1974, 18: 2.

¹⁸ Nicolas Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction: The Myth of Suvannabhūmi through the Thai and Burmese Looking Glass,’ *Mahachulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 2011, 4 : 79–80.

¹⁹ Rinith Tiang, ‘Was Cambodia Home to Asia's Land of Gold?’, *Phnom Penh Post*, 5 January 2018, p. 6.

²⁰ Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’: 80.

²¹ Prapod Assavavirulhakaar, *The Ascendency of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010, p. 55.

²² Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’ : 80.

²³ Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’ : 81.

Southeast Asia from at least, to be safe, the fifth century CE onwards.”²⁴ In Revire’s words “But what hard archaeological evidence is there to substantiate these views and what do we really know about the early advent of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia?”²⁵ I strongly object to the statement that all this early material found or excavated in Thailand as sign of the arrival of Buddhism in Suvarṇabhūmi 2000 years ago.”²⁶

Added to Burmese and Thai claims to Suvarṇabhūmi, being located within their national boundaries, is the Cambodian recent assertion to its land being Suvarṇabhūmi. This is based on the tablets excavated in Kampong Speu, which are now kept on the grounds of the Kiri Sdachkong pagoda and read “The great King Isanavarman is full of glory and bravery. He is the King of Kings, who rules over Suvarṇabhūmi until the sea, which is the border.”²⁷ Dr. Vong Sotheara, Professor of Cambodian and Southeast Asian history at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, is of the view that “the existing facts and findings, combined with the inscription in Kampong Speu, prove that Suvarṇabhūmi was the Khmer Empire”.²⁸

The above discussion and debates around Suvarṇabhūmi make it apparent that a term that originated in narratives from the ancient sailing world was taken up by Buddhist literature and is now being analyzed within nationalistic frameworks. The term was coined and used in an age when there were no clear nation states with set political boundaries and seemed to denote a geographical zone rich in gold. As has been rightly pointed out by Tranet, the literature points to Suvarṇabhūmi being larger than just the Khmer Empire and appears to have comprised Myanmar, the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia.²⁹

The issues discussed above may be summarized as follows:

- a. Was the name Suvarṇabhūmi just a myth or is there archaeological proof regarding the presence of gold mining and gold artefacts across Southeast Asia? Were these sources of gold tapped in the ancient period?
- b. Does archaeology provide evidence for early contacts between India and Southeast Asia/Suvarṇabhūmi, and the possibility of Buddhist monks and missionaries taking recourse to already established maritime networks and vocabulary in describing the area of Southeast Asia?

1. a) *Archaeological Proof Regarding the Presence of Gold*

Archaeological excavations and research work seems to justify the term Land of Gold for most of the Southeast Asian region has gold deposits which were used by its inhabitants from an early period. “Gold is fairly widely, though irregularly, distributed throughout Southeast Asia in

²⁴ Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’ : 91.

²⁵ Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’ : 81.

²⁶ Revire, ‘Facts and Fiction’ :88.

²⁷ Rinith Tiang, ‘Was Cambodia Home to Asia’s Land of Gold?’, *Phnom Penh Post*, 5 January 2018, p.2.

²⁸ Rinith Tiang, ‘Was Cambodia Home to Asia’s Land of Gold?’, p.3.

²⁹ Rinith Tiang, ‘Was Cambodia Home to Asia’s Land of Gold?’, p.5.

igneous and metamorphic hard rock deposits and in sedimentary placer deposits. Luzon and Mindanao in the Philippines, the Barisan mountain range in west Sumatra, western Borneo, Timor, parts of the Malaysian and Thai Peninsula, northern Burma, north and central Vietnam, Laos, northwest Cambodia in the Oddar Meanchey province, near Banteay Chhmar, its north-central area, in the Preah Vihear province in Rovieng district, and in the northeast in Rattanakiri province have all acquired a reputation as gold producers at one time or another.”³⁰ Anna T Bennett’s communication with villagers revealed evidence of ancient gold mining shafts in Central Vietnam at Kham Duc.³¹ Ancient gold mines and 79 gold coins were discovered from Bengkulu in southwest Sumatra, and three gold coins were found in the deposit of Candi Gumpung located in Muara Jambi.³² Touchstones, found at Kota Cina in northeast Sumatra, and at Khuan Lukpat, Krabbi Province, in Peninsular Thailand, which is dated to the third century CE and contains a Tamil inscription, *Perumpadan Kal*, or ‘the property of Perumpadan’³³ are definite proof for the existence of gold working and goldsmiths in Southeast Asia, some of them using Tamil language.

“The large coastal and riverine settlements around Oc Eo in the Mekong Delta, Giong Ca Vo in Southern Vietnam, the early river port of Khao Sam Kaeo in eastern peninsular Thailand, together with the Tabon caves in the Palawan Islands of the Philippines represent the earliest sites yielding gold finds in maritime Southeast Asia.”³⁴

A notable amount of early gold material were brought to light during excavations of 52 burials at the protohistoric cemetery of Prohear, about 65 km east of Phnom Penh, Cambodia and these date to a period between the second century BCE and the first century CE.³⁵ In Vietnam, the site of Oc Eo had significant amounts of gold jewellery, including rings, some surmounted by images of Nandi, the sacred bull, linked chains, inscribed gold sheets, gold plaques decorated with repoussé images of Hindu deities, and over nine hundred gold beads with various shapes.³⁶ A large number of gold plaques depicting Hindu deities have been recovered from excavations at various sites in southern Vietnam: the site of Go Thap has 321 gold plaques with dates ranging from the late centuries BCE to fifth century CE; at the site of Da Noi approximately 300 gold plaques and one gold linga and yoni were unearthed; and 21 gold plaques are from the site Nen Chua and 166 gold plaques from Cat Tien.³⁷ “Although the gold finds from these sites have not

³⁰ Bennett, ‘Gold in early Southeast Asia’ : 99-100.

³¹ Bennett, ‘Gold in early Southeast Asia’ : 100.

³² John N Miksic and Geok Yian Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, London- New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 358.

³³ A. Srisuchat., (ed.), *Ancient Trades and Cultural Contacts in Southeast Asia*, Bangkok: The Office of the National Culture Commission, 1996.

³⁴ Bennett, ‘Gold in early Southeast Asia’:104

³⁵ A Reinecke, Vin Laychour, Seng and Sonetra, *The first Golden Age of Cambodia: Excavation at Prohear*, Bonn: Die Deutsche National Bibliothek, 2009.

³⁶ Bennett, ‘Gold in early Southeast Asia’: 103.

³⁷ Le Thi Lien, ‘Hindu Pantheon as Observed on the Gold Plaques found from Southern Vietnam’,

<http://www.indian-ocean.in/Ms.%20Le%20LienThi%20-Bhubaneswar-IORC-March2015.pdf> (accessed on 12 February 2018)

all been excavated and are often chance finds, recorded in local villagers' collections, they share many highly characteristic features which provide sufficient evidence to indicate that a trade network linking the areas of the Southeast Asian mainland, the outer islands, the Philippines and India was already in place by the 2nd half of the first millennium BCE.”³⁸

1. b) *Evidence for Early Contacts between India and Southeast Asia/Suvarṇabhūmi*

In regard to the second point made by Revire that there is no evidence to prove earlier existence of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia before fifth century CE, the archaeological data is analysed here. This evidence may have skipped Revire's attention as they do not constitute monumental remains or sculptures of great aesthetic significance, but are subtle and small artefacts excavated from archaeological sites, mainly coastal sites. Buddhism is not merely a philosophy with a defined doctrine and a sect of rituals but involves a whole range of human activity which includes literature and art.³⁹ “Buddhism in Southeast Asia came peacefully often as a guileless missionary or converted sailor and traders aboard ships.”⁴⁰

Lion carnelian pendants have been recovered from the sites of Ban Don Tha Phet, Khuan Lukpad and Than Chana in peninsular Thailand, Chansen in central Thailand and in central coastal Vietnam at Lai Nghi near Hoi An (dated to second – first century CE), and have been reported from Halin, Ywa Htin and Hnaw Kan in Burma.⁴¹ The discovery of carnelian lion pendants at Ban Don Ta Phet is the representation of Buddha as *Sakyasimha* (lion of the Sakya clan).⁴² Boonyarit Chaisuwan notes that, crouching lion pendant was found at Phu Khao Thong Ban don Ta Phet and Tha Chana, and these types of stone lions were found in the north western centre of Buddhism, namely Taxila in first to eighth centuries CE and in the Satvahana period they are noticed in western Indian towns of Sanbhar and Nasik.⁴³ “The lion pendant was a symbol of power and grandeur. During the Kushana dynasty (first-third century CE) it was the symbol of Buddha as sakra singha. Other auspicious symbols were conch shells, srivatsa and svastikas....

³⁸ Bennett, ‘Gold in early Southeast Asia’:104.

³⁹ Aurora Roseas Lin, ‘Buddhism in Early Southeast Asia: A Contribution to Study of Cultural Change’: 75 <http://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-11-01-1973/roxas-limbuddhism%20early%20southeast%20asia.pdf> (accessed on 6 February 2018)

⁴⁰ Lin, ‘Buddhism in Early Southeast Asia’: 77. <http://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-11-01-1973/roxas-limbuddhism%20early%20southeast%20asia.pdf> (accessed on 6 February 2018)

⁴¹ Bérénice Bellina and Praon Silapanth, ‘Khao Sam Kaeo and the Upper Thai Peninsula: Understanding the Mechanisms of early Trans Asaiatic Trade and Cultural Exchanges’, in Elisabeth A Bacus, Ian C Glover and Vincent C Pigott (eds) *Uncovering Southeast Asia's Past*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2006, p. 386.

⁴² Ian C Glover and Bérénice Bellina, ‘Ban Don Ta Phet and Khao Sam Kaeo: The Earliest Indian Contacts Re-assessed’, in P Y Manguin, A Mani and G Wade, (eds.) *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Exchange*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2011, pp. 17–46.

⁴³ Boonyarit Chaisuwan, ‘Early Contacts between India and the Andaman Coast in Thailand from the Second Century BCE to Eleventh Century CE’, in P.Y.Manguin, A Mani and Geoff Wade (eds.), *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross Cultural Exchange*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2011, pp.87-88.

Those religious symbols were the sign of the arrival of Buddhism in Suvarnabhumi 2000 years ago.”⁴⁴

The Vo Canh Stele from central Vietnam is the earliest evidence for Buddhism in Southeast Asia, which describes a donation of property by the King Sri Mara to his relatives. The inscription has been dated to around the fourth century CE.⁴⁵ Inscriptions with the Buddhist creed have been recovered from sites in Malay peninsula dating to the fourth and fifth century CE, such as Kampung Sungai Mas, Seberang Perai, Bukit Meriam and the Buddhagupta Tablet from Kedah.⁴⁶ Buddhist association with the maritime community is evident from the Buddhagupta inscription (fifth century CE),⁴⁷ recording a dedication by a sea captain (*mahānāvika*) from Raktamrttika, probably in Bengal.⁴⁸ In the case of Vietnam Buddhism was introduced in the beginning of Common Era,⁴⁹ by both sea and land routes and by Indian or Central Asia priests. Buddhism in Vietnam directly originated from India.⁵⁰ “The Indian merchants and Buddhist priests temporarily stayed at Luy Lau, Giao Chau in the first centuries C.E., they were not missionaries. They just followed their Buddhist beliefs. They took the Three Refuges, believed in the Three Jewels, and took the Five Precepts. They donated foods, clothes, shelters to priests as the “best land for merit seeds. The Buddhist texts they prayed could be some sutras about that law along with the narration of Buddha’s previous lives.”⁵¹

A proliferation of Buddhist inscriptions in Southeast Asia is discernable from fifth - sixth century CE onwards and these include inscriptions and structural remains. Buddhist presence in Java is revealed by excavations of a large brick stupa at Candi Blandongan which likely dates to the sixth century CE, though “the structure is part of a complex that is expected to reveal earlier phases of construction.”⁵² Pali inscription on the carnelian seal of the sixth century CE discovered in Kuala Selinsing, Perak, Malaysia; Buddhist scriptures inscribed on the gold plates of the fifth or the sixth century CE, discovered at Maunggun village near Hmawaza in the district of Prome in Burma; the inscription of the fifth or sixth century found in Si Thep; the inscriptions of the same period found in Wat Mahadbatu in Nakhorn Si Thammarat (Ligor); the four Mon inscriptions, engraved on an octagonal stone pillar, of the sixth or seventh century

⁴⁴ Boonyarit Chaisuwan, ‘Early Contacts between India and the Andaman Coast’, pp. 88-89

⁴⁵ Anton O Zakharov, ‘A Note on the Date of the Vo-canh Stele’, *The South East Asian Review*, 2010, 35(1-2): 18.

⁴⁶ Jane Allen, ‘An Inscribed Tablet from Kedah, Malaysia: Comparism with Earlier Finds’, *Asian Perspectives*, 1986-87,27(1):35-57.

⁴⁷ B.Ch.Chhabra, *Expansion of the Indo Aryan Culture during the Pallava Rule,(as evidence by inscriptions)*,Delhi:Munshiram Manoharlal, 1965, pp.23-24.

⁴⁸ Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the other Indo Aryan Languages*, New York- Oxford: OUP,1998, p.158.

⁴⁹ Duong Van Con, ‘Buddhism from India to Vietnam: A Study of Early Introduction’, *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (IJIR)*, 2016, 2(9): 1171.

⁵⁰ Con, ‘Buddhism from India to Vietnam’: 1174.

⁵¹ Nguyen Lang, *Viet Nam Phat Giao Su Luan (Essays on Vietnamese Buddhist History)*, vol. I, Hanoi: Van Hoc Publishing House, 1994, pp.49-50.

⁵² John Guy, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu Buddhist Sculptures of Early Southeast Asia*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014, p.10.

found in Lopburi in Thailand; the inscriptions of Purnavarman (the king of Taruma in West Java) of about 450 CE); the inscription of Rambi-poedji near Locmadjang-Djember in East Java belonging to the fifth century CE; the inscriptions of Mahendravarman of Cambodia, dated early seventh century CE⁵³, sandstone stele of the Buddha with Ye Dhamma inscribed in Sanskrit dating to sixth century CE, Muang si Mahosot (central Thailand) inscription of sixth century CE.⁵⁴ John Guy notes that “Buddhism was firmly established in Pyu territories of Myanmar in the fifth century CE”,⁵⁵ evident from the find of one of the earliest Pali texts in Sriksetra (Myanmar). The text is inscribed on gold leaves and contains eight excerpts of Buddhist canonical texts and has been dated to the mid to late fifth century CE.⁵⁶ As for Kedah, John Guy is of the opinion that, “The Indian presence, predominantly Buddhist, seems established by the sixth century, if not earlier.”⁵⁷ Dating to the eighth century CE are Buddhist mouldings and metal foils inscribed with the Ye Dharma verse.⁵⁸

Early evidence of maritime transactions between India and Southeast Asia is provided not by monumental remains or sculptures, but rather more basic commodities, namely food grains, pottery and beads. Arduous effort by archaeologists made over the last four decades has revealed a rich collection of artefacts, each pregnant with startling revelations of South and Southeast Asia’s past. Archaeological artefacts in the form of pottery and beads found in coastal sites of Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia clearly indicate that maritime trade between these regions and South Asia was established by the third century BCE.⁵⁹ The presence of merchants is evident from seals found at U Thong and Chansen categorized as merchant seals. The small stone seals from Palembang are inscribed in Sanskrit with the verse, “This successful journey is for the welfare and happiness for all human beings.”⁶⁰

Archaeobotanical Studies: Scientific analysis of crop remains date the interactions between India and Southeast Asia to the prehistoric period. In Peninsular Thailand, the Indian community brought a suite of pulses that were formerly unknown in the area, or at least, if present in the wild, undomesticated, such as the mung bean. Mung bean (*Vigna radiata*), horsegram (*Macrotyloma uniflorum*) and pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*) were found in both Khao Sam Kaeo and Phu Khao Thong; but Phu Khao Thong, located on the India-facing coast, had a larger suite of pulses of Indian origin. This included black gram (*Vigna mungo*) and grass pea (*Lathyrus*

⁵³ S. Singaravelu, ‘Note on the Possible Relationship of King Rama Khamhaeng’s Sukhodaya Script of Thailand to the Grantha Script of South India’, *Journal of the Siam Society*, 1969, 57(1):7.

⁵⁴ Guy, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu Buddhist Sculptures of Early Southeast Asia*, p.18.

⁵⁵ Guy, *Lost Kingdoms*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Thein Lwin, Win Kyaing, and Janice Stargardt, ‘The Pyu Civilization of Myanmar and the City of Śrī Ks·etra’ in John Guy (ed), *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu Buddhist Sculptures of Early Southeast Asia*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014, p.65.

⁵⁷ Guy, *Lost Kingdoms*, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Guy, *Lost Kingdoms*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Shahnaz Husne Jahan, ‘Rouletted Ware Links South and Southeast Asia through Maritime Trade’, *SPAFA Journal*, 2010, 20(3):5.

⁶⁰ Guy, *Lost Kingdoms*, p. 8.

sativus), which were not found at Khao Sam Kaeo. Grass pea is originally from either the Near East or the Balkans, and came to India before 2000 BCE. The grass pea, together with other finds in the Thai-Malay Peninsula such as hyacinth bean (cf. *Lablab purpureus*) and finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*), provides evidence of early translocations from as far afield as East Africa and, in the case of the latter two, via India by at least 1600 BCE and 1000 BCE respectively.⁶¹

“A number of important cultivars in south India, especially amongst trees, have their likely wild origins in Southeast Asia. These include the Areca-nut palm, the nuts of which are chewed as a stimulant together with slaked lime and the leaves of the vine Piper betel. Both are probably from Island Southeast Asia⁶² Another interesting tree that appears to have come to south India from the east at this time is the true sandalwood (*Santalum album*). Sandalwood is probably originally wild in the driest parts of Indonesia, such as eastern Java and the Lesser Sundas, where its distribution appears natural.⁶³ Wood charcoal from the latest Neolithic levels of Sanganakallu (Sannarachamma) in south India, identified as *Santalum*, however, places it in the southern Deccan by c. 1300 BCE”⁶⁴

The Rouletted Ware: This wheel-made pottery constitutes a very significant item in the evidence for exchange between South and Southeast Asia and is dated from 500 BCE to 300CE.⁶⁵ “It has been well known in India since the excavations of Wheeler at Arikamedu in the 1940s. The most common form is a flat-based shallow dish, about 6 centimetres deep and up to 32 centimetres in diameter. The bevelled rim curves slightly inwards. The surface is highly polished, brown to red-grey in colour, and the interior body mainly grey. Decoration comprises one to three interior bands of impressed rouletted designs.”⁶⁶ The subsequent explorations and excavations have yielded Rouletted Ware from 124 sites in India. Rouletted Ware is concentrated more in peninsular India, particularly along the coasts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and on the banks of the Rivers Godavari, Kaveri and Krishna and recent excavations at Pattanam along the coast of Kerala have also yielded Rouletted Ware. Rouletted Ware is also reported at Beikthano in Myanmar; Kobak Kendal (Buni Complex) and Cibutak in

⁶¹ Dorian Q. Fuller and N. Boivin, ‘Crops, Cattle and Commensals across the Indian Ocean: Current and Potential Archaeobiological Evidence’, in G. Lefevre (ed.) *Plantes et sociétés (Études Ocean Indien 42–43)*: Paris: Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, 2009, pp.13–46.

⁶² Dorian Q Fuller, Nicole Boivin, Tom Hoogervorst and Robin Allaby, ‘Across the Indian Ocean: The Prehistoric Movement of Plants and Animals’, *Antiquity*, 2011, 8: 549.

⁶³ Dorian Q Fuller, Nicole Boivin, Tom Hoogervorst and Robin Allaby, ‘Across the Indian Ocean’: 549.

⁶⁴ E. Asouti and Dorian Q.Fuller, *Trees and Woodlands of South India: Archaeological Perspectives*, Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast Press, 2007, p.135.

⁶⁵ Peter Magee, ‘Revisiting Indian Rouletted Ware and the Impact of Indian Ocean Trade in Early Historic South Asia’, *Antiquity*, 2010, 84:1049.

⁶⁶ Bérénice Bellina, and Ian C. Glover, ‘The archaeology of early contacts with India and the Mediterranean World from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD’, in Ian C Glover and P. Bellwood (eds), *Southeast Asia, from the Prehistory to History*, London: Routledge/Curzon Press, 2004, p.78.

Java; Sembiran and Pacung in Bali; Tra Kieu, Go Cam in Vietnam; Palembang in Sumatra; Bukit Tengku Lembu in Malaysia.⁶⁷

The sites across India include- in West Bengal at Chandraketugarh, Deulpota, Atghara, Harinarayanpur and Hadipur (24-Parganas district), Tamluk, Tilda, Bahiri, Boral and Natshal (Medinipur district), Mangalkot (Bardhaman district), Saptagrama (Hugli district); in Orissa at Sisupalgarh (Khurdha district), Manikpatna (Puri district) and Radhanagar (Jajpur district); in Maharashtra at Junnar (Pune district), Paithan (Aurangabad district), Nashik (Nashik district), Nevasa (Ahmednagar district), Ter (Osmanabad district); in Andhra Pradesh at Kondapur (Medak district), Salihundam (Srikakulam district), Vamulapadu and Satanikota (Kurnool district); in Karnataka at Maski (Raichur district), Brahmagiri and Chandravalli (Chitradurga district); in Tamil Nadu at Kanchipuram (Kanchipuram district), Karaikadu (Cuddalore district), Arikamedu (Pondicherry), Kaveripattinam (Krishnagiri district), Karur (Karur district), Manigramam (Nagapattinam district), Uraiyyur (Tiruchchirappalli), Alagankulam Ramanathapuram district) and Sengamedu (Perambalur district); in Uttar Pradesh at Ayodhya (Faizabad district) and in Bihar at Rajghat.⁶⁸

Archaeological sites which yielded Rouletted Ware along the Andaman Coast are at Pak Chan in Kra Buri district, Kapoe in Kapoe district and Phu Khao Thong in Suk Samran district in Ranong province and on the east coast of the Kra Isthmus at Khao Sam Kaeo archaeological site in Muang district and Tham Thuay.⁶⁹ Rouletted Ware sherds from Khao Sam Kaeo archaeological site in Chumphon province have been analysed technologically by P. Bouvet and are dated between fourth and second century BCE.⁷⁰

Rouletted Ware has also been reported from Chansen in Central Thailand . Other archaeological sites of Southeast Asia that yielded Rouletted Ware sherds are at Beikthano on the Irrawaddy River in Central Myanmar; Bukit Tengku Lembu in Perlis on the western coast of Malaysia; Kobak Kendal and Cibutak in North West Java, Indonesia; Sembiran, a coastal site on the north coast of Bali, Indonesia; and Tra Kieu, the ancient Cham capital of Simhapura in Central Vietnam). Among these, Rouletted Ware of Sembiran has been dated from the last centuries BCE to the early centuries of the Christian Era⁷¹ and Rouletted Ware of Tra Kieu has been dated to the first century BCE and the first half of the first century CE.⁷² Mineralogical analysis

⁶⁷ Sila Tripathi, 'Seafaring Archaeology of the East Coast of India and Southeast Asia During the Early Historical Period', *Ancient Asia*, 2017, 8: 7.

⁶⁸ Shahnaz Husne Jahan, 'Rouletted Ware Links South and Southeast Asia through Maritime Trade', *SPAFA Journal*, 2010, 20(3):6-7 .

⁶⁹ Jahan, 'Rouletted Ware Links South and Southeast Asia through Maritime Trade': 8.

⁷⁰ Jahan, 'Rouletted Ware Links South and Southeast Asia through Maritime Trade': 9.

⁷¹ I W Ardika and P.S. Bellwood, 'Sembiran: The Beginning of Indian Contact with Bali', *Antiquity*, 1991, 65: 224.

⁷² Ian C Glover and M.Yamagata, 'The Origins of Cham Civilization: Indigeneous, Chinese and Indian Influences in Central Vietnam as Revealed by Excavations at TraKieu, Vietnam 1990 and 1993', in C.Yeung, and Wai-Ling, B. Li (eds.), *Conference Papers on Archaeology in Southeast Asia*, Hongkong, 1995, p. 166.

confirmed that the fabric of the pottery from this site was similar to that of sherds from Wheeler's excavations at Arikamedu.⁷³

The excavations at Sembiran and Pacung on the north-eastern coast of Bali have yielded a number of Rouletted Ware sherds, a sherd with graffito and semiprecious stone beads which resemble the findings of Arikamedu. Prof. B. N. Mukherjee has deciphered the graffito as Kharoshti script and read as 'te sra vi' where as Dr. I. Mahadevan has suggested that the script is Brahmi in Prakrit language and read as 'm(a) la sa'.⁷⁴ In recent years, the problem has been illuminated through chemical examination of the pottery fabric. Reporting the discovery of Rouletted ware and Arikamedu Type 10 sherds from Bali and Indonesia, for which Ardika & Bellwood⁷⁵ proposed a geological source in India. "Subsequently, Ardika and others indicated a 'trading/warehousing' activity area at Sembiran and also the identification of a number of sherds of assumed South Asian origin, including Arikamedu Type 10 and Arikamedu Type 18."⁷⁶ "Thus, the presence of Indian-made Rouletted Ware in Southeast Asia puts the matter of contact between these regions beyond question."⁷⁷

Beads : Bérénice Bellina's comprehensive and meticulous study of beads leads her to conclude that "The distribution of beads shows that cultural exchange was already underway in the protohistorical period, and while the transfer was not all one way: South-east Asia specified the form of the symbolic objects and India was itself affected by the exchanges."⁷⁸ The most ancient beads from South-east Asia, dating from the last centuries BCE, are technically identical and of similar size, or smaller, to those from India. However they are of a very high quality which is not so frequent in India and often have more complex morphologies, such as icosahedral and bipyramidal shaped beads. These high quality beads have been found in Central Thailand sites such as Ban Don Tha Phet, a Peninsular Thailand site, Khao Sam Kaeo, Coastal Vietnamese sites of the Sa Huynh culture (Sa Huynh, Giong Ca Vo, Phu Hoa) and, in the Philippines, the Tabon caves in the Palawan island. Local South-east Asian manufacturing centres have not yet been located, and the beads are assumed to be Indian productions.⁷⁹ "In the earlier period (Period 1) corresponding to the last centuries BCE, the high proportion of ornaments found in South-east Asia were made with the most skilled Indian technologies but in a local style, suggest (following ethno-historical analogies), Indian productions made to order. This must be the result of well-

⁷³ R.Prior, 'The Ceramics from Early Historic Sites in Vietnam', in P.Y. Manguin (ed.) *Southeast Asian Archaeology 1994*, Hull: Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1998, p. 106.

⁷⁴ Tripathi, 'Seafaring Archaeology of the East Coast of India and Southeast Asia': 7.

⁷⁵ I.W.Ardika, and P.S.Bellwood, 'Sembiran': 224.

⁷⁶ L.A. Ford, A.M. Pollard, R.A.E. Coningham and B.Stern, 'A Geochemical Investigation of the Origin of Rouletted and Other Related South Asian Fine Wares', *Antiquity*, 2005,79 (306):909.

⁷⁷ Bérénice Bellina, and I.C. Glover, 'The Archaeology of Early Contacts with India and the Mediterranean World from the Fourth Century BC to the Fourth Century AD', in Ian.C Glover and P. Bellwood (eds.), *Southeast Asia, from the Prehistory to History*, London: Routledge/Curzon Press, 2004, p.77.

⁷⁸ Bérénice Bellina, 'Beads, Social Change and Interaction between India and South-East Asia.' *Antiquity*, 2003, 77: 286-287.

⁷⁹ Bellina, 'Beads, Social Change and Interaction between India and South-East Asia': 289.

established exchange relationships, probably dating back to the first half of the first millennium BCE⁸⁰. During the following period (Period 2) corresponding to the first millennium CE, manufacturing centres began to develop in South-east Asia, producing beads of medium or mediocre quality *en masse*. At the same time, beads of Indian manufacture continued to reach certain destinations.”⁸¹

“The method by which Indo-Pacific beads are made is complex. It requires specialized knowledge, a unique furnace and tools, and a dozen trained workers.⁸² They are Indian at heart, as the industry began in India and has its last remnant there, but their story is much broader than that, being largely played out in Southeast Asia.”⁸³ The Indian settlements of Khambhat and Arikamedu are considered as two of the largest centres of production of Indo-Pacific glass beads (including collared beads and etched beads) from the second half of the first century BCE to the first or second century CE. However, recent investigations have produced small pieces of broken glass tube wasters (broken during drawing), black slag and tubular pre forms of uncut glass beads at Giong Ca Vo (and Khao Sam Kheo, Thailand) that indicate that at least some of the glass beads were produced locally⁸⁴ or elsewhere in Southeast Asia using imported Indian technology⁸⁵.

The geographic distribution of Indo-Pacific trade beads indicates that complex trading routes had already developed widely from Southeast Asia to the Indian sub-continent, and possibly as far as the Mediterranean by the early to mid-first millennium BCE (*ca.* 2350 BP). Not only were finished ornaments and raw materials traded but evidence from Thailand and Vietnam demonstrates that technological innovation and manufacturing skill were also exchanged between different cultures⁸⁶

Stamped Ware: Conversely there is the presence of Southeast Asian wares at Indian coastal sites Such as Kottapattanam, Arikamedu⁸⁷, Alagan Kulam⁸⁸ and Jaugada⁸⁹. 337 sherds of stamped or

⁸⁰ Bellina, ‘Beads, Social Change and Interaction between India and South-East Asia’: 291.

⁸¹ Bellina, ‘Beads, Social Change and Interaction between India and South-East Asia’: 293.

⁸² Peter Francis Jr, ‘Glass Beads in Asia, Part Two: Indo Pacific Beads’, *Asian Perspectives*, 1990, 29(1): 16.

⁸³ Francis Jr, ‘Glass Beads in Asia’: 20.

⁸⁴ Nguyen K.D. , ‘Jewellery in jar burial sites from Can Gio District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. *Khao Co Hoc* 1995,2: 27–46 ; Hirano, Y. 2008. Trading and its Development in Iron Age of Vietnam: A Study on Glass Ornament’, *Khao Co Hoc*, 2008, 4: 39–44 (in Vietnamese)

⁸⁵ Bérénice Bellina, ‘Maritime Silk Roads’ Ornament Industries: Socio–Political Practices and Cultural Transfers in the South China Sea’, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 2014, 24: 345–377.

⁸⁶ Ian.C Glover, ‘Ban Don Ta Phet: The 1984–5 Excavation’, in Ian C. Glover and E. Glover (eds), *Southeast Asian Archaeology 1986, Proceedings of the First Conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe*, Oxford: BAR International Series 561,1990, pp. 139–183.; K.D Nguyen, ‘Jewellery in Jar burial sites from Can Gio District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam’, *Khao Co Hoc* 1995,(2):27–46 (in Vietnamese).; Bellina, Bérénice and Ian C. Glover, ‘The Archaeology of Early Contact with India and the Mediterranean world from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD’, in Ian C. Glover and P. Bellwood (eds), *Southeast Asia: From Prehistory to History*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2004, p.70

⁸⁷ R E M Wheeler, ‘Arikamedu: An Indo Roman Trading Station on the East Coast of India’, *Ancient India*, 1946, 2, : 49-51.

impressed ware have been found at Kottapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, ⁹⁰ and according to Rao, this is a southeast Asian ware which is datable to as early as 700 BCE in north Vietnam. The ware found at Kottapatnam closely resembles the southeast Asian ware⁹¹ most of the decorative motifs have almost exact parallels in southeast Asia sites like Johor, Tanjong Kubor, Kota Tinggi, Santabong .⁹² Rao estimates that the presence of this pottery at Indian sites can be dated to third century BCE,⁹³ and states that “The occurrence of this ware only in the coastal sites, especially those with evidence of maritime activity, is a clear indication that this ware reached the Indian shores via maritime contracts.”⁹⁴

Roman Coins as Jewellery: The custom of wearing Roman coins or their imitations as pendants is documented by numerous finds from southern India. The equivalent phenomenon in Southeast Asia is to be seen in the context of the network of maritime routes.⁹⁵ A disc of gold from Oc Eo, 19 mm in diameter corresponds to that of a Roman *aureus*, and its design being a copy of Antoninus Pius (r. 138–161 C. E.) coin, ⁹⁶ and another gold disc from Óc Eo seems to derive from a gold coin of Commodus (r. 180–192 C. E.).⁹⁷ Pendants imitating Roman coins have also been found at Khlong Thom in southern Thailand.⁹⁸ “The pendant from Khlong Thom is certainly to be seen in the context of the popularity of the Indian pendants imitating this particular coin of Tiberius.⁹⁹ The practice of wearing such pendants may have been ‘imported’ from southern India, either encountered there by Southeast Asians in the course of trade activities, or brought eastwards by South Indians”¹⁰⁰ According to Borell, the Roman coins would have served as prototypes in manufacturing the moulds, for the imitations might have been imported via India in the scope of more regional networks across the eastern Indian Ocean.¹⁰¹

⁸⁸ V. Begley, ‘The Ancient Port of Arikamedu’, *Journal of Pondicherry Institute for Linguistics and Culture*, 1994 : 203.

⁸⁹ *Indian Archaeology Review*, 1956-57: 30-31.

⁹⁰ K.P.Rao, ‘Early Trade and Contacts between South India and Southeast Asia, (300 B.C.-A.D. 200)’, *East and West*, December 2001, 51, (3/4):385.

⁹¹ Rao, ‘Early Trade and Contacts between South India and Southeast Asia’: 388.

⁹² Rao, ‘Early Trade and Contacts between South India and Southeast Asia’: 389.

⁹³ Rao, ‘Early Trade and Contacts between South India and Southeast Asia’: 392.

⁹⁴ Rao, ‘Early Trade and Contacts between South India and Southeast Asia’: 391.

⁹⁵ Brigitte Borell, ‘The Power of Images – Coin Portraits of Roman Emperors on Jewellery Pendants in Early Southeast Asia’, *Zietchrift fur Arcaheologie Aussereuropaischer Kultures*, 2014, 6: 7.

⁹⁶ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 10.

⁹⁷ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 13.

⁹⁸ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 15.

⁹⁹ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 23.

¹⁰⁰ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 29-30.

¹⁰¹ Borell, ‘The Power of Images’: 31.

2. The Raison d'être of the Themes Chosen for the Bibliography and their Relevance **Objectives of the Project:**

The project does not locate the term Suvarṇabhūmi within the narrow confines of Buddhist or Nationalist framework but signifies a geographical location in the maritime world. The primary concern of the project is elucidating the multifaceted and multidimensional interactions across the Bay of Bengal based on a multidisciplinary approach incorporating archaeological, literary, ethnographical and archival sources. The project's objective is to better understand the various dimensions and facets of interactions and interplay across the Bay of Bengal with a focus on Maritime Archaeology. The project approaches the study of maritime interactions between India and Southeast Asia at multiple levels, encompassing a database comprising of archaeology, ethnography, maritime archaeology, archival and art historical studies. The themes of the Project are as follows:

2.a) Boat Building Traditions— This theme aims at bringing out the diverse boat building traditions, shipbuilding technology, evolution of various sailing crafts and interpreting various boat finds across the eastern shores of India as well as various sites across coastal Southeast Asia. Besides ethnographic data the resource base constitutes various shipwrecks and boat remains, depiction of boats found at sites such as Ajanta caves, the Jagganatha temple or at Niah caves and also information regarding traditional navigation and sailing such as the Manual of the Bugis, or the Indian text *Yuktikalpataru*, which highlight the rich sailing and boat building tradition.

2.b) Narratives of Tran locality : Humans are the key agents in the creation, maintenance, continuity and change in maritime networks. Important connections in economic, military organization, religious ideology were forged across the Indian Ocean and the participants in this inter regional network included sailors, mariners, traders, pilgrims, financiers, intellectuals, soldiers and administrators. A record of their journey and reconstruction of their narratives is possible through the study of textual data, inscriptions, artefacts, monuments and oral traditions. The presence of these communities and their narratives of trans-locality are established with the aid of archaeological and monumental remains, literary references and inscriptions.

2.c) Colonial Intervention: This theme has its focus on the various archaeological and ethnographical studies that were carried out and monumental and architectural remains that were recorded by European colonizers in the 19th and 20th century across India and Southeast Asia. With the coming of colonial rule in India and Southeast Asia, new disciplines of study such as Buddhist studies, archaeology etc. found a foothold, and shaped initial views of interactions between India and Southeast Asia within the colonial framework and objectives.

2.d) Indian Leaders Travelling to Southeast Asia and vice versa- The colonial era also witnessed mutual interest of Indian and Southeast Asian leaders in each other's country and culture. While Rabindranath Tagore visited various places in Southeast Asia, King Chulalongkorn travelled through India in 1872 and the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra

Bose had its headquarters in Singapore. This theme is thus chosen so as to highlight forging of socio, cultural and political ties between Indian and Southeast Asian regions prior to Independence.

2.e) Coastal Shrines and Religious Identity- As communities moved away from their shores and settled in new areas they constructed religious structure to maintain their identity. Cultural symbols and religious identities circulated along with people. The monuments and buildings dotting the littoral of eastern coast of India and Southeast Asian shores were not merely structures. They dotted the coastline and served as markers for sailors and mariners and were significant installations that physically circumscribed the seafaring world.

2.f) Indian Textiles in Southeast Asia : Indian textiles were an important trade commodity in southeast Asia and this theme not only traces the existence of commercial trade in Indian textiles but rather highlights the socio religious significance of Indian textiles and designs in southeast Asian societies. It also indicates an equally important involvement of southeast Asian communities in trade in textiles, which included a wide range of textiles that came primarily from production centers on the Coromandel coast and Gujarat.

3. To What Extent does the Project chart a Different course vis-à-vis Existing Secondary Writings on the Theme of India and Southeast Asia Interactions?

As has been rightly pointed out, “Histories written over the last five decades in different countries of Asia have primarily dealt with the ancient period of the present nation states and the discussion has largely centered on present national boundaries and local identities *versus* external influences. Perhaps it is time to move beyond the paradigm of the nation state in researching the history of Asia as these frontiers had little meaning in the earlier period.”¹⁰² The sea/ ocean world serves as a channel between peoples and lands scattered across the seas. The project aims to study movement and interactions across modern jurisdictional boundaries for a deeper understanding of the salient interactions at multiple levels. While most studies and research have focused primarily on one country or the other, this project aims on integrating information from all ASEAN countries to better comprehend developments and interactions amongst the littoral societies in India and Southeast Asia. The focus is to bring forth the multifaceted relations forged mutually across the seas, and the reciprocal and complimentary historical cultural interactions that have existed between India and ASEAN over two millennia, exemplified by a study of the bibliography provided for the themes selected for the project.

¹⁰² H. P. Ray, ‘Beyond National Boundaries’, in Satish Chandra and H.P. Ray (eds), *The Sea, Identity and History: From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, Singapore/New Delhi: ISEAS/ Manohar Publishing, 2013, p.35

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