

ECAI Workshop on Maritime Buddhism

The primary topic for this workshop is Maritime Buddhism in a broad sense. It includes information on Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia, documentation of the travels of Buddhist pilgrims, trade and shipping, shipwrecks, archaeology, trade routes, trade winds, monsoons, and historic climate change. In addition, related Religious Atlas work and digital Buddhist resources will be discussed.

The ECAI project on Maritime Buddhism plans to support mapping of Maritime Buddhist sites and shipwrecks and build a method to integrate existing data into an interactive map interface.

For the Friday sessions we are inviting the workshop participants to present results and status reports of related work. The Saturday session will include continuation of research reports, hands on demonstrations, and concrete planning: outlining the research agenda, identifying appropriate data, data collection, fundraising, and collaborative working plans.

Friday, 21 October 2011

11:00 – 12:30 – Introductions and Project Reports I

Lewis Lancaster

ECAI, UC Berkeley

Opening remarks on the vision of the Maritime Buddhism Project

I-Chun Fan

GIS Center of the Research Center for Humanities & Social Sciences,
Academia Sinica, Taiwan

Review of recent projects at Academia Sinica and of the digital atlas interface used for the Religious Atlas of China and the Himalayas

D. Dayalan

Archaeological Survey of India

Archaeological sites and evidence of Maritime Buddhism in South India

Buddhism came to South India during the period of Emperor Asoka (c. 273-236 BC). The existence of Buddhism in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka right from the Asokan period is well attested by large number of Buddhist edicts, edifices and other associated remains at various places. In Tamil Nadu, however, the Buddhist remains in the form of structures, stone objects and bronzes are datable to 4th-5th century and onwards. It appears that Buddhism was a flourishing faith

in this period in Tamil Nadu and has been patronized by the local people and the merchants and perhaps the rulers as well.

On the basis of the clue from the inscriptions, accounts given in indigenous and foreign texts and place names, a host of scholars and others explored all over Tamil Nadu and plotted a large number of places yielding Buddhist relics throughout the state. The outstanding excavations at Kaveripumpattinam (Lat. 11°12'50" N; Long. 79° 52' 50" E) by the Archaeological Survey of India had brought to light the remains of a *Vihara* of 4th-5th century and a Buddhist temple of 6th century or little later. Interestingly this place was remained as a flourishing centre of maritime trade in the early centuries. Nagapattinam, another significant seaport of Tamil Nadu in the medieval period had also flourished as an important Buddhist centre for quite a long time. Hundreds of Buddhist bronzes were produced here right from 9th century AD to the 17th century. The mass production of bronzes in Nagapattinam make this place an important centre Buddhist bronzes in India and large number of Buddhist bronzes were exported from here to various other Buddhist centres in the country. As a result of maritime contacts between South India and South-east Asian countries, there existed in Nagapattinam a colony of Buddhist and also Buddhist temple erected out of the subsidies granted by the Sailendra kings. During the Cola period there exist at least a *vihara* and two temples known as Sudamani varma vihara, Rajaraja Perumballi and Rajendra Perumballi or Cola Perumballi. The Smaller Laden plates of Kulottunga Cola I record the gifts to both the *Pallis*. During the reign of Pallava king Narasimha varman-II (8th century), a Buddhist temple was constructed here under the request of the Chinese king for the sake of Chinese Buddhists who came to Nagapattinam from China for trade.

The paper will dealt in detail about the archaeological probing of Buddhist remains in Tamil Nadu and their maritime trade links. Interestingly majority of the Buddhist sites were flourished as trade centres and also yielded Chinese and South-East Asian potteries and other materials. Many of the Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu Buddhist centres were frequented by the aficionados from Sri Lanka and other South-East Asian countries. One of the *Vihara* at Nagajunakonda datable to 4th -5th century AD is referred to as Simhala vihara.

12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 – Project Reports II

Lim Chen Sian

Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore
and Archaeology Unit, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
*Singapore Country Report & Collaborative Archaeological Projects in
Southeast Asia*

The archaeology in Singapore is a youthful discipline as the first excavations took place within living memory in 1984. Over the past 27 years, a small team of Singapore based archaeologists have expanded their activities beyond the island. The recent establishment of the Archaeological Unit within the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, provides a new platform to further projects designed to foster collaborative research in the archaeology and civilisations of Southeast Asia.

Since 2006, collaborative archaeological investigations and projects have taken place in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Apart from research and pre-development salvage projects, archaeologists in Singapore are extensively involved in the education and outreach work. This report presents a brief history of the archaeological undertakings in Singapore and the collaborative projects with other Southeast Asian countries.

Alexander Stoljarov

Institute of Oriental Studies of the RAS, Moscow
Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
Seasons and Weekdays for Landgrants in Early Mediaeval North India

The study of the early mediaeval North Indian landgrants, that are generally incised in copper plates, shows that 85% of them bear dates designations in their texts. Normally these date designations consist of the year, month (or season) and date. Very often the weekday is also added. Sometimes some auspicious day is mentioned like solstice, equinox, lunar or solar eclipse, etc.

In this presentation the seasons, weekdays and auspicious days are to be traced, that considered to be the preferable for making land grants in North India in the early mediaeval period (4th – 13th centuries C.E.) - both in general and in different periods and regions.

David Blundell

National Chengchi University, Taiwan
Buddhist Voyaging in Monsoon Asia utilizing Austronesian Sea Craft

This presentation is based on Buddhism voyaging in stage transit from Southern Asia to Southeast Asia. Buddhist monks and merchants not inhibited by Vedic restrictions for sea travel commissioned Austronesian-speaking navigators to sail them in sea craft – wood plank haul lashed and stitched together with outrigger – across the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. Destinations were to seats of kingdoms and trade centers where the Buddhist word and its faith developed in a healthy or vigorous way, esp. as the result of a particularly congenial environment of Southeast Asia.

Here I will trace the earliest evidence of trans-ocean sailing craft and Buddhist landings from the Subcontinent and Sri Lanka eastward across Monsoon Asia. As far back as two millennia ago people in the trappings of this new international spiritual authority at the time introduced a web of connections forming a world trade system in a tropical region of peninsulas and islands. Austronesian (Malay-Indonesian) built ships transporting people and cargo across the Indian Ocean that continued up to the early part of last century.

15:30 – 16:00 – Break

16:00 – 17:30 – Project Reports III

Osmund Boppearachchi

French National Centre for Scientific Research, (C.N.R.S), Paris, France.

“Diffusion of Mahayanist Images and Implantation of Port at River Mouths in Ancient Sri Lanka”

Sri Lanka played an important role in the long distance maritime trade as a result of its central position in the Indian Ocean. The most important characteristic of all the ancient ports around the island is their geographical situation at the estuaries of rivers. The location of emporia along rivers must have facilitated transactions with the interior regions. Archaeological data obtained from excavations and surface explorations provide much needed evidence for the « international » contacts established between the Western and the South Asian traders on the regional trade network between South India and Sri Lanka. The present author has discussed elsewhere that the earliest Buddha images and some portable marble reliefs depicting various Buddhist themes found in Sri Lanka were originally executed in Amaravati-Nagarjunakonda and were brought to the island by pious traders or pilgrims as offerings. It was during this period when the South Indian traders were playing the intermediary role between

Roman traders and Sri Lankans that they came from Andhra and Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka in search of merchandise. When Mahayanism reached its apogee in Sri Lanka around the eighth century CE, new forms of artistic expressions began to develop very particularly on the coastal range around the island. Avalokitesvara, the most venerated Bodhisattva in South and South-East Asia was reputed for healing the sick and saving mariners from shipwreck. A Sanskrit inscription from Tiriyaya engraved in Grantha script, refers to merchant mariners from Tamil Nadu who endowed this Mahayana Buddhist shrine dedicated to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and his consort Tara. In ancient Sri Lanka, Buddhist art undergoes drastic changes as the focus of trade changes one horizon to the other. In many cases, even without precise textual evidence, artistic expressions show the effects of different cultures. In short, the emergence of new iconography has to be considered as a main source of information when writing the historical diversity of different cultures. It is thus important to study the Mahayanist Images erected in the sanctuaries built either at the river mouths facing the sea or inland along the navigable rivers.

Jeanette Zerneke

ECAI, UC Berkeley

Update on ECAI Religious Atlas of China and development of a Tibetan Religious Atlas

Research and development work by ECAI affiliates in constructing the Religious Atlas of China and the Tibetan Religious Atlas can provide a model for the development of the Maritime Buddhism Project. These projects were developed in collaboration between ECAI and international scholars. They have developed dynamic mapping interfaces and links to varied resources. The paper will cover the development process and results from these projects. Recent work showing the foundation of Tibetan Monasteries over time and efforts to host a new online version of the Tibetan Canon will be presented.

Saturday, 22 October 2011

9:30 – 10:30 – Development Issues

Discussion of issues involved in developing complex Cultural Atlases and Digital Humanities Systems. Short introductions to some of the issues will be presented then opened for discussion. Focus issues will include:

- Dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity in development of complex visualizations and interfaces

- Using a diversity of digital data and media in integrated systems
- Incorporating Computational Humanities – including text analysis
- The roles of 3D / Immersive technology and potentials for integration and analysis

Project Development Planning □ Participants will discuss challenges and work on project planning, technical options, and collaboratively develop prospectuses.

Venue:

Friday meeting will be at the PNC conference venue:

[Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University](#)

Sasa Patasala Building,
Soi Chula 12, Phayathai Road,
Bangkok 10330,
Thailand

Saturday sessions will be held in the SASA Guest house, adjacent to the conference venue.