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SOUTH CHINA SEA-CULTURAL DIFFUSION AMONG SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES & INDIA

KEY WORDS:

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The word “South China Sea” is familiar and popular in the universal contemporary issues since decades. South China Sea (Chinese Nan Hai) arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland. It is bounded on the northeast by the Taiwan Strait (by which it is connected to the East China Sea), on the east by Taiwan and the Philippines; on the southeast and south by Borneo, the southern limit of the Gulf of Thailand, and the east coast of Malay Peninsula, and on the west and north by the Asian mainland. There are many theories regarding how humans came to live on the surrounding lands. However, Professor Bill Solheim had developed an interesting theory – since supported by anthropology and archeological findings – on how cultural norms and goods moved across the region. Thousands of years ago, there was a group of people, referred to as the “Nusantao” that survived on the seas. The “Maritime Silk Road” is a sea channel that starts from China’s southeastern ports, passes through the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, enters the Indian Ocean, and eventually reaches the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. There was emigration and migration between Tang China and Southeast Asia. The Chinese and indigenous people in Southeast Asia jointly gave rise to early development in the region and culture spread from one part to other parts. The distant lands of the South China Sea are laced with infinite contrast in the landscapes, the cultures, and the lifestyles. In the villages, farmers bring their crops from the country to sell in the marketplace, which allows the people to cook with the freshest meats, vegetables, and spices available. Over the centuries the South China Sea has served as a crossroads for world travelers, and each nationality has contributed a unique flavor to the fascinating cultural blend that is spread from one region to other region. Regional trade networks and long-distance trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere aided the diffusion and exchange of technology and culture between Europe, Africa and Asia. The present paper is based on secondary data and focuses its attention on South China Sea and diffusion of cultural elements.

“Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by (a human) as a member of society”
Sir Edward B. Tylor’s (1871)

Culture is the social behavior and norms found in human societies. Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Some aspects of human behavior, social practices such as culture, and expressive forms such as art, music, dance, ritual, and religion, and technology such as tool usage, cooking shelter, and clothing are said to be cultural universities, found in all human societies. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture and art, whereas the immaterial aspects of culture such as principles of social organization (including practices of political organization and social institutions), mythology, philosophy, literature (both written and oral) and science comprise the intangible cultural heritage of a society

(Culture,).

“Friedrich Ratzel, Leo Frobenius, Fritz Graebner and William Schmidt, approach was through the analysis of culture complexes identified geographically and studied as they spread and developed historically. It has both time and space dimensions. The first dimension of space was explained in terms of culture circles and the second dimension of time was explained in terms of culture strata”.

-German School of Diffusion

Diffusion is a social process through which elements of culture spread from one society or social group to another (cultural diffusion), which means it is, in essence, a process of social change. It is also the process through which innovations are introduced into an organization or social group (diffusion of innovations). Things that are spread through diffusion include ideas, values, concepts, knowledge, practices, behaviors, materials, and symbols.

Cultural Diffusion of the South China Sea countries surrounding can be divided into three cultural areas: China, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam share many cultural characteristics, as do Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Thailand forms a distinctly different cultural area. The distinctions are not clear-cut, as all these countries have a multi-ethnic population, but there tend to be politically dominant ethnic groups that have determined long-term political processes. Concentrating on two big blocks, the Nusantara (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines) and the Sinic block (China, Taiwan, Singapore and perhaps Thailand), we will try to distinguish between their respective cultural conceptions of space. The cultural interpretation of maritime space will thus be defined as part of the Longue Dure of history (Braudel). Through this methodology we hope to enhance our understanding (in the sense of Max Weber’s interpretative sociology) of current conflicts in the South China Sea (Hans-Dieter Evers)

Thousands of years ago, there was a group of people, referred to as the “Nusantao” that survived on the seas. The “Maritime Silk Road” is a sea channel that starts from China’s southeastern ports, passes through the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, enters the Indian Ocean, and eventually reaches the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. There was emigration and migration between Tang China and Southeast Asia. The Chinese and indigenous people in Southeast Asia jointly gave rise to early development in the region and culture spread from one part to other parts.

SOCIAL DIFFUSION OF SOUTH CHINA SEA

The South China Sea has been an important shipping lane for the past 2000 years, though there is little exact textual evidence before the 16th century (Ptak, R, 1992, Pp.27–56). Its rich fish resources have provided livelihood for the surrounding countries for centuries. The flow of Indian cultural values and institutions into Southeast Asia is one of the most remarkable aspects of the region’s history and an

intriguing counterpoint to China's claims that the South China Sea is a Chinese lake because the diplomat and seafarer, Admiral Zheng He, sailed it sometime in the late 14th or early 15th Century (Hindu Influence and South China Sea, 18/2/2018).

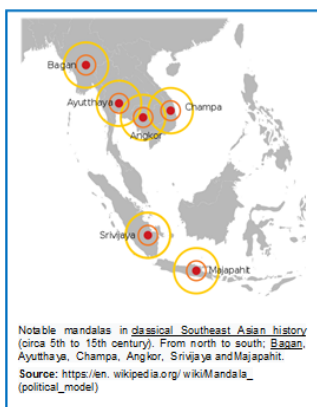
The development of new infrastructure linking the northern margins of Southeast Asia with the southern perimeter of China is retracing historical trade routes that once connected the indigenous peoples of the region. According to empirical evidence of Akha, it is a cross-border border trading activity zone between southwest China

By the beginning of the Christian era, Hindus had thoroughly colonized the region from Burma in the north to Java and Annam in the south and southeast. This is corroborated by the discovery of the Amravati style of images of Buddha on the islands of Sumatra, Java and Celebes and on the mainland of Siam and Annam.

Hindu social customs have also prevailed although they have been diluted by time and by interaction with other religions. The caste system, though not as rigorous as in India, was introduced to some degree in all the countries although more so in Java, Madura, Sumatra and Bali. The word Caturvarna, or four castes, occurs in early records of those Indonesian islands, and there are frequent references to the four castes in literature and inscriptions (Hindu Influence and South China Sea, 18/2/2018).

Straits of Melaka is a cultural centre of receiving the diffused other cultures. According to Andaya study "The first reference to a 'Sea of Melayu' is from an Arabic document dated c. 1000, which noted that travelers 'reaching the Sea of Melayu, were approaching the area of China'. While the location of the Sea of Melayu is not specified, the practice of naming a sea after a dominant people surrounding its shores suggests that this particular body of water must have been the Straits of Melaka." (Andaya, L. 2000, Pp.87- 110).

POLITICAL DIFFUSION HISTORY OF SOUTH CHINA SEA



Trade polities that sought to control both maritime and trans peninsular routes and argues that Mandal model explains the regional diffusion of craft systems and shared material culture within the "South China Sea Sphere of Interaction" (Berenica Bellina, 15 December 2017). Two main models have been applied to the early Southeast Asian political landscape. The "Mandala" model proposes a central polity with radiation influences that decline with distance from the centre and emphasize the non-physical character of the system. The second model proposes a hierarchic upstream-downstream river-based system. "Mandala" is a Sanskrit word used in Indian political manuals; it was employed by O. Wolters (1982), and H. Kulke (1986) to describe the sort of political system also called "galactic polity" by S. J Tambiah (1977) or

'Solar polity" by V.Lieberman (2003).

The "Mandala" Model and its analogues describe a confederation of kingdoms or polities subordinate to a centre of domination. At the core of the system is a ruler "claiming divine and universal authority able to maintain hegemony and counter potential rivals by building up a system of alliances with surrounding kings (Andaya Barbara Watson and Andaya Leonard Y, 2015: 46). In the Tai-Malay peninsula and Island Southeast Asia (Java and Bali excluded), the fragmented nature of the geographic environment was conducive to similarly dissected political alliances over a large territory. At times, alliances could cement small polities into a hierarchical confederation. However, competition for the control of trading routes can easily turn into conflicts, dissolving the federation and leading to the creation of new alliance and revamped federation. The "multiplicity of political centres and shifting loyalties of their leaders, particularly at the periphery of their system"(Kulke, H, 1986:7) are essential features of the "Mandala" political system of early Southeast Asia kingdoms. The hierarchical relationships that a dominant polity's leader had to maintain with other neighboring polities were hence very precarious, resulting in a trend for the Mandal to "expand and contract in concertina-like fashion" (Wolters, 1982, Pp. 16-17).

The conversion of the Buddhist Srivijaya empire, that controlled trade in much of Southeast Asia and in particular the Strait of Malacca, marked a strategic turning point as this act turned the Strait into an Islamic water. With the fall of Srivijaya the way was open for effective and widespread proselytisation and the establishment of Muslim trading centres. Modern Malays view the Strait of Malacca, which existed from the 15th to the early 16th century as the first political entity of contemporary Malaysia.

Now in the present global context of political scenario of South China Sea, the issue relates to the tensions between the United States and China. The rapid economic growth of China, sustained over 30 years, has had the inevitable effect of transforming its geopolitical standing in East Asia, if not the world (Manoj Joshi, <http://www.orfonline.org>), to control Chinese expansionism policy on South China Sea,

In the territorial claims issues of South China Sea, legal thoughts have been diffused from one region to other region to protect their sovereignty on maritime boundaries. In 2010 a watershed in the South China Sea issue was reached when then US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton declared American neutrality on the matter of the territorial claims. At the same ministerial meeting of the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) in Hanoi where she made this statement, Clinton also raised the issue of America's national interest in "freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commerce, and respect for international law in the South China Sea" (Minnie Chan, July 24)

SOUTH CHINA SEA-DIFFUSION OF ECONOMIC AND TRADE

During the medieval period (1000-1500C.E), several major trading routes developed in the Eastern Hemisphere. Trade is the main route of cultural diffusion! Cultural diffusion: spread of beliefs, culture, religion, Technology, ideas. Already we have discussed in definition.



Source: Trade Routes and Cultural Diffusion, www. Slideshare

.net/jauntingjen/trade

Goods-Traded along Trans-Sahara in Africa.
 Spices-Lands around Indian Ocean
 Textiles-India, China, Middle East, Later Europe (esp Britain)
 Porcelain-China and Persia
 Amber-Baltic region (northern Europe)
 Diffusion of Technology through South China Sea
Paper technology - From China though the Muslim world to Byzantium and Western Europe
 New Crops (sugar cane plant) technology -From India
 Waterwheels and windmills technology - From Middle East
Navigation technology - Compass from China- Lateen sail from Indian Ocean region

The distant lands of the South China Sea are laced with infinite contrast in the landscapes, the cultures, and the lifestyles. In the villages, farmers bring their crops from the country to sell in the marketplace, which allows the people to cook with the freshest meats, vegetables, and spices available. Over the centuries the South China Sea has served as a crossroads for world travelers, and each nationality has contributed a unique flavor to the fascinating cultural blend that is spread from one region to other region. Regional trade networks and long-distance trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere aided the diffusion and exchange of technology and culture between Europe, Africa and Asia. The present paper is based on secondary data and focuses its attention on South China Sea and diffusion of cultural elements and maritime issues (Trade Routes and Cultural Diffusion, 18/2/2018).

However in the border regions of the South China Sea, trading has increased significantly and became a part of life among the border residents. The neighboring border countries-Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam- have become important trading partners with these southwestern Chinese provinces. Border trade has renewed economic as well as social relationship between the people living at the border. From the 1980s onwards, kin relations and minorities from both sides of the border have begun to interact with one another, re-integrating, and revitalizing minority cultures along the border region. For the first time it is possible to speak of an integrated cultural area instead of one separated by a political boundary. By 1992, there were fifty-six border towns opened to border trading and social interaction in Yunnan and Guangxi.

Diffusion Of Religion And Temple Architecture

SPREAD OF HINDUISM

Hinduism is often called the oldest living world religion. Buddhism, which began as a reformist movement within Hinduism, spread across much of Asia. The message was one of deliverance of suffering through annihilation of desire. While Buddhism spread over the coast of Southeast Asia and also by the Silk Route via Central Asia to China (Poonam Surie, 2015, P.9) Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism were embraced in the 4th and 5th Century, during trade with Pallavas by Tarumanagada, Kutai and Kantoli kingdoms. From the 7th Century onward the Srivijaya kingdom (called naval kingdom) flourished as a result of trade and the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism imported with it (Geetha Reddy Anant, 2016, P.49).

SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

During the third century BCE, Buddhism was spread by Ashoka (BCE 270 - BCE 232), the third and the most powerful Mauryan emperor, who created the first pan-Indian empire. After the battle of Kalinga, Ashoka felt immense grief due to the huge loss of lives during the war and thus decided to follow the path of Buddhism. After this, he began to implement Buddhist principles in the administration of his kingdom and named the new code of conduct 'Dhamma'. China recorded

contact with Buddhism with the arrival of a Buddhist scholar, Bodhi Dharma, who travelled from India to China along with other monks in 475 CE. Bodhi Dharma introduced the teachings of the Buddha to the Chinese, who were influenced by the teachings. Buddhism and Chinese Taoism intermingled with one another, thereby resulting in the Ch'an school of Buddhism in China.

Major Buddhist temples in India, which are fine examples of the golden Indian architecture, are at Sanchi (450 CE), Taxila and Sarnath. Similarly, other temples such as those at Cambodia (the famous Angkor Wat temple), Sri Lanka, Thailand, China and Japan present an excellent example of the Buddhist architecture. Japan boasts of being the greatest surviving concentration of the Buddhist art and architecture in its 80,000 temples, most of which retain original features from as early as the Nara period (710 CE - 794 CE). Secondly, monasteries, a dwelling place for the community of monks, present fine example of the Buddhist architecture and charismatic Buddhist spirituality. In India, the ruins of the Nalanda monastic university and the ancient monasteries at Sarnath, whose ruins are still present along with some of the latest ones, still depicts the golden past of Buddhism and developed architectural style in India. The Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese monasteries along with others present a very distinctive style of architecture with splendid use of colour and ornamentation (The Spread of Buddhism Outside India, 12/2/2018). These cultural diffused South China Sea maritime.

Buddhism, which also brought along certain concepts of portrait painting and architecture, left notable imprints in China. In India, we are all taught in school that Fa X i a n a n d Xuan Zang, who reached India country during the reigns of Chandragupta and Harshavardhana, respectively, were the most important Buddhist link with China. In fact, Buddhism had reached China and flourished there more than three centuries earlier. It is well known that the Mahayana branch of Buddhism developed in Gandhara, primarily by the great philosopher Ashvaghosha around the 1st century CE. The region called Afghanistan today and the adjoining areas of Central Asia were great centers of Buddhism in those days. We recall with pain the loss of the treasures of Bamiyan that were the great gifts to humanity from that area.

Buddha was presented in image form in Gandhara and such images would, no doubt, have been sent to China even then. The sculpture of human forms developed in China under the inspiration of this art. Bronze images of the Buddha were made in China in large numbers, but hardly any exist now because most of them were destroyed or melted down when an officially sponsored campaign against Buddhism began a couple of centuries after the journey of Xuan Zang. We know about them only from the Korean and Japanese images of the same period. Buddhism reached Japan and Korea from China through South China Sea and is far more actively practiced in both countries today compared to China. There was another route for the Indian influence to reach China, via Southeast Asia. The coastal areas of China, especially the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, being trading regions, were in constant contact with Southeast Asia and through them, with the South Indian empires. There is need for much more research on the intermediation of Indian culture by South Asian Kingdoms in its impact on China (G.S.Iyer, 2016, P.41).

BUDDHIST TEMPLES INDIA- LAOS-CAMBODIA



Sarnath

DharmaJiva tours include an eleven-day pilgrimage to North India – the ancient homeland of the Buddha

Source: <http://www.buddhist-tours-india.com/about-india/ancient-india/>



Ancient Buddhist Temple in Laos

Source: <https://vientianestarhotel.com/places-to-see/wat-wisunalat-in-luang-prabang.html>



Angkor-complex- Cambodia

Source: <https://www.colourbox.com/image/ancient-temple-in-angkor-complex-image-3985132>

The practice of reciting scriptures was well known in India, and it must have helped in influencing the religious life of the people. Ashrams and monastic orders were also established, which then were used to diffuse Hindu culture in Kambuja. In the 9th century AD, King Yashovarman of Angkor is said to have built 100 ashrams, each headed by a priest, which were primarily centers for higher learning and promoting religious and spiritual practices, attracting large followings.

These ashrams offered hospitality to a variety of peoples in strict accordance with prescribed rules and regulations for each category of guest. One of the rules prescribed that with the exception of the king, anyone who passed the gates of an ashram had to get down from his chariot and walk covered under an umbrella. No one seeking refuge out of fear of being arrested needed surrender until proven guilty. However, there are no records about such religious institutions in ancient India, on which those in Kambuja were modeled.

Chinese architecture is a style of architecture that has taken shape in East Asia over many centuries. The structural principles of Chinese architecture have remained largely unchanged, the main changes being only the decorative details. Since the Tang Dynasty, Chinese has had a major influence on the architectural styles of Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. In Japan The Tsukiji Honganji Temple has Indian roots and according to the information we collected at the temple the Hindu architecture influence is due to the designer Chuta Ito who travelled extensively to countries like Burma, India and Sri Lanka. That influence is very tangible in the Honganji Temple from outside itself (Discover India in Japan: Tsukiji Honganji, 16/3/2018)



source: <http://experiencetokyo.net/discover-india-in-japan-tsukiji-honganji-indian-architecture-in-a-japanese-temple/>

DIFFUSION OF YOGA

During the seventh and eight centuries, the teaching of trantric Buddhism spread rapidly both throughout India and beyond to Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. The popularity of trantras and worship of the deities they embody from region to regimes. The Kriya, Carya, and Yoga tantras spread through southeast and East Asia, while the popularity of the fourth, the anuttarayoga tantras, was restricted largely to Tibet (Geri Hockfield Malandra, 1993, p.17).

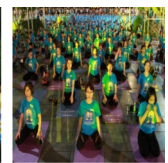
While on June 21, 2015, elaborate celebrations in New Delhi mark the first United Nations International Day of Yoga, what this UN day highlights is part of a process that has been unfolding for well over a century and transcends the boundaries of nation states. In India, this process is commonly perceived to date back to Swami Vivekananda's address at the Parliament of World Religions at Chicago in 1893. When the young Hindu monk declared that all humans are "children of immortal bliss," he was sharing a philosophical and spiritual truth that transcends human-made boundaries of race, religious doctrine, and nationhood. In the decade that followed, Vivekananda exerted a substantial influence in intellectual circles on both sides of the Atlantic. This was largely because he powerfully expressed the transcendent dimensions of Indic spiritual and philosophical traditions. A century later, Vivekananda is remembered simultaneously as a universal icon of communal harmony and a Hindu nationalist "missionary." And yoga, a corollary of this philosophy's practice, has spread across the world (Rajni Bakshi, 14/3/2018).



Yoga in Philippines



Yoga in Japan



Yoga in Vietnam

TECHNOLOGICAL DIFFUSION

Cultural exchange through the archaeobotany of two entrepot sites in the Thai-Malay Peninsula: Phu Khao Thong and the early urban centre of Khao Sam Kaeo (Hereafter PKT and KSK respectively). Both sites date to the later part of the first millennium BC, period when the Thai-Malay Peninsula connected the maritime silk roads linking the Mauryan and Han Empires from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea; as early as the second century BC, the Thai-Malay Peninsula appears in a Chises Han text (Ch'ien Han Shu) as an overland route to the India Ocean and India (Jacq-Hergoual'ch 2002). We found evidence for exchanged foodstuffs in South China Sea and information on the agricultural base that sustained the different communities at Khao Sam Kaeo, which included the local population, temporary settlers and transient

voyagers (Bellina et al. 2014). Numerous pulses were found, mostly of Indian Origin (*Vigna radiata*, *Vigna munge*, *Macrotyloma uniflorum*). The rice bean (*Vigna cf. umbellata*) of Southeast Asian origin was identified at Khao Sam Kaeo and Phu Khao Thong for the first time in an archeological context. Khao Sam Kaeo provides data on the beginnings of the long-lasting cultural exchange that linked South Asia and Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

South China Sea is the hot topic in the present scenario. The South China Sea is arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland. Cultural diffusion of the South China Sea countries surrounding can be divided into three cultural areas: China, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam share many cultural characteristics, as do Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Over the centuries the South China Sea has served as a crossroads for world travelers, and each nationality has contributed a unique flavor to the fascinating cultural blend that is spread from one region to other region. Regional trade networks and long-distance trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere aided the diffusion and exchange of technology and culture between Europe, Africa and Asia. The regional religion, political, economic and cultural diffusion has shared material culture and non-material culture within the "South China Sea Sphere of Interaction. This diffusion leads all kinds of progress.

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