# SAILING TO SUVARNABHUMI
# Cultural Routes and Maritime Landscapes

Himanshu Prabha Ray
Susan Mishra

RIS
Research and Information System for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

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# Contents

# Message from AIC

ASEAN-India relation is firmly embedded in culture, commerce and connectivity (3Cs). Shared historical ties, culture and knowledge have continued to underpin India's sustained interactions with Southeast Asia. The cultural dimension was introduced as a key component of India's Act East Policy (AEP) in 2014.

Starting as a sectoral partner of ASEAN in 1992, India became a dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1996, a summit-level partner in 2002 and strategic partner in 2012. On January 25, 2018, India and ASEAN celebrated 25 years of its partnership, at a Commemorative Summit in New Delhi, with the participation of Heads of State/Government from all the ten countries of ASEAN and India. For the first time, all the ten ASEAN leaders also attended India's Republic Day Celebrations on January 26, 2018, in New Delhi, as Guests of Honour. At the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, held on 25 January 2018, our leaders have outlined their vision on the future of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership, where they have identified cultural relations as one of the key areas of ASEAN-India cooperation activities.

The ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) undertook a research project titled "Sailing to Suvarnabhumi" in 2017 with financial support of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India. This publication *Sailing to Suvarnabhumi: Cultural Routes and Maritime Landscapes* is an outcome of this project. The narrative of India's cultural interactions with the ASEAN region is an extraordinary story and remains to be fully explored. This publication presents the study undertaken by the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS on India's civilization links with Southeast Asia, with particular reference to maritime history, architecture and archaeology. Chapters in this publication present shared legacy in fields of history and culture. Besides, it also traces ancient trade and maritime links, and contemporary cultural interaction.

We would like to record our appreciation of the efforts that have been put by authors of this book Dr Himanshu Prabha Ray and Dr Susan Mishra. We wish to thank Dr Mohan Kumar, Chairman, RIS and Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS for their wholehearted support and cooperation. We are grateful to Ambassador Shyam Saran, formerly Foreign Secretary and Chairman, RIS for initiating this research project at AIC. We are also thankful to Mr. Anurag Bhushan, the former Joint Secretary (ASEAN Multilateral), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India for his continuous support to the project.

We are sure this publication is expected to have the widest possible readership comprising of students, policy makers as well as senior researchers.

**Coordinator, AIC**

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Views expressed in the publication are of authors and not of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India; Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS); and ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS. RIS or AIC assume no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this publication. Usual disclaimers apply.

I

# On the Sailing Ship: Across the Bay of Bengal

## 1. Introduction

The seas across the India – ASEAN region presented a unique environment to the sailor in antiquity. The monsoon winds not only determined the basic rhythm for seafaring activity in much of tropical and equatorial Asia, but also influenced agricultural activity in the region. This paper suggests that one way of understanding this complex web of interactions of the past is through a deeper engagement with the markers of maritime regions and the communities that inhabited these spaces. One of the markers being discussed in this paper relates to depiction of boats and ships on religious architecture in the region. While these representations may not be realistic, they raise the issue of context. Why were boats and ships sculpted on Buddhist monastic sites and Hindu temples? How are these representations to be understood? It is being suggested here that these depictions are indicative of the diverse engagement with the sea in the region.

The paper is divided into several sections starting with the location of narratives of ship-wreck at three important sites in India, viz. Mathura, situated about 150 kilometres south of Delhi; Kanheri, a group of rock-cut caves located on the western outskirts of Mumbai on the west coast; and Ratnagiri in the Brahmani and Birupa river valleys in Jajpur district on the Orissa Coast in the east. Chronologically, while the first two are near contemporaries, the last of the three monastic sites dates from fifth to thirteenth century CE, i.e. the second phase of sculpting at Kanheri. The three sites are also diverse in their location: thus, while Kanheri and Ratnagiri are in coastal regions, Mathura is located in the northern heartland of the subcontinent away from the sea. What links up the three sites are representations of the saviour from ship-wreck and other dangers encountered at sea at each of them. Thus, one objective of the paper is to highlight the uniqueness of Buddhism, which adopted an approach unlike its contemporary religions in evolving the notion of a saviour from worldly disasters, including threats and risks involved in seafaring.

A more important agenda is to underscore commonalities between the national monuments and World Heritage sites of the ASEAN – India region and the engagement with the sea that these represent. How are representations on religious architecture to be understood? Scholars have often identified the sculptural depictions through the textual traditions, but often there is little consonance between the visual and the written. A well-known art historian has suggested that the large number of Avalokitesvara representations showing the Bodhisattva saving his devotees from trouble as shown in the paintings from Ajanta indicate physical dangers rather than spiritual salvation. Dieter Schlingloff argues against this position and states that "Buddhist artworks financed by laymen and executed by lay artists were primarily

intended to help and guide the monks in their path to salvation." We also need to factor into this debate not only the vision of the community who conceptualized and built religious structures, but also those who maintained and nurtured it over the centuries.

Most religious architecture survived through history because it continued to be relevant and meaningful to communities living nearby. In the second section, I move to another Buddhist site, which is also a World Heritage site, viz. Ajanta rock-cut caves in Maharashtra, which are exquisitely painted and sculpted. It is indeed significant that many of the paintings drawn from the Jatakas or stories of the earlier lives of the Buddha show the Buddha as a seafaring merchant. This is followed by a section focussed on ASEAN countries, especially Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia and their interconnectedness to sites in India as evident from religious travel and visits by Chinese pilgrims to India along the sea route, which show a somewhat different engagement with the waters. The final section deals with ship-wreck sites in South Asia to highlight the need to develop underwater archaeology for a deeper understanding of the water craft used to cross the seas. I start with one of the earliest Buddhist monuments in the country, viz the site of Bharhut in central India.

## 2. Early Buddhist Sites in Central India

Perhaps the earliest representation of a seafarer in distress is to be seen on a medallion on a railing bar from the Buddhist site of Bharhut, located in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. Foucher identified the story as described in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Divyāvadāna* while Chavannes showed that it also occurred in a Chinese version. In the Chinese and *Divyāvadāna* version the merchants shout '*namo buddhāya*' or '*namo buddhasya*' in the *Mahāvastu* version. In the medallion, the ship is depicted twice: once, being swallowed by a giant fish and the second time safely sailing away from the monster. Thus in its representation, the narrative adheres to the fifth century texts quoted above, but the inscription deviates from the texts by referring to the saviour as Mahādeva, a name unknown for the Buddha in textual sources.

This raises the issue of examining the sculptural representation of the narrative along with the inscription, which as in the case here, presents a somewhat different insight into the depiction. It also interrogates the extent to which sculptural representations followed textual accounts. The paper then proposes that the evidence from art and architecture be viewed as a parallel tradition, rather than one supplementing the narratives as prescribed in the written form.

More recently, an archaeological survey has revealed that a small monastic site may have existed as early as the end of third century BCE. During the later centuries BCE, the monastic community at Bharhut appears to have consolidated and expanded, as is evident from the construction of the stone railing and the network of four smaller sites that emerged around Bharhut. Before I discuss the three sites of Mathura, Kanheri and Ratnagiri, two points need to be stressed: one, the coastal location of a large number of Buddhist monastic sites; and secondly, the conceptualization of maritime space, as evident from inscriptions at early Buddhist sites.

The peninsular part of Gujarat is referred to as Saurashtra and forms a rocky tableland with an altitude of 300 to 600 meters, fringed by coastal plains. It is known for its black cotton soil making it a fertile tract for agriculture. Gujarat has a total coastline of 1600 kilometres with the Gulf of Kutch and the Gulf of Cambay providing major inlets. The Saurashtra coast is marked by sandy beaches, which extend from Dwarka to Diu and the distinction between the coast and the interior is not as marked as elsewhere in peninsular India. The Girnar hills, which contain the site of Junagadh are important for pilgrimage to the Buddhists, Hindus and the Jainas.

In the coastal regions of Gujarat, Buddhist caves were excavated from second century BCE to the sixth century CE. Rock-cut caves are known from Kateshwar and five from Siyot in Lakhpat taluka in the extreme north-west of Kutch, as also bronze images of the Buddha have been found datable from fourth to seventh century CE. Other coastal sites in south Gujarat include Talaja in Bhavnagar district with thirty rock-cut caves and Kadia Dungar near

Bharuch. Thus, the maritime orientation of a large number of Buddhist sites is striking and this leads to the second issue of travel across the seas.

## 3. Saviour of Mariners and Travellers in Distress

The emergence of the cult of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara as a saviour of mariners and travellers in distress is generally associated with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (chapter 24), though an enumeration of dangers of travel is to be found in earlier texts as well such as the *Anguttara Nikāya* (Kessivagga 119-20; vol. II: 121) and the *Divyāvadāna* (p.92: 25-8).

How does one explain the clustering of representations of Avalokitesvara in the western Deccan caves? The icon of Avalokitesvara as protector of the faithful is a type that occurs widely in the caves of western India. Several renditions were made in the western Deccan and over twelve painted and/ or sculpted versions are known from Ajanta (caves 2, 4, 6, 10A, 11, 17, 20, 26), three from Kanheri (caves 2, 41 and 90), one from Aurangabad (cave 7) and two from Ellora, though nowhere is the composition so elaborate and the treatment so elegant as in cave 90 at Kanheri. The image in cave 90 is unique in that it depicts Avalokitesvara as protector against ten perils (rather than the usual eight) and includes numerous subsidiary figures. In this litany, Avalokitesvara offers the devotee promise of salvation from the various perils depicted at the sides of the composition including attack by elephants, lions, robbers and similar disasters.

Around the same time, in the rock cut sanctuaries at Ellora, the function of the Avalokitesvara as the saviour from the eight perils is delegated to Tara. This theme occurs prominently in the monastic establishment at Ratnagiri in Orissa. It was in Orissa that the major expansion of Buddhism took place in the fifth to thirteenth century period and stupendous monastic complexes were constructed in the three hill ranges of Jajpur district, the Alti or Nalti, Assia and Mahavinayaka. Local tradition refers to the region being close to the sea in the past.

Ratnagiri is a 25 metre high isolated hill of khondalite formation of the Assia range bounded on three sides by the rivers Brahmani, the Kimiria and the Birupa. In the vicinity of Ratnagiri, the extensive Buddhist site of Udayagiri is located in the easternmost part of the Assia hills in a horse-shoe formation, while Naltigiri or Lalitagiri is not very far on the south bank of the Birupa. The three monastic complexes form a triangle, with the distance between Ratnagiri and Udayagiri is 5.5 kilometres as the crow flies and 3.5 kilometres between Udayagiri and Lalitagiri. The latter two hills are much broader and higher than Ratnagiri.

As late as the 1950s, Ratnagiri was marked by two compact mounds: one circular and conical, which yielded the stupa; and the other quadrangular, with several Buddhist sculptures scattered on the surface of the mounds. The site was located in close proximity to the major centre of Jajpur and was surrounded by navigable rivers, productive plains and khondalite bearing hills. The excavations yielded a large impressive stupa surrounded by a number of smaller stupas and two quadrangular monasteries. Several slabs found during excavations were inscribed with texts such as the *Pratītyasamutpāda sūtra* or the *dhāraṇīs*.

Of all the three major sites in Assia hills, the stupa at Ratnagiri is indeed striking (Fig. 6). The precincts of Stupa I were crowded with smaller stupas of varying dimensions and forms and comprised of both structural stupas of brick and stone, as well as portable stone stupas. It is interesting that there were several levels of stupas and sometimes stupas were built on top of earlier ones, the largest number of dedications being built between the ninth and thirteenth centuries CE. Many of the stone portable stupas had niches for enshrining deities such as Buddha, Tara, Lokesvara, Manjusri and sometimes deities from the Vajrayana pantheon. Some of the smaller stupas yielded *śārīrika* relics in the form of charred bones, though hardly any attention was paid to reliquaries, which were generally plain earthen vases or stone blocks with sockets.

Two standing images of *aṣṭamahābhaya* Tara were found from the surface at Ratnagiri. In

1927-8, R. P. Chanda, an official of the Indian Museum, Calcutta visited Ratnagiri and other sites in Orissa to collect Buddhist sculptures for the Museum. He found a number of sculptures near the Mahakala temple on the hill at Ratnagiri, including *aṣṭamahābhaya* Tara image, which is now in the Patna Museum. The standing image is dated to the 11th century on the basis of a fragmentary inscription and graphically portrays the *jalārṇava-bhaya* or fear of drowning in a sinking boat. A second image now in the site museum at Ratnagiri, dated to the end of the 8th century CE, shows Tara flanked by scenes of the eight perils depicted in two vertical rows of four panels each.

A striking feature of Buddhism in Orissa is the lack of narrative sculptures, one of the few exceptions being the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* sculpture, now in the Raghunatha temple at Solampur. Tara was a popular deity in Orissa, especially at Ratnagiri, where she is found sculpted on 99 niches of monolithic stupas. She is represented both in her seated *lalitāsana* form as also in various other types described in the *Sādhanamālā*. The eleventh century manuscript of *Astasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* in the Cambridge University Library (MSS no. Add 1643) illustrates Buddhist images and shrines from different parts of India and four of the illustrations relate to Orissa. It is not surprising that three of these refer to images of Tara, perhaps from Banpur, while the fourth refers to the monastic complex at Kuruma, near Konarak in Puri district. From seventh to twelfth centuries she is shown as the saviour from a variety of dangers including ship-wreck in sculpture as also in epigraphs. She is invoked in several inscriptions, such as the Nalanda record of Vipula Srimitra dated to the first half of the twelfth century, as also the Kalasan inscription from Java. It would then seem that though there were several similarities between contemporary sites, yet every site placed emphasis on certain images suggesting local preferences for cults and specific texts. It is this local and regional context of the practice of Buddhism that imparts the archaeology of monastic complexes a crucial place in the study of Buddhist narratives. In the next section we discuss the site of Mathura, which depicts another aspect of the Saviour of merchants at sea.

## 4. Mathura: Valahassa Jataka

Mathura is located on the river Yamuna, about 55 kilometres north-west of the city of Agra. Preliminary explorations at Mathura began as early as 1830s with the discovery of a Bacchanalian group of stone sculpture by Col. Stacy. This was followed by a survey by Alexander Cunningham from 1853 to 1883 based on the account of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang. His primary objective was to collect sculptures from the several mounds around the present city of Mathura, especially from Katra, Jail, Kankali Tila and Chaubara mounds. In 1872, during his explorations, Cunningham found a pillar in a small dharamsala near the Balabhadra tank close to Bhuteshwar mound. The second-third century railing pillar shows a standing female figure on the back of a dwarf and on the backside is sculpted the Valahassa jataka in three compartments. The first panel shows the chief merchant perched on a tree addressing others imprisoned in a circular tower. The central panel depicts merchants escaping by clinging to a flying horse, while the demons are portrayed gorging on their hapless victims in the lower panel. Thus, the context of the Mathura panel is no longer available. Five other railing pillars are known from Bhuteswar mound, though at present a Siva temple built in the late eighteenth century is an important marker at the site. Two inscriptions are known from Bhuteswar: one inscribed on a Naga image; and the other on a railing pillar, though the reading is doubtful.

The Pali version of the Valahassa Jataka relates an episode from a previous incarnation when the Bodhisattva was born as a white horse. He rescued five hundred merchants who had been cast ashore after they were ship-wrecked on the island of Ceylon where there was a town peopled by she-demons who seduced unwary travellers wrecked on the coast as far as the river Kalyani on one side and Nagadipa on the other. The head-merchant became aware of the flesh-eating demons, who charmed them by appearing as beautiful women and cautioned the others. Two hundred and fifty of them agreed and were saved by the Bodhisattva who flew in the form of a white horse from the Himalayas. This Jataka found wide popularity in the Buddhist world and it

was painted in the caves in Kizil, as also on scrolls in Japan. Representations also occur in the Anand temple at Pagan and in Tibet. The discussion so far has largely revolved around the Bodhisattva as a saviour of travellers and sailors in trouble. Did the kings and ruling groups in early India claim control of the seas? This is an issue that we take up in the next section.

## 5. Conceptualization of Maritime Space

Two names are used for the Indian subcontinent in early sources: the fourth century BCE Minor Rock Edict I of Aśoka at Brahmagiri and elsewhere refer to Jambudvīpa or 'island of the rose-apple tree' and the same term occurs in the *Mahābhārata*; and *Bhāratam varṣam* or *Bhāradhavasa*, which occurs in the Hathigumpha inscription. The minor rock edicts of Aśoka describe the king's noble deeds through which the people of Jambudvīpa were united with the world of the *devatās* or gods. The conceptualisation of the Indian subcontinent as an island continues to occur in later centuries. A first century CE inscription on a limestone slab found in a vihara at the Buddhist site of Phanigiri in Nalgonda district reads '*Jambudvīpa mile vagu*'.

By the second-first century BCE, royal inscriptions initiate the practice of defining territory under control of the king and the Buddhist caves in the hills at Nasik, on the river Godavari, are especially significant in this regard. The caves are locally known as Pandulena and are situated 8 kilometres west of Nasik town about 60 to 70 metres up the hill on a rock scarp. The monastic establishment had one *cetiyaghara* (cave 18), eighteen *lenas*, including three unfinished ones, one *matapa* and three cisterns, though more water cisterns are also known from the vicinity of the hill. The twenty-six inscriptions from the caves are significant not only for an understanding of the chronology of the Satavahana and Kshatrapa rulers of the region, but for the relationship between royalty and Buddhist monastic centres. The earliest record of the ruler Kanha of the Satavahana-*kula* is inscribed on the upper part of the right window of vihara 19 at Nasik. The vihara appears to be the earliest excavation at the site that came into existence because of the generosity of the king.

Thus, the inscription is valuable as the earliest evidence for royal control of the oceans, but what is intriguing is its location in a Buddhist *vihāra* and the inclusion of Epic heroes as role models for the king. No doubt cave 3 was an unusual setting for the Queen's inscription. It consists of a large hall with eighteen cells around it, five to the left, six at the back and seven to the right. There are two additional cells in the veranda in front. A beautiful relief of a stupa was cut in the back wall of the hall between doorways to the third and fourth cell. There are three additional royal inscriptions engraved in the veranda and these require brief discussion.

The earliest record in cave 3 is on the left wall of the veranda and dates to the 18$^{th}$ year of Satavahana ruler Gotamīputa Siri Sātakani. Thus, the caves at Nasik indicate complex relationship between royalty, the inhabitants of monastic sites, such as Nasik and the administration of monastic property, in this case by the Bhadāyanīyas, probably located in Andhra. This wealth of inscriptional data undoubtedly accords a special place to the Buddhist monastic centre at Nasik and to the claim for control of the three oceans. Another site that needs to be brought into discussion at this stage is that of the rock-cut caves at Ajanta.

## 6. The Paintings at Ajanta and Insights into Control over the Seas

Walter Spink has suggested that the bulk of the work at Ajanta dates from 462 to 480, though there was an early phase, as evident from caves 9, 10, 12, which were excavated in the first phase dated from first century BCE to the first-second centuries CE. Work at cave 2 at Ajanta was started in the mid- 460s, though the elaborate work was done on it after 475. Cave 4 the largest vihara at the site was started in the early 460; cave 11 is another inaugural Vakataka vihara; and in cave 26, work continued until 478. How is this royal power of control over the oceans represented? We discussed the inscriptional data from Nasik in the previous section, but no sculptural depictions are to be found at Nasik, instead the

Simhala vijaya narrative and its somewhat later fifth century representation at Ajanta cave 17, a cave "fit for the king" elaborate this concept.

In one of his previous births, Sakyamuni Gautama was born as Simhala, a merchant who led fine hundred others on a seagoing venture to Tamradvīpa or Sri Lanka. They were ship-wrecked, but eventually saved from the man-eating ogresses by the horse Balaha, who rose majestically into the sky with Simhala on his back. The ogresses, however, followed him back to his kingdom. Simhala once again rose to the occasion and saved the kingdom from being devoured by them. Simhala was crowned king and Tamradvipa was renamed Simhaladvipa.

The story of Simhala can be read at different levels: at one level, it is about the defeat of evil worldly forces by dharma and "articulates the Mahayana notion that in order to reach the further shore of nirvana, one must rely upon the *sambhogakāya* power of a saving bodhisattva", while at another it refers to physical dangers such as those encountered by the fifth century Chinese pilgrim Faxian off the coast of Sri Lanka, who saved himself by calling upon Avalokiteśvara. Holt continues the argument further and states that from the eighth to tenth centuries Avalokiteśvara was not only venerated by the coastal communities of Sri Lanka, but also in some of the monasteries of Anuradhapura.

The impressive litany of Avalokitesvara in cave 4 was, according to Spink, carved early in 479 CE and the scene of the Bodhisattva as Saviour continued to be popular at Ajanta. This popularity is indeed striking, as the other iconic images are either of the Buddha or the stupa. Based on his study of pictorial representations of the litany of Avalokitesvara at Ajanta, Schlingloff does not prioritise any particular text that was followed by the artists. "On the contrary, they developed their own relatively flexible iconographic tradition in which neither the number nor the subject of the perils, to say nothing of a prescribed sequence, were generally considered compulsory." In contrast, Schopen attempts to identify Mahayana Sutras that may have formed the basis for the painting tradition at Ajanta and suggests after examination of a painting of the Avalokitesvara in cave 10 that as the *Gandavyuha sutra* contains a similar enumeration of perils, it would have been taken recourse to at Ajanta. On an esoteric level, the dangers may be interpreted as obstacles to salvation.

In addition scenes of sea travel and ship-wreck are depicted, such as the voyage or prince Kalyanakarin in cave 1; the painting of the Purnavadana in cave 2; and Simhala legend showing ships carrying an army of elephants and cavalry to Sri Lanka in cave 17. Clearly sea-travel is prominently depicted and the popularity of the Avalokitesvara as saviour from ship-wreck at sites such as Ajanta indicates a far more complex picture than that suggested by the inscriptions at Nasik. How does this compare with representations at sites across the seas? Three of the sites that are significant include Nakhon Pathom in Thailand; Borobudur in Indonesia; and Neak Pean in Cambodia.

## 7. Chedi Chulapathon in Central Thailand

In this section, I shift the focus to the development of archaeology in Thailand over the last six decades and the shifting priorities in the research agendas. Dvaravati appears in the official name of both Ayutthaya (founded in 1350) and Bangkok (founded in 1782) and it would seem that the memory of the polity maintained itself from the tenth until the fourteenth century. Jean Boisselier has argued that the Ayutthaya royalty looked to Dvaravati culture as important to their rule, rebuilding Dvaravati period monuments abandoned at U Thong and bringing Dvaravati sculpture from Nakhon Pathom to Ayutthaya. No doubt the revival of interest in historical Buddhism had far-reaching implications for the study of the past – a case in point being the restoration of Phrapathom Chedi.

As a monk, king Mongkut (1804-1868) visited the Phrapathom Chedi that was in a state of disrepair in the jungle, though it was still considered a centre of pilgrimage by the local communities. On his accession to the throne, the monarch not only restored the Chedi, but also developed the surrounding areas. Two new canals were dug – the

Mahasawas and Chedibooja (1853-1862) and these provided a link between Nakhon Pathom and the waterways of Bangkok.

The following two stucco reliefs from Chulapathon chedi need to be brought into the discussion here. These reliefs were brought to light during excavations by the Fine Arts Department in 1968. As the present chedi had covered the earlier one, Pierre Dupont's 1939-40 excavations had failed to unearth them. It would seem that the chedi was renovated and expanded three times in the past. How are these depictions to be explained in the context of the monument at Nakhon Pathom, especially as there is no evidence for them from other stupa sites? Are these representations linked to the association of the site with the landing of Buddhist monks sent by Ashoka and the setting up of the earliest stupa in Thailand?

The panel shows the Buddha as a giant tortoise in a previous birth saving ship-wrecked merchants by carrying them ashore and then by sacrificing himself to keep them from starvation. This story also occurs in the first gallery at Borobudur in central Java.

The representation shown above draws from Suparaga Jataka, which narrates the adventures of merchants who travel to Suvarṇadvīpa under the able guidance of Supparaga, the *niryāmaka* or steersman who was none other than the Buddha in a previous birth. As compared to Nakhon Pathom, the eighth century monument at Borobudur displays an exuberance of sculpture devoted to sea travel and pilgrimage.

## 8. Chinese Pilgrims on the Sea Route

Another network that needs to be taken into account is that with China. As recorded in the written history of the Han (*Qian Hanshu*) under the reign of Emperor Wudi (140-87 BCE), the emperor sent a mission to the kingdom of Huangzhi, which contemporary writers generally agree was located on the shores of the Indian Ocean very likely in India. More often quoted are records left by Chinese pilgrims who travelled to India and visited Buddhist sites. The pilgrim Faxian arrived overland in India in 399 CE and returned by sea to China in 413-414 CE from Sri Lanka heading towards the northwest tip of Sumatra. The ship was wrecked on the way and perhaps landed in the Andamans. The next phase took Faxian to the northwest of Borneo where he arrived in 414 after 90 days at sea. The pilgrim remained in Borneo for five months and then left for China in mid-414 heading towards Canton.

The most interesting information about circum-peninsular navigation of the Malay Peninsula is contained in Yijing's accounts of the voyage of the Chinese pilgrims who travelled to India and returned during the second half of the 7th century CE. Yijing provides an account of his journey from Canton in October-November with the northeast monsoon and his arrival in Palembang on Sumatra a month later. He stayed there for six months, and then went to Jambi near Palembang sometime around May. He stayed there for another two months and then re-embarked in order to profit from the winds of the southwest monsoon to reach Kedah (Jiecha) on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. He did not leave this region for India until the beginning of the following year when the north-east monsoon was well established. He reached the Nicobar islands in ten days and fifteen days later arrived at Tamralipti in Bengal. This was clearly the most direct route to the holy places of historic Buddhism.

Twelve years later, Yijing returned by the same route travelling on the winds of the north-east monsoon to reach Kedah, but this trip required two months, when the outward journey had taken only twenty-five days. Sailing against the winds was a well-tried technique but it took much longer than sailing with the winds. One of the voyages recounted by Yijing lasted only the time of one monsoon – the pilgrim Wujing left China "in the period of the east winds," i.e. in October-November and arrived in Srivijaya at the end of a month. After stopping at Jambi he took another month reaching Jiecha and from there he left for Negapatam on the Tamil coast with the same winds before they began to wane towards the end of March. Clearly then the notion of the Saviour and its depiction on monastic structures reflected an active engagement of the patrons and

sponsors of Buddhist monastic architecture with the sea. This is further corroborated by ship-wreck sites found in the region, though their numbers are still small.

## 9. Ship-wreck Sites

The oldest ship-wreck in South Asia dates to first century BCE – first century CE and lies off the fishing village of Godavaya on the south coast of Sri Lanka. The ship was transporting a cargo of raw materials, including what appear to be ingots of iron and others of glass, as well as finished stone querns (hand-operated mills) and ceramic bowls, when it sank some time before the first century CE. Further across the Indian Ocean a somewhat later ninth century ship-wreck of a vessel of possible Indian or Arab origin was found in Indonesian waters in 1998. The wreck was located just north of the main town and port of Belitung Island, Tanjung Pandan. A large number of seventh century Chinese coins and ceramics were recovered from the site indicating that the ship was travelling on the route from the Persian Gulf to China. The wood for the ship originated in India, though the ship itself may have been constructed in the Arab region based on an analysis of bitumen pieces found near the ship-wreck.

In this paper the focus has been on representations of the several conceptions of the saviour of seafarers as represented on Buddhist monuments across South and Southeast Asia. This is an issue that needs further discussion and research as it is linked to larger issues of maritime connections, cultural plurality and memory of the community. Monuments enshrine many kinds of memories: memory of the vision of the builder; memory acquired over time; and finally, the created memory through transformation of the monument, either through its destruction or by altering its context or form. Monuments also become sites for enactment of rituals such as pilgrimage for the replenishment of memory and knowledge of the past. Social carriers of memory are agents for the reproduction and circulation of historical memory and traditionally these have included story-tellers, singers or actors who narrate mythical and past events to a local audience. As this overview of narratives of sea-stories shows, the sculptural depictions has multiple meanings and were significant markers of the diverse ways in which the communities of the ASEAN – India region travelled across the seas and related to each other.

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II

# Trade Networks and Commodities

## 1. Introduction

In the Working Paper I, the role of small-scale maritime communities involved in utilizing the resources of the sea since at least the prehistoric period had been discussed, with a view to shifting the emphasis from Empires and luxury trade to sailing networks and people to people contact. Maritime trade has conventionally been viewed as trade in luxury items and controlled by the state or Empire, but as shown in this paper, it is time to frame intercultural interactions across the seas with reference to maritime communities. This stress on fishing and sailing groups is further corroborated by finds of boats and boat burials in archaeological contexts in Vietnam. For example, boat burials associated with Dong Son bronze drums and dated from 500 BCE to 200 CE have been found not only along the coast of Vietnam, but also in the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago and have been linked with seafaring communities. These maritime activities resulted in vibrant interchanges in the first millennium BCE between South and Southeast Asia, as evident from material remains of Indian origin found at archaeological sites, such as that of Oc-Eo in the Mekong delta. In addition to material artefacts such as beads of carnelian and glass and other items, the archaeological record also shows the spread of writing in the Brahmi script and religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism across Southeast Asia. The evidence for the spread of Buddhism and Hinduism will be discussed in the next Working Paper. Here I would like to highlight the cultural and religious underpinnings of much of trading activity in the historical period, which facilitated cross-cultural interactions across the seas.

"We can mention a great number of carnelain and agate beads of Indian origin, which were found in the Iron Age sites in Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam: in particular, specific etched beads and beads with animal shape..... The pottery imported from South India appeared very early in Central Vietnam. It was evidenced in the early Cham sites such as Tra Kieu and Go Cam in Quang Nam province....The superimposition of Indian culture never derived from a policy of political subjugation nor to economic exploitation; rather the very process signified a peaceful outlook and a cooperative approach."

It is vital to incorporate this archaeological data in an understanding of cross-cultural interactions across the Bay of Bengal, which enables current research to move away from nineteenth century paradigms and models, such as the often-touted term - Maritime Silk Road. The term 'Maritime Silk Road' or 'die Seidenstrasse' is of recent origin and was first proposed by the German Geographer Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833–1905) in the nineteenth century. He suggested that the road focused on trade in silk connecting Han China and Imperial Rome in the early centuries of the Common

Era, but lost its relevance with the collapse of the two Empires. While the use of the term did not result in academic research on the concept, it did inspire Sven Hedin (1865 – 1952) to lead four expeditions from 1893 to 1927 to central Asia. An unintended outcome of the expeditions by Hedin and others was the discovery of hitherto unknown oases cities, Buddhist caves, etc. in central Asia and China and looting of paintings, sculptures and manuscripts from these sites so evocatively portrayed by Peter Hopkirk in his book. In recent years China has revived the terminology in an attempt at 'mythologising' the past in order to serve a current foreign policy interest, as discussed by Kwa Chong Guan of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore.

At this stage attention should also be drawn to the fact that traditionally it was Indian cotton textiles that were traded across the Indian Ocean and it is with an overview of the archaeological record of cotton fabrics that I start this paper. The beginnings of the maritime system in the subcontinent may be traced to the exploitation of marine resources in the Mesolithic period around 10,000 BCE when fishing and sailing communities settled in coastal areas. By the third millennium BCE, there is evidence for trade networks between the Makran and Gujarat coasts of the subcontinent and the Persian Gulf. This is an issue that has been dealt with elsewhere and will not be repeated here. In this paper, the focus is on the historical period starting with centuries around the beginning of the Common Era. This first section is followed by an overview of trade and exchange as discussed in Sanskrit and Buddhist texts and a discussion of movements of crops and plants, as evident from the archaeological record that has been studied and analyzed in recent decades. The final section presents an analysis of the organization of maritime trade in South and Southeast Asia in the early historic and early medieval periods.

## 2. Cotton Textiles and Indian Ocean Networks

India has historically been one of the major producers of cotton fabrics in the Indian Ocean region and these have been the staple of trade networks across the region. Though a local weaving tradition has existed for nearly 4,000 years in the Indonesian archipelago, Indian textiles were nonetheless considered special and continued to be imported. These imports included the double-ikat silk *patola* and the block-printed cotton textiles, which were traded to the region because of their status and ritual significance. This ritual significance of textiles is evident in 9$^{th}$-10$^{th}$ century inscriptions from Java, which record the ceremony and feast associated with donation of land and establishment of a *sima*, i.e. an area with changed revenue status. Together with gold and silver, pieces of cloth - *wdihan* for the men and *kain* for the women - were important gift items at this ceremony. It is important to underscore the fact that though several varieties of cotton cloth were produced in the subcontinent, it is only some of these that travelled across the seas. Secondly clothing was an important marker of social and cultural identity and a vital function of textiles was in ritual, as shown above.

Indigo is perhaps the oldest organic dye used and Greek sources refer to its origin in India. The first century CE text in koine Greek, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* catalogues it as an item of export from Barbarikon at the mouth of the Indus river (section 39) and the west coast of India. The *Periplus* contains a useful list of commodities traded across the Indian Ocean and refers to the west coast of India as providing spices, medicinal and aromatic plants, gems, textiles, both cotton and silk, dyes, such as indigo, grain, rice, sesame oil, ghee or clarified butter, ivory, pearls and tortoise shell.

Cotton was the most common fibre used in the subcontinent at least from the 6$^{th}$ millennium BCE onward. At the site of Mehrgarh in Baluchistan seeds of the cotton plant (*Gossypium* sp.) were found in 6$^{th}$ millennium BCE context. The evolution of a cultivated version of cotton (both Gossypium arborem or tree cotton and G. herbaceum or short staple cotton) in South Asia is dated to around the same period. Terracotta spindle whorls found at archaeological sites in the Indus valley in the 4$^{th}$ and 3$^{rd}$ millennium BCE attest to the spinning of yarn in the region. There are indications for the use of indigo

dyed cloth, while at Mohenjo-daro, Marshall found two silver vases wrapped in red-dyed cotton cloth in the lower town. The archaeo-botanist Dorian Fuller has reviewed the evidence for the presence of cotton and flax at Harappan sites, as also in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. He suggests an increase in spinning activity in peninsular India from the second half of the second millennium BCE as a result of increasing social complexity.

Silk is another important fibre and is known to have been in use in the 3rd millennium BCE at Harappan period sites. Current evidence suggests that the fibres belong to the wild silk moth (*Antheraea* sp). References to silk and silk working in Sanskrit texts indicate that silk technology and production was well established in the subcontinent in the 1st millennium BCE. The South Asian silk industry is also known to have evolved independently from the silk traditions of China. The *Arthaśāstra* lists valuable goods considered important to be included in the king's treasury and this includes a range of textiles such as silk, where a distinction is made between *patrorna*, *kauśeya* and *cina-patta* (II.11.107-114). *Patrorna* has been identified as uncultivated silk collected from various trees and together with *kauśeya*, which Xuanzang differentiates from Chinese silk and refers to as gathered from wild silk worms, it forms the Indian varieties of silk. *Kauśeya* is already mentioned in 5th-4th centuries BCE grammar of Panini (IV.3.42) and occurs in the Epics, as well.

A piece of silk was found in a Buddhist relic casket dated to the early centuries CE at Devnimori in Gujarat. The site of Devnimori is situated on the eastern side of the river Meshvo, overlooking the gorge and the valley and excavations have dated the Buddhist monastic complex from 4th to 8th century CE. One of the two caskets found inside the stupa contained silk bags, gold bottle and some organic material inside a cylindrical copper box. Clearly silk-weaving was an established tradition in early India as further supported by inscriptional evidence. A 5th century Sanskrit inscription of the chief of a guild of silk weavers from a now lost temple at Mandasor in central India describes designs woven by them on silks as *varnantara-vibhaga-cittena,* translated as 'with varied stripes of different colours'.

Excavations at the burial site of Ban Don Ta Phet in central Thailand have yielded cotton fragments and thread. The analysis of cotton shows that it was made of *cannabis sativa* fibre which might have originated from cotton plants found in South Asia. Similarly, remains of textiles have been found at Ban Chiang in Thailand. Moreover, at Tha Kae, central Thailand 'door-knob' spindle whorls, of which ninety fragments were found in 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE, context, some with traces of iron remaining inside the central perforations are similar to those found at Kodumanal, Tamil Nadu. Archaeological excavations at Kodumanal will be discussed in a later section here. Unlike Kodumanal, Tha Kae was occupied from the end of the first millennium BCE to the late first millennium CE. Judith Cameron has suggested that probably this shows the transfer of technology from India to Thailand along with fibre and iron during the early centuries of the Common Era.

Textiles fragments were found at the burial site of Pontanoa Bangka in Sulawesi, one of the Lesser Sundas on the eastern border of the Indian Ocean and were radiocarbon dated to CE 500. The fragments were of cotton and were decorated with "stamped (squares within larger squares), a decorative technique unique to India." There is continuing evidence for import of patterned and other textiles from India to the Indonesian archipelago in the period from the 10th to 13th century. This is further corroborated by late eighth century Sanskrit inscriptions from central Java and by the strong Pala influence on local statuary. Textiles, especially cottons were imported into Southeast Asia from India, not only as clothing and as gifts in ceremonies, but also used as adornments around images in temples and to decorate ceilings. Another prominent use is as manuscript covers and their further reproduction in murals. A study of patterns in the eleventh and twelfth century temples of Pagan shows a strong influence from Eastern India.

In addition to local consumption, Indian textiles were also re-exported to neighbouring countries such as Japan and China. These examples can be added to, but this may not be necessary, as the major role of Indian textiles has been well established by

references quoted above. To further strengthen the argument, the movement of crops needs to be brought into the dialogue, before we move on to a section on understanding the structure that framed economic activity, as evident in early Sanskrit literature.

## 3. Movement of Flora and Fauna across the Seas

The earliest evidence of contacts between Southeast Asia and India is perhaps provided by archaeo-botanical studies of various crops and plants found in archaeological contexts. The movement of these perishable items was the result of travel by small-scale fishing and sailing groups across the Bay of Bengal. These movements are often reflected in the adoption of loan-words from the people who introduced certain plants into a geographically contiguous society. In this regard, lexical data becomes an important tool of analysis. The adoption of new plants and crops also altered the landscape where these were imported and cultivated. Several Southeast Asian plants and spices revolutionized the cultural landscapes – or, rather, seascapes – of the Indian Ocean.

Certain trees and plants are believed to have been introduced from Southeast Asia to India in ancient times and from there to the Middle East, East Africa, and Europe. Examples include sandalwood (Santalum album L.), the areca palm (Areca catechu L.), betel pepper (Piper betle L.), banana (Musa spp.) and citrus cultivars (Citrus spp.), ginger (Zingiber officinale Roscoe), and galangal (Alpinia galanga (L.) Willd). Several spices too, featured actively in exchange with Southeast Asian participants. These included cloves (Syzygium aromaticum (L.) Merr. Et L.M. Perry), nutmeg (Myristica fragrans Houtt.), and Sumatran camphor (Dryobalanops sumatrensis (J.F. Gmel. Kosterm). Many of these were indigenous to the relatively isolated regions of present-day Indonesia. A significant factor facilitating the integrative potential of these maritime communities was their large cargo-carrying vessels, which not only facilitated transformation of the local settlements into centres of commerce and production, but also linked the local groups into regional and trans-regional networks.

The terms for certain plants and crops used in India, indicate origins in Southeast Asia, such as spices like the clove. Conversely certain crops of Indian origin were introduced to Southeast Asia as well. These include staple crops such as rice and lentils, as well as fruits such as jackfruit. The site of Khao Sam Kaeo (KSK) located 8 kms from the coast on the Tha Tapao River has been dated from 4$^{th}$ to 1$^{st}$ century BCE. Phu Khao Thong (PKT) lies in the Kra Isthmus and though smaller than KSK overlaps it in terms of chronology, with dates ranging from 200 BCE to CE 20. Rice was the dominant cereal at both sites and was identified as a Chinese domesticate. The excavators suggest that labour intensive wetland rice agriculture (of *indica* rice) was introduced in the middle of the first millennium CE.

It has been suggested that many of the pulses found at archaeological sites may have been for the consumption of the Indian community settled in peninsular Thailand. Indica rice is the dominant species cultivated in modern Thailand, and wetland rice agriculture is practised throughout the region today. Therefore, it is posited that labour-intensive wetland rice agriculture (of indica rice) was introduced after sustained Indian contact in the middle of the first millennium CE, and associated with the development of Indic states in mainland Southeast Asia.

Faunal remains also indicate movement of certain animals across the sea. How were these exchanges in the first millennium BCE organized? In the next section we discuss the evidence from early Iron Age sites in peninsular India that is usually marginalized in studies on inter-cultural contacts.

## 4. Iron Age Sites in First Millennium BCE

Southeast Asian archaeologists have long recognized that the earliest archaeological evidence for iron in mainland Southeast Asia coincides with the earliest evidence for interregional maritime trade

and exchange. It is significant that the dates for the introduction of iron in mainland Southeast Asia range around 500 BCE and are later that those in large parts of India. It has been suggested that in the first phase, iron was largely used for weapons and for thwarting the "predatory imperial ambitions of the Han Dynasty of China," especially in the region of Yunnan and north Vietnam. In large parts of mainland Southeast Asia, the increased use of iron also led to intensive agriculture and expansion of irrigation facilities. Archaeological excavations at sites such as Noen U-Loke in Thailand have shown that water was brought through channels into moats around sites and these large water control structures date to the late Iron Age between about 100 and 500 CE.

These early beginnings also provide a different perspective on trans-oceanic exchanges, as traditionally trade has been linked with urban centres and the Mauryan state. Archaeological evidence from Iron Age sites in peninsular India offers a long pre-Mauryan prehistory of exchange and trade, both overland and coastal and presents several analogies with coastal sites across the Bay of Bengal. Chronologically, the Iron Age megalithic sites span several centuries, from 1200 BCE to 300 CE, and extend across all regions of peninsular India with the exception of the western Deccan or present state of Maharashtra. These Iron Age sites are often associated with mortuary monuments, such as urn burials and terracotta sarcophagi, marked on the surface by large standing stones, though there is regional variation from stone circles to enormous standing stones at sites in north Karnataka, as also dolmens. There is evidence for exploitation of mineral resources and their exchange across the peninsula. 7 habitation sites, 148 burial sites and 22 habitation-cum-burial sites are known to have been located in the vicinity of gold resources. Not only was gold mined, but also exchanged as is evident from finds of gold ornaments at widely dispersed sites. This is further supported by the fact that 60% of the megalithic sites were located in regions with no known mineral or ore resources nearby.

Another correlation that is increasingly evident is with tanks or reservoirs, for example at the site of Hire Benkal where in addition to the stupendous standing stones, settlement sites, both megalithic and Early Historic have also been identified. It would seem that these tanks were largely for collecting run-offs or rain water and were filled only during some months of the year. Another difference lay in the fact that there was no mechanism for the distribution of the water.

Surveys undertaken by Moorti and Brubaker have provided an overview of the hierarchies within megalithic sites. Of the total number of 1933 sites discovered so far, the largest concentration (34%) is in Karnataka, followed by 31% in Tamilnadu. A more recent survey of published literature suggests a similar database of 2207 megalithic sites. Of these 1668 were cemeteries, 55 were habitations, 128 were both habitations and burial sites, and the association of 356 sites was unclear. A study of site sizes indicates that the larger megalithic sites were found along major routes of communication. These routes are known to have continued in the subsequent periods. Perhaps the most interesting is the stretch extending from the Palghat gap and Coimbatore to the Kaveri delta. An analysis of the dimensions of sites indicates that there were at least 26 large settlements, each capable of supporting a population of approximately 1000 people.

It is no coincidence that those in coastal areas score over others located further inland, in terms of the richness of grave goods. The lower Krishna valley on the Andhra coast was more intensively settled by Megalithic communities than other parts of Andhra. A similar situation may be envisaged for the Tamil coast where the littoral Megalithic settlements of Souttokeny and Moutrapalon near Pondicherry and Adichanallur further south have yielded a wide variety of grave goods. Adichanallur was extensively excavated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is one of the largest known mortuary complexes, containing several thousand megaliths and covering an area of some 114 acres and far richer in terms of gold ornaments and beads as compared to other contemporary sites.

In addition to the variations in site sizes indicating the presence of large towns and smaller villages,

archaeological excavations at Kadebakele on the Tungabhadra River in Koppal district of Karnataka has provided insights into their adaption and reuse over the extended period from 1500 BCE to fifteenth century CE when the site was in existence. There are indications that the mortuary monuments continued to be restored and revisited and that there are indications of occasional feasting around them.

One especially significant site for this paper is Kodumanal on the northern bank of the river Noyyal, a tributary of the Kaveri. The site straddles the ancient route from the Palghat gap eastward to Karur and Uraiyur along the Kaveri. Hundreds of inscribed potsherds were found at the site in stratified contexts, with inscriptions in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Tamil. The Kodumanal finds gain further significance in view of data now available from Sri Lanka. The finds of pottery sherds inscribed with Brahmi letters from Iron Age levels in Anuradhapura have raised several questions regarding the traditional view of the introduction of writing from north India to Sri Lanka. These diverse communities in peninsular South Asia used at least four languages, viz. Prakrit, Tamil, Old Sinhala and Sanskrit, which were all written in the Brahmi script, with some evidence for the presence of Kharosthi as well.

In addition to the trading systems of the north, these Iron Age communities also participated in an extensive coastal exchange network which included sites in Andhra, Tamil Nadu, the Malabar coast and northern Sri Lanka. How was this system organized in peninsular India? An issue that needs further research at this stage relates to the overlap between the Iron Age networks comprising of small-scale communities of South and Southeast Asia in the first millennium BCE, though inscriptions from coastal sites in India refer to associations of merchant groups and communities termed *nigama*/ *nikama* and *goṣṭhī*.

## The *Nigama* and the *Goṣṭhī*

The Pali dictionary derives the meaning of the term *nigama* from the Sanskrit root *gama* with the prefix *ni*. The compound term thus has the sense of coming together or meeting. On the basis of early Buddhist texts, Wagle defines the *nigama* as a *gama* composed of more or less integrated members of various kin groups and occupational or professional groups. It is therefore a larger and more complex economic and social unit than the village or *gama*. A significant association of the nigama in peninsular India, especially in the coastal regions is with Buddhist monastic centres. Two prominent sites need to be mentioned: one is that of Bhattiprolu; and the other is Amaravati, both on the Andhra coast.

The terms n*igama* and *negama* are found inscribed on unbaked clay sealings from several sites in north India. The earliest of these date from the Mauryan period. Beyond the northern plains, there are references to the *nigama* in inscriptions from early Buddhist sites. The *nigama* of Karahakata in the Deccan is mentioned in the second century BCE inscriptions of the Buddhist site of Bharhut in central India.

The Buddhist site of Bhattiprolu, a village on the Guntur – Repalle railway line in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh is significant on several counts. It provides details of second century BCE practice of relic worship in coastal Andhra, but more importantly patronage for the setting up of the stupa came from the local chief or raja Khubiraka and members of the *goṣṭhī* of nigamaputas and *nigama*. The term *goṣṭhī* has been translated as committee or association and also occurs in the inscriptions of the Buddhist sites of Sanchi and Mathura in central and north India respectively. The name Khubiraka has wider prevalence and occurs as Kuyiran (Tamil) or Kubira (Old Sinhala) both derived from Sanskrit Kubera. Variants appear as Kupiro at Bharhut in central India, Kubirako from Bhattiprolu in Andhra, Kubira in Sri Lanka cave inscriptions and Kuviran in early Tamil cave inscriptions.

Similarly, there are references to the *nigama* of Dhanyakataka along the east coast in Andhra. Both the *goṣṭhī* and the *nigama* existed at Dhanyakataka. It is significant that both Dharanikota and Amaravati are located at the point up to which the river Krishna is navigable and may be defined as landing places for the coastal traffic. The Krishna takes a sharp turn at this spot and the association of Amaravati with the river is preserved in a stele discovered during

clearance of the site in 1958-59. Engraved on one of the faces is the legend: "the *goṣṭhī* called Vanda at Dhanyakataka" together with the representation of waters. It may be mentioned that Amaravati was the largest and longest lasting Buddhist site on the Andhra coast, which continued to revered by pilgrims from across the seas well into the 13th century.

The term *nigama* also occurs in the region around Madurai in Tamilnadu where fifty-five inscriptions in Tamil-Brahmi have been dated between the second century BCE and the second century CE.

From the third and second century BCE to the second century CE, many of the intersecting networks combined into larger systems as evident from the distribution of specific pottery types, such as the Rouletted Ware. Further evidence of the interlinkages between peninsular India and parts of Southeast Asia is provided by the distribution of Rouletted Ware (RW), which was long considered to be a marker for Indo-Roman trade. Painstaking analysis of the pottery from archaeological excavations at Tissamaharama in Sri Lanka has led to an unbroken chronology and sequence from fifth century BCE to twelfth century CE.

Detailed analysis of Rouletted Ware was undertaken during archaeological excavations in the vicinity of the monastic site of Tissamaharama, one of the most revered temples in southeastern Sri Lanka and the capital of the ancient kingdom of Ruhuna. The Sri Lankan Chronicle, the *Mahavamsa* refers to prince Vijaya and his followers landing on this part of the coast in the fifth century BCE. The results from archaeological work at Tissamaharama have provided insights into the participation of coastal centres in Sri Lanka in maritime networks as early as the fifth century BCE, as well as the development of urban centres in close proximity to monastic establishments.

It is then evident that in the third-second centuries BCE, it was the *nigama* and its members whose presence is attested to in peninsular India, especially in coastal regions. What was the relationship between the *nigama* and the political dynasties, as also with religious centres. These issues have been discussed in earlier publications. Here I will draw on data from early Sanskrit texts to highlight some of the differences with current understanding of terms such as economy and trade.

## 5. Economic Activity as Described in Early Sanskrit Literature

The accepted modern definition of economy relates it to the production and distribution of goods and services and considers it as distinct from politics and religion, but this distinction is not reflected in early Sanskrit texts, such as the *Arthaśāstra*, where politics and economics are not treated as separate domains, but are dealt with as one unit. The king is responsible for protecting the productive territory of his kingdom and guards it against internal and external threats. It is this protective role that provides him authority to collect taxes from the inhabitants. Kingship thus governs both the political and the economic domains. In addition to being in-charge of economic activities of his kingdom, the king was also responsible for regulating it and for maintaining law and order. It is evident that the historical conditions under which the *Arthaśāstra* was written were very different from the environment in which the present economy operates and this distinction needs to be kept in mind when using terms such as trade, markets, ports, revenue, taxation, etc in the context of early South and Southeast Asia. It is also important to emphasize the fact that the *Arthaśāstra* is not a historical document, but a normative text, though it does provide valuable insights into conceptualization of various aspects of the economy. It also needs to be 'read' in the context of early Buddhist sources, as also the data from inscriptions and archaeology, as will be done in this paper.

The *Arthaśāstra* accepts *artha* as one of the legitimate and desirable pursuits of life, though riders were attached to this goal, which was not absolute. Thus, the quest of *artha* was to be subordinated to that of *dharma* or 'that which upholds the regulatory order of the universe', and the seeking of *kāma* or pleasure was to be subordinated to that of *artha* and *dharma*. *Artha* has been variously translated as material, social and human capital.

Nevertheless, important points to be kept in mind when consulting the *Arthaśāstra* are the several references that it makes to inter-regional trade and the sea in Book II (2.28.1-13). The Controller of Shipping (*nāvādhyaksa*) is mentioned, as also collection of taxes from fishing and sailing communities; those diving for conch-shells and pearls; and traders. The *Arthaśāstra* makes a distinction between local trade transacted in fortified cities of the interior, identified as *nagara*, from that originating at distant places and exchanged at the *pattana*, located either on sea coasts or on river banks of the interior. Dharmasthas are mentioned and their duties in regulating market transactions at frontier posts are discussed in Book III (3.1.1).

One aspect that Trautmann makes no reference to in his book is the ritual economy of the period and the extent to which the religious shrine or temple was a motivating factor in channelling economic activity as also being able to monitor transactions, such as trade. Olivelle nevertheless does refer to the social role of the temple as discussed in the *Arthaśāstra* and contrasts it with the absence in the *Dharmaśāstras*. He mentions that references in the text indicate the enormous wealth of temples and their political clout, as evident from the mention of an overseer of temples. In legal disputes relating to temple property, "we see the temple or the temple god emerging as a legal entity with legal rights that can be defended in a court of law." These references to the religious shrine need to be compared with data from inscriptions and archaeology, but before that a discussion of early Buddhist texts and wealth generation would be relevant, as it provides a different perspective to that in the *Arthaśāstra*.

Early Buddhist Canonical texts, such as the *Nikāyas* and the *Vinaya* texts expound on the subject of money: how to earn it legitimately and how to effectively use it to accumulate this-worldly and other-worldly gains. Nevertheless Buddhist writers were aware of the imbalance and disparity of wealth found within society and the fact that in reality money can subvert justice and that lack of it can result in an abject humiliation of a person. Craving for money, however, does not bring happiness, because such cravings are impermanent, without substance and false. The emphasis is on *dāna* or giving for a meritorious cause, such as the Buddhist Sangha.

The most frequently used term in the texts for money is *bhoga* and it is listed among the ten most desirable things. The other nine are beauty, health, virtues, life of continence, friends, truths, understanding, *dharma* and heaven. Money is referred to as bringing two kinds of happiness: one is happiness resulting from the lawful acquisition of money and its expenditure on meritorious deeds; the second is happiness due to absence of debt. In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha explains to the merchant Anathapindika or feeder of orphans and the helpless, five good reasons to acquire money. Not only do Buddhist texts extol the virtues of the merchant Anathapindika, but his generosity in the purchase of Jetavana for gifting to the Sangha is prominently sculpted at the second century BCE site of Bharhut in central India, with an inscription identifying the scene, as also at other sites, such as Bodh Gaya, Sannathi, Amaravati, etc. Thus it is evident that endorsement for economic activities such as trade and generation of wealth was provided by several normative text such as the *Arthasastra* and the Buddhist Canon.

This was by no means limited to the early period, but continued well into the present. The Hindu temple was an important institution for cultural integration and several religious shrines were located in coastal areas. Monastic and temple-centred religious institutions formed an important intermediate group between the state and the family. Thus the temples and monasteries were not merely centres of devotion and worship, but were also principal institutions in the period from 9$^{th}$ to 13$^{th}$ century for establishing laws and enforcing them on their members. This is a theme that will be discussed at length in the next Working Paper. Here we continue with a focus on institutions involved in providing support to economic activities, such as the guilds that developed in early medieval India.

## 6. Merchant Guilds

The inscriptions of the corporate body termed Ainurruvar start with a eulogy of the guild and list its members, as mentioned in the Introduction. The earliest eulogy is to be found in the mid-tenth century Kamudi record from Tamilnadu, whereas the Bedkihal inscription is the earliest from Karnataka dated to 1000 CE. These inscriptions eulogise the Ainurruvar as descendants of Vasudeva, Kandali and Mulabhadra who transacted business in eighteen pattanam, thirty-two *velapuram* and sixty-four *ghattikasthanas*. In addition to these common elements, the inscriptions refer to the charter that the Ainurruvar had in which their rights and duties were detailed, as also the dharma of merchants that they practiced.

A constant catchphrase is their close association with Aihole in Karnataka through its deity Parmesvari or Bhagavati. Their association with Aihole remains enigmatic, as the earliest records at the site, i.e. the Gaudaragudi and Lad Khan temple inscriptions refer to the term five hundred but in relation to brahmanas, termed *mahajanas* or *caturvedins*. Karashima suggests that the brahmanas may have taken the lead in initiating commercial networks, but their relationship to the Ainurruvar that comprised of a diverse range of groups remains unclear (Karashima 2009: 143). It is significant that in the case of the inscriptions from Kolhapur, the guilds contributed to Jain temples and Jain ritual worship of the Tirthankara.

The association of merchants and trade-guilds in administration occurs widely in many of the texts of the period as well and has been a feature of early administrative structures in India. Some of the merchant guilds such as the Ayyavole known as the Vira Bananjas in Karnataka had linkages with other regions. In their inscriptions, they refer to themselves as being resident in thirty-two coastal towns, eighteen *pattanas* or market towns, and sixty-four *ghaṭikā-sthānas* or establishments for learned men. They had their own banner with a hill symbol and usually met in different places on weekdays and made donations to temples from the cess on commodities sold in the market.

In the twelfth century merchants who proclaimed their south Indian origin financed the construction and endowment of a Hindu temple modeled on the Meenakshi temple of Madurai at Quanzhou, the premier China international port of that era. After the thirteenth century there are no further records of the guilds; by the fifteenth century numerous sources describing the Melaka emporium detail instead the critical role of two south India-based net worked merchant communities: the Chulias (Tamil-speaking Muslims) and the Kelings/Klings (Chetti, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada Hindu merchants). In the fifteenth century, the Italian traveller, Niccolo Da Conti described the Chulia traders as "... very rich, so much so that some will carry on their business in forty of their own ships, each of which is valued at 50,000 gold pieces." Another group of traders settled in the Malay peninsula and in north Sumatra were from Gujarat who traded in several varieties of cotton cloth.

In the final analysis, the vibrant trade networks that extended across the Bay of Bengal had several partners. Nigamas as well as trade guilds from the Indian subcontinent were vital partners in these networks along with local trading systems of Southeast Asia. Evidence for this dynamic cultural interchange is evident in the archaeological record, as also in inscriptions both in South and Southeast Asia. In the next Working Paper, we will discuss the part played by religious shrines, especially those located in the coastal areas and their role both as institutions of learning and also as consumers of commodities.

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III

# Shared Religious and Cultural Heritage

## 1. Introduction

In this Working Paper, I address the theme of cultural integration through the institution of the religious shrine or Hindu temple, especially with reference to those located on or near the coasts both in India and in Southeast Asia. A discussion on the coastal shrine is critical for this paper to dispel the myth that due to restrictions stipulated in the Law Books or the *Dharmasastras* on maritime travel, the Hindu population turned to agrarian pursuits and production, away from trade and maritime transport.

It is significant that while the origin myths of most of the temples associate their founding with a royal patron, yet there is little historical evidence for this during most of their existence. An analysis of the data from inscriptions establishes that temples and monasteries were not merely centres of devotion and worship but were also principal institutions in the period from 9$^{th}$ to 13$^{th}$ century for establishing laws and enforcing them on their members. Several inscriptions document complex arrangements for the use of temple resources, whether these were lands or else revenues from shops and markets. In the larger temples, we find mention of several classes of temple employees such as administrators, treasurers, accountants, temple women, cooks, sweepers, artisans, watchmen, etc. Resources for temple rituals, processions and for the large number of employees were generated through surplus agricultural production on temple lands and from donations in cash and kind from trading groups. The inscriptions also provide a record of legal transactions conducted and in addition to the temple archives on income and expenditure form a valuable source of information on the legal jurisdiction of the temple. A good example of this is the study of the early seventeenth century archives of a temple in Kerala.

The formulation of the role of the religious shrine in the ancient period, as discussed in this paper is different from that which is generally accepted by historians of ancient India. Historians have tended to credit royalty with the establishment of Hindu temples at the instigation of brahmanas who provided legitimisation to their rule in return for generous gifts and land grants. Brahmanas are linked to the spread of Puranic religion and for the dissemination of Puranic ideas, practices and institutions like *vrata, puja, tirtha* and temple-centred *bhakti*. Three processes have been postulated for historical development in what is termed the early medieval period (6$^{th}$-7$^{th}$ to 12$^{th}$-13$^{th}$): expansion of state society; assimilation and acculturation of tribal peoples; and integration of local religious cults and practices. The temple is seen as having played a major role in this integration of peripheral areas and tribal populations. This neat trajectory of religious expansion and integration is not reflected in the archaeological record, which highlights a complex mosaic of cultures from the first millennium BCE onwards that continued to retain their identity.

In Gujarat coastal temples were dedicated to a variety of deities, ranging from the non-Sanskritic fertility goddess lajja-gauri whose shrine dated to 1st century BCE was excavated from the site of Padri in the Talaja tahsil of Bhavnagar district of Gujarat hardly 2 km from the Gulf of Khambat to temples of Surya or Sun and other gods along the Saurasthra coast from the sixth century onwards. From the 10th to 13th century, the primary route was along the coast from Dwarka on the Gulf of Kachchh to Somnath on the Saurashtra coast and Bhavnagar at the head of the Gulf of Khambat. The coastal centres of Somnath and Dwarka were well-known for their magnificent temples, though the beginnings of these sites date to the early centuries of the Common Era. We start with the nature of the early temple in western India and changes in its interactive circuits across the Ocean over time.

## 2. The Hindu Temple along the Coasts

The first issue that needs to be addressed is: do we know of coastal shrines and how early are they? Gujarat has a coastline of 1600 kms most of which lies in Saurashtra bounded by the Gulf of Kachch in the north and the Gulf of Khambat in the southeast. The region was settled at least from the third millennium BCE onward. A survey of published sources on the archaeology of Gujarat shows at least 683 Harappan sites, both early and late. These are largely located around the Gulf of Kachchh and in Jamnagar district, while Junagadh district is a blank, with the exception of the coastal site of Prabhas Patan, 4 kms south of Veraval at the mouth of the Hiran river. The earliest evidence of a coastal structural shrine comes from Padri in the Talaja tahsil of Bhavnagar district of Gujarat hardly 2 km from the Gulf of Khambat. The site has third millennium BCE beginnings, but was again occupied around the first century BCE. The 7.14 hectare site with a 3.2 m thick habitational deposit has provided data for three cultural periods. Period I is Early Harappan (3000-2600 BCE), Period II is Mature Harappan (2500-1900 BCE) and the third period is Early Historic (1st century BCE to 1st century CE).

A distinctive feature of the Gujarat seaboard is the series of temples located along the coast, which provide insights into the communities who inhabited the space between the ocean and the hinterland; their histories and attempt at constructing their cultural environment. How does archaeology help provide insights into the religious life of the communities? It is here that archaeological data on settlement sites helps identify the support base of religious sites. For example, while sites along the coastline of Saurashtra with temples, such as Kadvar, Mangrol and Porbandar served as intermediate ports and also subsisted on fishing, at Dwarka and Valabhi agriculture and bead manufacturing formed the backbone of economic activities, and at the sites of Roda, Akota and Broach agricultural activities were of prime importance. Another source of information is the finds of sculptures of deities often without any architectural associations, which need to be factored into any discussion of the early religious landscape in the subcontinent.

In secondary writings these coastal temples have been attributed to the Maitraka dynasty who ruled Gujarat from 475 to 776 CE with their capital at Valabhi situated at the head of the Gulf of Khambat. It is generally assumed that the patrons of the temples were the kings. But was that the case and if so, why did the kings build temples along the coast far away from their capital at Valabhi. Here we examine the issue through a discussion of the inscriptions of the Maitraka dynasty. More than one hundred and twenty copper-plate charters of the Maitraka dynasty written in Sanskrit are preserved in museums, especially in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai. Nearly half of these records list the town of Valabhi as the location of Maitraka rule and it was at this site in Bhavnagar district that most of the copper-plates were found. In the early charters of the sixth century, the place of issue is generally given as Valabhi, though from the seventh century onward, these seem to have been issued from victory camps by the kings. The epigraphs mention date of issue, but identifying the era used in the records has been a problem for historians. The charters comprise of two plates held together by rings, one of the rings bearing a Maitraka seal showing a bull and the legend *śrībhaṭakkaḥ,* the founder of the dynasty.

The purpose of issuing the charters was to record land donations to religious establishments. They start with a eulogy of the king and list officials involved in the writing of the charter and authorization of the grant. Of the nineteen kings described in the charters, sixteen are labelled as devotees of Shiva; though there are also references to rulers devoted to Vishnu, the Sun-god, the Buddha and occasionally to goddesses. A majority of the donations are to individual brahmanas and only a few mention Hindu temples. Jain institutions are completely missing, though Buddhist monasteries do find mention as recipient of grants.

The records however, celebrate Vedic learning and mention the Vedic Sakha affiliation of the brahmanas to whom land was donated. Fifty per cent of the brahmana recipients of the grants were Yajurvedins, almost 30 per cent were Sāmavedins, some 20 per cent Ṛgvedins, and only six of the recipients were Atharvavedins. Most of the brahman donees lived in and around Valabhi and the endowments had to be used for the practice of daily rituals.

Another early centre of religious architecture on the west coast is the site of Cotta Chandor in Chandor district in south Goa on the banks of the river Paroda leading to the sea, which was subjected to excavation for two field seasons in 2002-2004. The complete plan of a brick temple complex datable from third to eleventh century CE was unearthed and five phases of structural activity were identified. Though three phases of construction were identified, these were marked by continuity of religious beliefs and in the last phase the sculpture of Nandi was added to the temple complex. Politically, the Kanara coast was controlled by the Kadambas from CE 350 to 550 and several families are known who ruled from centres further inland, such as at Banavasi and Halsi. The Silaharas followed the Kadambas in Goa from 750 to 1020 CE, but the Kadambas re-emerged in the tenth century. The Panjim plates refer to king Guhalla Deva of the Goa Kadambas undertaking a pilgrimage to the temple of Somnath on the Saurashtra coast, but hardly had he reached halfway, when the mast of his ship broke and he was forced to take shelter with a ruler friendly to him. This was the port of Goa where a rich Muslim merchant by the name of Madumod of Taji origin and the wealthiest of all the seafaring traders, came to the help of the king. In return the king gave him much wealth. This record tells us for the first time of Arab traders settled on the Goa coast in 11$^{th}$ century CE.

Another important coastal site is that of Mahabalipuram on the Tamil coast 60 kilometres south of the present city of Chennai. Mahabalipuram is located on the River Palar, which joins the sea at Sadras, about 50 kms to its north and is known for the almost four hundred caves and temples most of them built in the seventh and eighth century, which now form a part of the World Heritage site. The site comprises of rock-cut cave temples, nine monolithic shrines known locally as rathas, three structural temples referred to as Shore temples and several rock-cut images that dot the area along the coast. A fascinating representation on the rock face is that of the descent of the river Ganga on earth.

Human activity in the area started in the Iron Age and continued well into the present. There is also evidence for a lighthouse on the rocks behind the temples and caves. Archaeological work in and around Mahabalipuram has helped unearth the long prehistory of the site, starting from the second and first millennium BCE Iron Age Megalithic period. Burials, cairn circles, jars with burials were found on the western side of Mahabalipuram at the site of Punjeri about 1.5km away. The Tsunami of 2004 brought to light another temple in the area. Recently, remains of two temples were excavated, one to the south of Shore temple and another massive brick temple of Subrahmanya near the Tiger Cave at Saluvankuppam, near Mahabalipuram.

Seventh-century inscriptions refer to it as ‘Mamallapuram’ or close variants; ‘Mahabalipuram’ appears only after the 16th century, and (with Seven Pagodas) was used in literature written in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The site is also known for some important inscriptions. The early seventh century Mandagapattu inscription of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I reads that he ‘brought into existence a temple without utilizing either timber or lime (mortar) or brick or metal’, and

the temple was dedicated to 'Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva'. One of the earliest inscriptions that refers to the ten incarnations of Vishnu including the Buddha was inscribed at the entrance to the sanctum of the Adi Varaha cave. In his *Avantisundari Katha*, the Sanskrit scholar Daṇḍin who is said to have lived in Tamil Nadu and was associated with the Pallava court praised artists for their repair of a Vishnu sculpture at Mahabalipuram. However, Daṇḍin's authorship of this text is disputed.

These references can be added to and are important not only as indicators for the presence of religious shrines in coastal areas of India and donations of land to the temples, but more importantly of travel and pilgrimage by the coastal route that provided inter-connectedness to the shrines. These records also underscore the vibrant coastal network in the ancient period. Another aspect that appears constantly in the copper-plate grants is the incorporation of merchant guilds in administration of the shrine and the city by the king.

## 3. The King, the Merchant and the Temple

"The king must protect the conventions of heretics, corporate bodies, guilds, councils, troops, groups and the like in towns and in the countryside. Whatever their laws, duties, rules for worship or mode of livelihood, he must permit them" (*Nārada Smṛti* 10.2-3).

The *Nārada Smṛti* places the onus of protecting customary rights of corporate bodies on the king, the one institutional figure that was likely to be the cause of their erosion and thus attempts to minimize the possibility of confrontation between the two. The legal system on the ground in the early medieval period was graded into several levels of law from the rules of the *Dharmasastras* to the regional and community-based conventions to localized standards. Several medieval texts on judicial procedure contain discussion on the conventions and legislation by corporate bodies and how these should be handled by the ruler. Writers of the *Dharmasastras*, such as Katyayana, Brhaspati and Manu state that the king was obliged to sanction and enforce those regional conventions that had the consensus of local leaders. This means that local consensus was the real source of *dharma*, as it applied to corporate bodies.

Relevant to this paper is the copper-plate charter of Visnusena in Sanskrit, issued from Lohata in the Kathiawar region. D. C. Sircar, the editor of the inscription has identified Lohata with the town of Rohar on the Gulf of Kachchh. The find-spot of the copper-plates is unknown, but on palaeographic grounds it is dated to 6$^{th}$-7$^{th}$ century CE. The inscription states that the king Visnusena was approached by the community of merchants from Lohata to endorse customary laws prevalent in the community and which had been continuing for several generations. The king assures protection to the community of merchants established in the region and endorses their continued functioning. The inscription then provides a detailed list of seventy-two trade regulations or customary laws to be followed by the merchant community.

Some of the regulations include the following: that merchants staying away for a year were not required to pay an entrance fee on their return. Other clauses specify duties that were to be paid. A boat full of containers was charged twelve silver coins, but if the containers were for religious purposes, they were charged only one and a quarter silver coin. In the case of a boat carrying paddy it was half this amount. The exception to this was a boat carrying buffaloes and camels, where no reduction is allowed. Other items, which were frequently transported by boat included dried ginger sticks, bamboo, wine, leather, and bulls. The variety of taxable objects mentioned in the inscription is an indication of the diverse nature of trade in the region. These included oil mills, sugarcane fields, wine, cumin seed, black mustard and coriander. The inscription also refers to a tax on dyers of cloth, weavers, shoemakers and retailers hawking goods on foot. Others such as blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers, potters, etc. could be recruited for forced labour under the supervision of officers. Thus the record makes a distinction between commodities meant for religious purposes and the temple, as opposed to those to be sold in the market and underscores a differential in taxation.

This leads to the question of the role of merchants as local administrators and especially their involvement in temple administration. Important evidence for this comes from copper-plate inscriptions, such as the first set of three copper plates from Anjaneri, near Nasik 168 kms inland from Mumbai on the west coast, which confirms this position of merchants and entrusts the *nagara* with the administration of the temple estate, including disposal and investment of the revenues. The record refers to Bhogashakti granting eight villages for providing materials for worship of the god Narayana, for repairs to the temple and for the maintenance of a *sattra* or procession in the town of Jayapura. The merchants are asked to select five or ten of their number to supervise the great annual festival of the god, which would be attended by many pilgrims from afar and last a whole fortnight in the month of Margasirsa (December). The merchants were in turn exempted from payment of octroi duties and the obligation to pay for the boarding of royal officers. A postscript to the plates records endowments by Tejavarmaraja who donated pasture land in a village to the south of Jayapura. He also deposited a hundred rūpakas with the guild of merchants. The interest on this amount was to be used for providing bdellium or *guggulu* for worship of the deity.

Also relevant for this discussion is the Anavada inscription of 1291 CE found near Patan, an ancient city in north Gujarat said to have been founded in 745 CE. The inscription records gifts to a temple dedicated to Krishna by *vanjārās* or itinerant merchants, *nau-vittakas* (knowledgeable about ships) and *mahajanas*, which according to the inscription included *sādhu* or *sāhukāra*, *śresthi*, *soni* (goldsmith), *thakkura* or *thākura* and *kamsara* or brazier. These sub-categories of trading groups no doubt also reflected their economic status and growing clout. These and other records confirm the role of merchants and trading groups not only as patrons of temples, but also involved as administrators both of religious shrines, as also towns and cities.

This is further confirmed by 9$^{th}$ to 14$^{th}$ century inscriptions of three families of the Silahara dynasty, one of whom ruled north Konkan comprising of about 1400 villages with their capital at Sthanaka or present Thana on the west coast. The second family ruled over south Konkan and had 900 villages under its dominion. This family rose to power in the modern state of Goa and had their seat at Chandrapura or the present Chandor. A third family ruled in the interior over the present districts of Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli and Belgaum. Most of the inscriptions of this branch have been found at Kolhapur, which perhaps represented their capital.

The form of government was monarchical and the Silaharas assumed long titles indicative of their lineage, power, learning, liberality, wisdom and so on. Most of their inscriptions are in Sanskrit and they called themselves *paścima-samudrādhipati* or 'lords of the western sea-board' and Konkana Cakravarti or masters of Konkan. In theory the king had absolute power, though in practice there were several checks and balances in place. The administrative structure included the counsellor or *mantrin* and the minister or *mahāmātya* who are mentioned in several records along with the heads of different administrative units, such as *rāṣṭrapati*, *viṣayapati* and *grāmapati* or village headman. Committees comprising of merchants, artisans and trade-guilds and referred to as *mahājanas* are mentioned with regard to the administration of towns and villages. Local religious institutions were also represented in these committees and are termed *pañcamaṭha-mahāsthāna* or the five religious groupings of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha and Jina.

This association of merchants and trade-guilds in administration occurs widely in many of the texts of the period as well and has been a feature of early administrative structures in India. Some of the merchant guilds such as the Ayyavole known as the Vira Bananjas in Karnataka had linkages with other regions. In their inscriptions, they refer to themselves as being resident in thirty-two coastal towns, eighteen *pattanas* or market towns, and sixty-four *ghaṭikā-sthānas* or establishments for learned men. They had their own banner with a hill symbol and usually met in different places on weekdays and made donations to temples from the cess on commodities sold in the market.

Several inscriptions from early medieval India document complex arrangements for the use of temple resources, whether these were lands or else revenues from shops and markets. In the larger temples, we find mention of several classes of temple employees such as administrators, treasurers, accountants, temple women, cooks, sweepers, artisans, watchmen, etc. Resources for temple rituals and for the large number of employees were generated through surplus agricultural production on temple lands and from donations in cash and kind from trading groups. The inscriptions also provide a record of legal transactions conducted and in addition to the temple archives on income and expenditure form a valuable source of information on the legal jurisdiction of the temple.

Further south on the Malabar coast, many settlements as also temples appear from the ninth century onwards, such as the coastal centre of Kollam or Quilon facing the Arabian Sea. The ninth century copper plate inscriptions of Sthanu Ravi found near Quilon record a contract between the local authority and a group of resident Christians from the Persian Gulf allowing them access, free of certain taxes, to the fort which protected the port market and was maintained by the merchant groups *Anjuvannam* and *Manigramam*. The Quilon copper plates are significant in connection with trading rights granted to the Christian church and twenty-five persons from West Asia are signatories as witnesses. The market was located within the precincts of the fortified settlement, while the church was situated outside the fortification wall. Through these grants the *Anjuvannam* and the *Manigrammam* guilds became the rightful occupants of the coastal centre or *nagaram* and were responsible for collection and remission of customs duty and for fixing the sale prices of merchandise transacted in the coastal town of Kollam. They were also granted the customary seventy-two rights by the rulers.

The early eleventh century Kochi plates of Bhaskara Ravivarman record the grant of the title *Anjuvannam* and privileges in trade to Joseph Rabban, a Jew in Muyirikkodu or Mujiri, now identified with Pattanam. The third set of inscriptions, the thirteenth century Kottayam plates of Vira-Raghava records the grant of the title *Manigrammam* and privileges to Ravikkoran, a merchant in Kodangalur.

Different views have been expressed about the identity of *Anjuvannam* found only in coastal towns both on the Malabar and Tamil coasts. After a careful analysis of the inscriptions, Subbarayalu equates them with the Hanjamana found on the Konkan coast in Marathi-Sanskrit and Kannada inscriptions. It denoted a trading body composed of West Asian sea-going merchants traversing the Ocean as far east as Java and occurs in inscriptions from the ninth century onwards. By the eleventh century it largely comprised of Muslim traders and became a permanent part of the local community in coastal villages. Its presence as a trade guild continues until the thirteenth century after which there no further references to it.

This brief survey of copper-plate grants shows the presence of a population with multiple religious affiliations and included in addition to Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. The shrine was an important locale in the cultural landscape; it not only brought diverse groups together, but more importantly placed merchant groups in a special position as administrators as also as adjudicators of customary law and traditional practices. At this stage it is necessary to bring in the evidence of the early Hindu temple in Southeast Asia and at sites defining the sailing world.

## 4. Coastal Temples and the Sailing World

It is important that these sites be viewed not as a monument or a group of monuments, but located within their wider context, which also included other sites in their vicinity. For instance, My Son and the port of Hoi An – both World Heritage sites in Vietnam; the numerous rock cut structures found at Mahabalipuram on the Tamil coast and slightly further inland; and the archaeological and structural remains of the pre-Portuguese period in Goa. Archaeology shows that many of these coastal sites existed as important landing places prior to the construction of grand religious edifices,

which may have stemmed from a need by the sailing world to provide anchorage – both physical and cultural on sailing routes. We start this paper with Mahabalipuram, 55 kms south off Chennai on the east coast of India and then move on to the Sun Temple at Konarak; Elephanta island and the churches at Goa, before discussing My Son temple and the port of Hoi An in Vietnam and the churches in the Philippines.

The temples at Mahabalipuram and Konarak were often referred to as pagodas by European travellers. While Mahabalipuram was known as Seven Pagodas by seamen, the Sun temple at Konarak was termed as the Black Pagoda. Interestingly another temple site, not inscribed in World Heritage list, yet referred to in sailors' accounts is the White Pagoda or the temple of Jagannatha in Puri, Odisha and the Chinese pagoda at Nagapattinam on the Tamil coast.

Recent underwater archaeological explorations have brought to light remains that may have belonged to other shrines at the site. The underwater structures, especially the long walls having 2 to 3 courses, scattered dressed stone blocks of various sizes and stones having projections are considered to be man-made in nature. What is important is the continued habitation at the site and its links with other centres along the east coast of India, as also across the seas. The thirteenth century Sun Temple at Konarak in Odisha was known as the Black Pagoda to European sailors and served as a navigational point for sailors in the Bay of Bengal. The site seemed to have been an important port from early times. The name Konarak is in most likelihood derived from the name of the presiding deity Konarak, which means the Arka (sun) of Kona (corner). Recent archaeological excavations at Kuruma brought to light a ruined Buddhist monastery, 8 kms north-east of Konarak and at Khalkatapatna, an ancient sea-port, 11 km south-east of Konarak on the left bank of the river Kushabhadra substantially attested the maritime importance of Konarak.

In 1983–84, soil was brought from Khalkatapatna for construction of the Marine Drive road between Konarak and Puri. While digging for soil, archaeological remains were noticed. The excavation brought to light a brick jelly floor which could have served as a loading and unloading platform. Other findings included Chinese ware, Celadon ware, egg-white glazed and glazed chocolate wares of Arabian origin and local wheel-turned dark grey pottery. No structural remains were found during excavation. Oven and hearth were noticed, including numerous ring wells connected with houses. Khalkattapatna port extended from Tikina, Ashram and Garudeshwar and beyond. According to the local people, Tikina was a boatbuilding centre. The findings suggest that maritime trade contacts of Khalkattapatna existed with the Persian Gulf countries, China and other Southeast Asian countries. This could be corroborated with the findings of stamped ware sherds of Kottapatnam and Motupalli on the Andhra coast and comparable with Kota China of North Sumatra and Bagan of Burma, which are datable from 12th to 13th century CE.

The rock-cut caves on the island presently known as Elephanta on the west coast are located about 10 kilometers off Mumbai, the financial capital of India and have been dated to between the fifth and eighth centuries. Landing quays sit near three small hamlets known as Set Bunder in the north-west, Mora Bunder in the northeast, and Gharapuri or Raj Bunder in the south. The island has a long history and continued in the possession of the political dynasties who ruled the mainland. There are seven cave excavations on the island and the primary cave, numbered as Cave 1, is about 1.5 km (0.93 mi) up a hillside, facing the ocean. The temple complex is dedicated primarily to Shiva and depicts him in various forms and also shows mythological events associated with him. The gigantic images of the deity show him in a variety of forms, both benign and meditative. The eastern part of the island has Buddhist monuments in the form of a few caves, of which two are complete and one contains a stupa. The current name of the site is attributed to the Portuguese who named it Elephanta after a colossal stone statue of an elephant found near the landing place.

Archaeological excavations at Rajbandar brought to light brick ruins of ancient port town extending to the hill on which Cave 2 is located. The ancient jetty

was known as Rajghat. Also noticed were a Buddhist brick built ruined building, silver Kshatrapa and Roman coins (1st to 4th century CE), small copper Karshapanas (1st century BCE/CE) and a 15 meter long brick jetty cum wharf. The height of the wall was raised over a period of 700 years. Also recovered from the site were Roman Amphorae, Red Polished ware and a structure dating to 1stcentury BCE to 7th century CE.

Two lead coins with three peaked hill on the obverse and a wheel on the reverse were recovered from Morandar. One of the coin had the character 'ye' in Brahmi. At Rajbandar were found carnelian bead, rolled and unrolled pottery few Chinese ware and a brick wharf of the 6th century CE Large bricks were found lying scattered around the Shetbandar village, along with RPW, and below a wall miniature bowls, spouts and jars were recovered. The brick size at Shetbandar suggests habitation in Gupta period. Coins belonging to the Kalachuris of 6th – 7th century CE are found in abundance. Thus, the island provides evidence for settlement contemporary to the rock-cut sculpture, which was an important landmark on that part of the coast and was probably, linked to the archaeological site at Chandor further south on the coast near Goa and already discussed above. Though a nationally protected site, Chandor has not so far been inscribed and this credit goes to the somewhat later Portuguese architecture. In the next section of this paper, I discuss one of the prominent coastal sites of Southeast Asia.

## 5. My Son Sanctuary, Vietnam

The site of My son in Vietnam is located in a valley surrounded by mountains. The Thu Bon river connects the upland and the lowland with an estuary in Hoi An. Under the kingdom of Champa (9-10th century), the city possessed the largest harbour in Southeast Asia. My Son's wonderful natural environment was the reason Cham rulers chose the My Son Valley for their sanctuary. The monumental area of My Son Sanctuary lies 300 meters above sea level and is surrounded by a row of high hills and is accessible only through a narrow gorge. Cham kings believed My Son was the residence of the god Shiva whose presence helped protect the empire. My Son Sanctuary monuments are set in a beautiful verdant valley shadowed by Cat's Tooth Mountain (Hon Quap).

Originally, the My Son Sanctuary had only a wooden temple, which burned down in the sixth century. In the early seventh century, King Sambhuvarman (Reign from 577 to 629) built the first temple in brick that still exists. Then, other dynasties continued to restore it by building more temples in brick to worship the Gods of Hinduism, but especially Shiva. This area was discovered in 1885 by a group of French soldiers. Ten years later (1895), archaeologist Camille Paris made the first exploration. Since then until 1904, many researchers and archaeologists have visited here to reveal the secrets, including Louis Finot, Henri Parmentier and others.

My Son, popularly known in ancient times as "Srisana Bhadresvara" was the royal sanctuary, while Hoi An, an ancient town sometimes called the "Port of Great Champa" was the centre of maritime trade. Sinhapura Tra Kieu was known as the "City of Lion" or the "Lion Citadel" and was the centre of royal power.

While excavating and restoring the tower Groups of K and H at the My Son Sanctuary (Duy Phu commune, Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province), the group of Indian archaeological experts and their Vietnamese partners have unexpectedly discovered an ancient road and walls underground. Besides, these experts have found several valuable objects at the foot of the ancient towers such as two stone lion-man statues and terracotta items dating back to the 11th-12th centuries. The road is 8 metres in width and between two parallel walls built with terra-cotta bricks. Initially, the ancient road is believed to lead to the ceremony sphere at the

The site has 70 tower temples dating from the fourth to thirteenth century CE with different architectural patterns. The temple towers are constructed in groups and each group is surrounded by a thick all of bricks. These have been classified using letters- A,B.C D E based on the classification carried out by Henri Parmentier (1904: 805-96). The A group has 13 temples of which the main temple of

the site is A 1 dated to the tenth century CE dedicated to Shiva. It is 24 meters high and is the tallest one of the site. Temple A 10 was built before 875 CE but is currently in a severely damaged condition.

This brief overview of some of the coastal religious architecture in the ASEAN – India region shows a close relationship between landing places, ports and religious architecture. In secondary writings, researchers have tended to privilege commercial interactions rather than ritual connections in trans-oceanic contacts, though rigorous documentation and analysis of find-spots and spaces within which coins and commodities have been found conforms closely to ritual. Similarly, the functioning of the medieval merchant guilds from peninsular India show their close association with temples. For example, the inscriptions of the corporate body termed Ainurruvar indicate that they transacted business in eighteen pattanam or market towns, often coastal, thirty-two *velapuram* or harbour areas of ports and sixty-four *ghatikasthanas* or centres of learning generally associated with temples (Karashima, 2009: 143). This is further supported by the Barus inscription from north-west Sumatra. The inclusion of centres of learning as spaces for conducting activities of the merchant guilds underscores the role of religious shrines in social and cultural integration rather than merely being places of worship.

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IV

# Of Script and Languages: Deciphering the Transactions of the Literate World

## 1. Introduction

The deep involvement of temples and other religious institutions with a range of activities including economic transactions was discussed in Working Paper III. There are references in inscriptions to the presence of *pathsala* or school attached to temples, as also medical centres and arrangements for distribution of medicinal herbs. Inscriptions from the Buddhist site of Kanheri near Mumbai and a temple in Gujarat suggest that this practice had its beginnings around the middle of the first millennium CE. A sixth century inscription from Buddhist caves at Kanheri near Mumbai refers to a donation by vaidya or physician. Three copper plates from central Gujarat dated in the reign of the Huna Toramana ($5^{th}$ – $6^{th}$ centuries CE) record gifts made to the temple of Jayaswami or Narayana belonging to the queen mother by the trading community of Vadrapalli on the west coast of India. The copper plate states that itinerant mendicants visiting the temple, as also devotees should be provided with medicines. These are aspects which need to be brought into the discussion.

Texts dated to the beginnings of the Common Era, such as the *Apadāna* are replete with descriptions of stupa construction and relic worship conceived within a cosmic soteriological framework. There are references to individuals or groups of individuals organizing festivals at a time when construction or expansion or renovation of a stupa was proposed and similarly at the time when it was completed. It is accepted that texts relating to the Buddha's biography were recited on these occasions as well as performed. Thus, the setting up of a stupa was an occasion when the king, the lay devotee, the stone-carver and the monks and nuns came together in celebration of the life of the Buddha. In this paper, these traditions of learning are explored through three sets of World Heritage sites. These include the Nalanda monastic complex in India; Borobudur and Srivijaya in Indonesia; and Ayutthaya and Wat Si Chum in Sukhothai, Thailand. We start the discussion with the expansion of Buddhism across Asia and the special interest that it developed in writing and manuscript cultures.

## 2. Buddhism across the Seas

The Buddha is said to have preached in Magadhi, the language of Magadha in eastern India. The school that we know today, which performs its rites and liturgies in a language which has come to be called Pali, was codified primarily by Buddhaghosa, a Buddhist scholar and commentator, in $5^{th}$ century Sri Lanka at the Mahavihara. This ordination lineage is the most widespread at present, while the Sarvastivadin and Dharmaguptaka Vinaya lineages

are active in Tibet and East Asia respectively. We know very little about most of the others, though there are indications that several *nikāyas* or monastic lineages were present at the Buddhist complex of Nalanda. In Tibet and China, for example, the language used and the means through which the texts were authenticated were very different from those in large parts of India. The emphasis on understanding the linguistic diversity of the different *nikāyas* in history is critical to an appreciation of the role of scholars, learned monks and local communities in the development of visual traditions within the different parts of the ASEAN – India region.

"Ancient Buddhist texts functioned both as sources of knowledge and as objects of veneration. Wherever Buddhism spread, written works served to transmit and reinforce the religion's doctrines, rituals, and institutions in new locations. The importance of written texts to Buddhist culture can hardly be exaggerated. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the oral transmission of Buddhist texts continued on for many centuries even after monks began putting sutras into writing".

Another important element in the spread of Buddhism is the language used to preserve the Buddha's teachings. In Suvarnabhumi or Southeast Asia, the classical Pali tradition was cherished and preserved by copying, reciting, studying and writing in Pali even after literatures in local languages had developed. In the 1920s, digging at Khin Ba mound in central Myanmar led to the recovery of a relic chamber sealed by a stone slab. The relic chamber contained several sacred finds, the most extraordinary being a book of twenty gold leaves bound by a gold thread. A perfect replica of a palm-leaf manuscript, the "golden book" contains a series of Pali texts and is one of the earliest examples of inscriptions on gold leaves. Both at Sukhothai in Thailand and at Pagan in Myanmar, Pali continued to be used for citations from texts and also for compositions, though it was written in the Khom script at the former site. In contrast, Cambodia and Laos have few Pali inscriptions. Thus, it is evident that the choice of language to be used was deliberate and taken after much reflection.

How does this discussion on the use of language for the teachings of the Buddha to be compared with the physical manifestations of Buddha dhamma? Recent archaeological research in Myanmar supports the presence of a complex cultural landscape known as the Pyu ancient cities, which provide the earliest testimony of the introduction of Buddhism into Southeast Asia. The best known of the Pyu sites are those of Beikthano, Halin and Sriksetra dated from 200 BCE to 900 CE. The Pyu ancient cities provide the earliest testimony of the introduction of Buddhism into Southeast Asia. The monastery and stupa at Beikthano show several similarities with those from the site of Nagarjunakonda in the Krishna valley in coastal Andhra.

In contrast, Thailand has had a head-start with World Heritage sites such as the historic city of Ayutthaya and that of Sukhothai inscribed in 1991. In a paper published in 1995, Thongchai Winichakul argues that as elsewhere, the study of the past was closely related to the nation and that there was little change in it from the nineteenth century until 1970s. He lauds Srisakra Vallibhotama's efforts at providing depth to the Thai past by focusing attention on prehistory and the early beginnings of the state, long before the thirteenth century Sukhothai kingdom that had been seen as the precursor to the present Thai state in the national narratives. Vallibhotama highlighted the contribution of settlements, urban centres and regions to an understanding of the pluralistic and diversified Thai past and this was developed further by Dhida Saraya in her work on Dvaravati, the early history of Siam. More recently an edited volume published by the Siam Society highlights contributions in art and archaeology.

Archaeological research during the last few decades has deepened the past of Thailand and challenged the notion of a unified superimposed Dvaravati kingdom. During the Iron Age, dating between 2000 and 200 BCE large settlements based on rice agriculture, bronze and iron production with extensive inland and trans-oceanic exchange and trade networks are known from central and northeast Thailand. Many of the sites provide evidence of burials with an impressive array of grave goods

followed by large settlements, which have in the past been termed as urban centres leading to the emergence of the state. Especially relevant for this paper is the site of Ban Don Ta Phet in central Thailand that commands the eastern approaches to the Three Pagodas Pass, a route that linked the Chao Phraya plains with the Gulf of Martaban and the Indian subcontinent. Radiocarbon dates suggest a fourth century BCE date for the beginning of the site. It is significant that several aspects of the material culture present similarity across the Irrawaddy, Chao Phraya and Mekong river valleys.

Details available from recent archaeological excavations thus support continuity of settlement in the river valleys from the Copper-Bronze age to the Iron Age and the expansion of wet-rice agriculture from the middle of the first millennium CE onwards. There is evidence for inter and intra-regional trade and exchange, as also long-distance networks through the Gulf of Siam. Thai scholars have suggested that the Thai term '*muang*' literally 'coming together of communities' best describes these economically, socially and politically self-contained units. It is largely these communities that accepted and adapted Buddhism.

Prapod Assavirulhakarn has convincingly shown that Pali Buddhism was present in the western part of mainland Southeast Asia from around the fifth or sixth centuries CE onwards and did not come only later in the twelfth century after the reforms in Sri Lanka that unified the Theravada Saṅghas there, as previously thought. Old Mon inscriptions in a variant of the Brahmi script record donations by people from different groups to Buddhist monastic centres and include commoners, dancers, ascetics, *brāhmaṇa*s, kings and nobles. The donations involved such activities as casting of Buddha images, building *stūpa*s and *vihāra*s, repairing damaged images or freeing caged animals. A second category of epigraphs comprises of extracts from the Buddhist Canon and several religious formulae in Sanskrit and Pāli.

This diversity in language and script indicating complexity of Buddhist traditions adopted in the region is matched by a variety of religious affiliations at archaeological sites. Khok Chang Din is a cluster of twenty historic sites at the foothills of Khao Dok, southwest of the moated settlement of U Thong, which have yielded bricks, stones, shards including Tang ceramics. The site was identified in the 1960s, but subsequent excavations by the Fine Arts Department unearthed a terracotta vessel filled with silver coins stamped with the conch symbol from site 18. At site 5, laterite bases of a rectangular structure were discovered, as also finds of stone Śiva *liṅga*s and *mukhaliṅga*s now displayed in the U Thong National Museum (Skilling 2003: 87-95).

Thus, it is evident that both Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted in ancient Thailand. Secondary writings often divide Buddhism into two opposing camps, *viz.* Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. This classification is however erroneous, since "Hīnayāna" is a polemical term that even in Mahāyāna texts is used in specific contexts. Assavirulhakarn reminds us that monks affiliated to different "sects" sometimes lived in the same monasteries and lay support was given to members of different communities even by the same person. Even today, most Buddhists in Thailand do not think of themselves as "Theravāda" Buddhists but rather simply as supporters of the Buddha's *sāsana* or religion, and include in their practice ideas from both "Hīnayāna" and "Mahāyāna" traditions, as well as many practices that are not derived from Buddhism at all, such as the worship of local spirits (2010: 71-112). This leads to the issue of identifying centres of learning and the circulation of knowledge in the ASEAN – India region.

## 3. Nalanda Mahavihara and Its Revival

The archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda University) located around 70 kilometres southwest of Patna, the provincial capital of Bihar, was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2016. The nomination dossier dates the mahavihara, which covers an area of 23 hectares, from 3rd century BCE to 13th century CE. The excavated remains date from the sixth century CE onward and excavations have exposed extensive remains of six major brick temples and eleven monasteries arranged on a

systematic layout and spread over an area of more than a square kilometre. Monastery 1 is the largest and it was here that several copper plates were found including the one by Devapala. The written records from Nalanda such as inscriptions, seals and copper plates are all royal records and we know very little about the members of the Buddhist Sangha at the site or the community of monks who studied there. It is also important to emphasize that the monastery was rebuilt nine times and there is no clarity on the changes that were introduced over time.

Even though Tibetan sources underscore only the Tantric aspect of Nalanda and other Buddhist sites such as the five great Mahaviharas in north India at Vikramasila, Nalanda, Somapura or Paharpur, Odantapura and Jaggadala known for their Vajrayana preceptors, there is need to contextualize the site of Nalanda within a multi-religious context and to underscore the 'creation' of its 'Buddhist' identity in the 19th and 20th century. Frederick Asher suggests new possibilities of examining the site of Nalanda beyond the currently defined limits of the *mahavihara*, which is restricted to the area excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India from 1915 to 1937 and again from 1974 to 1982.

Archaeological Survey of India's record of Nalanda describes it as the birthplace of Sāriputta, a disciple of the Buddha. Several dynasties are linked to the site as patrons, many of them with emblems on seals showing Hindu deities such as Lakṣmī, Gaṇesa, Śivalinga and Durga. It is said to have been destroyed by the Muslim general Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji in the twelfth century, though the Tibetan monk Dharmasvamin is known to have visited it in 1234 and found monks and pundits there. The king and queen of Bengal repaired many of the structures at the site in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. There was a change in Buddhist presence at the site soon thereafter, but Hinduism and Jainism continued to thrive. This account of the monastic complex shows the continued survival of Nalanda well into the fifteenth century.

The Pali *Dīgha* and *Samyutta Nikāyas* refer to Nalanda as one of the places where the Buddha halted, while the Jain *Sūtrakṛtānga* mentions that Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha, spent a rainy season at Nalanda. The crest for Nalanda was a wheel flanked by two deer symbolizing the first sermon. A copper-plate grant of the Sumatran king Balaputradeva related to the Sailendra rulers of Java records the grant of land to the monastery. The inscription, dated to 860 CE and written in Devanagari and proto-Bengali script, states that a king of Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra) named Balaputradeva gave an endowment for Nalanda. The claims for Nalanda as a university arise from inscriptions, and textual accounts, but have so far found little support from archaeological data.

The World Heritage site is inextricably linked to the project of reviving the ancient university and the establishment of the international university close to the site. Though the project of reviving ancient Nalanda was conceptualized in the 1990s, it received widespread attention in 2006 when the then Indian president, APJ Abdul Kalam mooted the idea while speaking in the Bihar Legislative Assembly. The project received support both from the State Government and the Centre and in 2007 the Nalanda Mentor Group was constituted to guide the university chaired by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and including among others Singapore's ex-foreign minister, George Yeo, who is the current Chancellor of the university.

In January 2007 the Government of India shared the proposal with the sixteen Member States at the East Asia Summit in Philippines and again at the fourth Summit held in October 2009, at Hua Hin, Thailand. To reinforce the university's international character, an inter-governmental Memorandum of Understanding came into force at the 8th East Asia Summit in October 2013. Till date 17 countries have signed the MoU, including China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Portugal – countries which had little interaction with ancient Nalanda. The international Advisory Board includes members such as the Thai princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Indonesia's former Foreign Minister Mr. Hassan Wirajuda and British economist Lord Meghnad Desai. In response to a question in the Lok Sabha, the Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs

stated on April 23, 2015: "Nalanda University is a non-profit public-private partnership with significant contribution from the Government of India. Foreign governments and entities have made voluntary contributions. It is not obligatory for foreign students to pay the University in foreign exchange. The foreign exchange likely to be earned in future will depend on such contributions. An amount of Rs. 2727.10 crore has been approved by the Government for the establishment of Nalanda University, of which Rs. 47.28 crore has been released till date."

An important aspect of discussion relevant here relates to the presence of Buddhist monks from Southeast Asia and China at Nalanda. For example, in the seventh century Xuanzang is known to have studied the Yogacara doctrine at the monastic complex. Most of what is known about monastic life at Nalanda is preserved in the travelogues of Chinese monks who undertook pilgrimages to India. Later Chinese accounts note that the Chinese Emperor Wu Di of the Liang dynasty organized a delegation to Nalanda in 539 to collect Buddhist texts. After the return of the expedition, Nalanda's fame in China grew sufficiently to inspire several more Chinese monastics to make the long and hazardous journey to India (Shoshin, 2012: 61-88). In addition there are examples of Buddhist monks from India also travelling to different regions of Asia.

## 4. Learned Monks and Itinerant Scholars

The Buddhist monk Vajrabodhi spent three years in Srivijaya identified with sites on Sumatra, between 717-720 CE enroute to China. He was followed by two of his disciples, the Sri Lankan monk Amoghavajra (704 – 774 CE) and Subhakarasimha (637 – 735 CE) who played important roles in the transmission of Buddhism to Southeast Asia and China. Vajrabodhi's father was a Brahmin and an acarya in Kanci and he had studied the sutras, abhidharma and so on in Nalanda monastery. He thereafter went to South India at the invitation of Pallava king Narasimhavarman and visited a temple of Avalokitesvara on the coast. Vajrabodhi then sought the King's permission to pay homage to Buddha's tooth in Sri Lanka and to travel to the kingdom of Srivijaya and China. Vajrabodhi revised two important texts, the *Mahavairocana sutra* and the *Vajrasekhara*. Amoghavajra translated several Javanese texts into Chinese and also attracted several disciples, one of whom Huiguo (746 – 805) continued his teachings and one of his disciples founded the Shingon or 'True Word'sect in Japan.

Providing a link between the Western Himalayas, Andhra and Indonesia was the renowned *dhamma* teacher Atisa (982 – 1054). Atisa was born in the village of Vajrayogini of Vikrampur region identified with Dhaka in present Bangladesh. At a young age he was ordained as a Buddhist monk and studied with several famous teachers, such as with the master Dharmakīrti of Suvarnadvipa, identified with Sumatra from 1012 to 1024. He travelled to the Indonesian archipelago on board a merchant ship along with his students. On completion of his studies, he returned to Vikramshila. In 1042 he arrived in Tibet at the invitation of the king of Tibet and is considered the father of Tibetan Buddhism. This example illustrates the mobility of scholars as they traversed large parts of South and Southeast Asia in search of knowledge, as also the close connection that were forged between religious institutions and learning. This brings me to the monument par excellence dedicated to Buddhism, i.e. the stupa at Borobudur, which was referred to in Working Paper I for the representation of sailing ships.

## 5. Borobudur in Central Java

Julia Gifford has argued that the visual programme of Borobudur was designed to be contemplated in the context of ritual, devotional and possibly meditative practice and not merely as visual illustration of contemporary texts (Gifford, 2011: 3). Borobudur was a centre for pilgrimage in the past, as it is at present and is best described in Buddhist terms as an architectural mandala that incorporates a hierarchically organized version of the bodhisattva path. It is significant that the temple has no inner space where devotees could worship.

It is suggested that leading monks promoted specific texts, which were then adapted to suit ritual

practices that required appropriate architecture (Chemburkar 2017, 205). One such was the Yoga Tantra text the *Sarvatathagatatattvasangraha* of the eighth century, which formed the basis to represent the monument as a mandala at Borobudur and at Tabo in the western Himalayas, even though architecturally the two monuments of Borobudur and Tabo are different. This recourse to texts to explain architectural development needs re-examination in view of the rich sculptural representations at Borobudur, but more importantly in the context of the interconnectedness of the site with that in the western Himalayas, further underscoring travels by teachers such as Atisa.

The 1460 reliefs on Borobudur are often seen as representing texts with a view to impressing Buddhist wisdom on the believer's mind, as formulated by N. J. Krom in 1926. This perspective reduces narrative reliefs to a corollary of the written text and is one that Julie Gifford argues against. She proposes that while some relief panels in the first and second galleries may be compared with Buddhist texts, their fundamental function was to articulate a ritual space for the worship of the Buddha. Narrative art by its definition must represent more than one event from a story, which is then organized both spatially and in a chronological sequence. An example of narrative art is often seen in the 120 relief panels in the first gallery that depict life scenes of the Buddha as narrated in the first century CE Sanskrit text, the *Lalitavistara*. One of the popular scenes is that of the Great Departure of prince Siddhartha from the palace shown in ten relief panels. However, it should be emphasized that rather than linear narration, the relief panels underscore the temporal nature of existence. The relief panels from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the third and fourth galleries picture visually descriptive passages of the text and present panoramic rather than narrative art. Gifford suggests that these were meant to encourage the devotee to imagine the panorama of a purified field emanated by the Buddha and were designed "to create a ritual space in which one could at least symbolically achieve some of the benefits of visualization meditation".

Clearly the monument at Borobudur was a part of the complex rituals associated with Vajrayana Buddhism that extended in the 8th and 9th centuries across the Bay of Bengal. But, as shown by the next example, there were several diverse philosophical strands in Buddhism around this time.

## 6. The Kingdom of Sriwijaya

Indonesia has four natural and four cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage list and nineteen sites on the Tentative List. Both the sites so far inscribed on the island of Sumatra are natural sites, while all four cultural sites are located on the island of Java. The Muara Jambi Temple Compound Site on the Batanghari river in Sumatra has been on the Tentative List since 2009 and comprises of at least 82 ruins of ancient buildings made of brick construction dated from 7th to 14th century CE.

Inscriptions dated to the seventh and eighth century in Old Malay with extensive vocabulary in Sanskrit found in the region of Palembang in south-eastern Sumatra have provided the bulk of evidence for a study of the kingdom of Sriwijaya. Data from these inscriptions is said to be corroborated by other sources such as Chinese, Arab and Indian. Recent research on these inscriptions and other sources has defined Sriwijaya as a maritime kingdom with central and district level administration. Rather than focus on the inscriptions and the structure of the kingdom, it is important for this paper to trace the archaeological beginnings of settlement in the area; relationship with inland Megalithic groups; the inter-island networks of the southeast coast of Sumatra; and finally the wider linkages of the Sriwijayan kingdom with South Asia. But perhaps the first question to reflect on is the significance of Sriwijaya to contemporary Indonesian society. In a thought-provoking paper, Truman Simanjuntak invokes the past of the present Republic of Indonesia to instil a sense of pride, on account of Sriwijaya's extensive maritime contacts and its control of routes through the Melaka and Sunda Straits and second as an ancient centre of learning on par with Nalanda in eastern India, as discussed in the next section. He bemoans the fact that while the name has been used

to instil a sense of regional pride, there has been little attempt to research its cultural legacy and inculcate the deeper cultural values of pluralism, education and tolerance.

Close links between kings of Sriwijaya and Buddhist and Hindu temples on the Tamil coast, especially the shrines at Nagapattinam are evident in the inscriptional record. The cultural context of Nagapattinam locates it within a multi-religious sacred geography, which preceded and succeeded the establishment of the Buddhist vihara at the site in 1005. The Kayarohanaswami temple in Nagapattinam is dedicated to Shiva and is said to have sixth century origins, though the present structure is dated to the eleventh century. Several 11th and 12th century inscriptions engraved on the temple walls provide valuable information. In addition to the setting up of the vihara, the king of Srivijaya gave a set of ornaments and jewels to the silver image of Nakaiyalakar (the handsome lord of Nagapattinam) according to an inscription carved on the wall of the Shiva temple thereby corroborating a plural sacred landscape at Nagapattinam. A second record refers to donations of several types of lamps by the agent of the king of Srivijaya, while a third mentions donation of gold coins from China for worship of an image of Ardhanarisvara installed on the premises of the temple by the king of Kidar identified with modern Kedah. Several seventh century Tamil saints, such as Saint Thirunavukkarasar (Appar) are known to have compiled devotional couplets in praise of Nagapattinam and its shrines. Tamil tradition also refers to the semi-legendary saint Shahul Hamid of Nagore, whose sixteenth century shrine is situated a few kilometres to the north of Nagapattinam.

The two sets of Leyden copper plates, the Larger Leyden Plate and Smaller Leyden Plates in Sanskrit and Tamil refer to the establishment of the Cudamanivihara at Nagapattinam at the initiative of the kings of Srivijaya. Construction started during the reign of the Chola king Rajaraja I (985-1016) and was completed under his son and successor Rajendra I (1012-1044). The Smaller Leyden Plates in Tamil refer to nine units of land attached to the Nagapattinam vihara. The larger plates contain a Sanskrit portion, consisting of 111 lines and a Tamil portion, consisting of 332. The Sanskrit text states that in the twenty-first regnal year, the king gave the village of Annaimangalam to the lofty shrine of Buddha in the Chulamanivarma Vihara, which the ruler of Srivijaya and Kataha, Mara Vijayottungavarman of Sailendra family with the *makara* crest had erected in the name of his father in the delightful city of Nagappattana. After Rajaraja had passed away, his son Madhurantaka caused a permanent edict to be made for the village granted by his father. It is mentioned that the height of the vihara towered above Kanaka Giri or Mount Meru. Nagapattinam finds mention in the 1467 Kalyani inscription of the Burmese king Dhammaceti. Some Burmese monks who were ship-wrecked are said to have visited Nagapattinam and worshipped there. During demolition of the monastery at Nagapattinam by the French Jesuits in 1856 a large number of Buddhist bronze images were recovered. These have been discussed in an earlier publication and need not detain us here. Another site that needs to be brought into discussion is that of Wat Si Chum in Thailand.

## 7. Wat Si Chum, Sukhothai, Thailand

The historic town of Sukhothai in Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet Provinces was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1991, as indicator of the beginnings of the Thai State. It is a serial property consisting of three physically closely related ancient towns comprising of Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet. Sukhothai was the political and administrative capital of the first Kingdom of Siam from the 13th to 15th centuries. It is celebrated for its distinctive Siamese architectural style, reflected in the planning of the towns, the many impressive civic and religious buildings, their urban infrastructure, and a sophisticated hydraulic system.

The old town of Sukhothai is surrounded by earthen ramparts and moats and contains the remains of sixteen Buddhist monasteries, four Hindu shrines, two living Buddhist monasteries (wat) and four ponds. More importantly it is associated with the codification of law, which provided the foundation for the first Thai state. King Ramkhamhaeng is considered the Founding Father of the Thai Nation. He is credited with the creation of the Thai

alphabet and the establishment of Buddhism as a state religion. Of interest to this paper is one of the Buddhist temples in Sukhothai, named Wat Si Chum, which lies outside the old town on the north-west. It contains a large seated stucco image of the Buddha, which is now enclosed within a structure, though the roof no longer exists. The Buddha image is locally known as Phra Achan loosely translated as the Teacher Monk. This section draws on an inter-disciplinary study of the temple that discusses several complex and unresolved issues. The objective is to move beyond discussions of the physical remains and aesthetics in order to underscore the philosophical underpinnings of religious architecture.

The inscriptional record from Sukhothai refers to several lineages of Buddhist monks and teachers in the area. Inscription I of king Ramkhamhaeng refers to a forest monastery built north-west of the city for a renowned monk from Nakhon Si Thammarat in south Thailand. Another important monk named Anomdassi resided at Red Forest Monastery at Si Satchanalai. A long inscription found near the Wat associates it with an aristocratic monk, Mahathera Si Sattha of the royal line. There is mention of some of the monastic lineages with close ties with Khmer and Sri Lankan monasteries. An interesting passage in inscription 2 from Wat Si Chum refers to Si Sattha as reincarnated in Krishna, Rama and Vishnu (lines 37-39) and in line 40 mentions Sri Dhanyakata, located about a kilometer west of the monastic complex of Amaravati on the Andhra coast. Dhanyakataka continued as an important centre of Buddhist pilgrimage in the fourteenth century, especially on the maritime route to Sri Lanka.

In addition to the inscriptional data, Wat Si Chum is famous for engravings of one hundred Jataka stories on slabs of phyllite, a metamorphic rock, which are now housed in the museum at Sukhothai. Many of the Jataka narratives refer to the Bodhisattva's birth as a Brahmana, but he then left his privileged life to become an ascetic. It is significant that this feature of the Jataka stories is represented for the first time in Thai art at Wat Si Chum, whose construction is dated to the third quarter of the fourteenth century (Chirapravati, 2008: 33). Peter Skilling has suggested that the rich literature on the past lives of the Buddha was meant to celebrate the glory and prowess of Sakyamuni Buddha and as Buddhism spread across Asia, the jatakas developed into a transregional and transcultural literature. The jataka stories 'circulated as texts, both orally and in written form, both in Indic originals and in local vernaculars. They were represented in painting and in sculpture, and recited and enacted at ceremonies and festivals'. Several scholars have suggested that ritual was essential to the political functioning of the Thai states and the link between Buddhism and the Thai State is further corroborated by the site of Ayutthaya.

## 8. Historic City of Ayutthaya

The capital shifted from Sukhothai to Ayutthaya at the head of the Gulf of Siam in the 14th century and continued until the 18th century when it was destroyed by the Burmese. It was never rebuilt and the new capital shifted to Bangkok. It is suggested that there was a conscious effort to replicate the urban template and architectural form of Ayutthaya at the new capital. At present is known for the extensive archaeological remains that have acquired World Heritage status.[1] Wat Phutthaisawan or the Monastery of Buddhist Kingship was one of the first temples to be built at Ayutthaya after the Siamese defeated the Khmers.

Scholars have suggested that from the late 13th and early 14th century, Ayutthaya increasingly claimed a share of the maritime trade of the declining Sriwijaya kingdom. It also had wide-ranging maritime links with the Mughal courts in India to China and Japan. Nevertheless Buddhism continued as an essential component of the State. Before we conclude the discussion on the spread of Buddhism across the ASEAN region, it is vital to bring in evidence from Cambodia and the World Heritage site of Angkor inscribed in 1992 and stretching over 400 square kilometres.

## 9. Angkor Archaeological Park

From the 9th to the 15th century, Angkor was the centre of the Khmer kingdom and the monumentality of religious and secular structures in the area testify to the prosperity and importance of the site. Villages involved in rice farming continue to exist within the

Archaeological Park and provide continuity between the past and the present and add to the diverse cultural matrix of the region[2]. Both Hinduism and Buddhism coexisted at Angkor, though a chronological bracket is sometimes suggested for the two: Hinduism is supposed to have been dominant until the 12th century, when it gave way to Buddhism. This is an issue that requires further research within the larger context of Southeast Asia.

Within the archaeological park, the famous Angkor Wat temple which has Hindu affiliation coexists with the Buddhist Bayon temple dedicated to the Boddhisattva Lokeshvara. The Bayon has been described as a complex structure having passed through several architectural and religious phases. One of the characteristic features of the temple are the two concentric galleries sculpted with bas-reliefs. while the internal gallery is complete in its ornamentation and represents mythological subjects of Hindu inspiration, the outer gallery, was dedicated both to scenes of everyday life and to certain historic episodes. They contain scenes of everyday life: markets, fishing, festivals with cockfights and jugglers and so on and history scenes with battles and processions. Between the third and the second enclosure there are traces of sixteen chapels where Buddhist and local divinities were housed.

The temples of Preah Khan and Ta Phrom have yielded in situ inscriptions, which provide detailed information and indicate that in both cases the temple complexes were large, had several groups associated with them. For example, there are references to over one thousand teachers at Preah Khan. Both the temples were built in the 12th century by Jayavarman VII and while Ta Phrom was dedicated to the king's mother as Prajñāpāramitā, Preah Khan was built five years later to the king's father as Bodhisattva Lokeshvara. Three small temples surround the Buddha temple: the one to the north is dedicated to Siva, and the one to the west to Visnu, while the one on the south is for the deceased king and queen.

Built in the Bayon style is the temple of Ta Prohm also known as Rajavihara and located at the edge of the eastern Baray at about one kilometer from Angkor Thom. The temple continued with additions and expansions being made until the reign of Srindravarman at the end of the 15th century. The main image, of the temple was of Prajñāpāramitā, and the northern and southern satellite temples in the third enclosure were dedicated to the king's guru, Jayamangalartha, and his elder brother respectively. The temple's inscriptional record states that the site was home to more than 12,500 people (including 18 high priests and 615 dancers), with an additional 800,000 people in the surrounding villages working to provide services and supplies. The stele also notes that the temple amassed considerable riches, including gold, pearls and silks.

It is this underlying ideology of moral and spiritual virtues that link Buddhist World Heritage sites in the ASEAN – India region, notably those at Sukhothai and Ayutthaya in Thailand; Borobudur in Indonesia; Ta Phrom in Angkor, Cambodia; Pyu sites in Myanmar; with those in India, such as at Sanchi, Ajanta, Ellora, Bodh Gaya and Nalanda among others. Clearly there is a need not only to study the art and architecture of Buddhist World Heritage sites across Asia, but also to research the scholarly lineages resident at these monastic centres, which led to a sharing of knowledge, both through texts, as well as recitations and performances.

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V

# Travels by Leaders in the 19th and 20th Century

## 1. Introduction

This is a draft paper on the theme 'Indian Leaders Travelling to Southeast Asia' which was also one of the themes of the Bibliography compiled for the project 'Sailing to Suvarnabhumi'. This draft will cover only the travels of Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra Bose in the early and mid-20th century to various countries in Southeast Asia. In addition to them there were several other leaders and intellectuals who visited Southeast Asia, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, P. J. Mehta, Chittaranjan Das, R. C. Majumdar and Periyar E. V. Ramasamy. These travels led to fostering of linkages and forging of socio-cultural and political ties between Indian and Southeast Asian regions prior to Independence. The paper shall not focus on a chronological account of travels by Tagore and Bose, but shall highlight the impact their travels had on both sides of the Bay of Bengal through the following sub themes:

## 2. Swadeshi and the Concept of Alternative Nationalist Education

Rabindranath Tagore established a college called Visva Bharati at Shantiniketan in 1921 whose motto was *'Yatra viśvam bhavatyeka nidam* (Where the world makes its home in a single nest)'. The college was a meeting point of global cultures where both the west and the east would converge on themes of art, culture and education. Tagore believed in constructive swadeshi characterized with *atma shakti* or self-reliance, in which education was to play a major role. The journeys undertaken by Tagore were an intellectual quest to find India's past glory and an attempt to forge cultural and educational ties between India and Southeast Asia and pursue artistic and educational dialogues across the Bay of Bengal. His entourage on his voyages to Southeast Asia invariably consisted of intellectuals and artists- Nandlal Bose (painter), Kalidas Nag and Kshitimohan Sen (Sanskrit scholar) in 1924; Suniti Kumar Chatterji (philologist), Surendranath Kar (painter) and Dhirendra Krishna Deva Varma (musician) in 1927. He set out on a three and half month Southeast Asian tour on 12 July 1927 on board the French ship Amboise. Rabindranath Tagore 'embarked on this pilgrimage to see the signs of the history of India's entry into the universal to collect source materials there for the history of India and to establish a permanent arrangement for research in this field'.[1] Rabindranath Tagore undertook the journey primarily to study the remains of Indian civilization and establish close cultural relations between India and Southeast Asian region. A direct result was the close interaction of scholars from Visva Bharati with the cultures of Southeast Asia and alternatively the study of Indian past in Southeast Asia.

Prafulla Kumar Sen, popularly known as Swami Satyanand Sen, taught at the Visva Bharati, and

went to Thailand in 1932 where he was appointed as a professor at the Chulalongkorn University. This was the result of the 1927 visit of Tagore to Thailand when the Thai Government asked him to suggest a specialist in Indian civilization and literature. Swami Satyanand taught Sanskrit at the University and also mastered the Thai language. He also established a Thai Bharat Lodge which fostered Indo Thai cultural and educational linkages. [2] The institution imparted physical, spiritual and education among the Indian youth. In his ten years in Thailand he delivered numerous lectures and in addition to many articles also produced ten books in Thai language. He is also credited with the translation of the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and biographies of Gandhi into Thai.[3]

Rabindranath Tagore's perceptions on education played a leading role in conceptualizing the 'Taman Siswa' (garden of pupils), in Indonesia, by the educator Ke Hadjar Dewantoro (1889 – 1959). "Taman Siswa was an influential and widespread network of schools that encouraged modernization but also promoted Indonesian culture and symbolised syncretism between new (Western) ideas and traditional (mostly Javanese) ways of teaching.[4] Tagore's ashrama style education at Santiniketan in 1901 could have served as a role model." [5] Conversely, Tagore also took an interest in Taman Siswa and during his visit to Java he and his team visited the school in Yogyakarta and Suniti Kumar Chatterji observed all the classes at Taman Siswa from close quarters to compare its educational approach with that of Visva Bharati. Close cultural interactions between Visva Bharati and Taman Siswa were fostered through travels of students and teachers to and from these educational institutes. Many dance teachers, such as Mrs Ammu Swaminandan, Shantidev Gose and Nataraj Vashi, were sent to observe and learn the classical Javanese dance forms.[6] Taman Siswa also established exchange student program with Tagore's schools in Bengal in 1928 [7] and students such as Ki Soebaroto, the painter Rushi Rusli (1916-2005) and Affandi from Indonesia studied in Santiniketan. During his stay at Santi Niketan from 1932 to 1936, Rusli was recommended to consider the art of the Buddhist temples at Borobodur in his home country as a fountainhead for motifs in his paintings. r.[8] He spent six years in India studying painting, fine art of mural and relief, architecture, as well as eastern art philosophy of Santiniketan tradition and thought.[9] Kartika Affandi also studied at Santiniketan and was advised by the Visva Bharati administration that his two-year grant would be given all at once which would facilitate Affandi's travel around India for studying Indian painting.[10] He also exhibited his paintings in India.[11]

The region of Myanmar/Burma had close relations with India since ancient times- economical, religious as well as political. While the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah was exiled in Rangoon, the last Burmese emperor Thinbaw was exiled to India as a prisoner of war. Political connections and sympathies were augmented by the British conquest of Burma which made Burma a part of British India. On the educational front as well there was a flow of students in both directions. Many Burmese students visited Universities and Colleges in Bengal to pursue further studies. "For the Burmese the Hindu College, Calcutta University and the Calcutta Medical College were popular amongst students for higher studies, and the Judson College and Rangoon College were affiliated to the Calcutta University."[12] Their stay in India for educational purposes exposed them to the concepts of swadeshi and satygraha which were then implemented by them in the Burmese struggle for independence. Many Bengalis from the University of Calcutta were sent to Burma as officers of the lower rungs of the administration.[13] U Ottama termed as the 'Gandhi of Myanmar' had close relations with India as he studied in Calcutta for three years and travelled around India. He was also elected as the President of the Hindu Mahasabha and had attended the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress in 1927.[14] U Ottama was the leader of the General Council of Buddhist Association (GCBA) and he adopted the method of boycott while protesting against various Acts of the British administration and was instrumental in promoting the idea of Home Rule Burma.[15]

The National education movement in Burma was an essential force in the nationalist movement.[16] Tagore made three trips to Burma in 1916, 1924 and 1927[17] The Burmese poets and literary personalities were inspired by Tagore's idea of national education. Artists like Kodaw Hmaing, socialists like U Pakhau Cha rendered support to national education and colleges. Kodaw Hmaing was popularly known as the 'Tagore of Burma' as his writing bore similarities with that of Tagore and he also opposed Imperialism.[18] Burmese artists were influenced by the artistic ideals of Santiniketan as seen in the works of Bagi Aung Soe who is considered the pioneer of modern art in Burma. Soe was sent on a Burmese scholarship to Santiniketan after Min Thu Wun visited Santiniketan and interacted with Rabindranath Tagore. Soe was sent to study and understand the art at Santiniketan and bring about a similar revival of traditional Burmese artistic traditions.[19]

## 3. Revival of Buddhist Linkages

Rabindranath Tagore believed in Universal Brotherhood embracing the whole of humanity and he opposed divisions and discriminations based on religion, territory, geography, caste etc. For him religion was Universal, which is identified with love and compassion and human spirit. "Cherish towards the whole universe immeasurable *maitri* in a spirit devoid of distinctions of hatred, of enmity. While standing, sitting, walking, lying down till you are asleep, remain established in this spirit of *maitri* that is called Brahmavihara."[20] Much of these ideals of Tagore seem to have stemmed from his knowledge of Buddhism. He appreciated the way Buddhism was preserved and being practiced in Southeast Asia, even though it had disappeared from India. "I am a disciple of the Buddha. But when I present myself before those holy places where the relics and foot-prints of the Buddha are found I come in touch with him to a great extent."[21]

In the early 20th century there was a renewed interest shown by scholars in the field of Buddhist studies and its various aspects such as language and philosophy. Pali was accepted as an independent subject for post-graduate studies by the University of Calcutta in the last quarter of the 19th century and the Department of Pali attracted a number of Asian as well as European scholars. Rabindranath Tagore realized the importance of Tibetan language for a study of Buddhist literature and thus he introduced Tibetan language as a course at Visva Bharati. In 1921 Sylvain Levi joined as a visiting professor at Visva Bharati and through his erudite scholarship scholars became attracted to Tibetan language and Pali, and this along with Sanskrit helped discover the hidden treasures of Buddhism. Through the support and encouragement of Prof. Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya a number of important works in Pali, Tibetan and Buddhist Sanskrit languages were brought out. It is at Visva Bharati that Tibetan studies became an independent subject of study, and thus the institute became a major centre for Tibetan studies in India and the world.

Tagore visited Siam (Thailand) as a pilgrim, "It has been my desire for many years to have the opportunity to visit Siam for two main reasons. The first is that Siam is country in the East, and the second is that his majesty the King of Siam is a devout Buddhist like myself. The hospitality and welcome extended to me have been above my higher expectations."[22] " In Bangkok he met prince of Chantabun in Bangkok, who had published multiple volumes of the Pali Tripitaka in Thai script."[23] Tagore carried back with him a set of the published volumes of the Tripitaka gifted by the Prince of Chantaburi[24] and a decorated box for the scriptures gifted by the Royal Institute.[25]

The following poem by Rabindranath Tagore was printed on blue satin and encased in Benares brocade, was one of the poems presented to the King and Queen of Siam.[26] This poem reflects his thoughts on the Buddhist linkages between India and Thailand and the preservation of Indian culture in Thailand.

"I come, a pilgrim, at thy gate, O Siam,

to offer my verse to the endless glory of India

sheltered in thy home, away from her own deserted shrine,

To bathe in the living stream that flows in thy heart,

whose water descends from the snowy height

of a sacred time on which arose, from the deep of

my country's being, the Sun of Love and Righteousness

I come from a Land where the Master's words

Lie dumb, in desultory ruins, in the desolate dust

Where oblivious ages of the pillared stones

The records of a triumphant devotion

I come, a pilgrim, at thy gate O Siam

To offer my verse to the endless glory of India

Sheltered in thy home, away from her own deserted shrine

To bathe in the living stream that flows through thy heart"[27]

(***Kusalasaya,*** Karuna-Ruang Urai, 2001: 42)

Rabindranath Tagore hoped that he would receive support from the King of Siam in establishing a Buddhist Chair at Visva Bharati. "We have different Chairs in our University, but we have no chair of Buddhism, and it is essential that one should be established….I therefore have come to Siam to seek your co-operation and your help in the desire to establish a chair in Buddhism, and also, if possible, to bring a message into a wider perspective."[28]

U Ottama, a leading figure of the Burmese Independence movement had close associations with India, as mentioned above. "He went to Calcutta with the help of wealthy Shan Woman. He studied three years in Calcutta until he passed tenth-standard examination and he passed the entrance examination to Calcutta University."[29] On his return to Burma he learnt the Tripitaka under the guidance of Yesagyo Sayadaw Ganthasara and was ordained as a monk at the age of 20 years with the support of U Tun Aung Kyaw, the representative of Bombay Burma Company. On his second visit to India he studied English, Sanskrit and Nagari at the Hindu College and on the request of Director of Indian Archaeological Department discussed Buddhist scriptures with him for about one year. U Ottama "later became lecturer of Pali at the Bengal National College in Calcutta. U Ottama was the leader behind the formation of the General Council of the Sangha Samettgyi (GCSS) and he asked the sangha not to keep aside the problems faced by people."[30] He supported the Young Men's Buddhist Association in Burma whose motto was Nationalism, Buddhism, National Culture and Education. When Rev: U Ottama returned to Burma, he enthusiastically helped and guided that Association. There was Young Men's Buddhists Association in which a majority of its members was laymen. Thus, the GCSS was the parallel association for the monks. In Burma Buddhist philosophy and teachings such as non-violence were integral ideas in the freedom movement. U Ottama: 'When Lord Buddha was alive, man had a predilection for Nirvana. There is nothing left now. The reason why it is so is because the government is English... Pongyis pray for Nirvana but slaves can never obtain it, therefore they must pray for release from slavery in this life.'[31] "U Wisara characterized the British as 'wrong-viewed' (in the Buddhist sense), and encouraged monks and laity to attain 'right view' by meditating jointly to 'eliminate the mental defilements so as to attain nibbana'. The GCSS, of which both monks were lead members, exhorted its members to preach 'The Four Noble Truths of Loki Nibbana' in which the path to freedom from samsara coincided with national Independence."[32]

Rabindranath Tagore's trips to Southeast Asia were the crucial driving force in the revival of a glorious Indian past amongst scholars. He visited Bali and Java on the invitation of the Dutch Colonial Society or the Dutch East Indies Art Circles. Tagore's word during his farewell that he was going on a pilgrimage of India beyond its political boundaries to find what could be seen of the remains of the ancient culture,[33] and that "he was looking at India when he was walking down the Borobodur galleries[34] echo the intellectual undercurrents in India of finding Indian remains in Southeast Asian countries and similarities between their religion, culture, art and architecture. His visits inspired historians, archaeologists and art historians of the Calcutta based Greater India Society

to study and locate India within the wider Southeast Asian context. "Rabindranath Tagore was invited to be and became the '*purodha*' or spiritual guide of the Society. From 1934 to 1958, the Society published 18 volumes of the *Journal of the Greater India Society*, with a gap in the period 1947 to 1954. The topics in its articles through its two-decade existence cover a wide range—political history, literature, religion and philosophy, sculpture and iconography, architecture, etcetera.Their unifying theme was, of course, the historical connect with India."[35] Kalidas Nag who had travelled with Tagore had laid the foundations of the Greater India Society the main focus of which he outlined in the article *Greater India: A Study in Indian Internationalism, which was* republished in the *Journal of the Greater India Society* in 1926, and primarily dealt with the spread of Indian culture and civilization to Southeast Asia in the ancient times. This Society was vital in "reviving India's past glory against imperialist propaganda that India had no past of its own except the countless invasions from outside. He wanted India to be acknowledged as a modern nation on a par with countries of East and West."[36] The historian R C Majumdar published *Champa: History and Culture of an Indian Colonial Kingdom in the Far East 2nd-16th Century AD* in 1927 and in 1936 published the first volume of *Suvarnadvipa: Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, followed by a second volume. In south India the works of Nilakanta Sastri highlighted the ancient connections of the Cholas with Southeast Asia and the relevance of maritime connections. His works include*. The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom from the Earliest Times to the Sixteenth Century (Luzac, 1929), The Cholas (University of Madras, 1935), South Indian Influences in the Far East (Hind Kitabs,1949) and South India and South-East Asia: studies in their history and culture. Geetha Book House (Mysore, 1978) to mention a few. In the field of art history the works of Ananda Coomaraswamy projected a pan Indian view of art. He had made several visits to India and befriended Abinandranath Tagore and along with Sister Nivedita co-authored Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists which featured the illustrations of Nandlal Bose and Abanindranath Tagore.*[37] *His 1927 publication Indian and Indonesian Art, covered the art of India, East Asia and Southeast Asia and put forth the view that Indian influences spread in these regions by land as well as sea.*[38] These monographs and articles were based on the inscriptional, archaeological and literary evidence available to the scholars in both India and Southeast Asia.

## 4. Revival of Traditional Dance, Textiles and Handicrafts

"Textiles are an important medium in cultural studies because of their universality and mobility. They circulate within specific cultural milieus and also serve as a vehicle for the transmission of ideas between cultures. ……Textiles lie at the heart of the exchange mechanisms of many societies. These processes are not only economic: many social, political and spiritual contracts are sealed through the giving and receiving of cloths."[39]

Batik textiles are thought to have originated in India, travelled via sea as an important trading commodity to Southeast Asia, and after Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Indonesia in 1927 the craft was revived in Bengal.

'Batik is a process wherein dye-resistant wax is utilized to create elaborate patterns and designs The first step in batik making is to stretch a piece of cotton or silk onto a frame and paint ("*cat")* or stamp ("*cop")* a design on the fabric using a mixture of beeswax and resin. Painting designs are done using, a pen-like instrument or *canting* which is used to draw the hot wax onto the fabric. The tip of the *canting* is usually made of copper so that the wax flows smoothly onto the cloth. The dye is painted onto the fabric between the intricate wax pattern. After the dye dries, these first two steps can be repeated to produce multiple layers of design and colour.'[40]

As has been rightly stated by Deboshree Banerjee, "…. a vital aspect to be considered while studying a culture through its textiles are the routes that textiles follow when they are exchanged between cultures."[41] Here a discussion on the traditional art of Batik shall be taken up to highlight the cultural influences between India and Java that lasted for centuries. The

story of batik encompasses both sides of the Bay of Bengal highlighting a continued cultural tradition and exchange of artistic influences crucial to the long term survival of traditional crafts,

Theories and discussions abound on the origins of batik, its spread to Southeast Asia and comparative analysis of Indian and Indonesian batik. Many scholars believe that the roots of this ancient craft can be traced to Indian textiles, which found their way to Southeast Asia along with textiles such as chintz and Patola, [42] for instance John Guy is of the opinion that technique of batik and many of its designs in Southeast Asia were inspired by imported Indian textiles.[43] According to scholars like Maxwell Indian elements were 'absorbed, adapted and transformed' wherein some were 'replicated', and others were reinterpreted to form a part of Javanese batik textiles.[44] Kahlenberg, is of the opinion that while in the first millennium Indian influence spread to Java, the next millennium witnessed the adaptation of the religious aesthetics gradually paving the way for an indigenous and distinct style in the region.[45] The artisans of Southeast Asia gradually mastered the art of batik and were able to produce textiles with indigenous materials that were less expensive and more affordable as compared to the expensive imported Indian textiles. The import of Indian cloth in Southeast Asia began to decline in the mid seventeenth century and the Javanese not only favoured their own textiles, but exported them from the 1680's to Borneo, Sumatra and the Straits of Melaka.[46]

Even though batik most likely had its origins in India, it travelled across the seas to Southeast Asia where it was adapted and transformed to suit local needs and continued to be practiced over the centuries. Tagore's visit to Indonesia completed the circle of story of batik textiles, when he decided to revive the craft at Santiniketan. Tagore had received several pieces of batik fabric as gifts, such as sarong, kemben, selandang, which contained traditional motifs and patterns, and these he hoped would help in re-establishing the native art of batik. According to Ashish Basu, Tagore's experience during his trip to Java was the source of inspiration behind batik revival.[47] The key figures in promoting the revival of batik at Santiniketan were Surendra Kar and Tagore's daughter-in-law Pratima Tagore.[48] The study of batik was thus introduced at the Viswa Bharati University in Santiniketan and it became one of the main subjects of the curriculum, and "over the years revolutionized the craft scene in the locality of Santiniketan, giving it a distinct identity of Santiniketan art."[49]

Tagore's revival of the batik was part of his 'constructive swadeshi' ideals that aimed at revival of rural industries and the collection of folk art to be able to halt their decay. Tagore established the 'Bichitra' studio, which was primarily concerned with the revival and promotion of folk arts and crafts. This aim was to be achieved by the use of local and inexpensive material and technique, just as in the case of the Javanese batik which helped it survive as a traditional craft for centuries. In 1922 Tagore's daughter-in-law introduced batik, lac work and calico printing in 'Bichitra Studio' at Santiniketan. It was later shifted to Sriniketan and renamed 'Silpa Bhavan' where tanning, wood work, basket weaving and cane work were imparted.[50] "In 1930 Nandalal Bose established the Karu Sangha, a handicraft co-operative, in Kala Bhawan with an aim to improving the economic life of the artisans."[51] At the Karu Sangha the artists would live together and devote a certain number of days in a month to commercial orders and commissions. Various artistic creations and handicrafts made by artisans of the Karu Sangha were sold in the stalls of the Satui Poush or village style fairs held at Santiniketan [52],. These fairs served as nodal points for cultural exchange and implementation of Tagore's ideas of revival of folk traditions through performances of *kathakaras*, jatakas, folk songs and dances.

The nationalist movement in Burma was associated with rejection of foreign textiles and promotion of the *longyi* or traditional dress. The Wunthanu movement in Burma, established by U Ottama in 1921, "focused on the government's economic policies, which undermined local industries and impoverished the Burmese common folk, and advocated the use of local goods and a

boycott of imported products."[53] Wunthanu derives from Pāli and means "supporting [one's] own race."[54] Joining the nationalist movement meant boycotting foreign products in order to strengthen their own economy.[55] Ikeya says that the Burmese nationalists or *thakins* chose to wear slippers and *longyi* instead of Western dress out of an interest in reviving traditional Burmese culture as an antidote to the negative effects of colonialism.[56] The Buddhists and women folk in Burma took to wearing home spun and coarse cloth as a symbol of their protest against colonial rule. According to Mendelson, U Ottama , "wrote and spoke about the wanthanu rekhita taya- the points of law to be observed by nationalists- including the wearing of homemade cloth and boycott the tinned and other foreign foods"[57] U Ottama in his nationalist struggle propagated the boycott of foreign cloth in Burma and promotion of homespun clothing,[58] and the *pinni*. Burmese cloth in the eyes of the Burmese national student was a symbol for national identity and support to the national economy,[59] and the Burmese dress was worn by the radical nationalists.[60] The *pinni-yaw* became one of the most widely known symbols of anti-colonialism in Burma.[61]

On his various tours Rabindranath Tagore made it a point to witness the dance forms of the place, and these he would then incorporate within the artistic heritage of Santiniketan. Tagore is credited with reviving Kathakali, Mohiniattam and Kuchipudi, and these had become a part of the syllabus at the Kala Bhavan. What is today popularly known as the Rabindra Nrtya is the net result of Tagore's experimentation with various classical dance forms that he saw during his travels. These dance forms were eventually made part of the syllabi at Santiniketan and the main protagonists in the revival and continuity of the 'classical' dance forms were the girl students and women at Santiniketan.

"The Tagorean dance tradition, reflecting the modernism of Renaissance Bengal, provided the first watershed in modern dance. Tagore's foremost contribution was to provide the context for the emergence of "respectable" middle class women in the world of performing arts… With his new dancers Tagore asked for a new rank of educated audience, consisting of both men and women. Indeed, in his day, he served the valuable purpose of making dance accessible to middle class women."[62]

The Kandyan dance of Sri Lanka had its origins in the Kandy region of Sri Lanka, and under the Kandyan dynasty underwent transformations, and during the rule of the south Indian dynasty of the Nayyakars the dance moved outside the confines of the royal household. [63] On his visit to Sri Lanka Tagore witnessed a performance of the Kandyan dance on 3rd June 1934, which was later integrated into his dance dramas, as seen in the character of Kotal in dance drama Shyama.[64] The Mayar Khela had elements of Southeast Asian dance forms.[65] Tagore sent "Santidev Ghose, a music and dance teacher at Visva Bharati, to Java and Bali to study the traditional dance forms and versions of the srimpi, golek, legong and kebyar were studied at Santiniketan."[66]

The dance performances witnessed by him were to influence his dance dramas as well, "The narrative as well as abstract movement components of Balinese dance made a deep impression on Tagore's mind and would feature in his own dance drama experiments on his return to Santiniketan."[67]

On 6th November 1919 Rabindranath Tagore visited the Bishnupuriya Manipuri village of Machimpur where he saw Ghostha Lila being performed in Manipuri dance style. The dance performance with its subtle movements and variety impressed him so much that he asked Mr. Tanu Singha to look for a Manipuri teacher who was versed with Bengali. This finally resulted in Guru Nileshwar Mukherjee travelling back to Santiniketan with Tagore to become the teacher for the Manipuri Dance department at Santiniketan which was established soon after their arrival.[68] The influence of Manipuri dance is evident in the compilation of 'Chitragada' in which Tagore incorporated various elements of Manipuri dance.

Another dance form that caught Tagore's attention was Kathakali, and in 1931 when he sent Shantidev Ghosh to Kerala to find out the

whereabouts of Kerala Kalamandalam that was just opened and learn the dance form so as to be able to teach it at Santiniketan. [69] Tagore invited a number of Kathakali dancers to Santiniketan, such as Guru Gopinatha and Ragini Devi (1935), Guru Shankaran Namboodiri, and after Poet Vallathol vist to Santiniketan Rabindranath Tagore asked him to send a Kathakali teacher. In 1937 Shanti Dev's visit to Kalamandalam resulted in the Santiniketan having its first Kathakali teacher as Kelu Nair.[70] "In 1938 with lot of experimentations, the dance drama Shyama was created in a new style. The dance drama included a number of dance forms such as Manipuri, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kandyan dance forms."[71]

Tagore's daughter-in-law Pratima Debi was encouraged to learn dance and she went on to produce the first dance drama at Santiniketan, Natir Pujo, in 1926 along with Guru Nabakumar Singh. This drama was staged in 1927 in Jorasanko, in Kolkata, and the characters were played primarily by the young women students at Santiniketan.[72] She was the driving force behind Tagore's compilation of dance dramas and he composed the Mayar Khela in a new format and she herself transformed poems like Samanya Kshati, Dalia and Kshudita Pashaan for performance purposes. Protima held dance classes in the ashram to train girls in dance performances.[73] In the late 1930's Mrinalani Sarabhai taught Bharatnatyam at Santiniketan, and in 1939 travelled to Bali and Java where she studied srimpi dance at Kridha Beksa Wirama, gave a performance in Yogyakarta and also studied dance at Bali for a short period under I Mario.[74]

Saumyendranath Tagore or Sreemati danced to the recitation of Rabindranath's poems- Juhlan and Shishu Tirtha in her own unique dance forms which were influenced by Manipuri, Kathakali and Hungarian, and Hainamati danced with a recitation of Dushamay from Kalpana. [75] Tagore on his trip to Saurashtra and Gujarat saw some women dancing with cymbals in their hands. A family from the same village was invited to Santiniketan to teach dance and music to the girls.[76]

"As Santiniketan expanded to include women as students and village welfare as objectives, curriculum innovations were required. These often took place through extra -curricular activities such as the 1910 drama Lakshmir puja, which was staged and performed by female students. Tagore brought in dance teacher from Banaras to train the girls and when they left, he personally taught them. "[77] "Tagore took it as a challenge to introduce dance into his dramatic compositions, train women students to participate in them and travel all over India and abroad with them".[78]

## 5. Role of Women: Rani of Jhansi Regiment

On 9 July 1943, Bose asked both men and women to join as volunteers and stressed the need for women to equally share the burden of the freedom struggle. The women responded by joining the struggle and the creation of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.[79] "Rather than drawing on India's rich collective (sub-) conscious with several goddesses known for their use of violence, Bose opted for a real woman of flesh and blood as his role model.' [80] With the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose the structure of the INA changed, as he invoked the revolutionary spirit and the will to fight amongst women by providing them an equal footing in the rejuvenated Azad Hind Fauj. The Rani Lakshmibai Regiment was formed under the guidance and leadership of Dr Lakshmi Swaminathan, who was secretary of the Women's section of the Indian Independence League in Singapore. Her duties entailed touring various parts of Burma, Malaya and Thailand to open more centres, collect funds and provide amenities to soldiers.

Lakshmi Swaminathan as Minister in Charge of Women's Organisation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) convinced twenty young women to join her and on 12 July 1943 and her efforts in recruiting, which included home visits, led to the creation of 1500 strong women regiment from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Ipoh. The regiment consisted of women from diverse religious, educational and economic

backgrounds. In Ipoh, she was invited by two Christian Indian girls, Ponnammah (b. 1925) and Rasammah Navarednam (b. 1927) to convince their mother to allow them to join the regiment.[81]

A women's camp was started on 23 October 1943, in Singapore which was followed by many more in Malaya and Burma. Besides being trained in nursing, social service and general welfare work, Subhas put them on an equal footing as far as military training was concerned. They were trained in various aspects of military exercises such as weapon training, tactics, map reading and general subjects. They were trained to use rifles, bayonets, sub-machine guns, machine guns, revolvers, grenades, swords and daggers. They wore the soldiers' uniforms and had to observe strict military discipline. They were taken out on route marches and had to cover between six and forty miles at times. [82]

Women joined the INA for various reasons- Lakshmi Nair's father had just died, there was no money for food in the home of her stepmother and her father had hated the English. Rani Muniammah's father lost his job in the rubber estates in Malaya and so she joined the regiment in order to survive. The inspiration for the fifteen-year-old, Rasammah Navarednam was banned book, *Jallianwala Bagh– The Amritsar Massacre* which described the killing of innocent Indians. Janaki Bai, a Rajput, grew up on a large coconut estate in Malaya, where her father, El Fateh Singh, a Rajput, worked as assistant manager and when a young man from the Indian Independence League in Selangor came looking for volunteers to join the Ranis, she and a Christian girl signed to join the army.[83] Manavati Arya of Burma, who even prior to the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose, had shown interest in the freedom movement by working as a civilian with the Indian Independence League.[84] She sold all her jewellery for the struggle and joined the INA,[85] where she held the post Lieutenant Captain. "She worked out a detailed proposal for the increased participation of women in the freedom struggle which impressed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose so much that he appointed her Secretary-In-Charge of Women and Children in the provisional government of the Azad Hind."[86]

.Saraswathi Rajamani belonged to a family that owned gold and tungsten mines in Rangoon. She as a teenager emptied all her jewellery in the INA donations box and when Bose came to return her jewellery to her father, she did not allow him to take it back. It was then that Netaji told Rajamani he needed something even more valuable than jewels. "If I really wanted freedom, he told me, I would have to spill my blood," recounted Rajamani, "I stepped forward without batting an eyelid. There and then, I joined the Azad Hind Fauj."[87]

In Malaya was Janaky Devar was responsible for the uneducated women recruited from the rubber plantations. She first heard Bose at the Selangor Club maidan in Kuala Lumpur and was so overwhelmed that she took off her jewellery to demonstrate her support for the Indian National Army. Her desire to join Netaji's armed force was met with resistance by her family members, yet she did not succumb and finally managed to join the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and eventually became second in command. A list of women who joined the cause for freedom under Bose included, Chinnammal, Subaranjitham , Rukmani, Vellayammal alias Malai Ammal of Vyasarpady, Radhambal of Red Hills, Pattammal of Rayapuram and Jeyalakshmi Ammal of Korukkupet from Madras were sepoys in Regimental No.8240 of Rani of Jhansi Regiment.Thanapackiam from Thanjavur District,was served in Indian National Army as a Nursing sepoy in Rani of Jhansi Regiment with Regiment No. 84370, Lakshmi Devi Lieutenant in Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Meenakshi served as a sepoy in fifth Guerilla Regiment. The prominent women sepoys in the Ramanathapuram District were Chinnammal and Kamakshi Ammal who served in Indian National Army as a Chairman for the women section, Indian Independence League Hanthawaddy East, Burma and Indian Independence League. Others include Mangammal, Vijayam, Maragatham, Muthammal, Dhanuskodi Ammal, Kalimuthammal Nagammal, Puranam, Muthulakshmi Ammal.[88]

"The regiment was trained as vakayda soldiers. Each chose her line of work according to her aptitude, her preference- if she liked nursing, she'd take that up. Some chose to be part of the military

police. Others were soldiers doing administrative work. There were three lady doctors in the Jhansi Regiment - Dr Narula, Dr Gyan Kaur - who became Gyan Puri later - and Dr Lakshmi herself."[89]As Rasammah expressed it, "They became soldiers for India's freedom and their own liberty."

## 6. National Identity

"Of the nearly 30 million people who left the Indian shores between 1840 and 1940, all but two million of them travelled back and forth between eastern India and just three destinations- Ceylon, Burma and Malaya."[90] In Burmese nationalist leader Ba Maw's opinion Subhas Chandra Bose, "personified the spirit of long and passionate Indian revolution and the wider Asian revolution that could change the face of Asia."[91]

A brief account of the history of the Indian National Army (INA) reveals the changes it underwent under the able leadership of Bose which led to a feeling of unity and brotherhood amongst the vast number of Indians residing in Southeast Asia. During the war Japan had occupied Malaya and many Indians were taken prisoners of war. These were recruited by Captain Mohan Singh,[92] Pritam Singh and Fujihara to form the first Indian National Army. An estimated 40,000 Indians [93] were placed under the charge of Captain Mohan Singh. Thus the first phase of INA constituted primarily of Indian prisoners of war, and members of the Indian Independence League set up under Rash Behari Bose. Mohan Singh had expressed that it was Subhas Chandra Bose who should be the right leader of the INA. After the arrest of Captain Mohan Singh the responsibility of the INA fell on the shoulders of Rash Behari Bose. In the Bangkok Conference of June 1942[94] the Imperial Government of Japan was asked to bring Subhas Chandra Bose to Southeast Asia. Bose thus travelled from Germany to Tokyo aboard a Japan submarine. He arrived in Singapore along with Rash Behari Bose, on 2 July with an aim to reorganise and lead the IIL and INA and was given a prodigious welcome by the Indians. On 8 July 1943 he took formal charge of the INA and renamed it as the Azad Hind Fauj.[95]

Bose believed in 'total mobilization' and envisaged the INA as constituting not only Indian soldiers but civilians as well. His movement stressed on ideals of equality and unity among his followers who belonged to different castes, religions and regions of India. "The psyche of labouring Indians as well as those in the British army regiments and those in white collar colonial occupations and traders was altered so that they too felt that they could bring down a mighty empire and be free."[96]

The civilians in the new INA were mostly Tamilians from Madras. The famines in the Madras Presidency had forced numerous Hindus, Muslims into labour migration and some of them were recruited by Kannagi in Melaka.[97] There were an estimated 21,000 Indian employed in the plantations of Sumatra. "The INA included a significant number of Tamil plantation workers in Malaya, instilling in them an unprecedented level of political mobilization and commitment…Tamil plantation workers who joined or supported the INA during the war felt a sense of citizenship for perhaps the first time, as citizens of the Provincial Government of Free India: Subhas Chandra Bose's government in exile."[98] As shown by Rajesh Rai - Nearly 30,000 Indians died while building and maintaining the Thailand-Burma "Death" Railway, 78,000 civilians from Malaya and Singapore were deployed on the rail project.[99] Other Indian communities comprised former Hindu and Muslim sepoys from Bengal and Sikhs.

Bose's army was based on egalitarian principles and the higher ranks were open to all irrespective of gender, religion, region, caste or economic background. Bose also asked the trustees of the Chettiar temple of Singapore to contribute towards the INA.[100] They agreed on the condition that he would visit the temple, provided that his officers accompany him to the temple[101] and are allowed to enter the temple premises irrespective of their caste or religion. The temple authorities agreed, and Bose entered the temple with Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian officers who were treated with respect, applied tilak by the temple priest and also given Prasad. This act of Subhas Chandra Bose clearly

brought the unity of Indians living on foreign soil for a common cause.

Those who could not physically be a part of the INA in the fight for freedom contributed in monetary terms by donating all their material possessions. These donations made by innumerable Indians across Southeast Asia were essential to the survival of the INA as it funded the food, uniforms and weaponry and other activities of the army. "While voluntary donations were often generous, Bose never hesitated to persuade, cajole or even threaten Indians for a greater flow of capital for the cause. Much of the fund raising was undertaken at public meetings, where Bose's oratory would often inspire all those present to contribute in whatever way possible for an Azad Hindustan."

Habib belonged to Dhoraji in Saurashtra, migrated to Rangoon and became a rich businessman. On 9th July 1944 he handed over all his cash, jewellery and landed estate estimated to be worth one crore and three lakhs for the cause of freedom to the INA.[102] Subhas Chandra Bose granted him the title of Sevak e Hind.[103] The other person to have received this title was Srimati Betai who also gave up all her worldly material possessions to Bose.[104] On 29th January on Bose's 48th Birthday celebration, Netaji was weighed in gold and a total of 2 crores and 80 Kgs of gold was collected.[105] In all his charismatic personality and fiery speeches, he encouraged Indians in Burma and Malaya to donate all their wealth, which amounted to an estimated 5 crores from Malaya and another 5 crores from Burma.

"The war years also brought about a sense of Indian identity which was lacking before the declaration of the IIL and INA. Indians in both organisations were involved for a single purpose- liberating India…This sense of unity of purpose cut across linguistic, regional, caste and religious divides amongst Indians".[106]

This feeling of unity had spread across the Bay of Bengal and its repercussions were felt by the British Empire on the Indian soil. The Red Fort trials , which began on 5 November 1945, were the inspiration behind mutiny on board the HMIS Talwar by Balai Chand Dutt who had served in the RIN for 5 years and resented the discrimination and racism faced by Indians. The psychological impact of the INA trials triggered military mutinies across Indian shores in February 1946. On February 17 when the naval ratings demanded better and decent food, the British sneered at them and on the following day on February 18, "1500 ratings walked out of the mess hall in protest".[107] The next day 60 RIN harboured at Bombay, 11 shore establishments and the barracks "pulled down the Union Jack and hoisted flags of the Congress, Muslim League and the Communist Party."[108] By the morning of 20th February the strike had spread to other ports across India- Calcutta, Karachi, Madras, Vizag and Cochin. "In all, around eighty ships, four flotillas, twenty shore establishments and more than 20,000 ratings joined the mutiny."[109] Thus within a span of merely 48 hours the British had lost its control over the navy. The striking naval rankings were also supported by about 1000 RAF Indian men, the Gurkhas, who refused to open fire on Indian soldiers, and the Signals Training Centre at Jabalpur who mutinied as well. Even though the British authorities were able to put down the mutiny, yet this mutiny made the British realise that they could no longer blindly trust the loyalty of Indian soldiers employed in the British armed forces, which was the mainstay of colonial rule in India. Justice P.B. Chakravarty of Calcutta High Court disclosed that when Lord Attlee had visited the Governor's Palace in Calcutta, Chakrabarty had a discussion with him regarding the factors that led the British to leave India. Amongst the various reasons given by Attlee, "the erosion of loyalty of the Indian army towards the British crown and the navy personnel due to the military activities of Netaji was the principal cause for the departure of the British from Indian soil."[110] Thus, it is evident that travels by Indian leaders in Southeast Asia not only contributed to the demise of colonial rule in India, but also helped forge strong ties between several Southeast Asia and Indian leaders. An appreciation of this phase of India and Southeast Asia relations needs to be researched further.

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VI

# Travels by Leaders: Myanmar

## 1. Introduction

The duration of the 'Project Sailing to Suvarnabhumi' being till December 2018, the themes of 'Travels by Leaders' and 'Colonial Intervention', listed in the Bibliography, shall be the subject matter of the Working Papers. The theme 'Travels by Leaders' will be address first and in context of Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand. This working paper will explore various aspects of travels by leaders to and from India and Myanmar in the 19th and early 20th century and the ensuing impact on the socio, political, religious and educational realms. The term leaders in the paper relates not only to political nationalist leaders, but assumes a broader definition incorporating religious and social leaders, literary figures (Alāol), the various missions sent by the Myanmar rulers (Bodawphaya of the Konbuang dynasty) and the movement of communities, (Brahmins from Manipur and north India) – all of which highlight the multidimensional interactions between India and Myanmar. As most British records and scholarly articles use Burma instead of Myanmar, this paper shall follow the same as it deals primarily upto pre Independence era.

India and Myanmar share a common political border clearly demarcated in modern political terms. This political marker was often blurred, fluid and constantly changing in the past and thus negating a clear line dividing India from Myanmar. For instance King Bodawphaya annexed Manipur in 1814 and Assam in 1817 which became a part of the largest Burmese empire. During the colonial period, Burma was annexed by the British through the three Anglo Burmese Wars (1824-1885) and Burma became a province of British India.

Even though the historical- cultural linkages between these two countries date back to the ancient times, it was during the British rule that evidence of large scale migrations of Indians to Myanmar is observed. "The geographical contiguity, with India sharing both land and maritime boundaries with Burma, facilitated large-scale migration of Indians into Burma."[1] This migration can be attributed to British policies of promoting labour movement to colonies,[2] the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the passing of the Burma Land Act.[3]

The introduction of steam ships further accelerated migration and movements across India and Burma. In the first decade after British annexation, movement of labourers was on slow moving Indian owned sailing vessels. In 1861 the first regular monthly steamship service between Calcutta, Akyab and Rangoon was started by The British India Steam Navigation Company[4]. By 1870 over 100 sailings a year took place between Calcutta, Akyab and Rangoon.[5] By 1880 there were weekly runs from Calcutta and Madras to the ports in Burma and in the 1890's the Indian owned Bengal Burma Steam Navigation company provided regular service between Chittagong and Burma.[6] The number of Indian coolies that travelled in the steamers to Pegu in 1880-81 was 40,000 coolies.[7]

According to the 1872 census, there were 16,000 Indians in Rangoon constituting only about 16 % of residents. In the 1901 census, the number had increased this increased to 120,000 persons which accounted for approximately half of the population of the city.[8] It has been estimated that at the beginning of the 20th century, a quarter million Indians were arriving in Burma every year. In 1921, immigration reached 887,007 people[9] and "by 1931, the number of Indians in Myanmar had exceeded 1 million." [10].

The migrants to Burma consisted of the labourers, the educated Indians and the money lending Chettiars. Burma's expanding 'rice frontier', and it's becoming the largest exporter of rice were critical factors migration of labour and the movement of the Chettiar community into Burma[11]. The plantation economy in Burma led to a higher demand of labour in the country and unskilled Tamil and Telugu labourers and farmers initially dominated this migration flow. "Sittwe was one of the busiest rice-exporting ports in the world in the late 19th century, and in 1931 there were 2,10,990 Indians who made up 97 per cent of the city's population ."[12] "The laboring poor, both skilled and unskilled workers formed the third class. Indians contributed to more than half of the technical or skilled personnel in the economy. They were essential workers in railways, inland water transport, road transport, electricity, post, telegraph telephone and radio communications, and exploitation of natural resources, including minerals, mineral oil, timber, rice and other agricultural products. In trade, Indians constituted about 17.3 percent of the total workers."[13]

Another class of Indian migrants were teachers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, and accountants, clerical and administrative staff, who worked in the colonial revenue, executive, educational and municipal department, medical, executive, judicial, revenue and municipal systems of administration in Burma. "The first Chettiars seem to have arrived in Burma in 1826 along with Indian ('Madrassi') troops and labourers in the train of the British campaign in Tenasserim. The first formal Chettiar 'office' was established in Moulmein in 1850, by 1905 there were an estimated 30 Chettiar offices in Burma and according to the Burma Provincial Banking Enquiry Report (BPBE), the most dependable source on the extent of Chettiar operations, this number had increased to 1,650 by 1930."[14]

These varied communities in Burma were the one of the motivating factors for Mahatma Gandhi's last and final visit to Burma in 1929, which was politically motivated.

## 2. Political Leaders and Their Impact

The most prominent leader to have visited Burma is Mahatma Gandhi, whose ideals of ahimsa, *stayagraha* and non co-operation had a huge impact on the course of the freedom struggle in Burma. Gandhi travelled thrice to Burma, in 1902, 1915 and 1929, and of these the first two visits were primarily to meet his friend Dr. Pranjivan Mehta. Dr. Mehta and Gandhi had met each other while studying Law in London, and later Dr. Mehta moved to Rangoon where he had a jewellery business.[15] Dr. Mehta was not only a close friend of Gandhi, but also a financier for Gandhi's projects and had an influential role in planning the salt *satyagraha* in India when he visited Gandhi in 1926.[16] "He was one of the most politically active men in Rangoon"[17] and fought for improving the conditions of the Indian migrant labourers.[18] He was also instrumental in aiding communication between the moderate Burmese nationalists and the INC.[19] The posts held by him were- President of the Hindu Social Club and Shri Ramakrishna Society in Rangoon, member of All India Congress Committee of Burma, President of the Burma Provincial Congress Committee and in 1906 he started the Anglo Gujarati paper United Burma.[20] Mehta attended the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in December 1915, spent several weeks with Gandhi, and had the 'Lal Kothi' or 'Red Bungalow', built near the Sabarmati Ashram. His pamphlet *Vernaculars as Media of Instruction in Indian Schools and Colleges* (1917), carried an 'Introduction' by Gandhi, stressed the need for the "adoption of the regional languages as the medium of instruction in educational institutions at all levels and adoption of Hindi as the national language of India."[21]

Gandhi's first visit was to meet his friend Dr. Mehta and was a relatively short one. During his second visit Gandhi arrived in Rangoon on 17 March 1915 and stayed with Mehta for eight days. "Mehta assured Gandhi of financial assistance in the establishment of the Sabarmati Ashram, and Gandhi said that Mehta was not only 'the pillar of the Ashram, without him the Ashram would not have come into existence at all'."[22] Mehta was ever ready to give most part of his wealth to Gandhi in his struggle for freedom and equality. Dr. Mehta more or less can be credited with preparing the ground for Gandhi's politically motivated tour of Burma in 1929. It is during this visit that he widely toured Burma delivering speeches at Rangoon, Moulmein, Paungde, Prome, Mandalay and Toungoo addressing varied sections of society from the labouring class, plantation workers, the wealthy Indians as well as the Buddhists and Arya Samjists.

The prime factors behind Mahatma Gandhi's decision to travel to Burma in 1929, where he stayed and toured for two weeks, were collection of funds for the Lajpat Rai Memorial fund and the propagation of the manufacture and use of home-made products, in other words *swadeshi*. Gandhi wanted Indians in Burma to contribute financially, evident from his speech, "Remember that I expect not only the Gujaratis, but the Bengalis, the Punjabis and the Tamilians to give as much as they can…The Chetties who deal in crores have lakhs of rupees worth of property may not disregard my claim. Let them not forget that I also belong to their lass, I am a Gujarati Chetti."[23] The ground for was prepared in Burma for Gandhi's ideals by the introduction of the *swadeshi* movement by monks such as U Ottama who had studied in India and had closely witnessed the activities of the Indian freedom movement. In 1917 the Young Men's Buddhist Association promoted women to safeguard their traditional dress- the longyi, thamein and the pinni jacket.[24] "Influenced by Gandhi's *swadeshi* movement the Burmese nationalist students seized upon cloth as a symbol of National identity and support to National economy."[25] Gandhi's visited Burma at a time when its people were acquainted with Gandhian techniques which was being applied by the Burmese nationalist leaders in their struggle against colonial rule.

The emergence of organised political agitation against British colonial rule in Burma can be traced to period 1906-1939. U Ottama figures as the prominent leader of the as a mass leader of GCBA after 1915 who firmly believed, propagated and practiced the Gandhian methods of Home Rule movement, boycott Non-cooperation movement and civil disobedience movement in the fight against colonial rule. During the 1920's known as the *wunthanu* (supporting one's own race) era in Burma, it was a peasant based anti-British nationalist movement which was conceived by the GCBA and supported by Buddhist monks.[26] It's main ideals were the preservation of one's lineage, preservation of one's traditional values and rejection of foreign ideas and products and the methods adopted were refusal to pay taxes, boycott of foreign goods and use of local goods as means of protest against the British Government.[27] "The influence of *swadeshi* movement of India was clearly discernable."[28] "Maung Maung and R. Taylor opine that it were the Wunthanu Athins who popularized the idea of a grass root protest along the line of principle of Dhamma. The *Dhammakatikas* preached the method of protest which has astonishing similarity with the Gandhian method of practicing Satyagraha."[29] The British manufactured items such as cigarettes, thin materials and imported textiles were boycotted[30] and the Gandhian slogan of native product became widely popular in Burma that signboard with *'wunthanu'* written on it could be seen almost in every home and shop and people purchased from shops with such signs. [31] "U Ottama, faithful to his Gandhian ideals, did not advocate the use of violence in the anti-colonial struggle."[32]

Gandhi as well as Burmese nationalist's shared the common aim of attaining freedom from British rule which fostered a mutual bond against colonialism. At its meeting in Pakokku on held during November 1925, the GCBA passed a resolution stating "As Burma and India are both desirous of Independence, and as the Indian National Congress and the Burmese General Council thinks and acts along similar principles, it is to be placed on record that the GCBA will give all support to Congress organisations in India and Burma."[33]

At Moulmein he addressed a gathering of 5000 peasants and encouraged them to stop using foreign yarn and urged them to revise [their] taste for foreign. "You have got enough weavers in this beautiful land. But instead of working for the good of nation they are slaving away for a foreign capitalist because it is to foreign yarn that they are applying their skill and workmanship. If you will avoid helplessness, become self-contained and happy and not become semi starved as we in India are, you will take my word and revert to the spinning wheel while there is still time."[34]

Gandhi addressed the people of Prome by saying, " I have no other and better guidance to offer to you than to commend to your attention the general principle of non-violence, in other words, self-purification … As I was driving through Prome I passed through a village which was pre dominantly a weaver's village. All the looms are working with foreign yarn and therefore have no living contact."[35] Gandhi asked the women to give up foreign silks and English umbrellas and take to homespun cloth and paper parasols.[36] In his speeches at Prome and Paudane he complemented the Burmese looms and found them to be cheaper, better and lighter than the Indian looms. He asked the people to make more bamboo spinning wheels and urged the weavers to display patriotism by reviving hand spinning and connecting with villagers who produce yarn.[37]

The enduring message of *swadeshi* is evident in the traditional Burmese farmer's hat which was worn by Gandhi in his tour of Burma. "There is one area where Gandhi appears to have lent a new meaning to a longstanding accoutrement: a Burmese traditional, broad rimmed, bamboo, farmer's hat known as the *kamauk*. Pictorial records suggest that the *kamauk* on his Burmese tour to symbolise the practical utility of *swadeshi*… we can thus speculate that Gandhi acted as a conduit for the *kamauk* to become a symbol of resistance, resilience and freedom later adopted by Suu Kyi."[38]

The importance of Burma in the context of the Indian freedom struggle can be ascertained by the speech given by Gandhi on the eve of his departure Gandhi at Mandalay "you have rightly reminded me that it was here in Mandalay that the great son of India, Lokamanya Tilak, was hurried alive. It was he who gave India the mantra of Swaraj and in burying him alive, British Government had buried India alive. The Lion of Punjab (Lala Lajpat Rai) also was similarly incarcerated here and lest we should forget those things, Government recently buried alive Subhas Bose and numerous other sons of Bengal. Mandalay is thus a place of pilgrimage for us Indians, and it is remarkable coincidence that we are all sitting here today in the shadow of the walls of the fort and the prison sanctified by those sons of India. In India it is a common saying that the way to *Swaraj* is through Mandalay, - and let Mandalay be an eternal reminder both to you and to us of that great truth."[39]

The impact of Gandhi's visit is evident in the adoption of boycott and civil disobedience as a means of protest by the YMBA or GCBA. Influenced by Gandhian ideology, U Chit Hlaing initiated the 'Thakin' or 'masters' movement in the early 1930's, which believed in strength in unity and demanded complete independence or *swaraj*.[40] Non-cooperation boycott movement, which was started under Gandhi's leadership in January 1921 came to an end on 11 February 1922 at Gandhi's insistence, following the news of the burning of 22 policemen by angry peasants at Chauri-Chaura in Gorakhpur district of U.P. on 5 February 1922. While in Burma the boycott movement "continued unabated till 1928 in some of the most heavily populated districts or even till 1930 in some other areas of Burma."[41]

## 3. Women Leaders

Indian women played a pivotal in creating a common political platform across Asia in the era of nationalist movements. All Indian Women's Conference (AIWC) was started by Women's Indian Association in 1927 and addressed women's education and also recommended policies to the government. Later on, the primary objective of All India Women's Conference was to promote education for both sexes at all levels and also to deal with problems related to the welfare of women and children. The

ideology of 'Greater India' greatly influenced the formation of the AAWC[42] and "evidence of the 'Greater India' ideology among Indian women is seen in their relationship with one of their closest neighbours, Burma." National Council of Women in India set up a branch in 1926 in Burma, namely- the National Council of Women in Burma (NCWB). The members constituted "European, Burmese and Indian women living in Burma and its members of the NCWB were represented on the central executive of the Indian Council."[43] The NCWB concerned itself with "improving the lives of women and child labourers in Burma in 1929 well before *thakin* and other politicians turned their attention to the plight of the working class."[44] The report of its investigation on the labour condition of women and children in vicinity of Rangoon was submitted to the Royal Commission of Labour in India.[45]

All Asian Women's Conference of 1931 was organised primarily by Indian women and it aimed to "cement regular meetings between Asian women and to forge a pan-Asian feminist organisation[46]…. The AAWC was a vehicle for Indian women to voice their ideas and vision of an Indian-centred Asia." [47] May Oung also known as Daw Mya Sein, was on the All Asian Women's Conference committee from 1931 to 1933. She attended the AAWC at Lahore and also presided over one of the sessions. She also was a member of the executive of the National Council of Women in India and was appointed secretary of the Liaison Committee of the AAWC at the 1931 Conference.[48]

A strong bond between the women's organizations of India and the rest of Asia was thus created by the efforts of Indian women nationalist. "The support for the All-Asian Women's Conference testified to the thriving women's movement within India and across Asia as a whole."[49]

S. Muthulakshmi Reddy worked for the progress of Women's education, because she felt that education was essential for women. "She was nominated by the Viceroy to serve on the Sir Philip Hartog Education Commission which was formed to review educational projects in India and Burma."[50] As a member of this committee she travelled to different parts of India and studied the advancement of education among the people in Burma and India. Dr. Reddy "was nominated by the Nationalist Women's Organization of India to represent Indian women and give evidence at the Third Round Table Conference in London (1930) and the World Women's Congress in Chicago (1932)."[51] Muthulakshmi Reddy was the main figure behind the abolition of the *devadasi* and started the Avvai home in 1930, which was initially located in her residence. It provided shelter, protection and basic education to women and girls free from the Devadasi system. "The Avvai Home was a home to provide protection, food and accommodation without social or caste barriers. It was virtually an 'open house'. Most of the women and girls who came had very little education and 'mother' (Dr. Reddy) educated them in local schools."[52] In 1940 during the Japanese invasion of Burma and she came to learn from the British camp authorities in Imphal that many Tamil children and women were stranded. These she readily accepted and provided shelter to them in the Avvai home. "The Avvai home became like a Universal Refugee camp", which was not merely an asylum, but also a place where vocational training and basic education was provided to women. [53]

## 4. Religious Leaders

The late 19th century and early 20th century witnessed travels by Burmese Buddhist monks to India, not only for purposes of pilgrimage, but also to pursue further education, learn about different religions and re- establish old meditation technique of Vipassana. These visits led to close religious and cultural interactions between India and Burma, and they also highlight the pivotal role of Burmese Buddhist monks in field of Buddhist and Pali learning, research and education.

Monk U Ukkattha stayed in India for 7 years during which he visited numerous parts of the country. With the aid of financial support from followers from around Burma, he boarded a ship from Yangon to India on 18 November 1922 and arrived in Calcutta on 21 November 1922, where he

went to the Mahabodhi Society. At the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta he met the forward thinking Adiccabhivamsa and they under him he developed an interest secular learning and knowledge of other religions and art of debating.[54] After residing at Mahabodhi for a month and a half he moved to Benares where he pursued English and received a Ph. D degree. He also learnt Hindi and Sanskrit form the Hindu pundits who also acquainted him to Vedic hymns the Upanisads and the Bhagwad Gita.[55] He gained knowledge of Rg Yajur and Atharva Veda, and he studied the Chandoga, Svetasvatara, Bṛhadārnayāka, Māṇdukya, Aitreya, Muṇḍaka and Prasna Upaniṣads. In 1926 he moved to Lucknow where he studied the Bible and the Koran, and gave talks every Sunday between 6 pm to 8 pm at the Bengali Buddhist Monastery.[56] In 1927 he attended the Gaya Congress where he discussed the site of Bodhgaya with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and suggested that the site should be placed under national administration as the site had global historical and religious importance.[57] He moved to Amritsar in 1928 and continued his Sanskrit studies, read the Mahabharata and Ramayana and translated the Visudhimagga and Kathavattu in Hindi in 1928 and the Suttanipataka in 1929[58], thus making it accessible to the general public in India. He travelled widely in India and visited Buddhist sites of Jetavana, Kusinara, Lumbini, Nalanda, Rajagriha, Pataliputra, Sanchi and the historical sites of Harappan civilization, Gandhara, Bombay, Ajanta as well as some museums.[59] His keen interest in understanding the various systems of education in India led him to visit "St Xaviers College in Mumbai, St, John's College Lucknow, the Punjab University, Varanasi Sanskrit University, Shanti Niketan and Calcutta University."[60] Ukkattha mastered Sanskrit to such an extent that he won the first prize in a National Sanskrit poem competition held at Sanskrit University in Benares.[61] He also attended conferences, seminars, wrote newspaper articles in Hindi and English and preached Dhamma in his talks. His talk reflected" the continued development of an international network of Buddhists centred on India especially under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society."[62]

Burmese monks played a central role in the preservation and continuation of the Vipassana technique of meditation. It is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation and was taught by was taught by Buddha as a universal remedy for universal ills. This non-sectarian technique is a way of self-transformation through self-observation.[63] This technique was brought to India by Mr. Goenka who was born and raised in Myanmar. He was trained in Vipassana by Sayagyi U Ba Khin for 14 years.[64] Sayagi U Ba Khin belonged to a long line of Vipassana teachers beginning with the venerable Ledi Sayadaw who actively revived it. Ledi Sayadaw visited the holy Buddhist sites of Bodhgaya, Rajagrha, Sarnath, Savatthi and Lumbini in 1895, he received the title of *Aggamatra Pandita* by the British Government in India in 1911 and during the years 1913-1917 he had a correspondence with Mrs. Rhys-Davids of the *Pali* Text Society in London and translations of several of his discussions on points of *Abhidhamma* were published in the "Journal of the *Pali* Text Society." He assisted the Pali text Society in carrying out many translations as well. In 1915 he designated a lay disciple Saya Thetgyi to teach Vipassana and this not only allowed the common man access to Vipassana but also ultimately led to its re- establishment within India and across the world.[65] The other monk from this line of teachers who undertook pilgrimage to the sacred sites in India was venerable Webu Sayadaw (1896-1977) and he meditated under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya.[66] Acharya Anagarika Munindra (1915-2003), a Bengali Buddhist from the Chittagong region, was invited by the Prime Minister U Nu to visit Burma to receive instruction in Vipassana meditation from the famous Mahasi Sayadaw at Thathana Yeikta in Rangoon. He departed for Burma in early 1957 and spent nearly ten years at the Mahasi Sayadaw's meditation centre in Rangoon. "According to Pryor his visit was facilitated through a government project organized by U Nu to sponsor foreigners who wanted to learn Vipassana meditation in Burma. It was not until 1966 that Munindra returned to India and Bodh Gaya, where he embarked on a lifetime of meditation instruction and teaching."[67]

The close association of Burmese monks with Buddhist studies and education in India continued well into the post-Independence period in India. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dr. Jagaravibhamsa was ordained in 1944 and obtained a Doctorate from Nalanda University. He lectured at the University on Pali, Athakatha, Tika and treatises for over 20 years in Hindi and English, and translated select Buddhist literature into Myanmar from Indian literature. [68] In 1955 Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kovida travelled to Assam and at the Nampake Monastery in Dibaguga district he transmitted the Dhamma. . Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nandita was ordained in 1955 and he received MA degree in Pali from Nalanda University. He also concentrated on his efforts in Assam at Pan Sun village in Assam where he taught Myanmar literature, basic Theravada Buddhism and Abhidhamma and dedicated 13 years to missionary work. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pannavamsa was ordained in April 1948, he carried out missionary work in Andaman Islands and in 1961 he took charge of the Buddhist Mission for Tamil Buddhists in southern India. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pupapharama ordained as monk in 1939 and often toured in India spreading Buddha Sasana. Venerable Dr. Rewata Dhamma was sent to India by the Government of the Union of Myanmar to study Hindi and Sanskrit at Benares Hindu University and obtained MASanskrit degree in 1964 and PhD degree in 1967. At the Sanskrit University of Calcutta he mastered Mahayana Buddhism and pre Buddhist thought at. His mastery over Buddhism led to his appointment as the Chief Editor of Encyclopaedia of Chief Buddhist Technical Terms, and during his stay he translated, wrote and edited several Buddhist texts which were published by the Sanskrit University. He received the Kalidasa Prize from the U.P. Government for his translation of the Abhidhammathhasangha. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhana in 1949 resided in the Ariya Vihara Monastery where he learnt Sanskrit. Sayadaw Bhadanta Vajrabuddhi ordained as monk in 1938 obtained his MA Degree from Hindu University Benares and while in India he wrote books on Buddhism in Sanskrit and English and lecture on Buddhism in Hindi in Nagpur and Mumbai.[69]

## 5. Bodh Gaya – The Continual Link between India and Burma

The history of Bodh Gaya is closely linked with Buddhism in Burma, as records show a long tradition of upkeep and restoration of the site by the Burmese royalty for over millennia at varied intervals. This Burmese association with Gaya was integral in the continued sanctity of the site, even after Buddhism lost much of its foothold in India. While its architecture also played a crucial role if forging linkages between India and Burma, here only the various missions sent by dynasties of Burma, for varied purposes shall be discussed. "The upkeep of the Mahabodhi temple became a tradition with the kings of Myanmar who continued to send missions to Bodh Gaya repair the temple and also to donate temple slaves and land to the holiest shrine of Buddhism."[70] An interest in repairing and maintaining the temple premises in Bodh Gaya can be traced to the reign of King Kyanzittha (1084-1113 CE). Two Burmese inscriptions dated 1035 and 1086, record repairs at the site by Burmese kings.[71] The earlier one records on a copper umbrella the visit of Dharmaraja. The latter, on a stone slab, gives an important history of the temple itself. Burmese records confirm this activity. An inscription at the Shwesandaw Pagoda at Prome, Burma, records two missions to rebuild the temple, one sent by King Kyanzittha (1048-1112)[72] and Leityaminnan (came to throne of Arakan in 1118 CE) under the guidance of Panthagu sent an envoy with men and money to repair the sacred shrine at Vajrasana, Bodh Gaya, which was carried out with great care and is recorded at the site.[73] Kyanzittha's mission is mentioned in a Mon inscription from Prome, which says that because the temple of Sri Vajrasana (the Mahabodhi temple) had been "destroyed by other kings," Kyanzittha "gathered together jewels of diverse kinds and sent them on a ship to on) a ship to build up the holy temple at Bodh Gaya and to offer lights which should burn forever there . ".[74] The inscription continues that the funds are to be used for supporting the upkeep and functioning of the temple as well, for digging a reservoir, cultivating rice-fields, supplying musical instruments, singing, dancing,

and so on. The delegation that visited Bodh Gaya in 1833 came across an inscription recording the major repairs carried out at the temple between 1295 and 1298. It states that when the temple fell into disrepair, Dhammaraja sent his teacher Siri Dharmmarajaguru, who took along with him his pupil Siri Kassapa. Repairs commenced at the site on Friday the 10th day of the waxing moon of Plasuiw, in the year 657 (December 1295- January 1296) and on Sunday 8th day of the waxing of Tanchonmhum in the year 660 (October-November 1298) the dedication was held.[75]

King Dhammazedi sent a contingent of craftsmen under the leadership of a Sri Lankan merchant "in 1472 to Bodh Gaya to repair the temple and make plans and drawings of it".[76] In 1795 a Buddhist Burmese delegation had visited Bodhgaya with the purpose of collecting water from the tank for the Burmese king to bathe in.[77] Another Burmese mission visited the site in 1802. Francis Buchanan on his visit to the site in 1811 was told that the Burmese Buddhists were inquiring about the condition of the site.[78]

In 1823, a deputation of Buddha priests was sent from Amarapura, by the Burman emperor, to perform rites for his predecessor, at the shrine of Buddha Gaya.[79] The Burmese mission sent by King Bagyidaw in 1833 and their report about the site seem to have prompted King Mindon Min's mission in 1874 to Bodhgaya for extensive repairs to be carried out at the temple.[80]

In 1875 the Burmese sent a mission to clear "debris" from the temple complex. The king of Burma, Mindon Min (1853-1878) requesting to send a mission to Bodh Gaya because: "it is His Majesty's wish to repair the enclosures of the Great Bodhi tree, which from a long site of existence must have fallen into decay. [81] In August of 1875, Mindon's Foreign Minister specified that the King wished (1) to repair the Bodhi-tree enclosure itself, its walls and terraces, as well as all the structures within, (2) to repair the caitya of Asoka over the site of the Aparajita (throne), (3) to prop up with masonry the weakened right limb of the tree, (4) to build near the Maha Bodhi Tree a monastery that might house up to twenty monks, (5) to enclose this monastery within a masonry wall, (6) to erect a structure (pari-bhoga) for the deposition of royal gifts. The Burmese list of improvements and additions was then passed on again, in October of 1875 to Government of Bengal."[82] Alan Trevithick study reveals that the Burmese royal scribe who came to Bodh Gaya in January 1876 was able to draw up plans that suited both Mindon and the Mahant. In the succeeding year the king of Burma snet three officers to supervise the repairs at the site. "The work, under solely Burmese direction with the approval of the Mahant, continued for about six months until it came to the attention of the Government of Bengal that, from a newly sensitive archaeological point of view, Burmese workmen were making a mess of the old temple at Buddha Gaya."[83] In 1880 J D Beglar was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal proper repairs in co ordination with the second Burmese mission.[84] A Burmese Rest House was also built by the Burmese king Mindon Min in 1880[85], and a second Burmese vihara was established in 1936 by Venerable Nandamala.[86] The Burmese interest and activities related to restoration of the temple site ultimately led to the emergence of Bodhgaya as an important historical and archaeological site from the viewpoint of the Archaeological Survey of India. The site of Bodh Gaya would change the colonial archaeological involvement with Buddhist remains from mere documentation, surface excavations and collections to a more physical engagement with the monument focussing on conservation and restoration.

## 6. Shared Literary Culture

The Arakanese kingdom, Manipuri Meities, the Konbuang kings and Buddhist monks contributed to a shared literary tradition between India and Burma. One of the regions included to highlight the cultural interactions is Chittagong which even though is currently in Bangladesh, had earlier been a part of the Mughal empire and later Bengal sultanate, which incorporated the present west Bengal as well.

The earliest evidence for influence of an Indian language in a Burma is traceable to period of the Arakanese kingdom. Bengali language was patronised in the 17th century by both the royalty as

well as the elite and "Bengali literature was mainly written in two places in the kingdom: Chittagong and Mrauk-U". [87] "The Arakanese kings had come under the influence of Bengal Sultans and their courtiers were primarily Bengali speaking people from Bengal and neighbouring Chittagong region." [88] Coins of the 16th and 17th century are inscribed in Bengali bearing Sanskrit titles,[89] "That the king was perhaps capable of conversing with foreigners in Hindustani, and that the "poet laureate" would translate an Awadhi epic into Bengali in order to give it a local audience, suggests both a substantial Bengali presence in Mrauk-U, and a cultural orientation directed decidedly towards the Bay".[90] Bengali literature developed in the region primarily under the aegis of the royalty.

"The case of Bengali literature in Arakan is a fascinating example of complex cultural exchanges on the margins of South Asia. Above all, it shows the necessity of thinking in terms of regional cultural history in connection with supra-regional processes."[91] "Arakan participated as part of a broader literary and cultural continuum stretching along the Bay of Bengal."[92]

Daulat Kazi was the first Bengali poet in the Arakan court under the patronage of Ashraf Khan who had Sufi leanings. He was born into a Qazi family in the village of Sultanpur in Raozan Upazila, Chittagong, but not getting any recognition at home, he left for Arakan. Ashraf asked Daulat to write the story of Lor Chandrani and Sati Mayana in Bengali verse. Daulat Kazi turned to the old Rajasthani poem by Sadhan, a manuscript of which has been recently found.[93]

Ālāol belonged to Fathepur in eastern Bengal where his father was a high ranking cavalry officer. After his fathers death in a battle against the Portuguese, he was captured and sold to the king of Arakan. He was initially made to work in the stables and later he was aptronised by Ashraf Khan to write poetry[94]and eventually his patron who was also the Prime Minister, Magan Thakur, ensured him a place in the Arakanese court. Even though he was a Bengali Muslim, he "showed respect to figures of eloquence and wisdom associated with both Persian and Sanskrit cultures,"[95] and "had a deep knowledge of Hindavi, Sanskrit, and Persian literary cultures, his poems follow the rules of traditional Bengali literature, and all of his translations are panchalis."[96]. . Ālāol was also patronised important officials such as Syed Musa (Royal Minister), Solaiman (Chief Minister), Mohammad Khan (Minister of Army), and Majlis Nabaraj (Minister of Taxation).[97] His first work Padmavati "is an adaptation rather than a translation of the famous work, Padmavati of Malik Muhammad Jayasi. Alaol's Padmavati was composed in the court of Arakan during the reign of Thado Mintar (1645-1652), at the request of his chief minister, Magana Thakur."[98] Ālāol also wrote Ragtalnama, Padmavati (1648), Satimayana-Lor-Chandrani (1659), Saptapaykar (1665), Saifulmuluk Badiuzzamal (1669), and Sikandarnama (1673).[99] He often used Sanskrit words instead of Persian, to express the idea of refinement.[100] Ālāol also composed treatises on music, which now partially survive in later works called *Rāgamālās* and *Tālanāmās*. "The fragments of "Ālāol's *Rāgatālanāmā* partly deal with the myth of the creation of *ragas*, *talas*, and musical instruments. The work appears to be framed around the story found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* about the origin of Drama, combined with elements of Puranic stories such as the birth of the Ganga (the river Ganges). Ālāol also provides lists of the *kalas*, *ragas*,*raginis*, *talas*, and *talinis*, the way they may be combined as well as the directions, colours, and, for the four *kalas*, the elements — fire, earth, wind, and water — they are associated with."[101] The kings also promoted the writing of puttis or folklore in Bengali as well : Shuja Qazi's Roshanger Panchali (History 15 of Roshang), Kazi Daulat's Sati Mayna-O-Lora Candrani, Shamer Ali's Razawan Shah, Mardan's Nasir Nama or Nasir Maloum, Shah Alaol's Padmabati, Tufa, Sati Mayna Lor Chandrani, Saiful Mulk Badiujjamal, Sikander Nama, Hatf-Paikar, Abdul Karim's Dulla Mailis, Hajar Masil, Tamam Anjari, Qazi Abdul Karim's Rahatul Qulub, Abdullar Hazar Sawal, Nurnama, Madhumalati, Darige Majlis, Abul Hussain's Adamer Larai, Ismail Saquib's Bilqisnama, Qazi Muhammad Hussain's Amir Hamza, Dewalmati, Haidar Jung, and etc.[102]

Acquisition of Buddhist Pali and Sanskrit texts from India was actively prompted by the Konbaung kings who regularly sending missions to India. The translation and interpretation of these texts in the kingdom of Ava would not have been possible without the involvement of Brahmins from north India and Manipur, who also were essential components in the promotion of secular education undertaken by rulers of the Konbuang dynasty. The transfer of knowledge via texts, which include not only on religious themes but also secular as well, helps retrace movement of communities and cultural links between India and Burma. "Many of the texts circulating in the frontier region moved across communities into each other's libraries. Manipuri Brahmins sought to access particular old Manipuri books."[103] The region of Manipur and its inhabitants were the key elements in the multilateral interactions between India and Burma.

The Manipuri kingdom provided human resources to Burmese kingdom as in the case of the Manipur cavalry division and the Brahmins. "In the Manipur cavalry division, nine corps was organized in total and many cavalry divisions of Manipur origin were placed around the castle. War captives from Manipur were given important posts as leading figures in the textile industrial arts and as member of the cavalry division in Mandalay. [104] A"[105] Kathe horsemen were incorporated into King Alaungmintaya's cavalry after he occupied Manipur[106] and their impoprtance can be attested by the fact that, "They were offered gold, silver, clothing and other provisions and lands for residence and subsistence."[107] The Kathe people, were responsible for the defeat of the British in the first- Anglo Myanmar war of1824, when they attacked on their horses on the Rakhine front. They also fought as part of the cavalry in the the second Anglo Myanmar war of 1852 at and in the third-Anglo Myanmar war, the Kathe cavalry faced the e British in Sagaing. [108]

Another area that speaks of cultural exchange between the two regions is textile technology. During King Bodawphayas expedition to Manipur in early 19th century there was transfer of technology in nterms of traditional textile production from Manipur and can be seen at the largets silk production centre at Amarapura. [109]

The punna or Brahmins in the Konbuang court came in late 18th and first half of the 19th century CE from Benares as well as Manipur and belonged to Vaisnavite as well as the Saivite sects.[110] "A parallel historiography of Manipur (currently India) for the same period establishes that these 'Brahmans' constituted a particular ordination lineage of Vaishnava Goswamis drawn from Benares (Kashi) and Nadia (Bengal) in India." [111] As sated in the Manipuri chronicles Vaisnavite Brahmins belonging from various parts of such as Bihar, or Khardah for the Adhikari mayum, Gujarat for the Sija Gurumayum, Nandagram in Hindustan for the Furalatfam, were to be found as early as 15th century onwards[112]

"Of the Kathe who settled in Myanmar as non-war captives, Kathe Brahmans (Punnas) were the most outstanding class and they served the king as the court astrologers, advisers and royal purohita supervisor who arranged the royal coronations.[113]… During king Mindon's reign Punna scholars were offered insignia of rank including golden shoulder sash of twelve strings jewelled ear-plug, head dress, etc. and like the Myanmar court officials they were conferred the titles."[114]

Bodawphaya saw "India… as land of pilgrimage and as a land where highly learned Brahmins were the safe keepers of a written tradition that had authoritatively defined kingship."[115] Jacques P Leider's in depth study highlights the importance of the community and amongst the various functions entrusted to the punna were- the construction of a new city, the consecration of a new palace, the royal ploughing ceremony the naming ceremony, the first rice feeding ceremony, the anointing of the head at certain occasions, and the king's participation at the New Year (thin-gyan) celebrations. Their importance in the royal ceremonies and court is attested by the fact that they performed the "incantation of mantras and the inscribing of mantras and magic squares on cloth on drums on city gates, and city walls were performed by the punna"[116] On New

Year. As also Their importance can be judged by the fact that King Bodawphaya reformed the annual ceremonial procession on advise of Brahmin Govinda Maharajinda aggamahadhammarajaguru who hailed from Benares.[117]

During the rule of the Konbuang dynasty numerous missions were sent to India to collect books of both religious and secular nature, which were then translated and studied. The Indian punna or Brahmins played a central role in the process of translation and thus transmission of Indian texts to Burma. The kings pursued a scheme of "return to the canonical sources"[118], which invariably led to closer interactions between India and Burma. King Bodawphaya through letters to the English officers requested them to send not only Sanskrit texts but Brahmins as well. In one instance he asked for a Brahmin astronomer in a letter to Governor General Shore[119] and in 1795 King Bodawphaya he requested Michael Symes, journey to "send to Amarapura certain Sanskrit texts and a Brahmin with his wife."[120] From the early years of his reign he sent punna to Benares to collect books on "religious and secular subjects" and then these books were translated into Burmese either by the monks or the Punna at the capital Amarapura.[121]

Shwetaung Thagathu and Shwetaung Thirisithu departed from Burma on 12 February 1807 to visit the sixteen states in the Middle Region to get scriptural and secular texts, , , and they returned on 21 February 1808 alongwith back eight medical treatises and a Brahman Govinda for the court of Ava.[122] In 1810 a group of officers (Shwetaung Thagathu, Zeyakyawthu, Zeyakyawhtin and Zeyakyawswa), were sent brought along with them eight treatises on varied topics such as medicine, "on the distinctive marks on elephants, on augury and astrology. During a mission sent by Bodawphaya which left from Burma on 2 December 1812 and returned on 12 February 1815, Nemyo-jeya Kyaw Htinthe governor (myo wun) of Pegu, "copied texts, discussed philosophy and religion with the Brahmins of Benares, and brought a wife for his king".[123] The last mission sent with officers left on 1 May 1815 and returned on 4 September 1819, and.[124] "King Bodawphaya sent Shwetaung Thayata and officials to get more than 100 works from India which included works on medicine, didactics and astrology and had them translated. He sent missions to central India to collect secular and religious works. The official travelled as far as Punjab and also brought back with them two Bodhi trees."[125] It is estimated that a total of 253 texts were brought back from India between 1786 and 1818, but as of now only 236 texts have been found.[126] Of these 58 were on astrology, 56 on grammar, 23 on Logic, 8 on Law and the rest covered miscellaneous topics.[127]

The monastic education under the rule of King Bodawphaya included not only religious education but came to incorporate a number of subjects of Indian origin such as astronomy, boxing, astrology, military arts and music.[128] These subjects were taught to the elite students by court Brahmins who were primarily of Manipuri descent.[129] These Manipuri Brahmins were moving between the Burmese and Manipuri courts, and thus Manipur became "a significant route for the introduction of Sanskrit works into Burma."[130] The Chindwin monks relied on assistance of Manipuri and Hindu Brahmins in context of Sanskrit languages and texts.

Another aspect to this has been the role of the punnas and monks in collecting information about the British rule in India and informing it to the king. "As the Punna were familiar with Indian affairs and the increasing power of the English in India, much information of political nature could arrive at the court."[131] The delegations sent to visit holy sites of Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Varanasi seem to have established contacts with the local ruling dynasties of India. Evidence of "multilateral links between the Ava court and the heirs of Tipu Sultan, the Marathas, Nepal and possibly Punjab", is to be found in Burmese intelligence documents.[132] A. Phayre notes that "a Burmese was arrested while on his way to Delhi, ostensibly in search of religious books. The British Government now gained information, apparently for the first time, that Bodoaphra was actively engaged in intrigues with some of the native princes of India"[133] and "Manipuri and north Indian Brahmins in the Burmese court spread propaganda

hostile to the invaders from hatred to the British rule."[134]

Literary, inscriptional and archival evidence indicates the intertwined and interlinked historical, social, religious and political developments in India and Burma. Personalities as well as communities were instrumental in forging and maintaining linkages between these two countries over a long period of time. In the arena of Buddhism and Buddhist studies, the Bengali language, the fight against colonial, women's rights and traditional knowledge systems, the modern political national boundaries neither hindered nor impeded the interactions and movements of people and ideas between India and Burma.

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# VII

# Indian Leaders in Malaysia

## 1. Introduction

Even though Captain Francis Light is regarded as the founder of the British colony of Penang in 1786, he himself noted the presence of Indian traders and merchants at Penang. Francis Light "The second class of our inhabitants consists of the Chooliars [Chulias] or people from the several ports on the Coast of Coromandel [i.e. the east coast of Madras Presidency] they are all shopkeepers and Coolies, about one thousand are settled here, some with families, the vessels from the coast bring over annually 1,500 or 2,000 men, who by traffic and various kinds of labour obtain a few dollars with which they return to their homes and are succeeded by others."[1] Malaysia was not terra incognito on the arrival of the British, but was firmly established as an important trading zone in the Indian Ocean network. Its location made it a crucial halting place for sailors travelling to and fro between China and India. The region flourished as a major transit point where "fresh supplies of goods and provisions for long-distance voyages and a point of collection of all goods from the archipelago, which were later distributed to traders from India and China."[2] Ships from Bombay mostly arrived from July to September and from Bengal, from March to August.[3]

The Bay of Bengal region had trade contacts with the Straits and it held importance for the traders from the Coromandel coast who had established trading linkages with the region. The Indian traders, in particular the Chulia merchants carried out their trading activities primarily from Kedah during the 18th century. The prime commodity involved in this trading network was Indian cloth from the Coromandel coast, Indian cloth "which was re-exported by Melaka to various Malay ports in the archipelago. In the earlier period, Indian cloth came from the Coromandel Coast and was mostly carried by Indian and Moor traders from India."[4] The volume of trade and items exchanged can be glimpsed from records about Syed Mohammad from Porto Novo. The traders involved in trade with Penang hailed mainly from Pulicat on the Coromandel coast, who traded primarily in Indian cloth. Ships tracing with Melaka hailed either from Pulicat or Surat- " three to four ships from Pulicat were regularly engaged in the trade with Melaka two ships from Surat that came to Melaka annually on their way to Siam who traded in silks and chintzes. In the second half of the 19th century the main Indian commodities imported into Melaka were Indian cloth, opium, tin and grains.[5] "In 1828–29, the main goods that Melaka imported were cloth valued at more than Singapore Dollars 202,009.95. Most of the cloth came from India, which constituted more than 22 per cent of all cloth brought into Melaka …the next important imported item was rice and paddy – more than 16 per cent of all goods imported to Melaka. This was followed by opium and tin."[6] Of the total volume of Melaka exports in cloth, Indian cloth constituted more than 90 per cent in 1780–82 which was about 5,144 corgie of cloth.[7]

Syed Mohammad was a skipper from Porto Novo who sailed between Nagapatnam and Melaka in a 200-lasten and from Melaka he returned with mostly food and agricultural products. On his voyages to Melaka he brought with Indian cloth and salt and carried back goods from China and the archipelago to Nagapatnam which primarily constituted gambir, arak and sugar.[8] Along with his partners, Mucktoon Saib, Boojoo Mohammed and Ismail Mohammed, arrived and settled in Georgetown in 1787 from where they carried out trading activities between Penang and Coromandel coast between 1787 to 1814. They also owned brick shops valued at Singapore Dollars 77,000.37.[9] "The Chulias ties were with these independent Asian states and tended to be continuous and long-lasting. Their operations were across a broad spectrum, from powerful merchant-magnates to itinerant peddlers and vendors'.[10]

The Indian monopoly over the cloth trade came to a halt at Melaka due to Dutch policies and Indian traders traded directly with Malay ports such as Aceh, Ujong Salang, Kedah, Perak and Riau.[11] This brief interlude of loss of importance of the archipelago ended with new English policy of free trade and founding of Penang as an important trading centre[12] "As Penang was closer to the Indian subcontinent and had attracted, from its opening, a large number of Chulia traders and merchants to settle there, it was probable that the majority of Melaka-Keling and Moors had also chosen to base themselves on the island."[13] Even though with the Dutch impositions on trading of Indian textiles, traders from India shifted base from Melaka to Penang in the late 1820s, Melaka continued to be a part of the trading network as more than 33 per cent of Melaka's imports came from Indian ports such as Madras, Calcutta and Bombay.[14]

Prior to the establishment of the English settlement, traders, sailors, merchants, coolie labour etc. from India settled for short periods of time and return back to India. The foundation of Penang as an English settlement in 1786 changed this migratory pattern and over time more and more Indians came to settle permanently in Penang. Statistics show a gradual increase in the number of Indian inhabitants at Penang. In August 1788 the Chulia population numbered was 216 Chulias[15] which increased to 5604 in 1810. (Chulias and Bengalis)[16]. In Melaka town there were 1475 free Chulias in 1826.[17] "The majority of Chulias were shopkeepers, merchants or coolies. By the end of eighteenth century, about one thousand Chulias had settled in the town with their families. Besides this number, there were 1,500 to 2,000 Chulia immigrants from the Coromandel Coast who came to the town annually. However, most were sojourners who, after earning enough money, returned home."[18] The English encouraged the Chulias to settle permanently in Penang as it would not only increase the trade between India and Penang but would also help the English "secure the Chulia's trading network, which covered the Bay of Bengal, Southern Thailand, the Straits and north Sumatra." [19]

This migration and settlement pattern underwent a change post 1870's due to the shift of economic activity in Malaya to a plantation based economy. "In the Straits Settlements, this rise in sugar and coffee consumption caused "a sudden impetus ... to the cultivation of sugar cane, which had hitherto been carried on at a great disadvantage".[20] Malaya became a centre for production of sugar, coffee and minerals such as tin. These activities were labour intensive and largely depended on the continuous supply of a labouring force. It has been noted that sugarcane grew in Province Wellesley with an "uncommon luxuriance"[21]

During the 20th century an increasing demand for rubber led to decline in sugar and coffee plantations in Malaya. As this area was part of the British Empire, the planters turned to India as a source of cheap and continuous flow of labour employed at these estates through system of Indentured labour. The labour requirement was initially fulfilled by the convicts and slaves from India but the abolition of slavery in August 1833 led to a shortage of labourers. Initially the Government turned to employment of locals but realised they were not suitable for this job. S. Arasaratnam believed a "limited and irregular movement" of Indian indentured labourers to the Straits Settlements began about 1838.[22] According to

C. Kondapi workers from south India were initially recruited for Malayan coffee and sugar plantations under a three year indenture period from 1833,[23] and in the opinion of K S Sandhu the Indian indentured labour migration from India to Malaya predates 1823.[24]

Sinnappah Arasaratnam mentions that, "under the indenture system, a prospective employer of labour placed an order with a recruiting agent based in India for the supply of stipulated number of labourers. The recruiting agent thereupon sent his subordinate contact men into the villages, and picked the required number of men. These men, on signing a contract, were said to be under „indenture" to the employer for a period of five years."[25] "A ship owning merchant advances money to a head maistry who employs under him several subordinate maistries. These maistries have to go about the villages and persuade coolies (labourers) to emigrate. This they do by representing in bright colour prospects of enrichment and advances. The ignorant coolies (labourers) believe easily, and while some volunteer to go to try their fortune, many are persuaded. The maistries, get rupees 10 per head for every adult coolie they bring, all contingent expenses being paid. A less price is given for boys, who are not in such demand and a somewhat higher rate for young good looking women. The coolies thus obtained are kept in godowns (or depots) in Negapatam until a sufficient number is collected. They are then shipped on the ship owner vessel, and accompanied by the head maistry to the port of destination. There they are sold under contract to serve for certain periods. Each man fetches about five pounds, and all expenses of maintenance, passage money are discharged by the purchaser. The shipper and the head maistry divide the profits. The coolies, after their teams of service have expired, continue to work on their own account, and manage to save small sum of money, with which they return to India." [26]

From the last quarter of the 19th century, labour recruitment for Malaya was through as a kangani, The kangani received a commission for each of the labourers he brought and kept employed. The passage and other expenses in bringing the labourer were treated as a loan which he had to settle within two years. Unlike the case of the indentured labourer, this was not a legally enforced loan and theoretically the labourer was free to do what he liked after setting his feet on the Malayan soil. But in practice, he had to work out to pay his loan to the employer who had brought him over because no other employer would employ him.

The area under rubber cultivation increased from 43,000 acres in 1914 to two million acres in 1941.[27] The increase in exports totalling to 50% of total rubber exports[28] invariably meant an increased demand of labour supply, which predominantly came from India. It was this kangani system of recruiting which became the main source of labour supply from India to Malaya until the end of 1938. These developments in Indian labour movements and employment on estates, and their consequent exploitation by the owners and managers of estates led to the creation of a number of trade unions under Indian leadership

## 2. Trade Unions and Indian Leaders

The rubber plantation economy had wide implications in the society and polity of Malaysian history. Unlike in the case of sugar and coffee plantations where flow of labour was migratory in nature, in the case of rubber plantations the Indian labourers settled permanently in different parts of Malaya. The initiative for the betterment of the Indian labourer was taken by Indian nationalist leaders as well as Indians settled in Malaya. The Indian Immigration Fund was formed by the government to help overcome labour shortages in Malaya and it marked the beginning of 31 years of "assisted migration" from India to Malaya. The Tamil Immigration Fund Ordinance was approved in 1907, which led to establishment of Indian Immigration Committee (IIC) later it known as the Tamil Immigration Fund[29]. "The Committee brought together all the Departments of Indian Immigration in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States for discussion on all matters pertaining to labour issues and the welfare of Indian labourers. The IIC consisted of British administration officials and unofficial members such

as rubber plantation owners and community leaders. In 1907, the IIC established the Tamil Immigration Fund (TIF), sponsored by rubber plantation owners and the British government, to finance the cost of bringing Indian labourers to work on the estates in Malaya."[30] This invariably established a "state controlled structure for the mass recruitment of "free" South Indian labour. The fund provided free passage for Indian labourers intending to come in Malaya even though the recruiting of workers was carried out by licensed kangani with the approval of individual planters. All employers of Indian labour were charged a quarterly charge to cover the travel and related costs Indian labour immigrants to Malaya. The IIC was authorised to manage the movement of assisted labour migrants to Malaya by monitoring the number of recruiting licenses given to the kangani and also the recruiting allowance or subsidy to migrants. Crucially, this legislation resulted in Indian labour migration evolving into two distinct categories, namely recruited and non-recruited migrants."[31]

As compared to the statistics of Indian population in Malaya, there was an increase of 76 % in 1921, as compared to 1911.[32] In Malaya the voluntary system of recruiting was popular and labourers wishing to go to Malaya independently of the kangani, or recruiter, appear at the nearest emigrant depot. If they were bona fide labourers they were sent by the "Emigration Commissioner to Malaya at the cost of the Indian Immigration Fund. They are at liberty, on discharge at the port of destination, to go to any place of employment and they receive free railway tickets before they leave the immigration depot. The usual system is the kangani system, by which a few selected labourers are sent to India as kanganis by estate managers and other employers of labour who want labourers. Each kangani was allowed to recruit 20 adult labourers who were assisted to immigrate to Malaya from the Indian Immigration. As per the Labour Code, a labourer was not to work for more than 9 hours a day, and not beyond 6 hours continuously. Overtime is paid at the rate of one and a half times the usual rate. "[33] According to the Agent of the Government of India in British Malaya, between the years 1910 and 1920 an estimated 50,000 to 80,000 labourers arrived every year in Malaya. Efforts by Indian nationalist leaders to abolish the system of indenture and improve the condition of Indians in British colonies yielded some results in the form of legislation being passed by the British government.

Radica Mahase's article traces the involvement of the Indian nationalists with the issue of indentured labour. According to her "In the first decade of the twentieth century one can see the topic of overseas Indians creeping into the nationalist discourse. The period 1900 to 1910 can be referred to as the "formative phase" for Indian emigration in the Indian nationalist discourse."[34]

On 25th February 1910, Gokhale said "My Lord, my own view of this system of indentured labour is that it should be abolished altogether. It is true that it is not actual slavery, but I fear in practice in a large number of cases it cannot be far removed from it. To take from this country helpless men and women to a distant land, to assign them there to employers in whose choice they have no voice and of whose language, customs, social usages and special civilisation they are entirely ignorant, and to make them work there under a law which they do not understand and which treats their simplest and most natural attempts to escape ill-treatment as criminal offences such a system, by whatever name it may be called, must really border on the servile. I strongly hold therefore that the system should be done away with altogether."[35]

"The years 1911 to 1915 can be referred to as the "definitive phase" of anti-emigration agitation as well as the inclusion of Indian emigration in the nationalist discourse. It was during this phase that Indian emigration and the Indian indentureship system was clearly defined in the Indian nationalist discourse"[36] and the years 1915 to 1917 are termed as "phase of consolidation"[37] and Indian emigration became one of the central themes of nationalist agenda. In 1916 a motion for the abolition of the system of Indian indentured labour was delivered by Madan Mohan Malaviya was accepted by Lord Hardinge.[38] In 1917 N.E. Majoribanks and Ahmad Tambi Marakkaya were delegated to Ceylon and

Malaya to "study the methods of recruiting and the conditions of Indians there."[39] Gokhale's resolution for the prohibition of recruitment of indentured labour from British India was passed, and acted upon by the British.

The Indian Labourers in Malaya became one of the issues that the Government of India took a keen interest in. The Labour Department was formed in 1911 out of the earlier Indian immigration. Initially it had jurisdiction over the Straits Settlements and the F.M.S. but later became a pan-Malayan department in 1925 when the Unfederated Malay States came under its jurisdiction. The Labour Department was primarily concerned with the supervision of Indian immigration and conditions of Indian labour, although the smaller number of Javanese and Malay labourers also came under its jurisdiction. The Indian Immigration Committee was responsible for the affairs of Indian immigration. Officials of the Labour Department conducted regular visits and inspection of rubber estates to see whether housing, water supply, medical and sanitary arrangements complied with the requirements of the labour code. Comments and suggestions were made with the aim of removing serious abuses by the estate managers. The officials would also listen to the complaints[40] of the labourers and settle disputes industrial or personal. Under the provisions of the Labour Code of 1923, the Agent of the Government of India was given the same right of entry and inspection of places of employment. The Indian Government's ability to exert influence is apparent by formulation of standard rates of -wages by the Malayan Governments in several key districts from 1924 for male and female Indian labourers in Kuala Kangsar, which were 35 cents and 27 cents in 1924 and 50 cents and 40 cents respectively in 1928. [41]

The Labour Code required the employer to provide house accommodation, sufficient water supply, sanitary arrangements, hospital, medical attendance and treatment in estates. Treatment for an estate labourer and his dependants who remained in the hospital was free of charge within a period of thirty days.[42]

The Indian Emigration Act of 1922 brought organized emigration of unskilled labour under the control of the legislature. A standing emigration committee, composed of 12 members of the Indian Legislature, 8 of whom are members of the Legislative Assembly and four of the Council of State, advises the Government of India on all major emigration questions. The fact that the consent of the elected legislature is necessary to the existence of Indian emigration has exercised a liberalizing influence upon colonies which require Indian labor (p.599) Some of the provisions included were –

Section 6 provided for the appointment of Medical Inspectors at any port from where emigration was permissible; Section 7 provided for the appointment of agents at places outside India to protect the interests of Indian emigrants; Section 8 provided for the Constitution of an Advisory Committee to assist the Protector of Emigrants: Section 9 provided for the ban on emigration of unskilled workers from any port except Calcutta, Madras. Bombay, Negapatam. Tuticorin and Dhanushkodi, and any other port, which the Central Govemment may, by notification, permit; Section 17 dealt with the manner in which applications for emigration in respect of skilled workmen are to be dealt with; Section 18 stipulated that before a person departs from India on the basis of the permission granted in terms of Section 17, the employer or his authorized representative shall appear before the Protector of Emigrants along with the workman concerned; Section 26 notes that it is necessary to reproduce the same for ready reference and better understanding: Fraudulently inducing to emigrate: - Whoever, by means of intoxication coercion or fraud causes or induces or attempts to cause or induce any person to emigrate, or enter into any agreement to emigrate. or leave any place with a view to emigrating, shall be punishable [with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and with fine: Provided that in the absence of special and adequate reasons to the contrary to be mentioned in the judgement of the Court, such imprisonment shall not be less than six months and such fine shall not be less than one thousand rupees"[43]

The next phase of political developments related to Indian labourers in Malaya is dated to the post-Depression period. "A change in Indian consciousness began to show in the late 1930s. Indians understood the crucial role they played in the plantation capitalist structure as cheap labour, and wanted to change this dynamics of exploitation. This was evident through intermittent strikes prior to the war demanding increases in wages and other benefits."[44] "Despite the racial plurality of the population, labour became better organised and more militant, especially after the 1930's when free wage labour had emerged, economic conditions were fluctuating and anti-colonial sentiments were rising."[45]

In years of the Great Depression the price of rubber in 1932 fell to one fortieth as compared to that of 1925, the total number of Indians employed in 1932 was half of that in 1929, and payrolls fell to 80% in the same period. In 1934 the rubber industry had recovered from the effects of the Great Depression, but the wages did not see a corresponding increase[46]. "The Planters' Association restored wage rates and conditions to their 1928 level. It did, briefly, but then threatened to reduce them again.".[47] In the Depression years of 1930 – 1933 "labour surplus was shipped back to India under the aegis of the Tamil Immigration Fund," thus avoiding labour unrest and reducing planters overheads." [48] Indian nationalist opinions were resentful of the way Indian labourers were imported only to be thrown back to India like 'sucked oranges' during slump[49] "After the 1920's assisted immigration including kangani recruitment labour practically ceased with the onset of rubber slump. When assisted immigration was revived in 1934 kangani recruitment continued to account only for a small fraction of Tamil labourers coming to Malaysia."[50]

"The first wave of industrial unrest after the Great Depression "began in 1934, the year of economic recovery. The Great Depression had thrown labour into the depth of economic degradation: wages had been reduced to a pittance, working conditions had deteriorated, and large numbers of labourers had been laid off or put on short time. When they finally emerged from the depression, still a little dazzled, they found themselves in conditions even worse in some aspects than what their forbears had experienced. The fundamental problem confronting them was first of all to pull themselves up from the depression conditions and in the long run to remove the basic causes of their discontent. To achieve this end, they had no alternative but to combine and assert themselves. The economic recovery afforded them the first opportunity to fight for higher wages and better working conditions."[51]

In the period of economic recovery the areas and estates that were closed were once again brought under cultivation. There was a demand for labour but as many had been sent back to India, Malaya faced a paucity of work force. "Negotiations were undertaken by the Malayan Governments with the Indian Government towards the end of 1933 for the reopening of assisted Indian immigration, which had been suspended since 1931 and as a result it was in resumed on May, 1934 on a quota basis. In spite of low wages in Malaya, large crowds presented themselves at the depots in Negapattinam and Madras under the pressure of rural poverty and draught in South India, and many of the applicants had to be turned down"[52] In 1934 and 1935 there were altogether 155,000 Indian arrivals, of which 66,000 were assisted immigrants. Even though assisted immigration resumed, yet there was a change noticeable. "After the Great Depression, the kangani-recruited immigrants dwindled to an insignificant proportion, and the bulk of the immigrants consisted of non-recruited assisted labourers and non-assisted immigrants. The rubber planters issued thitti surat, a certificate of identity, for Indians who had worked in their estates before to come back; another kind of letter, puthal surat was sent to friends and relatives of labourers already on the estates, offering them employment in Malaya."[53]

The initial at increasing the wages of the Indian labourers was made by the Government of India. In 1933 when a Malayan deputation travelled to India to press for resumption of Indian emigration, the Government of India insisted wage cuts be restored before the resumption of emigration[54] and

in October 1935 a despatch was sent to the Malayan Governments, demanding the restoration of half the amount of wage cut in 1930.[55]

"Criticisms of the mode of recruitment and employment of Indians in Malaya began at the turn of the century, and had continued unabated ever since. The plight of the Indians overseas had been a constant theme of Indian nationalist agitation, and the fight on their behalf was part of the Indian nationalist movement. As a result Srinivasa Satri was sent to Malaya to report on the conditions of the Indian estate labourers, for which he visited nearly 30 estates which were mostly owned by Europeans." [56]

Srinivasa Sastri's report on the conditions of Indian labour in Malaya turned out to be a disappointment as he reported that the condtion of the Indian labourers in Malaya was not deplorable. He reported that" new places of accommodation were under construction " medical attention was satisfactory on the larger estates, but the dressers employed, particularly on the smaller and remote estates, were not always sufficiently qualified; the accommodation provided by estate schools and the teachers employed were susceptible of considerable improvement." In the case of wages he recommended that it be reverted to 1928 rates , he also suggested the abolition of kanagany and appointment of two more Indian members on Indian Immigration Committee.[57]

The report was interpreted by Indian Nationalists for purposes of taking initiatives and prompting Indian labourers to organise themselves and demand for better wages and working conditions "The CIAM, particularly following Nehru's visit to Malaya in May-June 1937, began showing strong pro-Congress nationalist leanings. Its fervent emphasis on labour and citizenship rights is reflected by the fact that the President, A. M. Soosay, had written the foreword for a book which described Indian labourers as 'sucked oranges' for whom Malaya had no more use."[58]The nationalist agenda and opinions against assisted Indian emigration succeeded when a ban was put on all assisted Indian emigration to Malaya with effect from June 15, 1938 by the Indian Government.[59]

"The formation of Central Indian Association of Malaya, a political organization, in September 1936, paved the way for Indian labourers to become more organized themselves. CIAM, knowing fully well the colonial government's stand on trade unions, instead encouraged the formation of associations among the Indian labourers. Consequently, between the years 1939 to 1941, the Klang District Association, United Kuala Langat Indian Association, Batu Arang Labour Association, and Johore Indian Labourer's Association among others, sprouted up in districts and towns where European-owned estates were located."[60]

On March 29, 1938, the C.I.A.M. sent an urgent telegram to the Government of India. The telegram reads: "Reduction of wages of Indian labour is imminent. If wages are now reduced the action will finally render infructuous the main labour of the Sastri delegation. The present labour situation is definitely detrimental to the economic interests of Indian labour. It is suggested that assisted emigration be stopped pending settlement of issues between the two countries. We respectfully urge Government of India to take up a determined and firm stand and safeguard Indian rights."[61]

All diplomatic attempts by the leaders of the C.I.A.M. having failed, " It dawned on more Indians that they had to look to their own resources to fight for their rights. The message that Indian labourers must organize and rely on themselves took on a new urgency."[62]The labour unrest witnessed in Malaya in 1940-41 was caused primarily due to question of wages and working hours. With the outbreak of Second World War War on September 3, 1939 soaring prices of daily necessities soared high and there was an overall increase in the cost of living. This, along with the factor of reduced wages among a broad section of labourers in the 1938-39 during the recession proved to be the turning point in labour unrest in Malaya.

R.H. Nathan, a member of the editorial board of the Tamil Nesan, a leading Tamil newspaper in Malaya in 1941: "A lot of coolies now understand what is the difference between labourers and capitalists. Co-operation is our watchword. The

estate proprietors and agents will try to break this co-operation. But we cannot allow this to interfere with our work. Unity is strength."[63]

"The wave of strikes by Indian estate labourers in 1941 shattered the stereotype of "the mild Hindoo."[64] The focus of the strikes was the Klang district of Selangor Province, and at Port Swettenham on the Straits of Klang to the west of Kuala Lumpur. The strike began on Demansara Estate, on March 17, 1941 when four labourers were arrested for allegedly intimidating the others into ceasing work. The demands of the strikers included: 1. Parity of pay for Indian and Chinese labourers. 2. The removal of estate staff who were brutal and their replacement with Tamil-speaking staff. 3. The provision of 'proper' education for children. 4. An end to the molesting of labourers' womenfolk by Europeans and 'black' Europeans. 5. The provision of proper medical facilities. 6. The closing of toddy shops. [65]

In 1939 two young Indian nationalists, R.H. Nathan, sub-editor of the Tamil Nesan, and Y.K. Menon, an estate clerk, who reactivated the Port Swettenham Indian Union and formed the Klang Kuala Langat and Kajang Indian Associations. These associations were more on the lines of the Indian sangams (societies) in their objectives, focussing on reform and enlightenment of the Indian community, and their membership included labourers, clerks, teachers, and kanganies. R.H. Nathan had contact with the Klang Rubber Manufacture Workers' Association[66] "The strikes by Indian estate workers in the Klang area (Selangor) in early 1941 under the leadership of the Klang District Indian Unions are of particular significance. The strikes later spread to many othe.- estates in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan prompting the British to send in troop reinforcements and declare a state of Emergency in Selangor on 16 May to crush them."[67] On March 7, 1941 about 300 labourers marched to Kuala Lumpur to stage a demonstration in front of the office of the Controller of Labour. The Indian labourers employed by the Klang Public Works Department and Sanitation Board also joined in the protest strikes. "The number of strikers rose from 4,000 in early May to 15,000 on May 15, affecting rubber estates in Kuala Lumpur, Klang, Port Swettenham area and the coast districts. The strike began to infect Negri Sembilan, where 'intimidators"'[68]

"High Commissioner Sir Shenton Thomas ordered the arrest of Nathan and Thangaiah, whom he blamed for leading the Tamils astray. The labourers, however, were incensed by the arrests, and this reignited the movement. The strikes involved over 20,000 labourers from close to one hundred estates and young militants fanned out on bicycles to spread the message of revolt over the 1,500 square miles affected."[69] These strikes in the second phase were mostly spontaneous. Pickets were deployed on the estates, transport of rubber was obstructed, telephone wires were cut in many places, some toddy shops were destroyed, and police raids were met with violent resistance. "The coolies armed themselves with sticks, batons, stones, and "anything they could find," complained Thomas.[70] They cut down telephone wires and on 12 May surrounded the Klang police station. The assistant barricaded himself in his house on a Klang rubber estate on 15 May. In order to quell the unrest caused ,Commissioner Shenton Thomas took military aid opened fire causing death of five strikers and another sixty were wounded.[71] A state of emergency was declared in Selangor on 16 May [72]and the strikes were undoubtedly a direct challenge posed by the Indian labourer to the Malayan authorities. According to the Colonial Office, "[t]he underlying cause of the strikes was probably the fact that the earlier strikes had given the labourers an idea of their power and their victory had gone to their head." The workers demanded the right to wear "Gandhi hats" and fly Congress flags in their compounds, and wanted the abolition of the custom of coolies having to dismount from their bicycles if they met a planter's car on the roads. Such "insolence" outraged the High Commissioner, Sir Shenton Thomas, who told CIAM leaders, "the strike was a disgrace to the Indian community" and a "politically inspired . . . challenge to authority."[73]

Indians active in the formation of plantation unions were P. P. Narayanan (Plantation Workers Union of Malaya), Govindan Nair (Johor State Plantation Workers Union),

Subbiah (Malacca Estate Workers Union). The Pan Malayan Rubber Workers' Union (PMRWU) was formed, with an aim to resist the employers, and leaders of the Negri Sembilan Indian Labour Union, the Perak Estate Employees' Union (PEEU), the Alor Gajah Labour Union, the Malacca Estate Employees' Union and the Johore State Plantation Workers' Union came together to form the PMRWU.[74]

Initially the PMRWU was not successful and, in September 1954, the formation of National Union of Plantation Workers signalled the presence of a union that worked for the befit of the plantation workers in Malaya. "Since its inception under the colonial regime. and since the establishment of an independent Federation of Malaysia in 1963, the NUPW has been the main organiser of plantation workers in the country and the plantation workers, as the union's leaders, have been predominantly ethnic Indian".[75]

The NUPW extended support for school education of children of estate workers as well as university education in 1963 and also provided student hostel accommodation in Kuala Lumpur and provincial capitals[76]. The wide ranging projects undertaken by NUPW include provision of adult education, eradication of alcoholism and succession in the union's governance.[77]

## 3. Indian Political Leaders in Malaya

A number of Indian leaders travelled to Malaysia in the first half of the 20th century and left a deep impact on the political developments of the country. While Nehru went on tours, John A Thivy and S.A.Ganapathy continued their political struggle from Malaysian soil. These leaders had witnessed the freedom for struggle against colonial rule in India and were inspired to fight for the cause of Indians in Malaysia who were reeling under the effects of British colonial rule as well. Most importantly they perceived Indians in Malaysia as a part of the Malaysian society and often joined hands with other political parties to hit at British imperialism.

***John A Thivy*** was instrumental in the formation of Malaya Indian Congress. Thivy met Gandhi in London and this meeting fuelled his determination to fight for India's independence. On his return from London to Malaya in 1932 he became actively involved in the nationalist movements. Inspired by a speech of Subhas Chandra Bose, Thivy joined the Indian National Army in 1943 and was a part of INA's campaigns in Burma and also a former Minister in Subhas Chandra Bose's Provincial Government. After the surrender by Japanese forces, Thivy was imprisoned in Changi Prison on charges of anti-colonial activities but was released from jail on Nehru's request.[78] Thivy was asked by Nehru to become secretary of the Indian Relief Committee and to lead an organisation of overseas Indians in Malaysia.[79] After his release from jail, Thivy resided in the Sri Mariamman temple in Kuala Lumpur and worked towards organising a communal nationalist movement.[80] A three day conference of Indian organisations was held at Kuala Lumpur from 3–5 August 1946, resulting in the formation of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) with John A. Thivy, as its first President.[81] "It was the culmination of a collective effort by several leaders to rally the Indians behind a national organisation that could safeguard the rights and interests of the minority community in the changing political environment in Malaya."[82] Thivy noted that Indians in Malaya had a double task- to work for the self determination of Malaya in co-operation with communities; and to work for independence, honour and dignity of the mother country[83]. One of the major concerns of the MIC was to gather support amongst the Indians in Malaysia. The most pertinent and important issue that the MIC had to deal was the question of citizenship. The MIC noted: "Malayans were, in effect, British subjects, a term which was a reminder of the subjugation of India and Malaya by the British" (Draft proposal of All-Malayan Indian Organisation, 3 August 1946). The MIC had differentiated between those who received citizenship of Malaya and those who did not and firmly believed that creating such a distinction would fragment the unity among the Indians in Malaya.[84] The MIC as party represented Indians in Malaya as a whole, and in its first Assembly in June 1947 noted: "Indian settlers who want to retain their own nationality should have equality before the law, without having civic rights, should

enjoy safety of person and property and should be treated in a generous and humane spirit" (Annual Report of the MIC General Assembly, 1947/1948; and Indian Daily Mail, 10 June 1947). The MIC urged the government to grant citizenship to those who lived in Malaya and simultaneously asked the people to obey the laws of the country and to give their undivided loyalty (Indian Daily Mail, 9 June 1947)"[85] In Thivy's opinion Indians were not only to safeguard their interests and guide the government in various problems, but also to help Malay towards its democratic goal.[86]

Thivy was appointed the Government of India Representative in Malaya in 1947 and he spoke on issues facing the Indian community. Thivy was aware that the constitutional changes that would take place in Malaya would create a situation where only those who qualified would be granted citizenship. Thus, there would emerge a distinction between the duties and obligations of citizens and non-citizens. Thivy assured the Indian community born in Malaya that they would receive the support of the Indian government.[87]

Thivy not only ensured celebration of Azad Hind Day and Bose's birthday on 23 January 1947 but also proposed the construction of a memorial to Subhas Chandra Bose[88] and the Netaji-MIC building would serve as a "living" replacement for the destroyed INA memorial. In its first meeting in June 1947, the MIC decided to a "Netaji Memorial" at the cost of half a million dollars. Further, the main room of the MIC building in Kuala Lumpur was named Netaji Hall.[89]

***S A Ganapathy*** was born in 1917 in Madras District Tamil Nadu. In 1929, he came to Singapore in 1929, and later in 1939 he joined the Malayan Communist Party. In the period of Japanese occupation from 1943 to 1945 he was an instructor in the Indian National Army and after the defeat of Japanese forces he worked towards organising the Indian Section of the General Labour Union of which he was appointed Secretary in 1945.[90]

He was reported to be a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Malayan Communist Party. Ganapathy was elected as President of PMFTU on 7th February 1947 which controlled 60 % of the work force and had 40,000 members.. He attended the Asian Relationship Conference held from 25th March to 2nd April 1947 in Delhi as a representative of Malaya.[91] .

In the opinion of Ganapathy pointed a democratic constitution was most vital to the promotion of the standard of living of the workers[92]. He said, "If the economic and the finance of the country is to be improved so as to place industries in a position to pay higher wages, if we are to have better social services, if there is to be equitable distribution of income and resources, these can only be secured by influencing the legislation of the country" .[93] In his opinion, "If the economy of Malaya is balanced, if the civil liberties are guaranteed and if there is democratic constitution through which the will of the people could influence Legislation it would be much easier to promote the standard of living of the workers and alleviated his sufferings"[94] Ganapathy also wanted the Malayan government to fix wages of workers "Today when real wages have shrunken to an alarmingly low level at a time when the working class is awakening in realize their rights the fixing of a minimum wage is now vital for the quick rehabilitation of the country. I stress most strongly the needs for fixing a minimum wage because it is vital for the preservation of law and order in Malaya".[95]

He joined hands with AMCJA-PUTERA and Malaya saw a nationwide hartal on 20 October 1947. In Batu Arang 2000 workers in collieries refused to turn up for work and the port of Swettenham came to a standstill with 200 stevedores and 700 shore workmen refused to offload cargo of five ships. The hartal was supported by the Selangor Indian Chamber of Commerce who decided to shut shops.[96] All labourers in various estates of Selangor went on strike as well. Ganapathy's role is evident in his visits to Batu Arang and meetings with h the leaders of the Colliery Workers Union (CWU). The impact of the strike is seen in the sheer number of workers that went on strike the second time on March 24, 1937, which was between 5,000 to 7,000 went on strike . They captured the colliery and the town and proclaimed their own "Soviet government". Thus

was founded "the first communist Soviet in modern Malaysian and Singapore history" and for seven days, the workers' "Soviet" had ruled Batu Arang. It required 250 policemen and 200 Malay Regiment soldiers to put an end to the revolt."[97]

S A Ganapathy went into hiding but was found and arrested at Waterfall Estate near Rwang om 1st March 1949. He was accused of possessing arms and on 15th March 1949, the Kuala Lumpur High Court sentenced him to be hung to death. The Indian Daily Mail of 6th May 1949 reported anger and protest in India and the British parliament on the decision to hang Ganapathy.[98] Kamraja, President of the Indian national Congress in Tamil Nadu stated, "British Government in Malaya have done a great injustice to India by ordering the execution of one of her sons in total disgraced of protest by the Indian authorities in Malaya." The news also covered the under Secretary Davis Rees Williams being questioned in the House of Commons by Philip Piratin on Ganapathy's hanging.[99]

***Jawaharlal Nehru***: In 1937 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the National Indian Congress Party, visited Malaya and saw unjust conditions of Indian labourers as compared with their Chinese counterparts. He suggested that a trade union for Indian labourers be established to maintain their welfare. He addressed a huge gathering at Johor Bahru on 27 May 1937 where he spoke in Hindustani and English. He expressed his desire for Indians in Malaya to assist the Malayas and not come in their way as Indians and Malayas were like cousins. He concluded by saying, "When I go back I shall carry with me your message and good will to the people of India who are struggling for freedom."[100] Consequently, in 1938, under pressure from the Central Indian Association of Malaya, the House of Representatives of India succeeded in stopping the migration of Indian labourers to Malaya. However, this was not sufficient to remedy the problems faced by the Indian labourers, as their situation remained unchanged Nehru went to Malaya again on 17th March 1946 and gave the assurance that, as soon as India achieved independence, the Indian government would focus their attention on the welfare of Indians outside India. On 26th March 1946, Nehru formed the Indian Relief Committee to handle matters relating to Indians in Malaya.

The INA and IIL relief committee was set up in November 1945 and functioned till 20th May 1946 when it was merged into the Indian Relief committee of Malaysia set up by Jawaharlal Nehru. It discharged money to ex INA personnel and their dependents and those in military camps which included relief in kind, transport, feeding ex INA stray personnel, defence cable and telegrams and maintenance of 145 INA personnel released from Kluang. The expenditures involved in Nehru's visit in 1946 were paid from this fund.[101] The fund helped more than 76,000 Indians between 1st April 1946 and 30 June 1947 and spent about $ 20,489 in relief work. More than 781 were given cash relief, 56,120 provided with clothing and 600 found employment by the Committee. In addition to this it arranged for the repartition of 3,622 people to India, sent 670 widows and children to various institutions and tended to the cases of 900 missing persons across Southeast Asia.[102] His visit coincided with the presence of the Indian Government Medical Mission sent by the Congress to Malaya. The Mission stayed in Malaya for three months during which it visited 300 estates and tended to 64,000 labourers and treated 30,000 individuals. The mission worked in close association with the medical and health services of the Government and Estates to tackle widespread disease and malnutrition afflicting the people of Malaysia resulting from the occupation of Malaysia.[103] On the Indian side Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy took interest in the medical Missions sent from India by the Congress to Malaysia and China. Dr. Roy arranged funds, purchased equipment and medicines, selected the personnel and arranged for their transport from Calcutta to various parts of Malaysia.[104]

"His visit was very beneficial as he was able to achieve much for the Indian community, especially in the establishment of a Trust. It was as a result of his efforts that many Indians had been arrested for collaboration with the Japanese were released. Those who were unable to pay their passage to India were assisted by the Indian Government, who also

relaxed export regulations in order that succour in the form of new and old clothes could reach needy Indians in Malaya. Three medical missions, two sponsored by the Indian National Congress and one by the Government of India were sent to Malaya to render medical aid. Due to the above activities and interest taken by the Indian Government and the Indian public, the whole situation influenced the Malayan Government to revise their policy towards Indians in Malaya."[105]

## 4. Social Reform and Estate Workers

Indian immigration of indentured labour to Malaysia for over a century invariably increased the presence of Indian population on Malaysian soil. Most of these Indians were from poor backgrounds who migrated due famine and extreme poverty in hope of a better future. Their hopes were dashed as they continued to live in poverty and worked under strenuous conditions for which they received minimal wages. Even though the British authorities in India passed numerous acts for their welfare, these were hardly favoured or followed by the estate owners and authorities. Indian leaders in Malaysia were deeply influenced by Indian nationalist ideas of social reform took it upon themselves to take up the cause of the labourers on estates and ensure their welfare and moral betterment.

***Thondar Padai-*** The Thondar Padai or Volunteer/ Youth corps was founded A M Samy in 1945 on the Harvard Estate at Kedah. The movement aimed at the socio economic, moral and cultural uplift of the Indian estate workers. The movement drew inspiration from the independence movement in India and the Dravidar Khazagam of Madras. It's main focus was the eradication of toddy consumption amongst the labourers and it drew inspiration from Gandhian principles of social reform.[106]

Prohibition on sale and consumption of liquor was a part of the Indian nationalist agenda from the 1900's and "provisional reform associations were formed to conduct this agitation and both Christian missionary and Hindu reformist elements came"[107]. "Picketing of liquor shops was an essential part of the prohibition campaign that Gandhi initiated in various parts of India. He has observed that this was an aspect of the Satyagraha Campaign in which women and children could join as they were the most affected by the spread of drunkenness in society. The campaigners in Malaya, too, addressed themselves primarily to women and children and evidence shows that the e took part in large"[108] In the civil disobedience movement (1930) thousands of men and led by the members of the Congress Working Committee picketed the shops and in 1931, the Congress Working Committee in its Karachi Session, pleaded for total prohibition.

Since most of labourers that migrated originated from the Madras Presidency, the Madras wanted "elimination of the toddy habit must be carried out in Malaya, not only for the personal benefit of the labourers, but also to prevent them from bringing back the habit when they return to India."[109] The Government of India was concerned and well aware of the fact that if toddy consumption habit was brought back to India from Malaya picked up in Malaya was brought back to India, "in most likelihood the Government of India would face serious problems as faced by their Malayan counterpart."[110] In 1937, Gandhi told the Congress ministries, "put itself morally right only by once and for all courageously and drastically dealing with this devastating evil of drink and drugs" [111] In 1937 prohibition was imposed in parts Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Province and the North West Frontier Province.

But on the Malaya front the Indian authorities could not achieve much besides sending memoranda, reports and holding protests. Consumption of toddy amongst the labourers on the estates caused not only health problems, but also placed them in the grip of poverty as they would spend a major part of their income on toddy. The Indian Government, a number of Indian organisations, estate management, labourers, and individuals, opposed the consumption and intake of toddy. A number of cases of poisoning, diarrhoea, dysentery and even death were reported after consumption of toddy. "Dr. M. Watson, a medical practitioner employed by the P.AM., made a strong case against toddy on medical grounds and

in 1916 governments to impose controls on the sale of toddy to Indian labourers."[112]

The sale of Toddy was also a major source of revenue for the Government and two-fifths of the profits from the sale of toddy was to be paid as tax to the Government. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in his report on Indian Labour in 1937 recommended a "policy of prohibition in the estates"[113] but this was opposed by the planters as in their opinion doing so would result in labour moving out of the estates for consumption of toddy.

The anti-toddy Thondar Padai founded by A. M. Samy constituted labourers and Tamil schoolteachers. "The movement that began in Harvard estate then inspired other estates to follow suit resulting in many estates"[114] in Kedah having their own Thondar Padai organisations. Those above the age of 15 years were motivated to join the movement through lectures and courses. "The focus of this movement was on education, hygiene, self-development, and community service. This movement reminded them that the elderly's submission to authorities and the dangers of consuming toddy and sameu drove many estate workers into poverty, deterioration, and wretchedness. In order to strengthen their resolve, youths were trained in exercise and physical activity by ex-members of the Indian National Army." [115] In Kedah itself the movement managed to enlist 1000 members in[116] and over time many estates in Kedah established their own Thondar Padai organisations such as in Sungai Toh[117] Pawang, United Patani, Kuala Ketil, Badenock, Scarborough, Bukit Sembilan, Sungai Tawar, Victoria, Padang Meiha, Henrietta, Kuala Sedim, and Dublin.

A committee was instituted on 27 September 1946 to look into the toddy problem which was known as the Estate Toddy Committee or Ross Committee. "The committee conducted various activities, including discussion, receiving 75 memoranda and letters regarding toddy, and receiving reports from 30 medical doctors on the harms of toddy. The report of the Committee came as a disappointment for the Thondar Padai who wanted complete closure of toddy shops to eradicate the toddy drinking and the report did not suggest either closing of shops or prohibition." This led to the adoption of militaristic means by the Thondar Padai to achieve their aim.

28 February 1947 about 1,000 labourers from Harvard estate, and other adjoining estates in Kedah, marched from Bedong and picketed in front of the toddy shop. "It was the largest anti-toddy campaign in Kedah. Thondar Padai members protested and advised the men to abandon the beverage."[118] At Harvard estate, a protest was held demanding the release of 12 Thondar Padai members but the police and employers did not give in to their demands. As a result A.M. Samy called on all labourers estates of Kedah to hold a strike in protest against the toddy shops. The strike was carried out by labourers in Harvard, Bukit Sembilan, Dublin, Sungai Tawar, and United Patani to which the employers and police reacted with even more violence. The leaders of the Thondar Padai and numerous other labourers were arrested and imprisoned. In March 1947, Thondar Padai helped the labourers in Bukit Sembilan estate organise a strike. The Malaya Tribune of 1st May 1947 reported that due to the riots the manager of the Bukit Sembilan estate was evacuated after being blockaded on the estate. The riots resulted in cessation of production of 65000 pounds of rubber a month.[119] All in all it is estimated that about 26000 estate workers went on strike in Kedah during 1947.[120] The riots were noticed by Indian nationalist leaders and S K Chettur, representative of the Government of India in Malaya sent a report after a six day visit to Kedah and reported that a series of events between the labour and management had resulted in the disorder. He also reported that Indians in the area felt that police actions were excessive in nature.[121]

***V T Sambanthan*** - V T Sambanthan's parents came to Malaya in 1896 and his father owned many rubber plantations. Sambanthan studied at the Annamalai University in South India and was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. He also became a member of Youth Wing of the Indian National Congress.[122] Mahatma Gandhi's religious principle of "*ahimsa*" (non-violence), Sambanthan understood and "*satyagraha*" (insistence of truth) as important tools for a nation fighting for independence

had an impact on him, and motivated him to join Malayan politics with an aim gaining independence for his homeland. Sambanthan returned to Malaya in 1946 and not only took over the family business, but continuously strived for the betterment of the labouring class on the plantations.

He wanted the workers to be empowered as also be a part of the society and have equal political rights. At a time when the rubber estates were being fragmented and the work of the plantation labourer was at stake, Sambanthan started the National Land Finance Co-operative Society in 1960 which provided them an opportunity to own land. "He toured rubber plantations to persuade workers to buy shares in the cooperative; a worker with a registration fee of $2 and a share costing $100 (payable in instalments) could buy a stake in a plantation"[123] Sambanthan distributed a portion of the land of the Ulu Ayer Tawar Estate to the workers through the shares of the National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFCS). "From the more than 242.8 hectares of estate land, 26.3 hectares was purchased and divided into 220 lots measuring a quarter acre each which were distributed to help the Indian community with the original purpose of improving their standard of living through plantation activities.[124] "At the time of his death in 1979, the cooperative had bought over 18 estates, totalling 12,000ha and had a membership of 85,000 workers." [125]

He encouraged workers to adopt Malaysia as their home rather than return to India and made them realise their importance in the development of the county as well as their place in it. [126] He encouraged them to become citizens of Malaysia and aided them in this effort. Since most of the workers came from villages in Tamil Nadu and were uneducated, he personally tended to their procedures involved in acquiring citizenship. "The MIC would fill up citizenship forms for these migrant workers and bring a Justice of Peace to the estates for mass swearing every weekend during the year when passing the Malay language was not yet mandatory for citizenship."[127]

The decision to build Mahatma Gandhi Tamil School in Sungei Siput, Perak was taken in 1951 but there was no state fund available. A Veeraswamy and A M S Suppiah Pillay, donated 2 acres of land for the school, but it was their sons Sambanthan and Periaswamy who donated $25,000 each for construction of the school, which was designed by the Danish architect B M Iversen. "Responding to the call of educating and liberating the poor plantation workers' children, the labourers too responded with a total donation of $7000."[128]

In 1954, he set up the. "He also lobbied for the introduction of the English language medium in Tamil schools in Perak and transformation of the South Indian Labour Fund into an education fund to assist children of plantation workers."[129] The SILF replaced the Tamil Immigration Fund on 1 September. The fund has disbursed over RM470, 830 to 699 poor Indian Malaysian students between 1962 and 1992.[130]

## 5. Doyens of Women and Children Welfare

A number of Indian women who were part of the INA later contributed towards the cause of women's rights and education such as Janaky Athi Nahappan and Rasamma Bhupalan. They dedicated their lives to various social and political causes in Malaysia. These women worked not on racial or political lines, but were determined to ensure better lives for the more underprivileged sections of society and equal rights for women.

***Janaky Athi Nahappan*** was born in Kuala Lumpur and was also a part of the Rani Jhansi Regiment of the Indian national Army and fought at the Indo Burma border. She rescued a number of soldiers during the bombing of the Red Cross hospital in Rangoon and trekked through dense forests to bring back the INA soldiers to safety. [131] After the war, she became actively involved in politics and devoted herself to the MIC. In the 1940s, she joined the Indian Congress Medical Mission in Malaya and visited rubber estates throughout the country. While touring the estates she interacted with the Indian emigrants and this first-hand experience of living and working conditions of the labourers encouraged her to establish a political organisation

that would tend to the betterment of the Indian immigrants in Malaysia. In 1946, she helped John Thivy to establish the Malayan Indian Congress,[132], held the post of commissioner of the Selangor Girl Guides Association and has been an active member of National Council of Women's Organisations. In 1972 she was a member of a commission set up by the Malayan Government for reviewing the existing laws and determine the possible reforms in light of the UN conventions on consent to marriage, minimum age and registration of marriages.[133] She was awarded Padma Shri in 2002 by the Indian government.[134]

***Mrs F.R. Bhupalan***: Mrs F.R. Bhupalan was part of the Rani of Jhansi regiment, of the Indian National Army, to fight the British and fought at the war front in Burma. [135] After the defeat of Japan, she dedicated her life to the betterment of society, in particular women and education. She started her teaching career at the Methodist Girls School in Penang in 1955, which made her aware of the discrimination in pay scale for men and women. The difference in pay scale was justified by the Government by stating that transfer women due to their family obligations and that that women were less permanent in service and were not the main breadwinners. Wage discrimination was evident in the Unified Teaching Service Scheme (UTS) of 1957, according to which that teachers with the same qualifications and seniority would be placed on different salary scales based on whether they taught the senior or lower classes. In 1960 she founded the Women Teachers Union of the Federation of Malaya and fought for equal pay for women teachers.[136] "Fighting for equal pay for women teachers was "the first real struggle for women in Malaya". [137] Calling first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman women's biggest ally then, Rasammah said he was the only one who listened to WTU and took up their cause. "He truly believed in the elevation of the marginalised and women teachers will always be grateful to him," and a single wage scale for teachers became a reality in 1964. An article dated 13 May 1964 notes that she sent a telegram on to Tengku Abdul Rahman appealing to give urgent and immediate attention to the question of equal pay for equal work. "Despite the long delay in dealing with the matter our confidence in the sense of justice of our Prime Minister and Government remains unshaken."[138] On 22 January 1966 the teachers accepted the Government's method of implementing equal pay for women,[139] which brought a fruitful end to a four and a half year struggle by teachers headed by Bhupalan. Bhupalan was keen on the setting up of a single teachers organisation, "The WTU has pledged itself to work for the development of one strong teacher's organisation which will speak for all the teachers throughout the length and breadth of the Federation".[140] This was ultimately achieved in August 1965 with the merging of 19 unions representing 27,000 teachers to form the Malayan Teachers Union. It resolved to seek affiliation with the Malayan Teachers National Congress.[141]

She played a key role in developing the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Vocational Training Opportunity Centre (VTOC), which has trained more than 1000 women since its inception. "It is here that poor girls were given a chance to shake off the shackles of poverty through free training in hairdressing and beauty courses, computer and secretarial skills, and sewing and tailoring."[142] Rasammah was the first honorary secretary general of the Malayan Teachers National Congress, which is affiliated to the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP). She was the founder principal of the Methodist College and in 1983 and received the Tokoh Guru award in 1986.[143] "Currently, she is chairperson of the National Council of Women's Organisations' Law and Human Rights Commission, finance chairperson of YWCA-KL and sits on the Methodist Education Foundation board."[144] She attended the World Confederation of Organisations of the teaching profession held at Addis Ababa from 31 July to 9 August 1965,[145] and attended a 10-day meeting of the World Confederations of Organisations of the Teaching Profession in Paris.[146] She was also the chairman of the Women's Institute of Malaya which was a non-political, non-religious and non-racial organisation that dedicated itself to the cause of the nation.[147] In 1956 she held the post of vice President of the Indian Association[148]

She is also one of the founder members of National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO), and was its first secretary general. This organisation is in forefront of reforms relating to women's rights in Malaysia and bringing about major legislations that did away with discrimination towards women. As stated by her, "the new Council for Women's Organisation will act as a spearhead group initiating action for the betterment of women. Our whole idea is to work on unity. We feel that women in Malaya can play a vital role in the life of the country if they all unite themselves."[149] The Organisation has "125 affiliates, working to raise women's status in Malaysia. Rasammah, NCWO vice president Datuk Ramani Gurusamy, 72, and All Women's Action Society (AWAM) president Ho Yock Lin, 58, are all veterans in Malaysia's feminist movement, and they have worked hard to raise the standard of Malaysian women's lives – from advocating for equal pay to amending legislation on rape, violence against women and custody rights, to creating awareness of breast cancer."[150]

***Datuk Ramani Gurusamy*** has devoted her life to professional, social and community work to promote women's empowerment in relation to the family, community and national development. In the 1960s, she fought for equal pay for work of equal value, for giving women Permanency and Pensionable status which entitled them to equal pay, medical, housing and other benefits. She was also involved in the formulation of the National Policy on Women and Action Plan. She was involved in the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) for more than 20 years, during which the organisation pushed for transformations in the procedures involved in managing rape cases which resulted in the setting up a special unit of police officers to investigate rape victims, reform on laws on domestic violence, custody and guardianship of children, inheritance and property rights. The organisation's lobbying also resulted in maternity leave being extended from 42 days to 60 days and eventually 90 days in 2010.[151] Ramani is currently the Deputy President of NCWO. She served NCWO secretary-general for 21 years and was at the forefront of its many programmes, including the formulation of the National Policy on Women and Action Plan. National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO) is actively involved in several organisations, such as the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations; Suhakam's Committee on Human Rights Education for Schools and the Home Ministry's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council.[152]

***Uma Sambanthan***, wife Tun V T Sambanthan is not only a social worker but was also involved in the cooperative movement in Malay. After the war she went to India where she majored in Chemistry from University of Madras, and studied for a Masters from Presidency College, Chennai. She started her career by teaching in Singapore, which she quit after three years and finally returned to Malaysia in 1956. Her interests lay in raising the status of women in rural areas. Alongside her husband who worked to ensure citizenship for Indian workers, she made the women ware of the advantages of taking up citizenship. "We wives started getting more involved with social work, especially in the kampungs. I was one of the founders of the National Council of Women's Organisations, the NCWO. Whatever needed pioneering, we were prepared to do. And we worked together as a multi communal group."[153] She was made founder life member of NCWO in 1956 and remained President of the organistaion for four years. She is also the co-founder of the Persatuan Sri Ramakrishna Sarada and is actively involved in the Society's early childhood development programme. From 1960 to 1972, she also devoted her time and efforts to the Children's International Art Class which encourages young children to pursue various hobbies. From 1980 to 1995 she served as chairman of the National Land Finance Co- operative Society (NLFC) which was established by her husband, and later she served as its President in 1995 and 1996. She participated in the Asian Regional Conference of the International Cooperative Alliance of 1996 held at Kuala Lumpur held in 1996, she attended the Asian . In 1992 the NCWO awarded her the the Tun Fatimah Gold Medal. [154]

The strong presence of India's in Malaysia from its establishment to present day is a noticeable fact. The Indian leaders in Malaysia saw themselves

as belonging to the country and as an essential component of its multi-ethnic society. They integrated themselves within the Malaysian society and fought for political, social and economic causes. Many also encouraged the Indian community in Malaysia to integrate with its multi ethnic fabric and become Malaysian citizens. The women social activists dedicated their lives to cause of women and children devoid of religious, political or economic motives. They served Malaysian society and not a fraction of it. All in all, while Malaysia welcomed and accepted Indians with open arms, many Indian leaders in return played a crucial role in the freedom movement as well as development of Malaysian society and economy.

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# VIII

# Indian Leaders in Singapore

## 1. Introduction

The maritime linkages of India and South East Asia paved the way for the settlement and integration of Indian communities in Singapore. The Indian community integrated within the socio economic and political fabric of Singapore and contributed towards the growth and development of the city. Conversely Singapore provided migrating Indians with ample opportunities in terms of trade, employment, wealth and business and was a major centre of India's struggle for freedom on international soil. The focus of Indian settlement was what is now known as Little India, whose history is closely linked to the lives and fortunes of the Indian immigrants. In the 19th century the place was swampy with sugarcane fields, brick kilns and lime pits where numerous Indian labourers worked and toiled. The city was built out of the bricks and lime manufactured here and set in place by scores of Indian convicts who laboured hard in the construction of bridges, canals and buildings. From the 1860's the place became the centre of cattle trade and attracted numerous traders and workers. Over the years it became the hub of commercial activities and many Indians opened restaurants and shops selling spices, cloth, jewellery, dishes and other items of daily use, while others took to professions such as hawkers, dhobis, milkmen etc. Names of streets in Singapore such as Pillai Road, Mistri Road, Angullia Road (now defunct), Veerasamy Road and Angullia Park are reminders of significant role played by the Indian community in the evolution and growth of Sinapore into a modern metropolis.

Maritime linkages between India and the Malay world can be traced to an early period, but from the 14th century CE they assume tremendous importance in the historical developments of the region. It is mostly traders from south India that established themselves here and were referred to as Benua Keling in many classical Malay manuscripts such as Sulalat al-Salatin, Hikayat Hang Tuah and Hikayat Raja Pasai.[1] "There were three groups of prominent Indian merchants during the Malaccan Sultanate era:- a) Hindu Indians who are also referred to as the 'Kelings'. b) Muslim Guajarati also called the Moors. c) Muslim Tamils."[2] Traders from south India married with the local Javanese, Chinese, Malay and Batik communities, and their off springs came to be denoted as 'Chitty' or the Hindu Peranakans. The mixed Malay community born out of the marriages between the Kelings and women of the Malay nobility had become a part and parcel of the local Malay culture. They carried Malay names and titles and practised Islam.[3]

Mani Purindam the eldest son for Nizam al-Muluk Akhbar Syah and an inhabitant of India played a crucial role in the history of Malacca Sultanate. After a dispute on the issue of inheritance he decided to migrate to Malacca and serve the king there. On his way his ship sank, he was saved and married to the princess in Pasai and continued his long journey to Malacca. Upon reaching Malacca het met Sultan Muhammad Syah who appointed him as one of the Malacca chiefs. He also married the daughter of the Malaccan chief Seri Nara Diraja.4

Sultan Muhammad Syah was married to a Tun Ratna Wati, the daughter of the Islamic ruler of Pasai and thus converted to Islam. He was made a Syahbandar of Malacca which wielded him immense control over decisions regarding trading, shipping and commercial transactions in the Malacca Sultanate. He was "in charge of the shipping system and the organization, the chief of all the sea-captains, supervised the system of measurement for all commercial transactions"5 and also the value of the currency to avoid inflation.6 This invariably "granted access and increasing influence of the Muslim Tamils who had previously been confined to trade and prevented by the Malay chiefs in playing any political role." 7

Mani Purindam's son, Tun Ali, was appointed as Seri Nara Diraja, one of the important officials in Malacca court.[8] Tun Ali, was a Tamil Muslim and held the post Bendahara (Prime Minister) from 1445 – 1456 by Sultan Muzaffar Shah[9]. Sultan Muhammad Shah was initially succeeded by his younger son Sri Parmeswara Shah, a Hindu, but after a coup by the elder son Raja Kassim with the support of his uncle Tun Perak/ Tun Shah, Raja Kassim became the ruler. Following this a number of chiefs were converted to Islam and the Tamil Muslim community came to yield increasing political influence in the Malacca Sultanate.[10]

"Raja Mundeliar was a chitty and the richest trader in 16th century Malacca, He was an Indian trader and was appointed as Syahbandar of Malacca in the reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah. He was involved with the trading activities especially among Tamil traders and represented the Indian traders. In his dealings with the Malay elite he followed the Malay customs, and maintained his identity by staying together with his own immigrant community."[11] The relationship of the Indian trading community was driven solely by economic exigencies, and so long as their safety and commercial interests were taken care of and they willingly supported the ruler.[12]

The next wave of immigration in Singapore occurred under British Colonial period. In 1819 Singapore was established as trading post of the British East India Company by Stamford Raffles. Sir Stamford Raffles has been truly considered the founder of Singapore as he established schools and churches in the native languages, allowed missionaries and local businesses to flourish, built a European town carriage roads and cantonments for the soldiers. In 1819, 120 soldiers of Bengal Native Army (Infantry) including dhobis (washer men), doodhwalas (milkmen) and domestic servants accompanied the officer of East India Company, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.[13]

Raffles was keen on remodelling Singapore into a modern city and conceived a plan which encompassed creation of separate clusters for the different ethnic groups, and building of roads, schools and land for government buildings.[14] In October 1822, a Town Committee was formed with Captain Charles Edward Davis of the Bengal Native Infantry as president and a civil servant George Bonham and merchant A. L. Johnston.[15] Lieutenant Philip Jackson was tasked to draw up the plan according to Raffles's instructions, and the resultant plan was published in 1828.[16] Raffles also turned his attention to higher learning and education of the sons of the Malay chiefs; teaching of the native languages to officers of the East India Company, and collection of literature pertaining to the traditions, and laws and customs of the country. [17] The foundation stone of such an institution was laid by him on 5 June 1823.[18] Singapore was made a British penal station in 1825 and a large number of convicts were sent to work here and 1840s they housed at the Bras Basah Road Goal [19] and in the 1860's there were 2275 Indian convicts in Singapore.[20] It is the Indian convicts who provided the labour force for the various constructions projects such as canals, bridges and buildings. They were also taught variety of occupational skills and later many became nurses, firemen and bridge builders.[21]

The first wave of migrants from India settled in the Serangoon Road area and worked in kilns and sugar plantations. from the Bay of Bengal worked on Balestier's massive sugar plantation,[22] and on spice, tapioca and coconut plantations in Penang and Province Wellesley.[23] In the 1820's Indians Serangoon Road was called Soonambu Kambam', or 'Village of Lime' as the Madras chunam, kind

of brick introduced from India was made here and widely used in the construction activities of Singapore. The Serangoon Road contained brick kilns and lime pits where many Indians were employed and the first Indian brick business was started by Naraina Pillai in 1819. [24] In the 1860's these brick kilns shut down and the cattle industry became the next major attraction as a business venture and an avenue of employment. [25] "From the 1860s, the development of the Serangoon area was intricately linked with the cattle and buffalo trade that flourished as a result of the abundance of water and fodder, crucial to the trade. The buffaloes were also most crucial means of transport for the agricultural enterprises in the interior of the island."[26] The early movement of migrants to the Straits Settlement was facilitated primarily because it was part of British India until 1867.[27] Indians who migrated during this period were closely linked to the growth of Singapore as an urban centre. They worked as "labourers, stevedores, traders, shopkeepers, hawkers, shop assistants and as clerks." [28] The Indian diaspora in Singapore consisted of people from various regions and economic backgrounds. The Bengalis were employed for menial work while the trading community belong mostly to south India. Indians also worked as petty shopkeepers, boatmen and servants[29]. The transportation of goods and people from Tanjong Rhu to Telok Ayer, and into the Singapore River was carried out on boats manned by Indians.[30] Over the years Singapore witnessed increasing migration of Indians – in 1836 there were an estimated 2,157 Indians which increased to 12,973 by 1860[31] and by 1931, the community had grown to 51,019.[32] This invariably resulted in further settlements in Singapore of the Indian diaspora- and the pioneering Indian migrants of the early 19th century first settled along Chulia Street, then High Street, Arab Street and finally settled along the Serangoon Road.[33]

A number of Punjabi Sikhs were employed in the Police Force or as watchmen, bullock cart drivers and security guards. A Commission of Enquiry into the state of the police force in 1879 led to the establishment of Sikh Police Contingent (SPC) in 1881. On the recommendation of the Commission a Sikh contingent formed in the local police force and 54 Sikh recruits arrived from Punjab on 26 March 1881. With the arrival and induction of another 46 Sikhs from Punjab the strength of the SPC grew to 100 and by 1898 there were 300 men. Sikhs also served in the Tanjong Pagar Dock Police Force as guards ensuring security of the docks, harbours and godowns. They also were part of the police force at the Naval Base in Sembawang and the Royal Air Force Base in Seletar.[34]

In addition to those recruited in the police forces a number of Sikhs hailing from Majha, Malwa and Doaba regions, arrived in Singapore in the early 1900's and worked as clerks, storekeepers, court interpreters and teachers.[35] "Non-Jat Sikhs also came as tailors and set up shops in New Bridge Road, Jalan Besar, Cecil Street and Serangoon Road."[36]. "In 1924, the Sikh community came together to establish a halfway house on Silat Road where new migrants could stay until they found employment and accommodation. It was known as the Police Gurudwara and it was built using donations from Sikh policemen in Singapore and the Sikh communities in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Thailand and Malaya. It later became known as the Gurudwara Sahib Silat Road, or the Silat Road Sikh Temple."[37] The community was involved in numerous economic activities, for instance Bhai Teti (Surain Singh arrived in Singapore in 1890 and joined the Sikh Police Contingent post retirement he opened a provision shop selling atta (wheat flour), ghee (clarified butter) and lentils.[38]

Chettiar played an important role in the economy of Singapore as money lenders. "The influence of the Chettiar factor cannot be underestimated when studying the impact of Tamil business on the modern commerce of Singapore."[39]

The arrival of chettiars in Singapore is traceable to the 1820s, closely following the footsteps of Stamford Raffles, founder of the Port city of Singapore. The first Chettiar money lending firms were founded in 1823 in Singapore, and "the Chettiars financed the opium trade and acted as agents or middlemen between banks and Chinese traders."[40] Even though the number of firms of Chettiars was lesser than the European banks in late 19th and early 20th century,

but they were crucial for the Asian commerce and industry. "During 1825, Singapore was handling over three-fifth of the total trade of Southeast Asia.[41] The geographical location of Singapore made it as an entry port point to the whole of Southeast Asia within a short span of time. By 1870s, the chettiars financed most of the opium trade in Singapore and the Chinese businessmen from Straits Settlements who opened up new tin mines in Malaya. During 1880s, the chettiars were strongly placed in the banking services of Singapore, with the cooperation of the Singapore and Penang Branches of Chartered Bank.."[42] Chettiars started two Joint stock Trading Companies in Singapore and in 1928, they opened up Chettiar Chamber of Commerce in Singapore.[43] "They provided working capital loans and investment capital as venture capitalists, syndicated loans for large undertakings, took deposits (with interest) and safekeeping of valuables, organised funds transfers to regional cities like Rangoon, Saigon, Medan, Kuala Lumpur, Chennai and Calcutta. They also issued demand drafts and discounting of demand drafts."[44] It is estimated that in the 1920sthere were seven kittangis on the Market Street that had 300 to 400 chettiar money lending firms.[45.]

The Tamil kitanggi is derived from kidangu meaning warehouse and is. a two-storey building and is designed like most shop houses found in Malayan towns. "The business operations were carried out from the ground floor and the upper floor served as accommodation. The number of occupants in a kitanggi ranges from 10 to 20 individuals but depends on the size of a firm and the number of agents appointed by the principal."[46] Narayan Pillai Chettiar was a prominent merchant and amongst the pioneers of Singapore who established his business as a building contractor[47]. He also founded the oldest Hindu shrine Mariamman Temple at New South Bridge Street of Singapore in 1823[48]

Thus by the early 20th century the population of Singapore constituted of a sizable number of Indian immigrants. These immigrants came from diverse region and socio economic backgrounds and served in various capacities ranging from the labouring class, to clerks, bankers, and rich traders. This immigrant population proved to be the backbone in the initial years of the development of Singapore from a marshy are to an important trading and commercial centre.

## 2. Struggle Against Colonialism

The substantial Indian diaspora in Singapore was crucial in the city becoming the focus of the Indian national movement in Southeast Asia. Singapore stood witness to two major events in the 20th century pertaining to India's struggle against colonialism. The mutiny of 1915 by Indian soldiers and the formation of the Indian Independence League with support of Indian soldiers on Singapore's soil highlights the might, strength, determination and longing of the Indian diaspora to contribute towards India's fight against colonialism.

The 1915 Singapore Mutiny, also known as the 1915 Sepoy Mutiny or the Mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry involved up to half of a regiment of 850 sepoys (Indian soldiers) against the British in Singapore during the First World War. The mutiny that broke out on 15 February 1915 and continued for seven days, seems to have had links of the mutiny with 1915 Ghadar Conspiracy and after its outbreak on 15 February 1915 and lasted nearly seven days. Casulaties included death of eight British officers and soldiers, two Malay officers and one soldier, 14 British civilians, five Chinese and Malay civilians. The mutiny was put down with the help of British forces and Allied naval detachments.[49]

On 27 January 1915, Colonel Martin announced that the 5th Light Infantry was to be transferred to Hong Kong. Rumours started circulating amongst the sepoys of the possibility of their being sent to Europe or to Turkey to fight against their Muslim co-religionists. The main conspirators were identified as Subedar Dunde Khan, Jemedar Christi Khan, and Jemedar Ali Khan. In a speech addressed to the sepoys, the General Officer Commanding Singapore complimented the sepoys on their turn out, mentioned about their departure but failed to inform them that they were being sent to Hong Kong. When the ship Nile arrived in February 1915 soldiers were given the order to sail without being informed about

their destination. On the same day the four Rajput companies of the eight companies making up the 5th Light Infantry mutinied at 3:30 pm. The mutineers divided themselves into groups and attacked at various points in Singapore- about a 100 went to the Tanglin Barracks to acquire ammunition, where 309 Germans were interned by the British. The mutineers asked the Germans to join hands with them, but the Germans by and large refused and did not accept rifles from the mutineers. [50] The other mutineers moved towards Keppel Harbour and Pasir Panjang, killing 18 European and local civilians. The third group laid siege to the bungalow of the commanding officer of the 5th Light Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel E. V. Martin and blocked the route into Singapore Town.[51]

This mutiny was not sporadic in nature and was preceded by careful planning and was influenced by the Ghadar Movement. The leaders of the mutiny were Muslim sepoys in the 5th Light Infantry. Kasim Mansur an Indian Muslim merchant in Singapore, and Nur Alam Shah were instrumental in providing the ideological base of the mutiny and fostering anti British feelings amongst the Muslim sepoys. Mansur hosted the members of the 5th Light Infantry in his where he would ask them to support the cause of the Ottoman Sultan and contribute towards the war against the British and assist their Muslim brothers in defending the Caliphate. [52] "The 5th Light Infantry was all-Muslim and made up of Ranghars, or Rajput Muslims, and Muslim Pathans. When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on Germany's side. Mehmed V, the empire's Sultan, was widely regarded as a leading authority in the Muslim world, so when he issued a fatwa calling for all Muslims to oppose the British"[53] the Muslims became the target of Ghadar Party propaganda and influenced the 5th Light infantry in Singapore. The event also brings into the forefront the role of the Ghadar ideology and philosophy in creating a common cause for uniting Muslims across the globe, but equal credit goes to the Indian officers and men of the Fifth Light Infantry who took the bold step the basis of their daily consciousness of the war and freedom.[54]

This mutiny of 850 soldiers from the 5th Light Infantry against their British officers was a nail on the coffer of the British rule in Asia. [55] This event highlights the role of the overseas Indian sepoys in the struggle against British Imperialism and colonialism, and also the might and strength of a few of a few Indians whose actions stirred the foundations of British rule in colonial Singapore. The episode made the British community in Singapore realise that they could no longer depend on Indian soldiers to garrison the colony. The British passed the "Reserve Force and Civil Guard Ordinance" to ensure security of Singapore, in August 1915, requiring "all male subjects between 15 and 55 years of age who were not in the armed forces, volunteers or police to enlist for compulsory military service."[56]

The second round of events of India's freedom struggle from foreign soil pertains to the establishment of the Indian Independence League in Singapore. Most major decisions pertaining to the INA were taken in Singapore which provided a conducive atmosphere for growth of nationalist feelings amongst Indian diaspora. Events such as handing over the reins of INA to Subhas Chandra Bose, formation of the Rani Jhansi Regiment, and broadcasts of speeches by Subhas Chandra Bose took place in Singapore.

In late December 1941, Captain Mohan Singh, the highest ranking Indian officer in the British Indian Army was captured by the Japanese troops. After the surrender the Allied forces in Singapore, some 65,000 Indian prisoners of war and 600 Malay Regiment soldiers assembled at the old Race Course at Farrer Park and were addressed by Captain Mohan Singh and Major Fujiwara from the Japanese Army.[57] Giani Pritam Singh asked for volunteers to fight for India's freedom under Captain Mohan Singh A large number of volunteers came forward and Captain Mohan Singh established his headquarters at Neeson in Singapore with Lt. Col. Niranjan Singh Gill as Chief of Staff, Lt. Col. J.K.Bhonsle as Adjutant and Quarter Master General and Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterjee as Director of Medical Services.[58] "By September 1942, 42,000 Indian soldiers had pledged their

allegiance to General Mohan Singh and the INA. Mohan Singh was arrested on 29 December 1942 and exiled to Pulau Ubin. Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore on 2 July 1943 and took over the reins of the IIL as President and Commander-in-Chief of the re-formed INA." [59]

In addition to these soldiers were other Indians who entered Singapore from Malaya and from the neighbouring colonies in order to escape the oppression caused by the Second World War. There were those who supported the INA primarily because of the inappropriate treatment meted out by the British colonial government such as the Punjabi Sikhs in Strait Settlement Police Force who were disbanded on suspicions of collaboration with the Japanese and their role in freedom struggle.

Lakshmi Swaminathan (1914–2012) was a doctor by profession was born in Madras arrived in Singapore in the middle of 1940. She is most remembered as an important member of the Ranji Jhansi regiment of the INA, who worked relentlessly to forward the cause of Indian freedom. Bose addressed 12,000 soldiers of the first INA at the Singapore Padang, on Monday 5 July 1943. Amongst the civilians who attended one was Dr Lakshmi Swaminathan, a 28- year-old doctor and member of the women's section of the Indian Independence League. Bose expressed his desire for the involvement of women in the Army of Liberation and to name the women's regiment the Rani of Jhansi Regiment after Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi who fought so valiantly against the British in 1857. For Lakshmi, 'this was the highlight of his speech,' even though most thought that this could not be achieved, [60] she took it upon her to create the first all- woman combat regiment in the world.

She was not deterred by the fact that convincing women and their family was a mammoth task as it required that women leave behind their traditional roles as daughters, wives and mothers and take up arms against the British Raj. Her door to door propaganda and follow ups succeeded and the first female guard of honour was established on 12 July 1943. The Regiments main camp was located in Singapore and she was formally put in charge by Bose.[61] "Bose made her the commander of the Regiment and a few months later, on 21 October 1943, appointed her as the Minister in Charge of the Women's Organisation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India).[62].. By 22 October 1943, 156 women and girls from among the Indian communities in Singapore and Malaya from a wide range of ethnic, social, religious and language backgrounds had joined the regiment that was part of Bose's plan to liberate India from British domination."[63]

"Attavar Yellappa, a barrister, consequently took upon himself the task of finding a home for the Regiment. He persuaded some of his wealthy Nattukottai Chettiar banker clients to fund the refurbishment of a dilapidated building. The property was enclosed with a high fence to shield the female soldiers and several new barracks were erected. The standing buildings were fitted with new plumbing, and bathing facilities were installed. After three weeks of around-the-clock activity, the Singapore Central Camp, the Ranis' first training centre, was almost ready for the first contingent of volunteers to move in on the birth anniversary of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi." [64]

Subhas addressed the all-women's regiment "The opening of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment Training Camp is an important and significant function; it is a very important landmark in the progress of our movement in East Asia. To realize its importance, you should bear in mind that ours is not a merely political movement. We are, on the other hand, engaged in the great task of regenerating our Nation."[65] Bose went on: Since 1928, I have been taking interest in women's organizations in India and I found that, given the opportunity, our sisters could rise to any occasion. … If one type of courage is necessary for passive resistance, another and more active courage is necessary for revolutionary efforts and in this too, I found that our sisters were not wanting. … [66] . Unfortunately, Jhansi Rani was defeated; it was not her defeat; it was the defeat of India. She died but her spirit can never die. India can once again produce Jhansi Ranis and march on to victory.[67]

In the Town Hall of Singapore , Subhas Chandra Bose for the first time gave the war cry of "Chalo Delhi" and asked for "total mobilization" from the civilians. The Provincial Government of Free India was formally set up in Singapore in October 1943, and Bose's speeches, lasting over a month, to the Indian national leaders dissuading them from accepting the Wavell plan was broadcast from Singapore.[68] Subhas Chandra Bose's act of laying the foundation stone of a memorial dedicated to the "Unknown Warrior" of the Indian National Army at the Esplanade on 8 July 1945 authenticates the pivotal role of Singapore in the life and history of the INA. The words inscribed on the memorial were the motto of the INA: Unity (Ittefaq), Faith (Etmad) and Sacrifice (Kurbani).[69] The deep rooted connection connection between the Nationalist struggle and Singapore can be ascertained by the request of J A Thivy to Mahatma Gandhi's son to send his father's ashes to Singapore. The ashes arrived in Singapore at Kallang Airport on a Malayan Airways flight on the night of 15 March 1948.[70] The procession of two motorcycles and 50 cars carrying the official guests made its way through Kallang Road, Lavender Street, Serangoon Road,Selegie RoadBras Basah Road and Connaught Drive. The urn went on a tour of Malaya and returned to Singapore on 26th March wher it was immersed in the sea.[71]

## 3. Indian Business Community - Key Components of Singapore's Economy and Philanthropists

The commercial opportunities offered by Singapore during the second half of the 19th century and beginning 20th century attracted the business communities of the Gujaratis, Chettiars, Marwaris and Parisis. Singapore became a land of fortune for many who established businesses and became wealthy patrons. In 1849 there were 17 Indian merchants and by 1860's there were Tamil, Bengali, Sindhi and Parsee merchants houses in Singapore.[72] The Namazis ancestor Mohamed Javad Namazie emigrated to Singapore in 20th century. They are credited with the building of the Capitol Theatre in 1929. Mohamed Namazie "was involved in the formulation of Administration of Muslim Law Act of 1966. And their law firm Mallal and Namazie is well known in Singapore."[73] The Parsi community's contribution towards health services, social causes and religious establishments are visible on the landscape of Singapore- Mistri Wing in the Singapore General Hospital, the Central Sikh Gurudwara, the Capitol Theatre and the Srinivasa Perumal Temple, to mention a few.

The Punjabi migrants in the 1920's undertook textile trading ventures and the Chettiars and Punjabis established moneylending business spanning across Southeast Asia, and lent money to Indians, Chinese and Europeans. Sikhs also established themselves in the trading business. Pargat Singh upon arrival in Singapore in 1901 initially tried his hand at dairy farming arrived in Singapore in 1901, but later established a textile business with shops at Armenian Street, Bras Basah Road and Queen Street. He was joined by his son Tara Singh came to Singapore in 1906 as a child in 1906. He did his engineering apprentice and later worked with the Singapore Harbour Board but when offered the post of Fifth Engineer with the Straits Steamship Company he refused and preferred to join his father's textile business . He made a fortune by becoming a leading contractor for the British Armed Forces in Singapore. He used his wealth for the betterment of his community and established of three Sikh institutions- the Singapore Khalsa Association, the Sikh Partinidh Sabha and the Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha in Katong.[74] Baba Gurdit Singh originally came from Amritsar and while the date of his arrival in Singapore is not exactly known, he set up building construction companies in Singapore and Malaya, and travelled extensively in the region.[75]

The Sikhs were also involved in the cattle rearing and business and supply of milk. Jiva Singh was a cattle dealer in the early 1900s and his son Mall Singh and brother Hari Singh started a dairy farm in 1921 in the Serangoon area. Mall Singh diversified into money lending business along with Ajit Singh and they functioned from a tyre repair

shop at 245 Serangoon Road.[76] The Sikhs operated as small moneylenders and loaned out money to those desirous of starting a small business. Mohan Singh Brahmpura together with his brothers Bachan Singh (father of Central Sikh Gurudwara Board and Singapore Khalsa Association Patron Naranjan Singh Brahmpura) and Bhola Singh who arrived to Singapore in the 1920's from the Punjab's Majha region started a moneylending business in Singapore in the 1920s. In case of smaller loan requirements the debtors had to sign promissory notes and if the amount involved was high the property title deeds were required to be submitted.[77] "The Japanese Occupation of Singapore saw a significant decline in Sikh moneylending activities."[78] The Sikh money lenders played a crucial role in the economy and business of Singapore as they not only provided loans to those wanting to start small businesses, but also utilised the money to improve the Indian religious and cultural establishments. [79]

Hardial Singh (also known as Hardial Singh Bajaj) was only 17 years of age when he and his four brothers - Inder Singh, Harbans Singh, Hira Singh and Balwant Singh left their home in Punjab in 1920 and ventured down to Ipoh in Perak State to set up shop trading in spices, grains and foodstuffs. They came to Malaya mainly because their family in India was in debt owing to business losses. "They ventured to Singapore in 1934 and established a successful business trading in foodstuffs and textiles. A three-storey shop house at 4 Battery Road (where the present Bank of China now stands) housed their firm Gian Singh & Company, which served as a department store, wholesale office, and living quarters all rolled into one. They moved later and established a department store in Raffles Place opposite the Robinson & Company Limited department store, against which it competed successfully. Hardial Singh and his brother Hira Singh went on a business trip to Shanghai in 1949, and before too long, Gian Singh and Company became a family oriented multinational company with offices in Japan, Indonesia and Thailand."[80]

The establishment of the Central Sikh Temple in 1912 at 175 Queen Street brings out the co-ordinated efforts of diverse s Indian communities. The money for the purchase of the building was provided by a Sindhi merchant Wassiamul Assomul, who donated $6,500. He purchased it along with Sergeant-Major Punjab Singh and Corporal Ganda Singh of the Singapore Police Force to be used as a Gurdwara[81]

The Khojas and Sindhis who migrated to Singapore established themselves as leading traders and merchants, and many were also philanthropists who contributed to the betterment of the people. Wasssiamull Assomul was a Sindhi textile merchant who brought textile business to Singapore in 1864 and had extensive trading networks outside India. The Sindhi Singapore Association was formed in 1921 under the chairmanship of Mr T Naraindas. It bought its first property in 1938, "at Enggor Street, which was used to lodge Sindhis in transit to various destinations via Singapore. Even "Veesi" (contract meals) service was run by Mr. Hashumal. The Association donated $400 for war-time evacuees from Japan to facilitate their transit through Singapore. The Sindhi ladies made Collections for the building fund for Ramakrishna mission – 1948."[82]

Rajabali Jumbabhoy was born in 1898 in Lakhapur and belonged to a Khoja Muslim trading family based on the west coast of India. He came to Singapore in 1916 to establish a firm in Singapore which eventually became the largest coffee and sago traders in Singapore. In the post war period he diversified into shipping and real estate and founded the Indian Chamber of Commerec. From 1918 the firm exported coffee, black pepper, gambier, gum jamin and sago flour. Over time Rajabali Jumbabhoy shifted his focus on imports of wheat flour, cotton yarn and dates.[83] On 2 January 1922, Jumabhoy launched his own business after a fall-out with his brother, and by 1924, had opened offices in Hong Kong, Java and Bombay, trading in produce such as coffee, sago flour, gum benjamin, rattan and gambier.[4] In 1924 he ventured into property business and in the post-war years he diversified into the shipping . Jumabhoy had escaped to India on 7 February 1942, fearing retribution by the Japanese but after the end of the war he returned to Singapore and helped rehabilitate important industries.. [84]"The Parsis,

began to grow in Singapore from the mid-19th century and the earliest known Parsi in Singapore was a convict named Muncherjee, who arrived in 1819. An enterprising group of people, the Parsis in Singapore included Cursetjee Framjee, the founder and partner of John Little & Company a large retail store and Mr. Phirozshaw Manekji Framroz who started the Framroz Aerated Water Factory in 1903"[85], which manufactured carbonated drinks with fruits imported from California and his factory was located at Allenby Road in Jelan Besar. Navroji Mistri, is the most cherished Parsi in Singapore who established the Phoenix Aerated Water Works . Mistri worked as engineer with the Royal Indian Marine Dockyards in Bombay and travelled to Singapore in 1909 where he was employed by Sir John Aird & Co., in the building of the graving dock at Keppel Harbour, and thereafter at Riley, Hargreaves & Co. He then joined P. M. Framroz as a manager in the aerated water business in 1913 and in 1925 he branched out and started his own soda water factory called Phoenix Aerated Water Company.[86] "After the Japanese Occupation, Mistri fell ill, and during his time in the hospital, he saw sick children sleeping along the corridors due to a lack of space. His friend and doctor Professor Ransome jokingly asked Mistri to give him money to build a children's ward. Mistri, however, took the comment seriously and donated a sum of $950,000 to SGH, stating that he "cannot bear to think of sick children, and their mothers lying on the floors of hospital wards".[87] He donated $950,000 to the General Hospital (later renamed Singapore General Hospital) for a new building, the Mistri Wing, for sick children. Even after his death, Mistri left behind $1 million for the use of charities in Malaya and Mumbai "which held in a trust fund by the Mistri Singapore Trust and the Mistri Bombay Trust. Funds in the Mistri Singapore Trust were set aside for the benefit of indigent children, scholarships, and also to aid patients with tuberculosis."[88] He was known as the godfather of the poor due to his liberal donations towards the welfare of children and provision of medical facilities. His cousin Pesi Daver on his death left his entire fortune to both Zarathushti and non Zarathusthi recipients to be utilised for educational and charitable purposes.[89] Byramjee Hormusjee Cama, established a school in Tanjong Pagar in 1864 which tended to Chinese and other children and the expenses for running the schools were paid and taken care by him.[90]

The contribution of the Parsis towards Singapore's development is apparent in the existence of road named after them. such as the such as the Parsi Road which runs parallel to a part of Palmer Road and is linked to Palmer Road by Mistri Road. .[91]

Amongst the south Indians the most well known is P Govindasamy Pillai who was a philantrophist and donated generously from the fortune he made through his business venture in Singapore. He hailed from Tamil Nadu and sailed to Singapore arriving at Tanjong Pagar in 1905 only with his clothes and 13 rupees on him. Upon his arrival he worked at a provision store surviving only food and accommodation as remuneration. He sailed back to India and returned with his wife to Singapore. He took a loan from the Chettiars and brought over the provision store and began selling grains, oils and spices. He named the store Dhanalakshmi and through hard work and business foresight he had a string of stores along the Serangoon road in Singapore by the 1960's which was popularly known as PGP stores. He is remembered for his donations towards the construction of the five-tier Gopuram Srinivasa Perumal Temple and donations towards Ramakrishna Mission, India Association and Gandhi Hall.

"Pillai donated money and land to help construct the Ramakrishna Mission's current building in Bartley Road. He also contributed to the construction of the temple and the library within the building complex. Through his contributions the Mission could carry out many charitable works were carried out. For example, during the war, the Mission helped to give shelter, food, water and medical attention."[92] Pillai's played a significant role in the Singapore Indian Association and from the money donated by him, the Association created a fund for those unemployed due to old age or poor health. He also personally oversaw the collection of money to

construct a hospice for those under the Association and also donated a room in the Mount Alvernia Hospital. [93]

From the region of Gujarat it was the Angullia family that made their fortunes in Singapore and contributed towards the construction of mosques. The first person to have arrived in Singapore was Ebrahimjee Mohamed Salleh Angullia in 1837 where he opened a shop in Kling Street. His son Mohammed Salleh Eussoofjee (MSE) Angullia, amassed a fortune by trading in spices, sugar, timber, pins and cutlery with countries in the region. By 1900, MSE Angullia had become a successful and prominent figure in the local Indian Muslim community. They used the wealth to construct a mosque for the Indian Muslim community in Singapore. On 23 April 1890 they acquired the land for the mosque and the first Angullia mosque was built before 1892.[94] On his death in 1904 Mohammed left 34 pieces of property, some included plantations in Singapore and India, to the Wakf Am which was a charitable trust, and from this two additional mosques were constructed in 1933- one at Orchard Road and the other at Serangoon road.[95] Mr. Ahamad Mohamed Salleh Angullia was born in 1873, and received his education at Raffles Institution and the Anglo-Chinese School. He entered his father's business at an early age, and has been a partner since 1897. The firm traded as general merchants and commission and estate agents. Their trading network was expansive and included most of the Asian and southeast Asian countries and Europe and America as well. From India they imported yarns of all kinds, cotton, teas, curry stuffs, rice from Rangoon, Saigon, Bangkok, and other centres, rice ; native products from China and Japan; rough and soft goods, hardware and from Europe and America They exported tin, betel-nuts, gambier, pepper, tapioca, rubber, copra, gutta, to India, Burma, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, China, Japan, and the Netherlands Indies. The stores and godowns of the firm were located in in Robinson Road, Collyer Quay, Market Street, and Malacca Street testify at all times to the large trade done. Their branches were located in Bombay, Calcutta, Bangkok, Sama-rang, and Kobe (Japan). [96]

## 4. Social Cohesion and Uplifting of the Masses

Indians from diverse region and socio economic backgrounds migrated to Singapore, but amongst these the poorer sections of society, the labourers from south India far outnumbered other communities. According to records of the Straits Settlements of 1794 an estimated 1300 or 2000 men came annually from the Coromandel Coast[97] and by 1860's almost all labourers, boatmen, caulkers on board ship and in town, watermen and a large number of hawkers, traders and domestic servants are men from the Madras coast.[98] In 1821 the number of Indians in Singapore was132 and by 1921 this increased substantially to 27755.. The substantial presence of the south Indian labouring class could be ascribed to the fact that were the most favoured class for menial jobs under the British for light, simple, repetitive tasks since "he was malleable, worked well under supervision and was easily manageable, accepted low wages and cost less in feeding and maintenance."[99]

Initial attempts at highlighting the plight of these labourers and bringing about socio economic reforms was undertaken by the Indian Association was formed in 1923. This was the first attempt at forming an organisation that would represent the Indian community in Singapore. [100] The members of the Indian Association belonged mainly to the English educated class and decisions were largely taken by the elite and intelligentsia. [101] This Associations elitist nature denied the representation of both the middle class as well as the labouring class, which proved to be a handicap in gaining popularity and appeal amongst the masses. The members avoided mingling the labouring class[102], and its elitist attempts at reforms offered little aid to the suffering working class. The association made no attempt at working out a proportional representation from the different socio-economic sections of the community.[103] They propagated their reformist ideas mostly through the English print media which invariably had a selected readership thus restricting their reach to limited number of English educated Indians.

Arasaratnam argues that since "the educated middle class did not give the lead in these matters but went on conducting affairs in a manner largely irrelevant to the greater part of the people, then a different category of leadership had to be thrown up so that the social advancement of the people may be affected"[104] .

This leadership came from Thamizhavel Govindasamy Sarangapany and his supporters. Sarangapany arrived in Singapore in 1924 and secured a job as an accountant. Sarangapany was amongst the few educated Tamil Indians in Singapore and he took it upon on himself to carry out social and educational reforms amongst a vast majority of Indian labour who "came from the coastal regions of South Eastern India, or the hinterland around Tanjavur, from a variety of backgrounds, including but not limited to lower-caste and 'untouchable' (Dalit) communities"[105]. He vigorously promoted Tamil literature and language in Singapore and his efforts led to the language being recognised as one of the four official languages of Singapore.

He was deeply influenced by the 'Self Respect' movement, founded in India by EV Ramasamy Naicker who also known as Periyar. Periyar's visit to Singapore and Malaya was aimed at spreading the reformist ideas among the Indian immigrants of British Malaya. According to S. S. Amrith, "Periyar's visit brought about a political awakening and enlightenment. He not just visited the capital cities of Penang and Singapore but also travelled to rubber plantations and interacted with the workers. He addressed large crowds on social and caste reforms. It sparked off the development of local Tamil movement. He acted as a stimulus to develop organisations and institutions such as Tamil Reform Association. He was the real stimulus to a number of local Tamil newspapers, which were starting to sprout up in 1930. His visit, directly or indirectly, started labour activism in Tamil workers. In 1941, strikes in rubber plantations spearheaded by radicals were a part of the Tamil movement," [106]

With an aim to rid people of superstition, caste system and addiction of toddy, and promoting Civil Marriages which would allow Hindus to get married without the necessity of a Brahmin priest, he set up the Tamil Reform Association in 1930. Sarangapany along with like-minded individuals, such as A.C. Suppiah, spread reformist ideas by importing Naicker's publications and distributing them in Singapore.[107] The association undertook numerous activities for the uplift and betterment of the Tamil Indians such as running a library, setting aside financial contributions for the needy, and organising education and outreach programmes. The Association took on hands on activity to ensure the success of the Self Respect Movement. On pay days they would join hands with the family members of labourers in picketing toddy shops to prevent labours from wasting their salary. They ensured that the Chinese coffee shops along Serangoon road would not bar untouchables from entering their Cafes or discriminate by serving them in tins instead of glasses, which was much against the instructions of the high caste Hindus given to the owners of the coffee shops. They also threatened legal action against those who would discriminate against those discriminating against the lower castes. [108]

The Tamil Reform Association also busied itself with fostering education among the children of labourers and fostering Tamil education successfully founding and managing schools.[109] An umbrella body, the Tamil Education Society, was formed which unified poorly run Tamil schools and provided funding for the teaching of Tamil at primary and secondary levels. He also made sure that adequate government grants were given to cover the operational costs of these Tamil-language schools Tamils Reform Association took the initiative to start up Tamil schools so that children would have the opportunity to study Tamil as well, It also ran adult classes and lectures for labourers, promoting basic literacy and social awareness.[110] At one point in time there were ten Tamil schools such as Kalaimagal Tamil School, Vasuki Tamil School and Valluvar Tamil School, distributed across the island and schools were to be seen wherever Tamils could be found.[111]

The newspaper and the Tamil Reform Association also made efforts in the field of labour rights of

Tamil community. In the interest of representing the Tamil community, Malayan Self-Respecters took a firm stance on the issue of labour rights. The TRA initiated a sub- committee with labourers to discuss their concerns[112] due to mounting labour grievances and a "Murasu editorial in 1938 recommended that the only way to stop labour strikes was to take heed of labourers' needs well in advance, instead of scampering to rectify problems after they had arisen."[113]

Sarangapany's movement was not an elitist as he used Tamil language in his publications and afforded easy accessibility of these to the poorer classes as well. Through his writings and publications he spread his message amongst different strata of society- the labouring class, the educated Tamils as well non Tamil Indians [114] He was the editor of the weekly magazine called Munnetram (meaning Progress) and editor of Seerthirtham (meaning Reform) a monthly magazine. In addition to this in 1935 he began a weekly magazine Tamil Murasu. These magazines "expounded the values of the Dravidian movement and aimed at encouraging the uplift of the Tamil community."[115] His entry into Tamil journalism is a landmark as it broke the broke the monopoly of Brahmins in the field of journalism and also addressed a different set up issues and ideologies in Singapore.[116] In 1935 with the pricing of the Tamil Murasu newspaper at a mere 1 cent, he ensured that it was easily accessible to the Tamil labourers who would be motivated through the articles to join the Malayan Self Respect Movement. Additionally the Indian Daily Mail was published in English from 1940 aimed at spreading spread the message and ideology of the self respect movement amongst the non-Tamil populations as well.[117]

Other key contributions by him included efforts that resulted in Tamil being named one of Singapore's four official languages. To unify all the Indian immigrants, he started a yearly gathering called Thamizhar Thirunal to showcase his love of the Tamil language, its arts and its rich culture[118]. The event saw some renowned poets from Tamil Nadu, India, being brought in for discourses and seminars while also recognising upcoming local talents in literature. The expenses of these vents were financed by him personally. To promote Tamil literature and language he also founded a youth organisation known as Manavar Mani Mandram, which motivated Tamil students to write poems, essays and short stories.[119]

In 1957, after attaining Singapore citizenship he encouraged other Indian immigrants to apply for citizenship. He personally filled up the necessary application forms and saw to it that Indian immigrants had a stake in nation building. In 1955 he was awarded the title 'Thamizhavel' for his enormous contributions to Tamil literature, followed by other awards such as the Thamizh Kavalar in 1963 and Muthamizh Kavalar in 1966.[120]

## 5. Jamiyah- A Humanitarian Religion

"Jamiyah is one of the oldest and forward-looking Muslim organizations in Singapore, well-known locally and internationally for its multifarious services and activities for the benefit of the community encompassing da'wah, education, welfare and social services." (His Excellency Mohammad Al Abdullah Al Hamdan Ambassador, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore Source: 65th Anniversary cum Opening of Building Extension -1997)[121]

The Jamiyah, earlier known as All Malaya Muslim Missionary, was established in Singapore by Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqi (3 April 1892 – 22 August 1954) who was an Islamic scholar from Meerut, India. He was taught by Ahmad Raza Khan. In 1913 he graduated in Theology and went on to pursue the study of modern subjects and law at the Divisional College in Meerut. Under his mentor Hazrat Maulana Shah Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilly he acquired knowledge of Quranic rules, Hadith, Tawassufa nd the four Islamic laws in Mecca and Medina. His utilised his knowledge of medicine in his humanitarian missions in many countries. He visited Singapore in 1930 and in 1932 he established the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society, now known as Jamiyah. He delivered numerous lectures spreading the message of the beauty of Islam and attracted many people to Islam. He was driven by a zeal of service to the community

and providing welfare services to the less privileged and disadvantaged of all races and faiths.[122] During the 1950s" the Jamiyah became one of the leading religious bodies in Singapore and Malaya which provided welfare, pilgrimage (hajj) and religious guidance services."[123]

"Over the decades, Jamiyah has expanded with several enhanced programmes and services to address the ever-changing needs of the community. As such, Jamiyah's history is marked with achievements in services including welfare homes, education centres, and welfare services."[124] Jamiyah Education Centre (JEC) is one of the organization's pioneering project since 1970s. JEC provides Islamic education to all Muslims in Singapore ranging from pre-schoolers to adults.[125]

Jamiyah Singapore is recognized both locally and internationally for its community service involvement and leadership.

"Jamiyah opens its welfare services to non-Muslims. This enlightened approach helps our different communities to integrate. By reaching out to the other races in a spirit of service, cooperation and partnership, Jamiyah makes a valuable contribution to strengthening the broader Singaporean community." (The Honorable Lee Hsien Loong Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Source: 65th Anniversary cum Opening of Building Extension -1997) [126]

His interest in fostering greater understanding amongst various faiths and spreading the message of peace in Singapore were the driving factors behind the establishment of the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO). He is also often referred to as the Roving Ambassador of Peace as he brought together people of different races Malays, Indians, Arabs, Bugis, Javanese, Bengalis and Chinese - to form Jamiyah Singapore. These pioneers also led the way to establish the Inter-Religious Organization of Singapore and Johore in 1949 with the support of the non-Muslim religious leaders.[127] The Inter Religious Organisation was inaugurated on18 March 1949 at Victoria Memorial Hall, Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddique said, "As far as the common evils and accepted moral principles were concerned, no religion could have any difference, and in the spirit of tolerance and sympathy and the desire to establish peace, all of them were as one. The task of the religious leaders was to let the followers of each and every religion know the teachings of other religions, so that a spirit of fellowship could work together to spread the accepted moral principles and to fight the common evils."[128]

"During his visits to various parts of the world he urged Muslims to build orphanages for the helpless youths, infirmaries for the destitute, hospitals for the suffering, spiritual assemblies for spiritual discipline, libraries for the preservation of the Islamic traditions and intellectual heritage, several masjids, organizations of Ulemas for the coordination of Islamic forces, Muslim youth Brigade & Muslims scouts for the physical and moral discipline of the youth. He also encouraged the publication of several magazines such as Muslims Digest and the Ramadaan Annual (South Africa), The real Islam (Singapore) and the Prophets Birthday Annual (Mauritius). He himself compiled his missionary works in terms of books or articles under the following titles – History of the Codification of Islamic Law, The Universal Teacher, The Islamic Ideal, Quest for True Happiness, The Meaning of Worship."[129]

"Jamiyah's show of kindness and compassion to the less fortunate is well known among Singaporeans and others in the region. Its work has been to help children in need of care, assist recovering drug addicts, help families in need, as well as care for senior citizens. Jamiyah is also known for these beyond our geographical boundaries..." (His Excellency S. R. Nathan President, Republic of Singapore Source: 75th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine of Jamiyah -2007)[130] Personal charisma, scholarship in religious areas, interfaith dialogue and humanistic approach paved the way for establishing long lasting support base for Jamiyah Singapore.[131]

The Indian diaspora in Singapore included a mix of people from different regions of India who came as convicts, labourers, shopkeepers, traders, merchants, sepoys, policemen and religious and social reformers.

They were key components in the economic, social, recreational and religious aspects of 19th -20th century Singapore. The relation between the migrants from India and Singapore was mutually beneficial- while Singapore provided many Indian immigrants prospects of a better life and living conditions and fertile ground for propogation of Indian nationalist ideals, Singapore too benefitted from the contribution of labourers, merchants and wealthy traders during its transformation into a major trade entrepot and a highly developed market economy. In the post-Independence era of Singapore second generation Indians occupied important positions and this signalled a fusion of the Indian diaspora with social, political and economic dimensions of Singapore. For instance- Devan Nair Chengara Veetil was the third President of Singapore, (came to Singapore at the age of 10 years); Choor Singh Sidhu served as a Judge of the Supreme Court (came to Singapore at the age of four years); Kishor Mahubhani was the first Singaporean President of the United Nations Security Council (Singaporean of Indian Sindhi decent); and Shunmugam Jayakumar served as Deputy Prime Minister from 2004 to 2009, Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1994 to 2004, Minister for Home Affairs from 1988 to 1994, Minister for Law from 1988 to 2008, and Minister for Labour from 1984 to 1985. He was a member of parliament (MP) for the constituency of Bedok ( has Indian Tamil ancestry).[132]

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IX

# Travels by Leaders: India and Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

India and Indonesia's cultural contacts can be dated from a very early period. The earliest evidence of direct contact between these two countries is from pottery recovered from archaeological sites in Java. "The presence of Romano-Indian rouletted grey ware in northwest Java provides evidence of trade between India and Java during the first two centuries A.D. The pottery comes from precisely that region of Java which c. 450 CE was known as Taruma and seems to have been a recipient of Sanskritic culture."[1] Sherds of pottery hint at existence of trade contacts of Java with sites along the eastern littoral located in southern India and eastern India. An analysis of pottery by Walker and Santoso reveals that in Java the main form of pot lids were in the shape of an upturned mushroom and these bear close resemblance with the Wheeler's 36 from Arikamedu and pottery from the "Buni Complex" in northwest Javanese consists of "incised ware" which has also been encountered at some sites in eastern India.[2]

Inscriptional evidence recovered from sites across Indonesia reveal the presence of merchants and traders in Indonesia from the 9th century CE to the 14th century CE. The Tamil inscriptions found from sites across Indonesia, primarily from Java and Sumatra, clearly indicate the presence of Indian traders and merchants at various sites and simultaneously also inform us about donation and constructions carried out by them and indicate their inclusion in the administrative set up. The inscription from in Java, dated to c. 856 CE, written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Javanese, refer to Klings (the people of Kalinga). "The Kuki Copper Plates (c. 840 CE) of Jaha (Java) speaks of potters and all sorts of servants of inner apartment hailing from Kling (Kalinga)."[3] The inscription dated to 883 CE from the site of Kedu in central Java lists a number of foreign traders and of there are clear references to different regions of the Indian subcontinent such as Kling (Kalinga), Aryya (Aryapura/Ayyavole) and Pandikira (in Kamataka). The partially legible Palebuhan charter of 927 CE, refers to traders from Pandikira.[4] The Cane inscription of 1021 CE,[5] from the Brantas delta region of east Java, lists foreigners from Kling, Aryya, Singhala, Pandikira, Drawida, Campa, Remen, and Kmir. The inscription of Patakan,[6] from the same district, lacks a legible date, but was commissioned in the same period and contains an identical list. The new name in these two lists, Drawida, refers to the east coast Dravidian region of Tamil Nadu.

An East Javanese inscription dated to c. 1194 CE one finds mention of a Jurn Kling i.e., headman or chief of the Kalinga people.[7] In the Balawi inscription of 1305 CE[8] belonging to the Majhaphit era, the list of tax-farming foreigners are: "...wargga kilalan (tax-farmer group): Kling, Aryya, [.....], Singhala, Karnataka, [.....], Cina (China), Campa (Champa), Mandisi (?), Caremin (Ramanyadesa), Kmir (Cambodia),..." The Javanese text Nagarakertagama dating to 1365 CE, mentions merchants and others from Jambudwipa (India) - specifically from Goda (Gaur in Bengal) and Kamataka.[9]

The inscription from the site of Lobo Tuwa in West Sumatra dated 1010 Saka, or 1088 CE[10] mentions: "In the Saka year 1010 current, month Masi, we, the Nanadesa-Tisaiyayirattu Ainnurruvar, having met at the velapuram in Varosu (Barus), also called 'the pattinam (commercial town) for the welfare of the merchant body blessed by Siva', decided to grant as follows to 'our sons', the nagara-senapati Nattu-cettiyar, to Patinen-bumi-desi-appar(?), and to the mavettugal (elephant-trainers?): [On each of the] ships' [cargoes?], the ship's captain and crew will pay the fee anju-tundayam in gold, pegged to the price of kasturi (musk), and [then only] may 'step on the cloth spread' (ie. enter the settlement to trade). Thus we, the Five Hundred of the Thousand Directions, known in every direction in all Eighteen Lands, had the stone inscribed and planted. Do not forget charity; charity alone will help you." [11]

The Tamil-language inscription from at Neusu Aceh,[12] north Sumatra, has been palaeographically dated to about the twelfth century, and contains the word mandapam, which possibly refers to a temple. The Tamil inscription datable to the 13th century is from Porlak Dolok Padang Lawas area of northeast Sumatra,[13] which is carved on a stone pillar bearing the head of Ganesa. Yet another inscription is datable to 14th century CE and was found at Batu Bhapat in Padang Highlands of west Sumatra. The inscription is bilingual and contains 13 lines in Tamil language carved in the south Indian script.

The earliest Mahayana inscriptions of the Shrivijaya Kings in Java were written in a North Indian script which closely resemble the inscriptions dating to the 9th century CE at the Buddhist site of Nalanda.[14] Additionally "the Siddhamatrka (pre-Nagari/ proto-Bengali) script used in the Sailendra records of Java has been used on the golden disc and inscribed in stone in the relic chamber of Maura Takus (Sumatra) and Bali. The first old Javanese script, evolved from the late Brahmi, as seen in the inscription of Dinaja dated AD 760."[15]

A 9th century copper-plate of Devapala of the Pala dynasty of Bengal discovered at Nalanda in 1921[16], states that Devapala being requested by the illustrious Maharaja Balaputradeva, King of Suvamadvipa (Sumatra), granted five villages for the upkeep of the monastery built at Nalanada at the instance of the King of Suvarnadvipa.[17] "The Tibetan work of Kalyana Mitra, Phyag-sorpa (written about the middle of the 13th century) mentions the visit to Suvarnadvipa of the great Bengali monk Dipankara (Atisha 980-1053 CE)."[18]

Movement of people from India to Indonesia continued in the colonial period. A number of Indians migrated to various parts of Indonesia in various capacities such as labourers, traders soldiers and as clerks of the colonial administration. Indians belonging to Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh moved across the sea to work as indentured labour to work on the plantations of north Sumatra, andthe other set of immigrants consisted of merchants from Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Bombay who settled in the urban areas and set up business in textile and iron and steel. [19]

## 2. Indian and Indonesian Nationalist Leaders and Colonialism

The colonial period witnessed the coming of these two nations closer in their struggle against the colonial powers. Indian nationalist leaders supported the cause for Indonesian freedom, and were central in ensuring that Dutch attempt at re-establishing colonial rule in Indonesia post Japanese surrender in World War II. During the years 1945- 1948 there was close political relations and interaction between Indian and Indonesian leaders and both provided material help in the form of medical supplies and rice, in hour of need. While leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad provided political support and aid to Indonesia in their fight against colonialism, Indian journalist PRS Mani played a crucial role in highlighting the events in Indonesia and the Indian nationalist leader Biju Patnaik carried out rescue operation in his Dakota aircraft. It is also essential here to highlight the role of the Indians who were sent to Indonesia as soldiers in the British army and the Indian seamen, who in their own capacities provided support to Indonesian nationalist leaders and their cause of freedom from the clutches of colonial domination.

1945 onwards Indian politicians took a keen interest in the nationalist struggle of Indonesia. "For India, support to independence struggle in other parts of the world was an integral part of the Indian national movement. For Gandhi and Nehru no single country could attain true independence from European colonialism unless it was rid from the whole of Asia In fact, opposition to colonialism and racial discrimination was built into India's approach to world politics during India's freedom smuggle as well as in the post independence period. It was but normal that India would raise its voice when a 'sister' country was suffering from colonial occupation. India's policy of supporting Indonesia's struggle for independence was, therefore, part of her overall approach towards colonialism and racial discrimination."[20]

The Indian leaders opposed the idea of Indian soldiers being deployed to Surabaya to fight against the Indonesians. The use of Indian troops in Indonesia was vehemently opposed by Indians and 28 October 1945 was observed as Southeast Asia day in Bombay, Lucknow, Pune, New Delhi, Kanpur and Karachi demanding the immediate removal of Indian tropps from Indonesia.[21]

P R S Mani was a journalist commissioned as a Captain in the British Army and served in the Public Relations unit. He reported directly the Battle of Surabaya from October 25 to 28, and his writings highlight the role of Indian soldiers in the Indonesian struggle for Independence. His official dispatch of 29 September 1945, describes a feeling of pan Asianism amongst the Indian troops as they crossed over to Java:

"to [I]ndian troops Java brings back the memories of Indian colonization in the country in the early centuries of its occupation by the 'pallava', 'cholas' and the 'gupta' of Indian history. Though not fully conversant the Indian 'jaman' [sic] has a vague idea of this ancient connection and [is] extremely anxious to renew and strengthen this centuries old bond of friendship. These views were expressed to me while on board by a [S]ikh soldier from Punjab."[22] His diary entries on Surabaya, however, "makes it clear that Indian troops faced dilemmas which were simply not visible in the many military histories of the momentous Battle of Surabaya."[23]

Mani was posted along with the 23rd Indian Division which included Mahratti, Rajputs and Indians from other regions. They were sent to Surabaya on the pretext of fighting against the Japanese but soon came to realise that they were being used to supress the Indonesian nationalists and they were in the midst of the Indonesian National Revolution. Mani reported that "The Indian troops were often nationalist, conflicted and desperate, yet did what they did, and Mani watched and recorded all this for history."[24]

Mani was in the middle of battle between Indonesian nationalists and troops under Britain's South East Asia Command (SEAC), the Battle of Surabaya. In the initial reports from Indonesia from the city of Batavia he records that the Indian troops carried out "simple policing duties, although his dispatches showed that he was angered by the menial nature of the tasks they were asked to perform for British officers. He suggested in general that Indian troops were uneasy about their position, but as yet had little sense of urgency."[25] This was to change dramatically with the arrival of the 23rd Indian Division at Surabaya on 25 October 1945. Mani reported "The port is 'decorated' with anti-Dutch and anti-imperialist slogans, and for the first time in Java, slogans have also appeared in Hindustani: "Azadi ya Khunrezi!" (Freedom or Bloodshed!) Its effect on Indian troops, especially the Mahrattas and Rajrifs, who compose the Brigade, is remarkable. Reports have reached me that they are already beginning to ask their officers if they have to fight the Indonesians…." [26]

Indians from various backgrounds in the The "Gurkha" regiment Muslims, Sikhs, Jats and Marathas, soon realised that they were not fighting the Japanese but rather were deployed to supress the Indonesian struggle against colonialism. "Repeated cries of "Allah-u-Akbar" from the resisting Indonesians and their villages made the Muslim soldiers realise that they the British were making them fight against people from their own religion. Inspired by the speeches they heard on radio of Indian

national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the circumstances and condition of Indonesians freedom struggle, 600 Muslim soldiers defected from the British forces and joined the Indonesian resistance group of freedom fighters along with their arms and ammunitions.[27]

"Three brigades of Muslim troops landed on the Dutch-held island of Java. Brigade I landed in Jakarta, Brigade 38 in Semarang and Brigade 49 in Surabaya. Division 32 of Brigade 1 was commanded by Abdul Matin and Ghulam Ali. Without the knowledge of their British army commander, Ghulam Rasul and seven of his compatriots conducted a secret meeting and contacted the commanders of the army of the Republic of Indonesia in the Siliwangi division. Their code words for communication used to be "Assalamu 'alaikum". Their first task was to disarm and take all Japanese as prisoners and confiscate weapons from local residents. When they heard appeals made by Gandhi, Azad and Jinnah, Muslim troops became reluctant in carrying out the British orders which they felt as detrimental to Indonesians. Ghulam Ali and other Muslim soldiers unlocked a clothing warehouse and distributed clothes to the Indonesians. Many Indonesians did not have enough food and suffered from serious medical problems such as swollen feet. Ghulam Rasul distributed rice, sugar, salt and other items among them. Muslim troops jointly deserted from the British army and joined the Indonesian resistance army. They took their equipment and weapons too alongwith them. They were integrated into units of *Tentara Keamanan Rakayat* (TKR), *Badan Keamanan Rakayat* (BKR) etc. Major Ahmad Husein was made commander of Regiment III with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. These 600 soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with the Indonesian freedom fighters and suffered heavy losses. By the time Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, the 600-strong band of deserters was reduced to only 75." [28]

Mani duly reported: "It is true that some were attracted by material things. But the choice between two bigger issues lay in us and we chose the more honourable one. We decided that aspirers of freedom cannot become freedom suppressors[29]In keeping with the prevailing mood in India, where by October 1946 many had come to regard the INA as nationalist heroes rather than treasonous traitors, Mani opened with the statement: 'Another Indian National Army is writing history in that island fortress of freedom, Java, in defence of the Indonesian Republic.' Having established this patriotic lineage, he then explained that his story could now be told as Nehru had assured parliament that the government of India would not tolerate 'any subterfuge or delay in the withdrawal of Indian troops."[30]

Jawaharlal Nehru was invited by Sukarno to Indonesia, to which he responded- "I should like to tell Dr. Sukarno that if I can be of any service to the cause of Indonesian freedom I shall gladly visit Java in spite of urgent and important work in India I believe that our freedom in India or Java or elsewhere hangs together and if I can serve the cause of freedom in Java better than in India I shall certainly go there. But that depends not so much on my wishes but on the facilities for within India and travelling to Batavia by air. If these facilities are available I shall set aside all the work and go there. Meanwhile I send my Dr. Sukarno and to my old comrades Dr. Hatta and Dr. Sukarno and wish them all success in achieving an independence of Indonesia."[31] (October 1945)

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, stated on October 19, 1945 that, "things have come now to the point when Congress will have to consider seriously what steps to adopt to prevent the use of Indian men and material against the Asiatic peoples fighting for their freedom"[32] (*The Statesman,* Calcutta, 20October,1945).

Nehru held similar views and declared on October 28, "people of India will stand by the Indonesian demand for independence and will give all the help they can". Nehru also demanded the withdrawal of British troops that were being used to supress the Indonesian freedom struggle, from Indonesian soil and called for the recognition of Sukarno's provincial government.[33]

Severe famine hit India during the early 1946 in India caused severe shortages of food, and it was

Indonesia that came forward and offered help by provision of rice to India. In May 1946, Dr. Sjahrir, the Prime Minister of Indonesian Republic sent a cable to Nehru with the message:

"Indonesians will keep ready for shipment to India a quantity of rice amounting to half a billion tonnes. Every section of Indonesian community gives enthusiastic adhesion (sic) to the plan ... For the sake of mutual assistance between the two nations, we should like to receive in exchange goods mom urgently needed by the majority of population, e.g. textiles, agricultural implements, etc. In case you cannot dispense with goods mentioned above on account of Indian peoples' own needs, we should call ourselves fortunate if we can secure some other exchange ... We are quite prepared to consider any other kinds of goods that happen to be at your disposal."[34] A delegation under Morarji Desai was to be sent in July 1946 to Java to work out the details and on 20 August 1946, the first shipment of rice amounting to 6000 tonnes was received by India at the Cochin port. [35]

The Indian nationalist leaders once again supported Indonesia in 1947 against Dutch intervention. As per the Linggadjati Agreement (LDA) signed on March 27, 1947 the Netherlands recognised the Republic of Indonesia as the de facto authority in Java and Sumatra. After the agreement the Indian government not only recognised and accepted the new Indonesian Republic, but also extended it invitation to the new nation to participate in the Asian Conference that was being organised by Nehru to be held in March 1947.[36] On 9 March 1947, India showed her support for Indonesian fight against Dutch by declaring that all Dutch passenger planes shall be forbidden from landing at Indian airports, and that the Indian Government shall not conclude any commercial treaties with the government of the Netherlands East Indies and would rather establish trade relations with the government of the Indonesian Republic (*The Statesman*, Calcutta, March 10, 1947).[37]

In an address in Delhi on July 28, Nehru declared: "India has been and is especially interested in the freedom of the peoples of Asia .... Asia having suffered greatly in the past from foreign domination and exploitation is determined to end it. Any attack on the freedom of the people in any part of Asia affects the rest of the great continent. The mere presence of a colonial regime or of foreign troops in any Asian country is an insult and challenge to Asia" and that India planned to approach the United Nations "within a few hours" regarding Dutch aggression in Indonesia "if nothing happened" (*The Statesman,* July 29, 1947; *The Hindu*, July 30, 1947).[38]

Jawaharlal Nehru asked Biju Patnaik to fly into Jakarta to bring the leaders of Indonesia's independence struggle to Delhi. He was instrumental in rescuing Md Hatta, former vice President of Indonesia, and Prime Minister Sultan Sjahrir of Indonesia. After the Japanese surrender of World War II, Indonesia declared Independence. The Dutch were not interested in losing their colony and carried out a full scale attack on 21 July 1947 in an attempt to regain control. Mohammad Hatta and prime minister Sutan Sjahrir were advised by Sukarno to leave the country and attend the first Inter-Asia Conference which was being organised by Nehru at New Delhi in July 1947. Biju Patnaik was a pilot and owner of the Kalinga Airlines, which mostly had the Dakota aircrafts in its fleet. Biju Patnaik and his pilots come to the aid of Indonesia by transporting humanitarian aid and medicines to Indonesia.[39] "The arrival of Patnaik with his plane meant that the air blockade had been run. Tonnes of medical supplies urgently needed by the people were carried directly to Jakarta. Not only that our leaders and other Indonesian people who had to go abroad in the interests of the struggle could also make use of this plane".[40]

He was asked by Nehru to rescue Indonesia leaders and bring them back safely to India. The Dutch authorities were aware of this and warned Patnaik that if he entered Indonesian airspace, which was now under the Dutch who had put a blockade on air and sea routes into Indonesia, he would have to bear with the consequences. Biju Patnaik responded to the threat of his aircraft being shot down by saying, "Resurgent India does not recognize Dutch colonial sovereignty over the Indonesian people. If my aircraft is shot down, every Dutch plane flying across the Indian skies will be shot down in retaliation"

was Biju's reply. He also sne a message to Prime Minister Nehru which read– "Take necessary steps should my aircraft be shot down".[41] Biju Patnaik was a skilled pilot and after skilfully dodging the Dutch he manages to land his aircraft and managed to land "on an improvised airstrip and using left over petrol from abandoned Japanese military dumps, eluded the Dutch to land in Jakarta and flew back to Delhi with Indonesian leaders Mohammad Hatta and Sultan ."[42]

Biju Patnaik was given honorary citizenship in Indonesia and awarded the 'Bhoomi Putra', the highest Indonesian award as well as the highest national award, the 'Bintang Jasa Utama' by the Indonesian government during its celebration of 50 years of Independence in 1996.[43]

Indian seamen working on board Dutch ships[44] were also crucial in undermining Dutch authority and attempts at regaining control of Indonesia. After Indonesia declared Independence, the Dutch set up their government in exile in Australia. "The involvement of Chinese and Indian seamen in maintaining the boycott of Dutch shipping was ultimately crucial in the campaign for an independent Indonesia."[45] Inspired by the speeches they heard on radio of the Indian nationalist leaders, the Indian sea men resorted to non- co-operation and refused to board or load the Dutch ships. They were also able to gather support of the new recruits employed to replace the striking workers, against the Dutch authorities in support of the Indonesian nationalist movement. In a letter addressed to Sardar Patel on 16 October 1945, Nehru stated, "The Indonesian struggle is becoming more intense and I feel we ought to give it greater prominence. It would be a good things if there are meetings etc. But the most dramatic thing would be for our dock workers and sea men to refuse to load the war materials for Java, as the Australians did."[46]

Heather Goodall's in depth research has brought to light significant data and information regarding the role of Indian seamen in subverting Dutch authority and aiding the Indonesian declaration of Independence. Ligorio de Costa, a Goan, and Abdul Rehman, an Indian from Poona represented of two major groups of the Indian seamen in Australia, and they were later joined by Dasrath Singh. Singh had reported that "There's a ship at Ball's Head [one of the North Sydney docks]. There are Indian seamen on it and the Dutch are loading munitions! The Indian seamen are very concerned about it but they don't know what to do. We've got to get those men off!"[47]

The incident of 20 October 1945 highlights the importance of the Indian seamen in ensuring that *Petras* was unable to sail out to Indonesia. "An extraordinary chase down Sydney Harbour ensued in which a small launch driven at high speed by Australian unionists like Barney Smith (Seamen's Union) with Dasrath Singh and other Indian seamen pursued the large Dutch cargo ship. From the launch, Singh addressed the crew by megaphone in Urdu or Hindi. He explained the Dutch attempt to re-arm their colonial forces in Indonesia and argued the case for joining the strike to the receptive crew, but the presence of Dutch troops made it impossible to intervene further and the ship steamed out of the heads. Yet within hours it had limped humiliated back into port. As the Indian crew poured over the sides into waiting launches, they described how they had taken the dramatic, confrontational decision to refuse to stoke the engines. The Indians had agreed to go back to work only if the ship returned to port, leaving the Dutch little option but to comply." [48] Similar incident occurred with the *General Vespijck* "where armed Dutch guards formed an intimidating presence when Singh and others stood off the boats stern and addressed the crew. Here too the Indian crew members decided on direct confrontation, letting the steam down in the ship's engines, and then leaving the ship spectacularly en masse in lifeboats lowered over the side. They argued they would not carry armaments 'for use against their "Indonesian brothers".[49] "As more Indian seamen arrived in Australia by British ships as replacement crews, Indian seamen organisers spoke in Hindi, Urdu, Goanese or Bengali to the replacements arriving in Australia by sea and air, and told them the cause behind the boycott and succeeded in mobilising them as well to adopt the non-violent method of non-cooperation for the cause of the Indonesian struggle against colonial rule."[50]

Between October and November it has been estimated that a total of 200 Indians walked out and about a 100 on board the Dutch ships did not co-operate with the NEI or the Dutch Government in exile.[51] The efforts of the Indian organisers were able to convince even replacements recruited by the Dutch to adopt non co-operation and support the Indonesian cause. Heather Goodhall's study reveals that "the only Indian crews who sailed were those being coerced by Dutch troops and even those sailing at gunpoint were prepared to mutiny where they knew they had support on shore."[52] According to estimates about 700 Indians were part of the boycott during 1945 and 1946.[53]

On the other end, the Indonesians aboard Dutch ships anchored at Indian ports received the support of Indians. Fuelled with an intense feeling of nationalism the Indonesian workers working on Dutch ships during World War II refused to perform their duties while in India. They received support from the Indonesian Students Committee in India, who submitted a memorandum to Jawharlal Nehru stating that these men were recruited forcibly into the Dutch Navy without their consent. Nehru sent a letter to Yusuf Meheralli, the Mayor of Bombay, asking him to immediately attend to the problems regarding food and accommodation of these Indonesian workers. Meheralli tended to it and as India was not keen to hand them over to the Dutch, they were sent back on a neutral British ship, Dunera, which set sail from Madras in June 1946.[54]

The words of President Sukarno echo the deep rooted ties that have existed between India and Indonesia and the unconditional support provided by the Indians to the cause of Indonesian freedom. "In the wide world around us are countless friends and well-wishers who are aiding us with their moral support and active help. Among you, our brothers and comrades in India there are a host of sympathizers and helpers. Your press is supporting our cause. Your great leader Nehru's passionate utterances on behalf of our freedom have been a source of immense strength in our hour of trial and tribulation. How should I ever be able to convey to you the deep stirring of emotion that swells up in every one of us when we think of the wonderful manner in which you have rallied our cause. Deep down in his hearty every Indonesian utters a silent prayer 'God bless you, our brothers and friends in India.'[55]

## 3. Travels by Religious Leaders

Travels by religious leaders across India and Indonesia and their impact on the socio cultural and religious aspects of Indonesian life has been a lesser known and studied subject. These deep rooted ties are evident in the words President Sukarno, "In the veins of every one of my people flows the blood of the Indian ancestors and the culture that we possess is steeped through and through with Indian influences. Two thousand years ago people from your country came to Javadvipa and Suvarnadvipa in the spirit of brotherly love. They gave the initiative to form powerful kingdoms such as those of Sri Vijaya, Mataram and Majaphit. We learnt then to worship the very gods you worship still and we fashioned a culture that even today is largely identical with your own. Later we turned towards Islam but that religion too was brought to us by people coming from both sides of the Indus."[56]

"I would like to argue that Indian Muslims have played an important role since the first coming of Islam to Southeast Asia. The development of intellectual network can be found in the links between 'ulama' from India and Southeast Asia, especially through mystical teaching propagated by a Gujarati scholar Nurdin ar-Raniri, the great 'ulama' of Aceh who had authored many books in Southeast Asia."[57]

The coming of Islam in Indonesia is credited to Indian sailors and merchants from Gujarat and the southern regions, who sailed from Indian shores to various parts of Indonesia. Nuruddin ar-Raniri is credited with the standardization of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in the region of Aceh. "He can be regarded as the father of Islamization and standardization of Islam in Indonesia."[58] He hailed from Raniri in Surat district of Gujarat and his family had contacts with Pahang and Aceh in the 16th century. Ar-Raniri paternal uncle, Muhammad Al-

Hamid travelled to Aceh between 1580-1583 Aceh to teach logic, rhetoric, ethics, fiqh, science of the sources and other religious and intellectual subjects.

"Ar-Raniri also played a vital role in documenting the extremely needed literature in Malay and Arabic language on principles of Islam which never existed before the early missionaries of Islam conveyed the teaching Islam by oral instruction, and practical application and taught masses how to conduct themselves according to the basic tenets of Islam."[59] In 1637 he travelled to the Malay peninsula and then to Aceh where he not only became proficient in the Malay language and literature, but was also employed in the court of Iskandar Tsani who later appointed him as Shaikh al-Islām, which was the highest religious post.[60] On the request of the ruler Raniri in 1638 produced Bustān Al-Salātīn, which was to become the main Islamic text that served as a reference and guide to the Malay rulers laying down the duty of the rulers towards their country and subjects based on Islamic laws.[61]

"Nuruddin ar-Raniri played a vital role in terms of spiritual and intellectual upliftment of the people by facilitating the establishment of new ground for social order through Islamic teachings and consequently adoption of Sharia. As a result, the impact of Islam in Indonesia was real especially in transforming the body, the soul and mind of different groups within the society."[62]

This interaction between Indian and Indonesian Islam continued in the 20th century as well which is evident from the presence of the Ahmaddiyahs, Islamic Socialism and Tablighi Ja'maat in Indonesian.

Mushir Hosain Kidwai's writing and thoughts were central to the introduction of Islamic socialism propagated by Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto.[63] Kidwai was born in India's United Provinces in 1878 in a noble family that traced its roots back to the companions of the Prophet.[64] By referring to the verses in the Quran and Hadith, Kidwai demonstrated the existence of the notion of socialism among the companions of the Prophet, but this socialism aimed at all "Muslims (and later all humanity) working together to help one another, uphold the dignity of humanity, and run society in accordance with God's laws."[65]

Tjokroaminoto was influenced by Kidwai's thoughts and works, which is apparent in the work published by him in 1924 *Islam dan Socialisme* [Islam and Socialism], which drew heavily from and was mostly are affirmation of Kidwai's work .[66] What is essential to note is that Tjokroaminoto concluded his book by pointing to pan-Islamism as the ultimate goal of Islamic socialism.[67] "H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, whose work on Islamic socialism had a strong influence on Indonesian Islamic organizations and political life for the remainder of the century. The means by which Tjokroaminoto came to study Kidwai's work are especially interesting, and speak to the influence of yet another South Asian Islamic movement, the Ahmadiyyah, on Indonesia's intellectual development."[68] Tjokroaminoto's interest at tracing the non-Arabic influences in Islam prompted his interest in understanding and gaining information of South Asian Islam. He thus sent his son to India to be able to comprehend Islam in the context where the Hindus were in majority, to be able to carry out a comparative study of the religions, in addition to receive further education in Islam. Harsono Tjokroaminoto travelled from 1929 to 1930, primarily across northern India and visited Calcutta, Poona, Lahore, and Kashmir.[69]

Throughout the 1930s, the Ahmadiyyah continued to influence young, Western-educated Islamic thinkers, including the next generation of Islamic socialists. The journal of the Jong Islamieten Bond, a group of Muslim student activists trying to promote a modern, rational, Islamic future for their country, "was also heavily influenced by the writings of the Ahmadiyah movement in India."[70]

The initiative of three students from Minangkabau (South Sumatera) who had studied in Lahore, British India, namely Abubakar Ayyub, Ahmad Nuruddin, and Zaini Dahlan, the connect between Ahmadiyas of India and Indonesia was established. Upon hearing about the renowned Islamic educational centres in India whose Islamic education was considered at par with that of the Middle East, in 1922, they visited India and chose to stay at Qadiyan. Upon

their return in 1924 to Indonesia they encouraged fellow students to study at Qadiyan not only because Islamic education imparted was of high standards, but the cost of living was low and the poorer students could also get scholarships to pursue their studies. They were granted permission to preach the tenets of the Qadiyan school in 1924. In the year 1925 they invited Rahmat Ali (an alumunus of the Punjab University and a Qadiani follower) who was the first missionary of Qadiani Ahmadiyya to be sent to Hindia Belanda (nowadays Indonesia). He arrived in Sumatera Island and "the teaching and belief of JAI was firstly brought and introduced in Indonesia on 2 October 1925 by in Tapaktuan, Aceh." [71]

Rahmat Ali then travelled to Padang where the Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (the JAI) was officially established in 1926 with the aim of advocating Qadiani Ahmaddiya belief, establishing branches in different parts of Indonesia and also enlisting more members. "Ali moved to Batavia (nowadays Jakarta), the capital city of Hindia Belanda, in 1931. In that year, the teaching of Qadiani Ahmadiyya was rapidly developed in Jakarta and Bogor. From these two cities, the understanding of Qadiani Ahmadiyya then developed in many cities on Java Island, such as in Tangerang, Cianjur, Sukabumi, Bandung, Garut, Tasikmalaya, Ciamis, and Karawang." [72] With the establishment of a Central board on 16 December 1935 its official headquarters was established at Jakarta. A national conference was held in December 1949 in Jakarta, wherein it was mutually decided to change the name from Ahmadiyah Qadiyan Department Indonesia to Jama'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia. "This organization had structural and formal relations with the Ahmadiyah Headquarters in India because its chairman (amir) was responsible directly to the khalifah in Qadiyan."[73]

Cultural and religious interactions with India had left their imprint on Balinese Hinduism since the ancient times. In the mid-20th century this Hinduism was reformed due to the efforts of Indian and Indonesian intellectuals. Narendra Dev Pandit Shastri, who was a Sanskrit lecturer by profession travelled Bali to 1950 where he eventually settled down. The Dasa Sila Agama Bali was a short book written by him, but it changed the Balinese religion and reformed it. Shastri investigated the common factors between the Balinese religion and Hinduism which were discussed in ten points in the book, and it also contained the Tri Sandhya prayer.[74]

Prior to his arrival in Bali, Hindu rites and rituals had become the prerogative of the priestly class leading to ignorance of religious knowledge amongst the common people. Pandit Shastri aimed at reforming the old Balinese Hinduism and make it more accessible to the common people, as well as educating people on purer form of Hinduism. Shastri, in an interview with Ketut Subagiasta, revealed that "At the beginning, Balinese performed Tri Sandhya with only one mantra, which was the Gayatra mantra [...]' and by teaching this sacred mantra to students of Denpasar's Dwijendra School in 1953 for the first time Pandit Shastri made Hindu mantras easily accessible to all, bringing an end to dominance of Saiva priests in religious matters of Bali Hinduism. Pandit Shastri later taught Hinduism and Sanskrit at the same school."[75] Pandit Shastri "illustrated with drawing of asana (appropriate posture) and pranayama (breathing control), and provided meaning of the Sanskrit words used in the mantras (of Puja Tri Sandhya)."[76] Intisari Hindu Dharma (The Essence of Hinduism) served as the framework for neo Hinduism in Bali. His success is evident by the fact that in 1958, a "Hindu Bali section was finally established within the Ministry of Religions"[77] and in 1961 Hindu Dharma became one of the five major religions practiced in Indonesia.[78]

In the years 1945 to 1950, the Taman Siswa was taught in the Balinese village schools or people's schools which focussed on moral and character building (budhi pekerti). In the 1940s, Ida Bagus Mantra, Oka Puniatmaja, and Cok Rai Sudharta were handpicked Balinese got grants to study in India.[79] Ida Bagus Mantra, and Nyomn S Pendit studied at Visva Bharati University and Oka Puniatmaja and Tjokordo Rai Suddharta studied at Benares Hindu University. Ida Bagus Mantra on his return to Indonesia became lecturer in Indian History and Culture at University of Indonesia, in Jakarta. [80] I Gede Puja, "on the advice of Pandit Shastri Gede

Puja departed to India in order to study Indian philosophy, religion, architecture and arts at the Indology College of the Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi in 1956."[81]

In the year 1959 the Hindu council was established which was instrumental in translating many Hindu religious texts into Indonesian language. Ida Bagus Mantra, Ida Bagus Oka Puniatmaja, and Cokorda Rai Sudharta translated Indian scriptures as the Bhagavad Gita and the Law of Manu (Manawadharmasastra) into Indonesian language. They also composed the Upadesa which became "the first short standard reference volume covering the raw essence of Hindu teachings in Bali. … The Upadesa was the first book to introduce Hindu teaching in a systematic way."[82] The key role in compiling the Upadesa was Ida Bagus mantra, who invited seven more scholars to his home and together they worked tirelessly and incessantly till thay completed their task. The seven people were Bagus Oka Punia Atmaja, Pedanda Wayan Sidemen, Ida Bagus Mantra, Ida Bagus Dosther, Ida Bagus Alit, Mertha from the MORA, and me- Cok Rai Sudharta.[83]

"The key agencies involved in the field of Hindu education, were three research sites in Bali's municipality Denpasar: the Dwijendra Foundation (Yayasan Dwijendra, hereafter YD), the Indonesian Hindu University (Universitas Hindu Indonesia, hereafter UNHI) and the State Hindu Dharma Institute (Institute Hindu Dharma Negeri, hereafter IHDN).[84] Influenced by Pandit Shastri's amongst other things, Balinese reformers decided to found the Dwijendra foundation in Denpasar, and Pandit Shastri was actively involved in teaching at the Dwijendra foundation and the Saraswati School."[85] The Dwijendra Foundation aimed at preservation of Hindu heritage and knowledge and a "modernized and rationalized knowledge and understanding of agama, culture, and literature should be increased in the Agama Hindu Bali congregation and/or people interested in it." To further these aims the Foundation established schools and colleges with Denspar as their stronghold and a focus on Agamic Hinduism. Narendra Dev Pandit Shastri delivered the first religious discourse at Dwijendra Foundation and he is also credited with conceiving and implementing a uniform style of prayer at Dwijendra which was the Tri Sandhya. The languages taught were Balinese, Sanskrit and old Javanese. "In consequence, the Dwijendra Foundation (Yayasan Dwijendra) played a significant role in the recognition process of Indonesian Hindu Dharma and the implementation of the Hindu class and Hindu education system, because it was the epicenter of the reformers' rationalization and systematization efforts the 1950s and early 1960s."[86]

The Parisada Dharma Hindu changed its name to Parisada Hindu Dharma in 1964 thus casting aside its Bainese origins. The Parishad not only was instrumental in the translation of a number of Hindu scared texts, but it also played a crucial role in standardizing Hindu religion The Balinese Hinduism was reformed from a stage where religious knowledge was handed from generation to generation among a privileged few and when priests and kings played a prominent role, to a religion where all had equal access to sacred texts and scriptures and could practice Hinduism in their own right without the aid of the ritual specialists. "The Parisada was now instructing the Balinese on what to believe and how to practise their religion accordingly."[87] The theological canon of Agama Hindu was composed by Ida Bagus Mantra's which was based on "five articles of faith – the Panca Çraddha – conceived on the model of the five pillars of Islam: belief in the one and only God (Sang Hyang Widhi), in the eternal essence of life (atman), in the retribution of all actions (karmaphala), in reincarnation (samsara), and in the final liberation (moksa)."[88]

Historical, archival and archaeological evidence clearly speaks of interactions between India and Indonesia from the ancient to the modern period of history. In the field of art and education mentioned may be made of Rabindranath Tagore's travels to Java and Bali and the influence it had on subjects taught at Santi Niketan, as well as the influence of Tagore in the Taman Siswa system of education in Indonesia. This theme has already been dealt with in another paper, and the focus of this paper was to further highlight Indian and Indonesian interactions

in the sphere of religion, both Islam and Hinduism, and in the nationalist struggles against colonialism. The key participants involved were not only well known leaders but lesser known Indians such as soldiers and seamen whose significant contributions in forging these linkages often go un-noticed.

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X

# Travels by Leaders: India and Vietnam

## 1. Introduction

The commercial, religious and maritime linkages between India and Vietnam date to the ancient period and continue in the medieval period as attested by archaeological records and literary references to the travel of Indian and Vietnamese Buddhist monks. In the colonial period Vietnam formed a part of the French colony of Indo China, and it is in this time period that migration and settlement of Indians into Vietnam occurs. As for the term Indo China Pham Quynh wrote "one side is Chi-na, while the other is An-Do [India], and thus we have this land of Dong Duong, which is quite rightly given the name of An-Do-Chi-na".( Pham Quynh, 'Les annamites au Laos', France-Indochine, no 3,403, 6 March 1931, p. 1; Pham Quynh, 'vientiane la poussiérieuse', France-Indochine, no. 3,397, 27 February 1931, p. 1.)[1] He also notes in his travelogue: "The further we drove from Hue, the further we stepped into the Indianized world, leaving the sinicized realm [of annam] behind us in the distance".( Pham Quynh, 'du-lich xu Lao', Nam Phong, January 1931, no. 158, p. 7 and Pham Quynh, 'impressions du Laos', France-Indochine, no. 3388, 13 February 1931, p. 1.)[2]

Most of the migrants to Vietnam were Tamils from the French colony of Pondicherry and Karikal in south India. Indians migrated in the late 19th century in search of a better life or as civil servants and staff for the French colony. Indians migrating came from varied backgrounds and included low to middle ranking Civil Servants, South Indian business people, unskilled South Indian labourers, Gujarati and Sindhi merchants from Mumbai (then Bombay), Sikhs and other Punjabis who worked as security guards and shop owners.[3] An in depth study by Natasha Pairaudeau reveals the existence of a strong Indian community in Vietnam, hailing from various backgrounds and providing the essential man power and investment required for the sustenance of the French authorities in Vietnam. Essentially Indians who migrated to Vietnam did so out of free will and pursued a number of economic professions ranging from labourers to attorneys and lawyers.

"Indians living in Cochin-china who were not French citizens fell into one of two categories. If they originated from the French Establishments in India but had chosen not to renounce their personal status, they remained French subjects, albeit with a status distinct from the French subjects' native to Cochin-china. They were sometimes called 'non renouncers' {non-renongants). Migrants originating from parts of India under British rule were classified in Cochin-china, with the Chinese, as 'Foreign Asians'. However, for some purposes, neither they nor the Indian French subjects were legally 'Asian'."[4]

The Indian migrants from the French colonies in India held a different status viś a viś the British subjects in India, as they had a chance to become French citizens. Natives of French India could become citizens by declaring themselves 'renounced' of their personal laws and stood at an advantage as compared to natives of Cochin-china for whom obtaining French citizenship was a difficult and arduous task.[5] The 'renouncers' and Indian French

subjects who came to become the backbone of the colonial French administration and economy in Vietnam.

Occupations and jobs related to the French administration were given to the 'renouncers' who settled mostly in Saigon.[6] "From the beginnings of the French conquest of Cochin china, and throughout the period of French rule, the demand for French-speaking subordinate and middle-level functionaries in Cochin china's colonial administration was met in part by Tamils from the French of Pondicherry and Karikal. Indians were also employed as functionaries elsewhere in Indochina ….Many Indians working for the Cochin chinese administration were hired in posts normally reserved for Europeans, on European terms and with European salaries {a titre europeen, a solde d 'Europe). These tended to be middle-ranking positions requiring a mastery of French." [7]

The migrating Indians were mainly employed as clerks and accountants uptil the Second World War '. Amongst these the 'Writers' were among the earliest Indian functionaries to arrive in Cochin china followed by clerks and accountants employed in many branches of the service.[8] Other areas of administration where Indians were employed by the French authorities included colonial customs, revenue and registration. As per records all three tax inspectors employed in Cochin-china's treasury in the 1880s were Indian French citizens and in the Registration service Indians were employed as clerks, registrars, and bailiffs. The 'renouncers' constituted, one third of the clerks in Saigon's Court of Appeal, in the Saigon Tribunal and three out of eleven judges (judges suppliants) within the Court of Appeal in 1938 were also Indians. In addition to this, nine out of thirteen provincial tribunals were Indian clerk of court or appeal judges.[9]

The Indian 'renouncers' also found employment in postal and public services such lighthouses and railways. Their employment in Lighthouse services is indicated by records of 1897 wherein nine out sixteen names are Tamil. Indians also functioned as overseers of various construction works such as railways. A case in example being Gnanadicom Saverinaden, who in 1908 oversaw the building of embankments on the main line trans-Indochina line. They also were crucial links in the development of Saigon since they undertook major public works as contractors. Samy Appassamy, a renouncer[10] who made a fortune during "the building boom of the 1920s" and in the 1900s, his contracts involved provision of petrol lighting to public buildings. Xavier de Condappa, presumably taking over from Samy, undertook petrol lighting for the city of Saigon from 1908 -1911,[11] and other contracts undertaken by Tamils included wood supply for heating to local administrations, and food to prisoners and college students."[12]

In the field of transport Indians worked as s conductors, guards, and other general employees. In the arena of security they were employed as policemen, prison guards and other agents of security and surveillance. For instance, records show that Indians constituted half of the agents in the Saigon Municipal Force in 1908 and nine of a total of 17 prison guards on the prison island of Poulo Condore in 1917 (and another seven had Corsican names). They were also employed by Cochin-china's Security Service (Surete) and two guards, Sarny Beamnont and Saverinaden Dupas, were awarded medals of honour.[13]

The possibility of employment in varied branches of French administration proved to be an impetus for numerous Indians to migrate to colonial Cochin-china. The immense influx of migrants became a cause of concern for the authorities in Cochin china during the 1890s with regard to cost of repartition that "in 1908 the Cochin-chinese Governor Outrey asked his superior in Hanoi to advise the Governor for French India (as well as high officials in Reunion and Corsica) that 'there are no available jobs in the service in Cochin-china in the foreseeable future' and that those hopeful of employment in the public service were to be discouraged from coming."[14] Despite this the migration of Indians continued and as per records even in the 1920's a number of them functioned as magistrates, legal clerks, and bailiffs.[15]

Indians were employed in eleventh Colonial Infantry Regiment (R.I.C.) posted in Saigon and Indians who could speak, read and write in French

served as those in charge with managing the stores of the colonial troops.[16] "The French troops stopped to draw supplies at the ports of Pondicherry and Karikal. Indians are known to have joined them aboard their ships, coming to serve as soldiers in the conquest of Cochin-china, and the other Indochinese territories as they were brought under French 'protection'. Some of these soldiers stayed on and settled. Mougamadoucamy (or Mamoucani in the Vietnamese rendering of his name) wrote in barely literate French in 1902 to appeal to colonial authorities for financial help, he described how, originally from Karikal, he had arrived in the colony in 1852, 'comine simpelle solda a la guer Saigon [sic]' ('as a simple soldier in the fight for Saigon')." [17]

Besides government jobs a number of Indians were employed by French firms as accountants and in other subordinate positions. "The colonial directory of 1913 lists several French trading houses with Indians in their employ.[18] By the 1930s, Indians were employed as accountants in a wide variety of European firms and organisations, from banks to oil companies to department stores to professional associations." These posts were open to non-renouncers such as the Hindu Reddiar caste who tended not to renounce, and carried a reputation in Pondicherry of being 'good accountants'. A number of Indians also found employment as staff of various newspaper and printing presses that came up during the 1920's. [19]

South Indian traders established shops in various cities and smaller towns and sold imported cloth, as also they stocked garments and general supplies required by the ever increasing Tamil population. "The Cochin-chinese trade, concentrated in the larger urban centres, supported the growing cities of Saigon and Cholon, as well as Gia Dinh, Saigon's north-western extension. South Indian Muslim hade also flourished in the rice growing regions and their transport hubs in the Mekong Delta (My Tho, Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Sa Dec, Rach Gia) and Thu Dau Mot, the centre of rubber production, reflecting their role in bringing supplies to the expanding agricultural frontier."[20] In this aspect of economic activity it was the Indians from British controlled areas of India that were predominant. The two exceptions were the Saigon-based Koothanallur firm of J.M.M. Ishmael Brothers and the powerful Pondicherry firm of G.M. Said (also spelled Syed or Saed), with interests centred in Hanoi and across Tonkin. "These larger firms also generated employment for lower classes of overseas Tamils as their shopkeepers, cashiers, and servants. South Indian Muslims from the French possessions made up a disproportionate number of employees, as well as petty traders or agents".[21] The Indian Muslims in Saigon were also active in the diamond trade and financial services which not included only money lending but also services that helped Indians transfer money back to India as they were involved in money lending. [22] An interesting profession recorded are the Tamil tailors whose shops were often located in streets adjacent to areas where the cloth merchants conducted their trade in Saigon. These Tamil tailors carried cloth and goods into the remote areas of Cochin-china along the riverine routes.[23]

Another trade that was dominated by Indians was the cattle trade which provided for the transportation and diary needs of the French colony. "Cochin-china Yearbook (Annuaire de la Cochinchine) of 1865 reads: The 200 Indians whom we possess [que nous possedons] have managed to make themselves useful, and it is desirable that their numbers increase. Thanks to them the care of livestock is seen to, numerous carts [chariots] circulate, and some carriages for hire [voitures de louage]." [24] They provided transport and labour for early French urban construction projects and for the development of public transport in colonial Cochin china. Tirouvingadame signed a contract in 1869 to provide bullock carts to the Civil Works department, and other livestock related contracts included the provision of animal feed and milk. [25] Tamils sold milk door-to-door and in a list of 'merchants of milk' dating to 1884, twenty-six Tamil names in Saigon, and seven in Cholon were recorded. [26]

In addition to cloth, other items that were sold in shops during the 1920s and 1930s included Indian spices and specially prepared Tamil foodstuffs. Associated with the gastronomical needs of the

growing Tamil population was the development of professions and trade such as the pressing of sesame and peanut for oil (carried out on the outskirts of Saigon) and preparation rice and tamarind by Tamil methods. "Lagrandiere street in particular, which by the First World War had come to be the preferred place of residence of many Indians employed in the administration, attracted importers of Tamil foodstuffs and restaurants serving Indian food."[27]

The Muslim Tamil traders created their own enclaves in Saigon and already in the 1880's were found concentrated in the rue Vannier near to the Saigon River, and in 1908 nearly two thirds of rue Vannier was occupied by Tamil cloth merchants, moneychangers or 'retail vendors'. The other streets were the Vienot, street which was an important centre of Tamil trade, and the Catinat Street block which was the hub of the Indian money changers, [28] and the Ohier Street which was occupied by Chettys, Indian policemen, a dry goods merchant (epicier) Mouttou, three Tamil jewellers (Souppayapatter, Kamatchy and Aroquiassamy) and it also had a petrol station and residence of a wealthy renouncer businessman Sarny Appassamy.[29]

Indians were also amongst the rich land owning class in Vietnam. Saigon based merchant M.M. Ishmael, acquired property along with his brother Mohamed Abdoullah in the interwar years estimated at 891,000 piastres with an annual income of 111,328 piastres in 1933. These consisted of blocks of compartments, commercial properties and empty lots on ten different streets in central Saigon.[30] Savericom Prouchandy owned compartments and vacant lots in Saigon and Cap St Jacques (Vung Tau) during late 1920's.[31]

The entrepreneur Nagalingapoulle owned a large lot bordering the Chettiar temple on Ohier Street in 1881. In the 1920s, the holdings of the milk merchant Palamiappadevar (alternately Pajaniappathevar) brought a monthly rental income of 6,000 piastres). Kathiappadevar or Kattheappathevar, owned property with rental of 2,500 piastres monthly. A moneylender by the name of Appapoulle, owned massive tracts of land in Gia Binh and Go Vap provinces and to Nadimouttouppoulle and Varadappoule property had been 'bequeathed by Pajaniappathevar in his will of 4 November, 1922'.[32]

"Right from the 1860s, Tamils of Pondicherry were attracted by the employment and trade prospects in the French colony of Indo-China, composed of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Many migrated, especially to Saigon. There were other Indians, hailing from British India who also found their way to Saigon and Indochina. They were mostly the Hindu Nattukottai, and Tamil-speaking Muslims. In 1937 there were about 6000 Indians in Indochina. Most of them were Tamils."[33]

## 2. Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore's visit to Vietnam was made possible primarily due to French authorities and the French educated Indians residing in Vietnam. Their objective behind extending an invitation to Tagore was "the plan to restore the "declining native Powers!" – or Indianess and Asianess."[34] "The reception of Tagore, which appears to be religion-, morality- and Indian-oriented, might have been controlled by the powerful political discourses attempted to discourage Indochina from the revolutionary ideologies coming from China and Japan".[35]

Even prior to Tagore's visit a number of articles and writings pertaining to him were published in Vietnam. Nguyễn An Ninh in article, entitled 'La Sagesse du cochon' (Wisdom of the Animal) praised Tagore for his thoughts about Brahma and human harmony. The 24 March 1924 edition of La Cloche Fêlée carried a reprint of "Rab Tagore est Attendu en Chine," which enumerated on Tagore's reception by Chinese students, Tagore's speech on refusing the title "Sir" and the patriotic activities of Tagore.[36]

The Tonkin journal *Nam Phong tạp chí* published articles pertaining to Tagore upon news of his visit to Saigon. Volumes 83 and 84 of 1924 contained the articles 'Một nhà đại thi sĩ Ấn Độ: ông R. Tagore' (The Great Indian Poet: Mr. Rabindranath Tagore) and the quốc ngữ version of Tagore's speech, 'Declaration of the East,' ;Volumes 93 and 94 contained the article 'Đất châu Á mới – hai nhân vật – hai sự nghiệp' (The New Asian Land – Two Characters – Two Careers) by Sylvain Lévi, who was

the first foreign lecturer at Visva–Bharata and who had a "really intimate [relationship] with Tagore and his circle" (Tagore, Selected Letters 353).[37]

"A large amount of announcements and articles about Tagore and his visit found a place in both French and quốc ngữ newspapers in Saigon including *L'Écho annamite, Tribune Inchinoise, Đông Pháp thời báo, La Cloche Fêlée*, *Thần Chung, Công giáo đồng thịnh, Đuốc Nhà Nam, and Phụ nữ tân văn*. Among these magazines and newspapers, *Tribune Inchinoise* and *Đuốc Nhà Nam* were the official mouthpieces about the event, as their founders, respectively Bùi Quang Chiêu (1872-1945) and Dương Văn Giáo (1900-1945), were members of the official Welcome Committee." [38]

Rabindranath Tagore sailed for India in a French postal boat, S.S. Angers and reached Saigon at 11:30 am on 21 June 1929. The Welcome Committee in Saigon mainly constituted representatives of the French colonial administration- the Honory president, M. Béziet; the President, Bùi Quang Chiêu; French-Vice President, Monribot; Hindu Vice President, Xavier; Treasurer, Nguyễn Văn Của; and Secretary, Lê Trung Nghĩa. Arrangements for his stay involved the combined work of the colonial counselor Diệp Văn Giáp who provided a large villa at 35 Barbier Street for stay, the government which provided the cars and the "Bombay people" who were responsible for his food. [39]

As shown by Chi P Pham's in depth study of Tagore's visit to Vietnam, his itinerary was pre-determined by his hosts and was planned down to detail with a focus on cultural and traditional activities. In addition to visits to indigenous, Chinese and Indian places of worship (the Tomb Lê Văn Duyệt, Pagoda Cantonese, Chetty Pagoda), his itinerary included attending events organised to promote art and religion such as visit to the l' Ecole de poteric (College of Fine Art) in Biên Hòa, attending the cinema with films about the cultures of Tonkin and the opening function of the Institute of poetry, Murugananda Vasagasala. [40]

Tagore desired to travel to Angkor but was unable to do so then as the French Embassy instructed Saigon to abstain from including a visit to Angkor in Tagore's programme. [41] In most of his speeches Tagore "seems to have tried to make Annamite people more aware of their culture and used his rhetorical figures and his poetic speech to touch upon some Annamite sensitivity for losing beautiful traditions."[42]

In the speech given at the welcoming ceremony, Tagore requested people see him as:

"A messenger of passing opportunities. Although I stand outside your door, I am seeking a place in your hearts. At this moment, please accept me even in the situation that the flourishing age [of Indian civilization in Annam] is blurred, the light of happiness being together [India and Annam] is losing." [43]

"I bring you the greetings of that radiant India, who lavished her light on this land as well as the message of sympathy and brotherhood of present India who lives separated from you by geographic distance and by the dead solitude of her own darkness*"* said Rabindranath Tagore when he visited Saigon in 1929.[44]

Tagore: "Looking back into several centuries, I am dreaming of a time in (India), which is still flowing strongly in my blood. Today I am bringing to you evidence of the time when our cultures met together through documents, archives and art works to awaken your spirit. The time (of India in Annam) became ominous and was buried in several pages of historiography; that period is like a sapphire which was dissolved because of time, and left a beautiful but dried box of old hints behind...The Indian soul was once vital under the sunny sights of beaches of this area. The ancient Indian is here; India brought many thinkers to convey beautiful ideas to this area. The soul of India is still in my mind; it seems like I was walking around the countryside of my hometown, which is at the very momentum of disappearance."[45]

The lost Indian/Asian values that Tagore looked for in Annam seems to have been Buddhism and religiosity and in the course of his trip he was pre occupied with thoughts of visiting Angkor which

symbolised the presence of the ancient Indian culture in Southeast Asia. On his arrival at Nhà Bè port, Tagore expressed his desire to visit Angkor Wat and he agreed to visit Eden Cinema in the belief that he would see films about Angkor Wat. To his disappointment the films were about the cultures and landscapes of Tonkin and the films on Angkor Wat were said to be ruined due to humidity. His interest in Buddhism is evident in the conversations he had with the Governor-General Pierre Pasquier (1928-34) and on 24 June he "expressed his special interest in the connections between poetry and religion and his love for the peaceful environment of Buddhist pagodas."[46] These interaction and conversations with a focus on Buddhism had fruitful results as the Governor of Indochina signed a decree that led to the establishment of p an institute for teaching and studying Buddhism and moral lessons in Cochin China.[47]

On his day of arrival a second reception was organized at Theatre Principal where "As soon as Tagore entered the theatre, the audience seem[ed] to stop breathing… when listening to Tagore's speech, the audience was so quiet that the sounds of flying mosquitoes was audible." At this reception even prior to Rabindranath's speech, three speeches were delivered- 'Présentation du Rabindra Nath Tagore' 'Address A. Ranbindra Nath Tagore', and 'Traduction de l' allocution de Rabindra Nath Tagore',' by Bùi Quang Chiêu, Dương Văn Giáo and Trần Văn Trị, respectively. The English speech of Tagore had been translated before the meeting; a French translation was read by Jacques Đức, and the quốc ngữ translation by Hồ Văn Ngươn.[48]

Tagore met the governor of Cochin China on the second day and he asked for some books about Indochina for his university. Thereafter he was accompanied by Jean Kerjean (secretary of Court de' Appel and interpreter), Trần Văn Kha (colonial counselor), Trần Khăc Nương (delegate of the Municipal Counciel), Tamby (cadastral commissioner), Hồ Văn Ngươn (representative of Annamite journalists), and several Hindu people on his visit to L' Ecole de poteric (College of Fine Art) in Biên Hòa . Tagore took much interest while being guided, by the chief of Biên Hòa province and the director of the college, through classes and showrooms. He saw the artistic works in ceramic and bronze and he particularly liked the white stone vases with painted yellow flowers. Tagore purchased a ceramic vase and two lampshades for his students in Santiniketan and signed the visitors' book of the College. There after he visited the tomb of Lê Văn Duyệt, a 19th Century mandarin who had rescued Christian missionaries, where Annamite music was played to welcome him. Being tired from the journey to Biên Hòa Tagore did not attend the tea party at the site, but attended the big champagne party in the Union Printing House held in his honour. Nguyễn Văn Của the district chief and owner of Printing House, had a collection of ancient artistic items and offered the model of an Annamite battleship which was lacquered in red and trimmed with gold as a gift to Tagore. The photographer Khánh Kì took two photos of Tagore in Của's company. Later in the evening Tagore visited the Eden Cinema in Saigon.[49]

His interaction with the Indian community in Saigon took place on the third day of his visit when he visited the Catinat Street where was guided during his exploration of several Bombay shops and one Annam textile shop by Wastamull, the owner of one of the Bombay textile stores, while. Tagore took an interest in the textiles and not only bought a piece of Annam brocade, but also keenly observed the weaving and dyeing of a piece of satin by Annamites. On his third day he wore Annamite tunic stitched by the tailor Trần Thái Nguyên on Tagore's request. His dress constituted a bright brocade shirt, white silk trousers, Gia Định shoes, and a crepe hat made Tagore. [50] "Saigon people were interested in and surprised at the offer Tagore had made; he wanted to take a walk on Saigon streets in Annam dress... Immediately the next morning, on the crowded streets of Saigon, there was a big Indian with white hair and beard and dressed in a Vietnamese bright brocade tunic, white silk trousers, Gia Định shoes, and crepe hat walking peacefully; he looked as if he was a real Saigoner."[51]

The other two events attended by Tagore were a reception hosted by the Chinese Chamber at the

Pagoda Cantonese on Cây Mai Street in Cholon and a religious ceremony at a Chetty temple. In the former Tagore conversed with members of the Chamber regarding the significance of Chinese knowledge for India as well as Asia. At the Chetty temple, "A group of Indians came to the Chamber's reception and brought Tagore and his companions in a car decorated with flowers to the Pagoda for Lễ nhất châu diên Viện tàng thơ Murugananda Vasagasala [the opening ceremony of the Institute of Poetry Murugananda Vasagasala]. Tagore was invited to lead the ceremony along with Bùi Quang Chiêu and Lefebrve, Vice-President of Saigon. Garlands were offered to Tagore, Chiêu and Lefebrve; other members of the Welcome Committee were offered a flower. A girl named Kathéappa Thévarvin chanted a song by Passecarane, an Indian poet, to honor Tagore. The Indians gave Tagore a gift of 2101 piasire, which were placed in the middle of a tray of betel leaves."[52]

Post Tagore's departure a number of articles and books pertaining to him and writings continued to be published which were non-political in nature. "The intellectuals of Saigon's moderate newspapers intensively embellished the essence of religiousness and the morality embodied by Tagore. They tended to gaze at Tagore, himself, as the essence of the Oriental and promoted cultural similarities between Indian culture embodied by Tagore and Annamites to indicate that India is Annam's cultural and moral root." [53]

Phụ nữ tân văn published an article about Santiniketan of Tagore on 30 October 1930, in which he criticized the old teaching methods of Vietnam and alternative methodologies resembling those at Santiniketan, such as studying in the open air were suggested.[54] The weekly French-Quốc ngữ bilingual journal *Đông Dương tạp chí* printed quốc ngữ versions of short stories by Tagore and included 'My Fair Neighbor', a Short Story Written in English by the Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore (17July 1937) and 'Suba', a Short Story by the Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore (24July,1937) which were translated from French.[55] The book Thi hào Tagore is the most exhaustive work written on Tagore is *Nhà đại biểu văn hóa Á Đông (The Real Poet – R. Tagore – The Representative of the East*) by Nguyễn Văn Hải (Tân Việt Publishing House, 1942). It has five chapters which discuss in detail Rabindranath Tagore's life, career and thoughts. These constitute- Chapter 1 Bengali Renaissances which discusses cultural traditions and political situations of Bengal that influenced Tagore's poetry; Chapter 2- The Cradle of a Genius speaks of how family and education influenced Tagore's career; Chapter 3 - Poems of Tagore is about Tagore's views on poetry; Chapter 4- Thoughts of Tagore delves into Tagore's thoughts on devotion to humanity, the relations between humans and the universe, humans and God, and Eastern culture and Western civilization; Chapter 5- The Institute of Peace is on Tagore's policies on his international institute of peace, Santiniketan; and the last part of the book lists Tagore's works in Bengali and French.[56]

According to Pham, "Writings and visual descriptions of Tagore, translations of Tagore's literary works and even photographs were mostly imagined and illusionary, and focused intensely on Tagore's penetrating gaze and his eyes, rather than explicating his speeches.[57]…During the Tagore's visit, the audience focused more on Tagore's appearance than his speech. Tagore appears not to have talked much or shared much during his visit to Saigon; his voice seems to have been sunk under programmed speeches of the committee. For example, at the reception of Tagore at Hôtel de Ville on June 21 …Tagore appears to have been silent while there were continuous speeches by the honored host Béziet and by representatives of Annamite, Hindu and French journals and governmental offices.[58]"

## 3. Travel by Indian and Vietnamese Leaders in the 1950's

In the political arena even though contact between political leaders occurred in early part of the 20th century, it is during the 1950's that a number of state delegations from India and Vietnam visited each other's countries. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru as well as Ho Chi Minh were keen on the support and co-operation amongst Asian nations under colonial rule.

Gokhale, who examined the origin and development of Nehru's vision of Asia, is of opinion that the concepts of Nationalism and Asianism… remained constant in his thought for over half a century.[59] Asianism of Nehru has been characterized as 'pacifist and benevolent', which differs from the somewhat aggressive Pan-Asianism of Japan[60] and was 'tempered with realism' as argued by Datta-Ray.[61]

The idea of pan Asianism found roots among leaders of the Congress during the 1920s such as Chittaranjan Das, Srinivasa Iyengar, Mukhtar Ansari. They believed in promoting a federation or union of Asian nations that were under colonial rule. Chittaranjan Das's Swaraj Party had as one of its programmes the formation of a Pan-Asiatic Federation.[62] Srinivasa Iyengar at Guwahati on December 1926 stated: "The time has perhaps come for us seriously to think of a Federation of Asiatic peoples for their common welfare... We have too long neglected the possibilities of a cultural and business union with all Asiatic Countries."[63]

The Brussels International Congress against Imperialism attended by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1927 seems to have been the motivation behind his idea of the formation of an Asian federation. The League against Imperialism Conference in the Egmont Palace in Brussels, Belgium, on February 10, 1927, attended by 175 delegates, of which 107 came from 37 countries under colonial rule .[64] Even though Nehru and other Asian delegates had a 'strong desire' for establishment of some Asiatic federation and closer bond among Asian countries,[65] but Nehru 'could not understand how an effective Asiatic organization could be built up'[66] and thus he and the other Asian delegates decided that it was 'premature to talk of any special Asiatic organization'.[67] It is from the meeting between Nehru and Ho Chi Minh during this Congress that close relations between India and Vietnam were established.

"The Indian independence movement had its impact on the independent movements of the neighbouring countries including Indochina. Indian nationalists' evinced keen interest in the nationalist activities of the neighbouring Asian countries. The Indian national leaders perceived the anti- colonial struggle in Southeast Asia as indivisible from their own freedom struggle against colonialism. Nehru was convinced that the future of India could not be separated from the future of Asia particularly Southeast Asia." [68] Jawaharlal Nehru recommended to the Indian National Congress to invite delegations from other countries to discuss common issues and on a few occasions nationalists from Vietnam attended the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress,[69] such as Gieu who attended the Calcutta session of Indian National congress. [70]

Subhas Chandra Bose attended the Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations held in Tokyo in November 1943 as the Head of the Provisional Government of Free India'.[71] And saw the establishment of GACPS is of 'vital interest', and emphasized the significance of the GACPS for the entire Asian people and the role of India as the more than a bridge between East and West Asia. Subhas Bose believed that the establishment of the GACPS would pave the way for a Pan-Asiatic Federation.[72]

The Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh was keen to use regional cooperation to further the cause of Vietnamese independence[73] and in September 1945, Ho Chi Minh expressed his interest in the creation of a 'pan-Asiatic community' comprising Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaya, Burma, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines (China, Japan, and Korea were not included in Ho's vision of an Asiatic community.

The great leader Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote many articles on India and in1921 he published his first article about India, 'Revolutionary Movement in India'[74] (in *La Revue Communiste* of August and September 1921, No. 18-19)[75] and other articles included *English 'Colonization'* (in *La Vie Ouvriere*, 9 November 1923); *Letter from India* (March 1928); *Workers' Movement in India* (April 1928); *Indian Peasants* (April 1928); *Peasant and Workers Movements in India* (May 1928). "Through events, with figures on the number of movements, number of Indian workers and peasants participating in the struggle against the atrocious oppression and exploitation of British colonialists, the content of

Nguyen Ai Quoc's articles expressed sympathy and deep concern for the patriotic movement, the Freedom Struggle of the people of India." [76]

Ho Chi Minh wrote, "O the children of India! Please stand up and unite! Homeland needs all you people!"[77] He wrote a poem in Han, from prison in Guangxi, on Jawaharlal Nehru. "To Nehru" - a poem that Ho Chi Minh wrote on Nehru in his "Prison Diary" in 1942-1943:

*To Nehru*

*I am struggling, you are active*

*You are in Jail, I am in prison*

*Ten thousand miles apart, we have not met*

*We communicate without words.*

*Shared ideas link you and me*

*What we lack is personal encounter*

*I am jailed by a neighbouring friend*

*You are chained and fettered by the enemy.*[78]

Ho chi Minh wrote a series of articles in International Press Correspondence, on Indian struggle for independence from 1924 to 1931.[79] Nehru and Ho Chi Minh exchanged letters during the 1940's wherein they were "trying to project each other's countries problems".[80] The Vietnamese people showed profound sympathy and supported the freedom struggle in India. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were held in high esteem by the Vietnamese people. During the World War-II, the Vietnamese helped Indian independence movement led by Subash Chandra Bose.[81] The developments in Indochina after the Second World War received the attention of Indian Nationalist leaders. A contingent of Indian soldiers from the Twentieth Indian division were amongst the British troops, sent to Saigon in late September 1945 to disarm the Japanese. The All India Congress Committee in December at the Calcutta meeting passed a resolution declaring that "any support from any quarter to imperialist designs in Indonesia, Indochina, and elsewhere, is resented throughout Asia..." (Background of India's Foreign policy, p.90) In November 1946, Nehru successfully blocked an attempt to organize a volunteer brigade to fight against the French colonial forces.[82] Sarat Chandra Bose, urged Indians to fight side by side with the Indochinese against the French troops and he viewed the struggle of Indochina as part of the Asiatic struggle for freedom from Western domination and called on the Indians to "rush to the rescue" of the Vietnamese forces, to join as volunteers in their "thousands and tens of thousands", and to assist the heroic Indochine.[83](*The Times*, London, 4 January, 1947).

On 2 September 1946 an interim government headed by Nehru was formed in India which sided with Indochina's struggle for freedom. In 1946, Ho-Chi-Minh sent a representative to Delhi with the aim of winning the sympathy of the Indian leaders for "the Vietnam Republican government's cause, condemning French policy in Indochina, blocking the work of the French purchasing mission in New Delhi, and preventing the repair of French planes and the refuelling of French ships. These requests were met by Nehru, but only partially. On 18 February 1947, Nehru stated in the Legislative Assembly that the government of India shared the feeling of public opinion in India in favour of Vietnam and the freedom of the people of Indochina, and was anxious not to be a party in any way to any action which might be prejudicial to their interests. He disclosed that the government had taken steps to limit the number of French aircraft which might fly across India, and to exercise stricter control in the future."[84]

'Vietnam Day' was observed by students in India on 21 January 1947 to show their solidarity with Vietnam and on this day demonstrations before the French Consulate in Bombay and Calcutta were held with slogans resounding with the call for the withdrawal of French troops from Indochina.[85] Indian volunteers were recruited by Congress members in Pondicherry[86], and S.A. Dange, vice-president of the all India Trade Union Congress, called on the docker's union to boycott French ships calling at Indian ports carrying troops and arms to and from Indochina.[87] At Calcutta, demonstrations by students turned into riots and the police had to use tear gas and open fire to disperse the demonstrators. In this riot, 19 students were wounded by bullets, 50 injured

by lathi charges, and 500 arrested.[88] (*The Times*, 22 January 1947)

Nehru as the Vice-President of the Executive Council of the interim government undertook the task to organize and host a conference of Asian countries in India. The purpose of holding the conference was the discussion of problems of mutual interest like economic development, freedom movements, migration and racial problems, and the status of woman. The Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi from 23rd March to 2nd April, 1947, which was of great importance and event of 'considerable historic significance' for him.[89] It was attended by two hundred and forty three delegates from twenty eight countries.[90] Nehru stated: "We have no designs against anybody; ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world. For too long have we of Asia been petitioners in Western courts and chancellories. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own legs and to co-operate with all others who are prepared to co-operate with us. We do not intend to be the playthings of others."[91] The plenary session of the conference decided to set up an Asian Relations Organization with a Provisional General Council and also academies for promotion of Asian studies. Nehru at his speech in the Asian Relations Conference emphasized that "The idea of having an Asian Conference is not new and many have thought of it. ...the idea of such a Conference arose simultaneously in many minds and in many countries of Asia."[92]

In Nehru's words the first Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi was an "expression of the deeper urge of the mind and spirit of Asia which has persisted in spite of the isolationism which grew up during the years of European domination."[93].

Representatives of both Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai attended the Asian Relation Conference in March 1947 and Ho Chi Minh's representative asked for material, political and moral support. Nehru, was cautious in his approach to the problems of Indochina States and at the time did not give formal recognition to either of the government in Indochina region.[94] But at the same time the government and the people of India extended full sympathy to the Vietnamese independence struggle and in December 1946 Nehru stated to the France that "Our hearts are with the people of Indochina. The attempt to crush the spirit of freedom in Indochina has deeply moved the Indian people... Though it is difficult for Indians to know the facts of the conflict, one thing is patent that foreign armed forces are trying to crush Vietnam".[95]

Ho-Chi-Minh's representative, Pham Ngoc-Thach, came to Delhi in April 1948 and was received by prominent Indian leaders, including Mr. Rajendra Prasad, Mr. V. Patel, and Nehru. A non-official mission headed by N. Pillai had been sent to Saigon on 22 February 1948.[96] Two other attempts were made by the Ho-Chi-Minh government in 1950 to win Indian recognition, but they also failed.[97]

On the other hand "When Bao-Dai's representative came to seek recognition for his government in January 1950, no arrangement was made for a meeting of him with Mr. Nehru. When Mr. Nehru was asked at a press conference in Delhi on January 6, 1950, whether the government of India had received any request for recognition from the Vietnam government, and what Bao-Dai's representative was doing in Delhi, he replied he was not sure if any formal request had been made, but that certainly some kind of informal approaches have taken place". He repeated, however, that "our policy is not to give official recognition in Indochina to any government". Nehru said. "Whatever he wants to do, he has come here in his private capacity and officially he is not accredited to us, no do we recognise him in any capacity".[98]

Nehru declared that the developments in Indochina were of "grave concern and grievous significance" to his country, and "The maintenance of the independence and sovereignty of Asian countries as well as the end of colonial and foreign rule are essential, he said, for the prosperity of Asian peoples and for the peace of the world[99] ….We only seek to keep ourselves and others, particularly our neighbours, he affirmed, to a policy of peace and of non-alignment in world tensions and wars".[100]

Nehru was the first foreign leader to visit Hanoi on the establishment of the separate North Vietnamese state in October 1954 and his public embrace of Ho Chi Minh reportedly provided him "incalculable prestige."[101]

The government of India adopted a policy of non-involvement in Indochina till 1954 when the conflict between France and the Viet-Minh and presence great powers, notably the USA and the People's Republic of China (PRC), changed India's position with regard to Vietnam. The fighting at Dien Bien Phu and American plans to launch the 'United Action Plan' in association with France and Great Britain led Nehru to give up non-involvement in the region and appealed for a cease-fire and put forward six-point proposal which formed the basis of negotiations.[102] The suggestions put forward by Mr. Nehru as a basis for a peace settlement in Indochina contained the following points: 1) a climate of peace and conciliation; 2) a cease-fire; 3) independence for the three states; 4) direct negotiations between the parties immediately and principally concerned; 5) non-intervention; and 6) informing the United Nations and using its good offices[103]. The Geneva conference to resolve was held from 9 May to 21 July 1954 and even though India was not officially a part of it, "Without India it would have been difficult to establish an indirect dialogue between the opposite camps". V K Krishna Menon was sent on behalf of the Indian Government and he arrived in Geneva on 23 April. Though initially Nehru planned to stay there for a few days, it was not before for three weeks that he returned. [104]

Menon explained: "we did not stand on dignity, we just stood on the door step and we tried to be helpful."[105] Sar Desai, a Southeast Asian specialist, observes: "From the position of an out cast at the Geneva conference, India had moved to occupy the crucial position of a custodian entrusted with the supervision of Geneva settlement over Indochina".[106] Pierre Mendes-France, the Prime Minister of France, spoke of the conference as "this ten power conference - nine at the table - and India". "In the days following the Agreement, India tried to make China and North Vietnam repeatedly commits themselves to the principles of peaceful co-existence and thus tried to allay the fears of the non-communist countries in South-East Asia. This was all the more necessary because of the establishment of the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), whose primary aim was to prevent the spread of communism in the region."[107]

The conference resulted in the division of Vietnam into North and South Vietnam at the 17th Parallel. The Vietnamese troops were to vacate Laos and Cambodia and provision was made for the concentration of Pathet Lao troops in the two North-Eastern provinces of Laos pending a political settlement. The division of Vietnam was provisional and in July 1956 the elections were to be held in Vietnam after re-unification. No foreign troops were to be stationed or bases established and that the countries of Indochina would not ask for and join military alliances. India's share of the ICSC personnel was overwhelming whereas Canada and Poland sent about 160 men out of which, Indian contingent numbered 1,086 on 25 March 1955.[108] In an answer to a question on the expenditure so far incurred by India on the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, the Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, in a written reply stated in Lok Sabha on Sep 04, 1958 that the total expenditure incurreb dy India on the Commission since its inception up to May 1958, was Rs. 61,80,248.83. Out of this amount, Rs. 39,65,437.62 is recoverable from the Geneva Powers, being the expenditure incurred on their behalf. Nov 04, 1958.[109]

In October 1954, Nehru visited Hanoi on his way to Peking and "he was received with great honor as a first dignitary to their country".[110] President Ho Chi Minh during a state banquet for the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Today, the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are happy to welcome Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, the beloved leader of the great India, a soldier who commits to peace in Asia and the world, our Vietnamese' unshakeable good friend"[111]. After the official visit of Prime Minister J. Nehru, the first pages of the history of beautiful Vietnam - India friendship opened.

In a conversation with the Chinese Premier Chou, Nehru talks of Ho Chi Minh and the Geneva Conference

Chou: Your Excellency must have talked with Ho Chi Minh. In our view every article of the Geneva Agreement must be implemented. We wish that the situation in Laos may be stabilized. We support its unity and hope that this will be useful for expanding areas of peace and India in its capacity as Chairman can expedite the implementation of this Agreement

Chou: Menon asked the question and I then told him that you would require between 500 to 1,000 persons. We can understand that it is difficult to spare so many officers. India has of course a very arduous task and we will always support you. We hope you will achieve more success.

Q: Could you tell us something about your talks with Dr Ho Chi Minh? JN: I had very friendly talks with Dr Ho Chi Minh. Primarily, they were concerned with the situation in Indo-China. Dr Ho assured me that they wanted to abide by the Geneva Agreements completely, and they would do so. We hope that this will result in friendly and satisfactory settlements between the powers concerned. Dr Ho expressed his friendliness to France and said that, in spite of past history, he would like to maintain friendly contacts with France. He also told us that the International Commission was functioning very well. In fact, till that time all the decisions of the International Commission, consisting of India, Canada and Poland, had been unanimous. Dr Ho also referred to Laos and Cambodia, and said that he would welcome their free and independent existence. He hoped to have friendly contacts with neighbouring countries, including Thailand. (Press conference, Beijing, 26 October 1954. From Jawaharlal: Nehru: Press Conferences 1954. Information Service of India, Government of India. New Delhi.)

**Q: Would you describe Dr Ho Chi Minh as a man of peace?**

JN: Dr Ho Chi Minh struck me not only very much as a man of peace, but as an extraordinarily likeable and friendly person.[112]

His experience in Vietnam is expressed in a letter to Edwina Mountbatten dated 2nd November 1954:

Hanoi had changed hands just five days before I arrived there and the Vietminh were in possession. Ho Chi Minh had not made his official entry, but he came down to see me. The city had a queer rather fearful look. The streets had been cleared, people sat on their thresholds, looking rather glum. But there were many Vietminh flags in the shops and houses. Ho Chi Minh produced an instant impression upon me, which was good. He is one of the most likeable men 1 have come across. He gives one the impression of integrity, goodwill and peace. His Foreign Minister and Vice Premier, Pham Dong, also struck me favourably. Not only in Hanoi but in the other states of Indo-China some of the communist or near-communist leaders I met were obviously superior in character and ability to the others who seemed to have no clear aim and who were unable even to cooperate with each other. There is no doubt that if there was an election now in Vietnam, there would be a tremendous majority in favour of Ho Chi Minh. South Vietnam produced a completely opposite effect on me. The whole place seemed to be at sixes and sevens with hardly any dominant authority. The Prime Minister and his General were opposed to each other. There were three private armies of some kind of semi-religious sects. Foreign representatives apparently also pulled in different directions. It was generally estimated that if there was a vote now, ninety per cent or more of the population would vote for Vietminh. What would happen a year or two later, one could not say.[113]

Leaders of both North and South Vietnam visited India as well. In the case of South Vietnam, prior to visits by premiers of states steps were taken towards economic co-operation and trade agreements. In August 1956, a South Vietnamese mission headed by Nguyen-Huu Chau, secretary of state to the presidency came to Delhi which resulted in increased trade between the two countries -. India's exports to Vietnam jumped from Rs. 3,373,000 in 1956-57 to Rs. 9,649,00 in 1957, and again to Rs. 17,131,000 in 1958. Overall Indian exports to Indochina also increased from Rs. 1,275,000 in 1954-56 to

18,726,000 in 1957 and Rs. 23,830,000 in 1958.[114] India was granted the benefit of the minimum tariff along with only nineteen other countries and the South Vietnam government requested India to send an expert to Vietnam to advise it on small savings. *The Hindustan Times* reported " The South Vietnam delegation led by Nguyen Huu Chau, …has made considerable impression by the earnest by which its members have talked to the people concerned with trade and industry. Indian opinion is particularly amenable to the types of arguments used by Mr Nguyen Huu Chau. If South Vietnam is with the SEATO powers, it is because she wants security…. Their country is culturally linked with India, feels at ease with the Indian Government, which, it knows will not try to extend its political sway outside its frontiers."[115]

The vice-president S. Radhakrishnan paid an official visit to Saigon in September 1957, and issued a statement wherein he was "impressed with the concern which the Government of Vietnam has for the welfare of the people". President Ngo-Dinh-Diem was invited to visit India officially in November 1957 and president Ngo-Dinh-Diem "praised the work of the International Commission and expressed appreciation for India's financial sacrifice in shouldering the burden of maintaining peace in Vietnam and assured that his government would do everything in its power to facilitate the "high mission" assumed by India in Vietnam. At the same time, he expressed his pleasure at the "confident" relations between his government and the International Commission, and thanked India for her continuing support of Vietnam during the ninth Colombo Conference and for her technical aid."[116]

President Ngo Dinh Diem visited India on 4 November 1957 on the invitation by the Government of India. Ngo Dinh Nhu visited India from April 17 to 22 and was received by Nehru and V K Krishna Menon. Eight Indian Air force jets escorted him from Aligarh to Delhi by and he was given full civil and military honours appropriate to a visiting head of state of an important friendly country. A 21 gun salute, a guard of honour and a state drive along an eight mile route lined by the populace.[117]

Taya Zinkin, Delhi correspondent of *Le Monde*, wrote: "Of the visits of statesmen in India, that of Mr. Ngo-Dinh-Diem has been one of the most remarkable and the most successful... In Diem the Indians have discovered a nationalist and independent patriot". *The Statesman* reported "Mr. Diem is undoubtedly among the more remarkable leaders thrown up by war and ferment in postwar Asia". The *Hindustan Times* described Mr. Ngo-Dinh-Diem as "one of the heroes" of Asia, and *The Hindu* noted that president Diem's statement that he was not joining SEATO and was thus not committing himself permanently to the power bloc system "will be warmly welcomed in this country which is anxious to see Indochina function as a fully independent State with its own democratic system.":[118]

In 1957 a number of technicians involved in Da Nhim project visited India to study Indian hydro electrical projects. In December 1958 an official delegation comprising Vu Van Thai (director general of budget and foreign aid), and Tran Van Chieu (President of the Saigon Chamber of Commerce) visited the India 1958 exhibit in New Delhi. In the same year two delegations visited South Vietnam from India-Indian Engineering Export Promotion Council and Indian Jute Mills Association.[119]The Indian government agreed to the open a consulate-general of the Republic of Vietnam in Delhi. The government experts and technicians who had accompanied visited India's industrial and agricultural projects and held discussions with members of India's Planning Commission.

In March 1959, president Rajendra Prasad paid an official visit to Vietnam who praised president Ngo-Dinh Diem as one "who in his life exemplifies the energy and the building enthusiasm of the people to be free and to grow and prosper according to their genius", and complimented the Vietnamese people for being "fortunate in her leadership who realise the importance of development and reconstruction at home and friendly cooperation with neighbouring countries",[120] he also gifted a sapling of the Bodhi tree.

The South Vietnamese President Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem contributed humanitarian aid in the form

of rice to Tibetan Buddhist refugees in the late 1950s-early 1960s. According to an old *Chicago Tribune* dated 11 December, 1959, President Diem offered the Tibetan refugees with "surplus rice for a year." Which amounted to 200 tons, according to Indian Parliament's "Rajya Sabha Debates, 1952-2005," and an article by Tran Trung Dao dated 30August 2014) on *Dan Chim Viet online* notes that the President donated rice to the Tibetan Buddhist refugees through the Government of India not only twice and that the total amount of rice sent to India from South Vietnam during these two was 1,500 tons.[121]

At the invitation of the Government of India, His Excellency Dr. Ho Chi Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, visited India from Feb 05, 1958 to 13 February 1958. President Ho Chi Minh at the Gia Lam airport prior to departure said, "India is a very big country and Indian people are heroic. Previously, they were at the same colonial oppression as we were; people of India and Burma won national independence and now are on the building of their country. We are going to learn many valuable experiences through this visit. When return, we will tell you fellows and comrades, to learn from our brotherly nations." [122]

He was received at the airport by Nehru who spoke of him as "a great revolutionary and an almost legendary hero".[123] This visit has been recorded in the Foreign Affairs Record of India- February 1958. On 6 February President Prasad held a State Banquet in honour of the distinguished visitor. Speaking on the occasion President Prasad said:

I have great pleasure in welcoming in our midst tonight His Excellency Dr. Ho Chi Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. We are very glad that His Excellency found it possible to visit this country in response to our invitation. In him we welcome a distinguished leader of men and a great fighter for freedom. India is a young Republic; we celebrated the 8th anniversary of our Republic only two weeks ago. Having remained under foreign domination for long years we know what a boon political emancipation is, and so our sympathies have always been on the side of the countries struggling for freedom from foreign rule. We have followed with great interest and sympathy post-war events in Viet-Nam, which culminated in the Armistice Agreement at the Geneva Conference in 1954. Let us hope that the present phase will yield place in course of time to the formation of unified Viet-Nam by peaceful means and on the basis of democratic principles.

India is an ancient country whose past goes beyond the dawn of history stretching into the period known as the pre-historic era. Many centuries ago we had close ties, cultural, social and religious, with many countries in South-East Asia, including Viet-Nam. It gives us great pleasure to recollect those times when our two countries were bound by close ties of friendship; more so because we are looking forward to projecting the friendly relations of the past into the future so that our common ties and the desire for economic reconstruction at home and the consolidation of peace in the world forge new links for us making the friendly ties already subsisting between our peoples still stronger. Like Viet-Nam, India is also a predominantly agricultural country. Since the transfer of power into our hands we have been busy with planning in order to develop our material resources. We are in the midst of a varied programme of development which includes the establishment of heavy industries, implementation of big and small hydroelectric projects, improving our agriculture and putting the village industries and arts and crafts on a modern and a better footing. I hope during your stay in this country Your Excellency will be able to see at least a few of these projects. Once again I extend a hearty welcome to Your Excellency on behalf of the people and the Government of India and hope that Your Excellency's sojourn in this country will be enjoyable and that it will bring still closer in fruitful collaboration the peoples of India and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam.[124]

**President Ho Chi Minh in his speech said:**

I wish to sincerely thank H.E. the President for his kind and friendly greetings. This is an honour not only for me personally, but also for the whole

people of Vietnam. We are very happy and deeply moved to come to great India, the cradle of one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Indian culture, philosophy and art have had a glorious development and made great contributions to mankind. The basis and tradition of Indian philosophy is the ideal of peace and fraternity. For many centuries, Buddhist thought and Indian art and science have been expanding all over the world. But, colonialism imposed its rule over India for hundreds of years and hindered the Indian people's development. To recover their independence and freedom, the Indian people had been heroically and perseveringly struggling against colonialism. Now, India is a great power with an increasingly important role on the world stage. The Indian government and people have greatly contributed to the preservation of world peace, to the development of friendly relations and cooperation among nations, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Faithful to the Bandung spirit, the Indian government has made important contributions to the building of the great unity between Asian and African countries. In the economic field, the Indian Government and people have fulfilled the first Five-Year Plan and are striving to carry out the second Five-Year Plan. In the cultural field, your scientists, and intellectuals have promoted the glorious traditions of Mahatma Gandhi and of the great poet Tagore and are contributing all their strength to the building of the country. We sincerely wish the brotherly Indian people greater and greater successes and wish increasing prosperity to India. At present, the forces of aggression in the world are plotting to push mankind into a most disastrous war, but the peoples the world over loathe and are fed up with war. The people have uneasingly struggled to preserve and consolidate peace. In this struggle for peace India has made valuable contributions. The forces of peace are now stronger than ever and are capable of preventing war. But the warmongers have not given up their plans of aggression. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam warmly welcomes all initiatives, all efforts aimed at lessening international tension. We fully agree with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in supporting the Soviet proposals for a conference of leaders of various countries, with a view strengthening international cooperation and mutual confidence to preserve world peace. We are also opposed to all military aggressive blocs. We stand for general disarmament, for the prohibition of the tests and use of atomic and hydrogen weapons. The policy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is to make all possible contributions to the cause of world peace. At present, in Vietnam, on account of colonialist interference, national reunification by free general elections as provided for in the Geneva. Agreements has not yet been realized. That is hurting the feelings of the Vietnamese people and is an infringement on our national sovereignty. For thousands of years, Vietnam has been one, the Vietnamese people have been one, no force can divide it. We are determined to struggle for the reunification of our country by peaceful means and on the basis of independence and democracy. Having a just cause and with the unity of the whole people and the sympathy and support of the world, we are confident that Vietnam will be reunified. On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the Vietnamese people, I wish to thank the International Commission with India as its chairman for the efforts in the supervision and control of the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam. In its struggle for the consolidation of peace and for national reunification, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the people of Vietnam are always grateful for the sympathy and support of the Government and people of brotherly India. The Vietnamese people will always remember that Mahatma Gandhi lent the support to their resistance in its early stage, and that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has many times raised his voice in protest against the war of aggression in Vietnam. The visits of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and of Vice President S. Radhakrishnan to Vietnam have further promoted friendship between our two countries. We are convinced that our present visit to India will further strengthen these friendly relations and at the same time contribute to the consolidations and promotion of solidarity among Asian and African

countries. In conclusion, may I propose a toast to the health of H.E. President Rajendra Prasad and H.E. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, to the health of all the ladies and gentlemen present, to the prosperity of the Great Republic of India, to the unshakable friendship of the Indian people and the Vietnamese people, to the continual strengthening of solidarity among Asian and African countries, to the consolidation of peace in Asia and in the world, and Panchsheel.[125]

**Nehru-Ho Chi Minh Joint Statement issued a joint statement at the conclusion of the visit:**

At the invitation of the Government of India, His Excellency Dr HoChi-Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, visited India from 5 to 13 February 1958. During his stay, the President visited places of historical and cultural interest, hydro-electric projects, industrial centres and community development projects. The President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam met the President of India, the Prime Minister of India and other members of the Government of India, and took the opportunity of his visit to have a friendly and informal exchange of views with the Prime Minister on the international situation, and matters of mutual interest to their two countries. The President expressed his deep appreciation of the warm welcome given to him and of the friendship of the Indian people for the people of Vietnam. The President was glad to have the opportunity to see, himself, the Indian people's love for peace and their Government's achievements in the building of a modern country while at the same time retaining and developing their ancient and traditional culture. The President and the Prime Minister reaffirmed their faith in Panchsheel, the five principles of peaceful co-existence. They affirmed their belief that the application of these principles in international relations will help to relax international tensions and provide a basis for peace and understanding among nations. The President and the Prime Minister agreed that, with the developments in the fields of space travel and atomic and thermonuclear warfare, maintenance of peace has, more than ever before, become imperative. They agreed that a high level meeting for the consideration of ways and means to end nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and for achieving progressive disarmament and the lessening of world tensions is eminently desirable and expressed the hope that it will take place early. The President and the Prime Minister were of the opinion that military blocs only result in increasing international tensions and expressed their resolve to continue and intensify, in their respective spheres, their efforts towards the maintenance of peace.[126]

Even while facing international reprimand, India stood close to its belief to support Vietnam in its testing times during the 60s and 70s, which was well appreciated by Vietnam.[127]

## 4. Leon Prouchandy/ Purushanthi – The French Indian Nationalist

The Proucandy/ Puruanthi family belonged to Pondicherry and had migrated to French Indochina. Belonging to this family was Darmanathan Prouchandy who was the first steam navigator from south India, who plied steamers in the Mekong delta since 1891. Savarikkannu Purushanthi, made his fortunes in Vietnam and later returned to Pondicherry as one of the wealthiest men. He was a money changer, real estate owner and horse breeder. He was conferred the award of Chevalier du Mérite Agricole by the French Government in the year 1914. Leon Purushanthi/Prouchandy, his brother's son, was a French graduate who played an important role in the Indian community of Vietnam and was politically active. He was born in Pondicherry on 1st May 1901 in a middle-class Tamil Christian family. Like many Pondicherrians, studied in a French school in Saigon and was a *Brevet* diploma holder.[128] He took over the landed properties of Saverikannu Prouchandy in Saigon and Pondicherry and is also known for his donations to the needy and to public causes.[129]

Even though Leon Purushathi was a French Indian, unlike others he took a keen interest in India's freedom struggle and provided immense support and aid to Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and his Indian National army. He closely observed and followed the Indian National Movement ad influenced by Gandhian ideology he gave up his government job. He wrote articles in French newspapers and magazines

of Ind0 China and noticed the discrimination towards Indians because of their dress, which motivated him to initiate the 'Dress Reforms' in the 1930's.[130] Leon Purushanthi opposed the caste system and even though a Christian, he had contacts with Tamil Muslims of Saigon and visited Hindu temples as well. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, he was influenced by Gandhi's call to Indians asking them to relinquish their jobs as a sign of protest, and gave up his job in French credit bank, the news of which appeared in a Franco-Indian journal of Pondicherry called *L'Inde Illustré*.[131] In September 1939wen the Second World War broke out a pro-German French regime was installed in Vichy under Maréchal Pétain in June 1940.

Prouchandy used to proclaim that 'we (Pondicherry Tamils) are French only in paper, but in our hearts, we are Indians. We will take only what is good in European civilisation, but leave the bad.' He contributed immensely to the Netaji War Fund in terms of gold, jewellery and cash, and even though threatened by pro French supports, he did not deter from contributing to and supporting the Indian struggle against colonial regime.[132]

On 9th August 1943 Subhas Chandra Bose flew to Saigon where he was greeted with open arms by many members of the Indian/Tamil community of Saigon. While he was driving down in an open car along one of the main streets of Saigon, Léon Prouchandy of Pondicherry ascended the car and garlanded Bose with a gold necklace which was a gold *kasumaalai* that had belonged to his wife. Bose even addressed a rally of some 1000 Indian (mostly Tamil) residents of Saigon. Leon Prouchandy eventually became one of the principal financers and supporters of the Indian freedom struggle in Saigon.[133] Leon Prouchandy greeted him by presenting.

On 21st July 1945, the 'Provisional Government Day' was celebrated by the Indian Tamils of Saigon and the Indian national flag and the Japanese flag were hoisted in front of houses and shops during that day. The celebrations included offering special prayers at the Saigon mosque, situated at Amiral Dupré Street which was attended by, A.C.Chatterji and A.M.Sahai, and members of all Indian communities. Speeched given by the north Indian leaders were translated into Tamil by Moulvi Khaliloor Rahman, a Tamil Muslim from Koothanallur.

The General Secretariat of the Indian Independence League (I.I.L.) of Saigon, was established in the palatial residence of Prouchandy located on 76 Rue Paul Blanchy at Saigon and was given to IIL rent free.[134] "A soldier of the Indian National Army stood guard at the entrance. As the provisional government of Free India had accepted romanised Hindustani as the common language for all Indians, Hindustani classes were conducted in Saigon for the Tamils. Inscription for these classes were to be done at the Office of the I.I.L. at 76, rue Paul Blanchy. Besides, a recruitment bureau for the Indian National Army was established in the same place. Its secretary was a Tamil Muslim known as Abdul Majid Sahib. All details regarding recruitment and training were to be obtained from the Secretariat of the I.I.L. During this period a certain Nuarudin seems to have been the President of I.I.L. in Saigon." [32]

After the defeat of Japanese forces, "one afternoon probably towards the end of September 1945, a colonial military jeep approached the villa of Leon Prouchandy at 76, rue Paul Blanchy in Saigon, which until then served as the Secretariat of the Indian Independence League. Some soldiers brought down the three flags –Indian, Vietnamese and Japanese - that still flew atop the residence. They arrested Léon Prouchandy from his villa and took him away to an unknown destination."[135] He returned home after about three months but was now suffering from amnesia. The top French doctor of Saigon, Dr. Le Vilain tried to cure Léon Prouchandy but was to no avail.

Léon Prouchandy was not the once rich and wealthy man anymore but his philanthropic nature remained with him. "Whatever money that was given to him he distributed it amongst the poor and the children, seated at the government park in front of Villa Aroumé, the present Dining Hall of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Sometimes he used to even sit with ordinary labourers on the roadside and eat their food."[136]

## 5. Chettiar – Builders of Temples and Educational Institutes

The Chettiars found a strong foothold in Vietnam and settled primarily in Saigon. There were 110 chettiar money lending firms in Cochin China by 1930. They mostly lent money to agriculturists and the Madras Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report mentions that they gave loans on big scale as well as on short terms on the security of the crop harvest.[137] The rates of interest were high ranging from 15% to 25% per month, in the period of economic boon when peasants borrowed to increase cultivation. [138]

"In the late 1920s, individual Chettiars' annual incomes from property averaged from 60,000 to 100, 000 piastres. Further rental income (3,000 piastres monthly) came from rental properties belonging to the temple fund, in collective Chettiar possession. It was not until the onset of the Depression that Nattukottai Chettiars came into possession, through debt foreclosure, of vast tracts of agricultural land. Their gains in this time amounted to 30,000 hectares of land, worth 3,300,000 piastres. Seventy-three percent of the area they possessed was Transbassac paddy land."[139] The community hit upon hard times during the Depression years and the number of firms was halved and came down to 55 and the total credit came down to 20 million piaster in 1937. The inability of peasants and farmers to pay back dues made Chettiars landowners "The peasant of Annam range and Cochin China failed to repay their loans, thus making the chettiars seize their lands for the bad debts. During 1930s Chettiars were holding around 25% of the land in Cochin China. "[140]

Despite hardships they continued to have a prominent presence in the economic arena. They possessed 1/3rd of total rice credit in Cochin China, and it is said that during 1940s half of Indo-China was indebted to Chettiars. Chettiars continued to hold their position as reliable money lenders amongst landowners in Cochin China and Annam. [141] The richest Chettiar in 1932 was A R M Soocalingam chitty of Saigon who accumulated a fortune of 2-3 million piasters equivalent to 20-30 million francs. In 1937 there were 120 Chettiar establishments in Cochin China owning an estimated 22,204 hectares of land in the Mekong Delta and it is estimated that they repatriated about 65% of their earnings in 1939.[142]

The money and wealth the Chettiars accumulated was invested initially in the construction and maintenance of temples. "Magamai is a definite percentage of commercial profits earned by the Chettiars to be set aside for charity. Out of this, certain types are set aside only for the temples. It is a unique attribute of this community, that wherever they go to conduct business, from Saigon to Cochin China, they have built a temple out of their business earnings. The 'magamai' contributions helped the upkeep of these temples. They had the practice of collecting 'magamai' wherever they set foot for business. That's how they were able to build temples in all the places of their business."[143] The jewels and other assets in the Saigon temple were estimated at 50 million in 1971. This invariably announced the Chettiar wealth accumulation to the Vietnamese. [144]

During the 20th century they utilised their wealth to provide for educational institutions, especially for girls, research institutes, health care places, rural development centers and digging up of tanks in the water scarce Chettinad and they are credited with the establishment of schools and colleges in their home town.[145] "During their stint in Vietnam, the Chettiars gave generous donations to renovate the mausoleum of General Lê Văn Duyệt in the late 1930s. Lê Văn Duyệt (1764–1832) served as Emperor Gia Long's viceroy in the south, before the region came under centralized control."[146]

## 6. Messengers of Peace and Compassion

In addition to political and economic ties, India and Vietnam share religious linkages, particularly in Buddhism since the ancient times. "In the late half of the 2nd century BC, two Indian Buddhist Zen monks Mahajavaka and Kalyanacuri came to Vietnam and the atter became the head bonze of Dau Pagoda (in Bac Ninh Province) and founded Buddhism in Vietnam. K'ang-seng-huei, of Sogdiane origin I beginning of 3rd century CE migrated to India and then to Giao Chau (Vietnam) with his family. He learned religious teachings and later on became a

famous Zen monk, translated the Astasahashika on the topic of Sunyata and Nagarjuna and developed the famous theory of Madhyamaka. Virutaruci, an Indian Zen monk, came to Giao Chau (Vietnam)in the 6th century CE where he established the first Zen branch in Vietnam and expanded the principles of eight negations of the Nagarjuna. "In the beginning of the 11th century, the Zen monk Sung Pham, the 11th generation of the Virutaruci branch, came to India to study Buddhism for 9 years, and then returned home to bring strong development of Tantrism which has existed since the 10th century. Many other Tantrist monks from India such as Yogibrahman (the 13th century), Bodhist (the 14th century) came to Vietnam, and were well received by the Tran dynasty."[147] Travels of Buddhist missionaries to India continues well into the 20th century with the purpose of spreading peace and message of love and humanity. The other missionaries who ae worked selflessly towards helping the poor, homeless, elderly and children are nuns belongin to te Missionries of Charity of Mother Teresa.

***Thích Nhất Hạnh***

Born on 26 October Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen monk who is the leading figure behind 'Engaged Buddhism'. He was born in the city of Quảng Ngãi in Central Vietnam (Thừa Thiên) in 1926 and entered the monastery at Từ Hiếu Temple near Huế, Vietnam at the age of 16. He graduated from Bao Quoc Buddhist Academy in Central Vietnam, Thich Nhat Hanh and received training in Zen and the Mahayana school of Buddhism and was ordained as a monk in 1949. In 1956, he was named editor-in-chief of Vietnamese Buddhism, the periodical of the Unified Vietnam Buddhist Association. Over the years he has authored over a 100 books including 40 in English. "He founded Lá Bối Press, the Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon, and the School of Youth for Social Service (SYSS), a neutral corps of Buddhist peace workers who went into rural areas to establish schools, build healthcare clinics, and help re-build villages. Nhat Hanh is now recognized as a Dharmacharya and as the spiritual head of the Từ Hiếu Temple and associated monasteries. On May 1, 1966 at Từ Hiếu Temple, Thich Nhat Hanh he received the "lamp transmission" from Master Chân Thật making him a Dharmacharya or Dharma Teacher." [148] He travelled to Princeton University, USA, in 1960 to study comparative religion and was then given the post of lecturer at the Columbia University. By now he had gained mastery over many languages- Chinese, French, Pali, Sanskrit, English and Japanese. In 1963, he returned to Vietnam to aid his fellow monks in their non-violent peace efforts.[149] In 1969, Nhat Hanh was the delegate for the Buddhist Peace Delegation at the Paris Peace talks and in 1973 Thich Nhat Hanh was denied permission to return to Vietnam and he went into exile in France. [150] It was in 2005 that Nhat Hanh was given permission from the Vietnamese government to return for a visit and was also allowed to teach there, publish four of his books in Vietnamese, and travel the country with monastic and lay members of his Order, including a return to his root temple, Tu Hieu Temple in Huế.[151]

Nhat Hanh has also been the leader of the Engaged Buddhism movement which promotes the individual's active role in creating change. In his book *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* he uses the term 'Engaged Buddhism' for the first time. Throughout his life has actively promoted the message of peace and nonviolent methods in resolving conflicts, in connection with which he has traversed widely across the world.[152] He cites the 13th-century Vietnamese King Trần Nhân Tông with the origination of the concept who abdicated his throne to become a monk, and founded the Vietnamese Buddhist School in the Bamboo Forest tradition.[153] The monk has a substantial following across the world, and "In the West, like the East, Engaged Buddhism is a way of attempting to link authentic Buddhist meditation with social action. The current Dalai Lama has voiced a need for Buddhists to be more involved in the social and political realm."[154] His "Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing" are built around concepts of nonviolence and interdependence in the world and that all Buddhist morality is based upon "right view" which is namely, the quest for enlightenment[155]

"Engaged Buddhism" arose as a Buddhist response to the widespread trauma—including colonialism, war, social and economic injustice,

environmental degradation, genocide, totalitarian government, and the suppression of religion—that has accompanied the advent of modernity in some Asian Buddhist countries.[156]… Engaged Buddhism resonates with many Western Buddhists, who appreciate the confluence of their religious practice with Western political and social theory and European Enlightenment values, such as human rights, distributive justice, social progress, and freedom from oppression. In Asia and in the West, engaged Buddhism has taken a multiplicity of forms, including working for: peace and nonviolence, human rights, just and equitable development, liberation from oppressive government, social and economic justice, prison reform, access to education and health care, environmental protection and sustainability, and gender and racial equality."[157]

"Engaged Buddhism is defined and unified by the intention to apply the values and teachings of Buddhism to the problems of society in a nonviolent way, motivated by concern for the welfare of others, and as an expression of one's own practice of the Buddhist Way"[158]

"Nhat Hanh's Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism succinctly formulates his approach to engaged Buddhism. These include: Openness: Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance; Nonattachment to Views: Aware of the suffering created by attachment to views and wrong perceptions; Freedom of Thought: Aware of the suffering brought about when we impose our views on others; Awareness of Suffering: Aware that looking deeply at the nature of suffering can help us develop compassion and fi nd ways out of suffering; Simple, Healthy Living: Aware that true happiness is rooted in peace, solidity, freedom, and compassion, and not in wealth or fame; Dealing with Anger: Aware that anger blocks communication and creates suffering; Dwelling Happily in the Present Moment: Aware that life is available only in the present moment and that it is possible to live happily in the here and now; Community and Communication: Aware that the lack of communication always brings separation and suffering; Protecting the Sangha: Aware that the essence and aim of a Sangha is the practice of understanding and compassion; Right Livelihood: Aware that great violence and injustice have been done to our environment and society; Reverence for Life: Aware that much suffering is caused by war and conflict; Generosity: Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression; Right Conduct (For lay members): Aware that sexual relations motivated by craving cannot dissipate the feeling of loneliness but will create more suffering, frustration, and isolation-(For monastic members): Aware that the aspiration of a monk or a nun can only be realized when he or she wholly leaves behind the bonds of worldly love"[159]

Thich Nhat Hanh emphasized, "Buddhism means awake – mindful of what is happening in one's body, feelings, mind in the world. If you are awake you cannot do otherwise than act compassionately to help relieve suffering you see around you. So Buddhism must engage in the world. If it is not engaged it is not Buddhism."[160]

Thich Nhat Hanh visited India on three occasions, of which the visits in 1997 and 2008 have been recorded. During his visit in 1997 he had a wonderful meeting with Mr. K.R. Narayanan (then Vice President of India) on politics and spirituality, after which the Ethics Committee was set up in Parliament,[161] he spoke at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi, on "Worlds in Harmony", and held a five day retreat at the Theosophical Society, Chennai, among other programmes.[162]

In 1997 Thich Nhat Hanh, along with 12 monks and nuns from Plum Village and friends spent three weeks in February and March traveling through India and visiting many important sites of the Buddha's life. On his first evening in Delhi, 18 February, the Hindi translations of *Old Path White Clouds Our, Appointment with Life, Cultivating the Mind of Love,* and The *Stone Boy* was released by Mr. Ashok Desai Attorney General of India at a press conference. Which was reported in about 20 newspapers and some television channels.

On 20 February he visited the Jain Bird Hospital in Old Delhi, where he was warmly welcomed by the managers and doctors. At the hospital he

gave medicine to a bird and thereafter he along with accompanying monks and nuns released the healed birds. On the afternoon of the same day he held a meeting with the Vice President of India, Mr. K.R. Narayanan and even though the meeting was scheduled to last for 20 minutes, it carried on for an hour.[163] They discussed how the chairman and members of Parliament could apply the practice of mindfulness, deep listening and loving speech in the congress. He suggested, "Mr. Narayanan, may it would be good to begin every session with the practice of mindful breathing. Then, a few lines could be read to bring awareness into everyone's mind such as : Dear colleagues, the people who have elected us expect that we will communicate with each other using kind and respectful speech and deep listening in order to share our insight so that the parliament can make the best decisions for the benefit of the nation and the people. It would take less than one minute to read such a text and afterward something like a bell of mindfulness could be used.[164]

"Every time the debate became too hot and people were insulting and condemning each other, the chairperson could sound the bell of mindfulness saying-We are not calm enough, let us stop arguing and be silent for one or two minutes. Then he could invite everyone to breathe in and out- breathing in calming, breathing out smiling- until the atmosphere became calm. Then the one who was speaking would be invited to continue his or her speech."[165]

Accordingly, the Ethics Committee of Rajya Sabha consisting of nine members was constituted by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 4 March 1997, to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the members and to examine the cases referred to it with reference to the ethical and other misconduct by members. It was, in fact, the first such Committee to be set up by any legislature in India. Subsequently, the strength of the Committee was raised to ten members. Members of the Committee including its Chairman are nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha and they are generally leaders/deputy leaders/whips of their parties in the Rajya Sabha.[166] Hanh also met with other respected leaders including Ms. Kapila Vatsayyan, the Director of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and the President of the India International Centre. The Committee was inaugurated by the then Vice-President of India and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan, on 30 May 1997.[167]

The next morning a visit was undertaken to the Vasant Valley School, where he spent time talking to children and teaching them songs and basic meditation. Later in evening Hanh gave a talk on "Worlds in Harmony" to a full house at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. A practice session was organised on the following Saturday morning at the Tibet House at the Buddha Jayanti Park and in the afternoon at India International Centre he was introduced to an attentive crowd of 1200 people by Professor Ramachandra Chandra Gandhi and here Hanh spoke about "Walking Lightly," the four mantras, and the relationship between father and son.

On 23 February he spoke about relationships to about three hundred people who came to attend a Day of Mindfulness on Sunday hosted at a beautiful park and home of a local Jain patron at the Sanskriti Kendra. Sister Chan Khong led a deep relaxation and "Touching the Earth," session and a kino meditation (a kino is a cross between a tangerine and an orange). [168]

The next morning he travelled to Bodh Gaya where he was welcomed by people and banners across the road reading "Thich Nhat Hanh and friends." There he sat under the Bodhi tree, offered copies of Old Path Wide clouds in Hindi and English versions and chanted and then sat in silence admist the chanting of sutras by pilgrims from Sri Lanka, Tibet, Japan, and other countries in their own languages. He walked around the temple complex and then went across the Neranjara River to the village of Sujata and Svasti where he presented translations of Old Path White Clouds to the village headman for the library and school. At the Mahabodhi Society Hall he gave a talk, 'The Earth as Witness," in the afternoon, and the next morning he left for Rajgir. Here he spent time meditating on the Vulture Peak, which was Buddha's favourite meditation spot, gave a Dhamma talk and towards sunset walked down

the 2500 year old path built by King Bimbisara. He had breakfast on the succeeding day at the Bamboo Grove and "The children who were begging here soon became friends with Thay's gentle handling. He held their hands and slowly they relaxed. Later he and the others played games with the children by the Karanda Lake. The children, who had been begging and grabbing only a short while before, passed food to each other with great dignity. After lunch we drove through mustard fields and mango trees to the remains of the famous monastic university at Nalanda, where the Mahayana school developed."[169] His next stop was Calcutta where he gave a talk at a Hindu temple and on 3rd March he boarded the plane for Chennai where he spent 5 days. Hanh held talks every morning and Dhamma discussions in the afternoons, tea meditation and Touching the Earth. On his last day the 40 people who took the Five Mindfulness Trainings decided to continue the practise in Chennai. He managed to pack into his schedule on the last day at Chennai two talks and a press conference where some audiotapes and two more books, including Being Peace were released. "On the last evening in Delhi, our traveling Sangha had a closing circle and many recited insight poems. Thay won the hearts of many people in India and offered his help in practical ways. We continue to hear stories of how people are putting into practice what they heard, and over 40 came to our first Sangha meeting in Delhi on March 16. At the first press conference, Thay had introduced himself as a son of India and said that his spiritual ancestor was the Buddha. We felt that Thay was very happy to be in India, and we would be happy to welcome him any time to come back and make his home here as his ancestors did."[170]

His next visit to India was in 2008 in which he interacted with people, children and politicians. He gave a number of talks and attended numerous meetings throughout his stay in India. He was invited to be the National Guest Editor for all Times of India publications on 2nd of October, Gandhi Jayanti also observed as UN World Non Violence day for which a meeting with senior editors of Times of India was organised at Gandhi Darshan guest house, Rajghat subsequent to which he visited the newspaper office to interact with the top management including Samir Jain, Vice Chairman of the group. Thich Nhat Hanh delivered the Gandhi Memorial Lecture to mark the 60th year of Gandhiji's martyrdom and World Non- Violence Day 2008 celebrations followed by the launch of the book 'Power' published by Harper Collins and released by H. E. Anand Sharma, MOS Ministry of External Affairs. The session was attended by a large audience including many dignitaries like Dr. Karan Singh, head ICCR; Mrs. Tara Bhattacharya grand-daughter of Gandhiji, Ms. Savita Singh, Director, Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti and H. E. Vu Quang Diem, Ambassador Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

On Gandhi Jayanti 2nd October 2008 an Interfaith Peace Walk titled 'Peace is every step' on Rajpath commemorating the International Day of Non-violence, was organised in which more than 1000 people led by Thich Nhat Hanh walked for peace, slowly with mindfulness, in silence down historic Rajpath. The event was flagged off by the Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit. At IIC Delhi an entire day was devoted to mindfulness which was atteneded by about 300 people including many members of the IIC and the Former Attorney General of India, Mr. Ashok Desai introduced Thich Nhat Hanh to the audience. The event included a talk followed in the Fountain Lawns by the walking meditation in Lodhi Gardens.

On 5th October 2008 he had a private meeting with Mrs. Sonia Gandhi at her residence 10, Janpath, New Delhi which lasted for one hour meeting and there was a sharing of communal concerns. Thich Nhat Hanh offered full support from the Plum village community in any way sought by Mrs. Gandhi who also felt that Ahimsa Trust's focus on mindfulness in education as a seed programme for sustainable community benefit.

The next day, 6th October 2008 he gave a talk titled 'Meditation and healing' to the medical community at the AIIMS auditorium. The organisers of the event included prestigious hospital and institutes such as World Academy of Spiritual Sciences, Gangaram hospital, Max India and All India Institute of Medical Sciences The event was attended by 400 members

including eminent doctors including and AIIMS Dean in chair and Dr.S. K. Sama.

Thereafter he travelled to Nagpur where he gave a talk for 45 minutes to about 200000 people who had gathered at Dikshabhumi to commemorate the day Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956. Governor Gawai from Kerala, Bhiku Sasai and other eminent Buddhists of India and abroad attended. The rest of the sangha visited Dikshabhumi the next day and introduced various practices to many thousands of people. On 9th October 2008 he gave a talk to Buddhists and other in an event organised by Trilokya Baudh Maha Sangha Sahaiyika Gana (TBMSG), Nagarjuna Institute, Malini Srinivasan, at Nagaloka, Nagpur. The same organisers held a two day retreat for about 300 Dalit social activist and workers, Buddhists and the general public. On 10th and 11th October at Nagaloka in Nagpur a children's programme was organised led by the monks and nuns accompanying Thich Nhat Hanh.

His next Public Talk was "Understanding our Mind" held on 13th October 2008, Sports and Cultural Club, Sector 15A, Noida which was attended by about 800 people. The session started with some meditation, songs and chanting, thereafter he was welcomed by the representative of the Club and the RWA and introduced by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth. Thich Nhat Hanh gave a one hour talk focussing on Buddhist psychology.

At Delhi a talk on "Leading with Courage and Compassion" in Parliament was held on 17th October 2008 in the Parliament annexewhere he addressed the parliamentarians. The event was hosted in parliament annexe and attended by many dignitaries like Dr. Karan Singh, Santosh Mohan Deb, Rahul Gandhi, Omar Abdullah, Priyanka and Robert Vadera, Navin and Shalu Jindal, other members of parliament and prominent citizens like Justice Liela Seth, OP Jain, William Bissel etc. The talk was on deep listening skills after which a request was made by attendees to start a regular training plan in parliament based on these teachings which is being followed up with the Speakers office.

He had a private meeting with Rahul Gandhi on18th October 2008 at Gandhi Darshan guest house, Rajghat, Delhi where he had a personal one-on-one discussion with Rahul Gandhi who showed interest in training for congress workers based on Thich Nhat Hanh's Mindfulness teachings.

In partnership with 'Living Together in Harmony' a 5 day long (3 evenings and a weekend) retreat at the Teen Murti House was organised by Ministry of Culture, Government of NCT of Delhi, Spice Foundation, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti which was attended by 750 people, amongst which were prominent personalities such as Director of the NMML, Ms. Mridula Mukherjee, Navin Jindal, Priyanka and Robert Vadra, academics, teachers and people from all walks of life. The three evenings focussed on talk by Thich Nhat Hanh, walking meditation, eating meditation and the introduction of practices such as Deep Relaxation and the 5 Mindfulness Trainings. On the weekend, besides the above, discussion groups were formed, Beginning Anew, Touching the Earth and tea meditation was introduced. The monastics had a two day session of interaction with children organised on the weekend where different NGOs were invited along with the participants children .

In the international conclave 'Path of Awakening' held from 20th to 29th October 2008, 300 international participants travelled with Thich Nhat Hanh to Sarnath, Bodhgaya, Nalanda and Rajgir over 10 days where he gave a number of public lectures and visited the Buddhist sites. The participants included people from different countries in Europe, the US, Asia and Australia and included professionals, journalist, doctors etc.[171]

***Thich Nu Tri Thuan Nun***

Thich Nu Tri Thuan is Vietnamese Buddhist nun, who is the abbess of Linh-Son Chinese Buddhist temple in Kushinagar, northern India. Born in Dong Ha Quang Tri Vietnam in 1945, she was adopted by an American family, yet even though she lived in comfort in Michigan she always remembered the sufferings of the poor. In 1985 she left home and went to study Buddhism in France and was ordained as a nun in 1989 and she vowed to dedicate her life to helping others. [172]"On television, I saw people living in poverty in India and Africa. I thought that if I became a nun, I could help these people," [173]

She is the founder of the educational and vocational school sponsored by Vietnamese Buddhists with an idea "knowledge will change the lives of children".[174] Although initially she had planned to start her humanitarian work in Africa, due to the language barrier her master, the late Most Venerable Thich Huyen VI, advised her to go to India, which later became her base. "[175] She decided to go to India in 1989 and faced hardships during the construction of a ruined temple in Kushinagar where there was no electricity and no fund to sustain her daily needs. Her grit and determination gave a new lease of life to the Lin Son Vietnamese Chinese temple at Kushinagar. [176] The temple which was built in 1945 has got a new lease of life through her constant efforts and endeavours. She repaired the severly damaged shrine hall which can now accommodate about 150 people. It houses a Museum with over 2000 Buddha statues, a prayer hall with capacity of 100 people, two fully furnished buildings that can accommodate 150 people, a dining hall that has a seating capacity of 150 people.[177]

She has worked tirelessly for 23 years in Kushinagar which has earned her the respect of the people who call her 'Mataji' lovingly. She has taken over 5000 poor kids of the streets and built 24 schools. Every year just prior to the onset of winters she carries out the 'Winter Blankets Donation' project. She also runs a free clinic for students and the poor. She distribute food to over 7000 less fortunate people every year. She also organizes teams of monks and nuns who travel to remote areas to propagate Buddhism and since 2005 the temple organizes a prayer ceremony annually at the beginning of March in which a prayer ceremony for World Peace is held over 7 days and 7 Nights.[178]

In Kushinagar - where the Buddha passed away, nun Thich Nu Tri Thuan also became famous after 23 years dedicating herself to this land and charity school there. She carries out her humaniatarian work with help of funds and donations given by devotees and tourists visiting the temple and contribution by Vietnamese Buddhists around the world. The money donated is spent on building of schools, hiring teachers and taking care of students. Many students have graduated from Vietnam Linh Son school, some of them have become nurses, doctors and move to New Delhi – capital of India to work.[179]

A school has also been built in Bodhgaya which in its year of establishment in 2003 had only 45 students which has increased to nearly 700. The school has four branches and teaches children from class 5 to 10. A fifth branch began operating on opposite side of the Niranjana river as according to Nun Nu Tri Thuan, "The children there are very poor so they need to go to school, even though they have to cross the river with some difficulties. I look forward to building a bridge across the river for children going to school easily".[180] She has dedicated 12 years of volunteer work in Bodhgaya and for her the three most difficult stages faced in building the school were: digging wells and building school; persuading teachers and students to come to school; the departure of the devoted Buddhists. "I came here with $ 400 and saw many poor street children. The first job was to hire people to dig 22 wells to help people get clean water ", the founder of the school said. The memory of a poor pupil with scabies in ear walking with his mother to school still remained with her and made the nun determine to "change the fate of children." [181]

**Mother Teresa**

The bond between Mother Teresa and Vietnam was established in July 1973, when the then Archbishop of Saigon, Mgr. Paul Nguyen Van Binh, asked her to send nuns to serve the poor in Saigon. In June 1973 , Mother Teresa sent seven priests to serve in Saigon, including Father Andrea, who collaborated with Mother Teresa to form the Missionaries of Charity and Archbishop Nguyen Van Binh bought two houses at Cong Quynh Street, District I, for the care of the poor and the poor.[182]

Mother Teresa travelled to Vietnam five times between 1993 and 1995. Her first visit was in September 1991, when she came to Hanoi but was not allowed to proceed to Saigon by the Vietnamese authorities. The second time, on November 4, 1993, she came from Hong Kong to Saigon along with Sister Nirmala and Dr. Jannet accompanying her to help her.She came to Saigon without any notice in a

quiet way and was greeted by the Consulate of India and Vietnamese secretary at the airport.- On the way from the airport to the hotel, Mother Teresa wrote the name and address of Sister Ha Thi Thanh Tinh and gave it to the consulate, who gave the note to the secretary with the adress Ha Thi Thanh Tinh, 428 Huynh Van Banh, F.14, Phu Nhuan District written on it. When So Thanh Thanh received the message she was attending the evening Mass and preparing to help give Mass to the parishioners at the New Republic Church.

During the third visit, in 1994, Mother Teresa worked together with the eight nuns who ran the orphanage at 38 Tu Xuong Street in Ho Chi Minh City, which welcomes thousands of abandoned children from different provinces of the country.[183] She led the newly formed communities which included the 8 Soeurs to Vietnam to serve the poor, four Soeurs to work at the Center for Children with Disabilities in Thuy An Commune, Ba Vi District, Hung Hoa Province, four Soeurs to serve at 38 Tu Xuong, District 3, Saigon, take care of orphans. Every Thursday, the Soeurs in 38 Tu Xuong would come to the Eucharistic Adoration with their Vietnamese sisters at 428 Huynh Van Banh. [184]

During her fourth visit, she came, along with Sister Nirmala and Dr. Jannet accompanying her to help her in April 1995, Mother Teresa came to Vietnam to visit her sisters, and sent a petition asking the authorities to allow her to open houses for religious vocations. Mother sent a list of 20 sisters at home 428 Huynh Van Banh and asked to open a house here. She also applied to sponsor 7 Vietnamese sisters to India for training. But the government does not approve. During Mother Teresa's visit to Vietnam, she visited the sisters at 428 Huynh Van Banh many times.

The fifth time and the last time Mother Teresa travelled from from Singapore to Vietnam. She applied for a visa extension for the nuns, but the government has refused. In December 1995, the Communist Party told her that all the sisters of the congregation had to leave by 23 December.[185]

The Missionaries of Christ's Charity started with only 20 sisters but its numbers to 68 professed sisters, 20 novices and 43 Postulates and from its beginnings at a little home located on 428 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan District, Ho Chi Minh City, it has extended out to 7 other dioceses in Vietnam with numerous Missionaries posts:

*Saigon Diocese*: A Mother House; one orphanage for boys; one orphanage for girls; two Mother's Love homes for pregnant teenagers and young mothers; one school to erase illiteracy for poor children in Hoc Mon; and one Montessori to help poor families in Tan Qui.

*Ba Ria Diocese*: one mission in Long Dien Parish to teach catechism and bring communion to the sick and shut-in; and one mission in Hai Lam parish to assist the abandoned elderly, the destitute and the dying.

*My Tho Diocese*: one mission in Tram Chim to dispense medication for the sick and suffering.

*Phu Cuong Diocese*: one mission to assist the abandoned elderly, the destitute and the dying; and one Mother's Love home to help the pregnant teenagers.

*Long Xuyen Diocese*: two missions in Soc Son Hon Dat, one to erase illiteracy and one to dispense food and water to the poor.

*Buon Ma Thuot Diocese*: one mission at Dakmil to assist the runaway and poor children.

*Phan Thiet Diocese :* a mission at Vo Dat for medication and teaching catechism and bringing communion to the sick and shut-in.

*Mercy Center*: one mission consists of 12 registered nurse sisters who minister to the HIV/ AIDS victims.[186]

The Congregation now has 2 maternity homes -

*Mother's first love* was established in 1996 at Gx. Faith, Go Vap District, Saigon. After 16 years of work, the shelter has welcomed over 1300 girls to the shelter and saved more than 1300 foetus was born human. The second shelter was established at

the end of 2006 in Bung Parish, Thuan An District, Binh Duong Province and the shelter has received nearly 290 missing girls and saved 292 babies born. The First Love House at Gx. Tan Thong Commune, Cu Chi District over time through dedicated service of the pastor of Tan Thong and the sisters have raised more than 150 unmarried and elderly people. The Second Love House opened in 2011 at Gx. Phuoc Dien, Tay Ninh Province, which is currently caring for and nurturing 15 elderly homeless people.[187]

The Sisters work day and day out tirelessly and selflessly helping the poor, ill, elderly and homeless. "After having fed their souls, the sisters ate a quick breakfast which was customary to the Vietnamese culture namely steamed rice. They went out in search of the poorest of the poor such as pregnant teenagers at abortion clinics and hospital, the orphans on streets corners, the HIV/AIDS in the slums or the abandoned elderly in the alleys. Upon encountering them, the sisters would take them home where they have a roof over their heads and warm food in their stomachs. After a long and laborious day of work, the sisters spent hours in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament to pray, praise and give thanks to God."[188]

Vietnam and India's contacts in the late 19th and throughout the 20th century were well established and continuous. Even though Vietnam fought the French for independence and Indi against the British authorities, yet they stood united against imperialism ad colonial rule and together strived to from an association of Asian countries that would help strengthen the regions vis a vis the western nations and create a region devoid of conflicts based on peace and non-interference. In the political arena from the 1950' leaders from both Vietnam and India have had numerous state visits to each other's countries where the leaders have been warmly welcomed and accorded high status. Besides political contact, both nations have also taken keen interest in economic developments and signed treaties. Contacts between these two nations were also furthered by visits of religious heads who not only limited themselves to teaching religious precepts, but rather extended their work towards humanitarian and social causes which have improved the lives of many common people.

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